



Symposium title: Language Attrition in the Japanese Context from a CDST Perspective

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Symposium format:

- **Symposium Multimodal**

Symposium mode:

- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes

- LANGUAGE IN THE MIND/BRAIN: psycholinguistics, bilingualism, multilingualism, processing, cognitive advantage, individual factors or differences, cross-linguistic
- LANGUAGE SKILLS: writing, fluency, chunks / formulaic language, speaking, feedback, testing
- LANGUAGES IN SOCIETY: bilingualism, multilingualism, plurilingualism, multilingual classroom, translanguaging, literacy & literacies, heritage language, home language, migrants, deaf, sign/gesture

Short abstract in English (15 lignes) :

In this symposium, we will present three studies to explore the attrition phenomenon from the three angles of literacy, lexicon, and brain activation. The analytic tools used are based on the Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2017), which posits that language progression and regression is linear and systematic but at the same time dynamic, non-linear, and chaotic. The first study is about English literacy attrition in Japanese siblings who once lived with their family in a foreign country where they were educated and functioned in English and then returned to their home country, Japan. The study focuses on how these children may retain and further develop their English literacy skills. The second study looks at two young bilingual Japanese children who return to their home country after a prolonged stay in an English dominant milieu. Both linguistic and neuro-linguistic data are examined to see if similar changes occur between the two returnees who share almost identical language background. The third study focuses on lexical attrition by replicating and extending the methodology of Hansen, Colver et al (2012) and focuses on one of the most attrited languages--Japanese by testing fifty former English L1 Japanese L2 missionaries (incubation ranging from 1-50 years).

Argument:

In this symposium, we will present three studies to explore the attrition phenomenon from the three angles of literacy, lexicon, and brain activation. The analytic tools used are based on the



Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2017), which posits that language progression and regression is linear and systematic but at the same time dynamic, non-linear, and chaotic.

The first study is about English literacy attrition in Japanese siblings who once lived with their family in a foreign country where they were educated and functioned in English and then returned to their home country, Japan. The study particularly focuses on how these children may retain and further develop their English literacy skills after a lengthy sojourn abroad that is, for several years. The important data sources were video recordings of interactions mainly during literacy events at home, and literacy journals filled out by the children. One of the implications of the study is that the home is an important domain for literacy retention in returnees, especially when more recreational and socio-interactional literacy uses are emphasized.

The second study looks at two young bilingual Japanese children who return to their home country after a prolonged stay in another linguistic milieu. Firstly, both linguistic and neuro-linguistic data are examined to see if similar changes occur. Then, language retention and attrition are scrutinized in terms of their age upon return. These two Japanese-English bilingual returnees were both born in English-dominant countries, though their age of return to Japan differed - one at 11;07 and the other at 16;06. Yearly collection of both linguistic and neuro-linguistic data began at zero incubation and lasted for three years. The preliminary data analysis indicates the possibility that neuro-linguistic attrition precedes linguistic deterioration. The full results are presented at the conference.

The third study focuses on lexical attrition by replicating and extending the methodology of Hansen, Colver et al (2012), who compared long-term attrition among missionaries who spoke one of six different languages. The present study focuses on one of the most attrited languages--Japanese. I tested 50 former English L1 Japanese L2 missionaries on their productive recall of 100 words. A semantic fluency and two 1-minute speaking tasks were added to ascertain whether those without regular exposure to Japanese retained an intact lexical system. Participants with incubation periods ranging from 1-50 years were tested. Preliminary results show that missionaries scoring less than 70% on productive tests lost their ability to do more than produce strings of formulaic sequences in spoken Japanese.

References

- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2017). Complexity Theory. In Ortega, L., and Han, Z. (Eds.), *Complexity Theory and Language Development: In Celebration of Diane Larsen-Freeman* (pp. 11-50). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hansen, L., Colver, A., Chong, W., et al. (2012). The lost word: Vocabulary attrition in six mission languages. In L. Hansen (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition Abroad: The LDS Missionary Experience* (pp. 111-134). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Joy Taniguchi is an Associate Professor at the Department of Information Design, Shizuoka Institute of Science and Technology, and her research interests include sociolinguistics, bilingualism, second language attrition, and heritage language education. Hideyuki Taura is a Professor of Applied Linguistics at Ritsumeikan University, and Amanda Taura is Associate Professor at Setsunan University, and their interests include bilingual acquisition and attrition. Jenifer Larson-Hall is Professor in the Department of English, University of



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