

Causes of Language Interference and Solutions (Hino)

speakers of L2 (e.g., Hawaiian/ɾ/to the speaker of English and Japanese; a plural suffix -s to the speaker of Japanese).

Abbreviations:

Gen: genitive

Loc: locative

Nom: nominative

Pol: polite

References:

- Sapir, Edward. 1925. Sound Patterns in Language. *Language* 1. 37-51.
- Shibatani Masayoshi. 1990. *The Languages of Japan*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Swadesh, Morris. 1934. The Phonemic Principle. *Language* 10. 117-29.

E. Because a Japanese vowel does not reduce much when unstressed, Japanese think that a Hawaiian vowel also does not reduce greatly (actually, it reduces very much). → 1-1-2-2

3-1-2 Lack of L2 System in L1

When L1 does not have L2 system, interference occurs as follows:

1-1-1 Because English and Japanese do not have /ɹ/, American and Japanese people have difficulty in producing and recognizing it.

1-2-1 Because Japanese does not have an obligatory plural suffix -s, Japanese people often drop it when needed.

3-2 Solutions to Interference

As for overgeneralization (the case of A through E), we can solve it by carefully observing L2 and find a difference from our own as follows:

A. If we can observe a reduced vowel in an unstressed position in Hawaiian, it shows that Hawaiian is a stress-time language.

B. By observing complementary distribution between /p/ and [b] ([b] occurs intervocalically, /p/, elsewhere), we can conclude that [b] is an allophone of /p/ in Hawaiian.

C. By carefully listening to the /l/ in *lani* ('heaven'), *lanai* ('porch') and the like with [l] in *hula* 'the hula,' *pala* 'mellow' and the like, we can find the difference.

D. By measuring the duration of a long vowel in Hawaiian and Japanese, we can realize the difference.

E. By carefully listening to the change of the quality in both Hawaiian and Japanese vowels in an unstressed position, we can realize that Hawaiian vowels are much more reduced than those of Japanese.

For the lack of L2 system in L1, the best way would be to be aware of it all the time and to get accustomed to it because we are not native

refers to the future, whereas in Japanese, *mae* ('front') refers to the past and *ato* ('back') refers to the future. Hawaiian is the same as Japanese in this respect. Hence, if Japanese people learn that the word *mua* refers to *front* in terms of space, they can easily use *mua* meaning *past*.

3. Conclusion

3-1 Causes of language interference

'Language interference' does not occur when L1 has the same system as in L2, as I mentioned in Section 2. Conversely, interference does occur when L1 and L2 system are different from each other. I will propose two causes of 'language interference' (overgeneralization, and lack of L2 system in L1), in that order.

3-1-1 Overgeneralization

L1 speakers treat L2 as if it has the same system as L1 according to their own system, even when L2 has different system from L1. The examples I mentioned in Section 1 are as follows:

A. Because Japanese has a pitch accent, Japanese people think that Hawaiian also has a pitch accent (actually, however, Hawaiian has a stress accent). → 1-1-1

B. Because /b/ is a phoneme in Japanese, Japanese people think that Hawaiian [b] is also a phoneme (actually, however, Hawaiian [b] is an allophone of /p/). → 1-1-1

C. Because Japanese has a /r/ as a phoneme, Japanese people think that Hawaiian /l/ and its allophone [ɺ] as a /r/. → 1-1-1

D. Because Japanese has a mora-timed length, they think that Hawaiian also has a mora-timed length (actually, however, Hawaiian has a stress-timed length). → 1-1-2-1

Because they are marked either by locational *i* or motional *ma:* and because they follow the definite article *ka/ke*, they are content words in Hawaiian.

Japanese locational words such as *ue* ('up') and *shita* ('under') are also content words because they precede postpositions and can be the subject as follows:

tsukue no ue ni

desk Gen up Loc

'on the desk'

Q: Which do you like better, upstairs or downstairs?

A: *ue ga ii desu.*

up Nom good Pol

'Upstairs would be better.'

Because Japanese and Hawaiian locational words are both content words, Japanese people can learn Hawaiian locational words quickly.

2-3 Space-Time Relationship

Space-time relationship differs among English, Japanese, and Hawaiian as follows:

(English)	<i>behind</i>	<i>ahead</i>
space	back	front
time	past	future
(Japanese)	<i>mae</i>	<i>ato</i>
space	front	back
time	past	future
(Hawaiian)	<i>mua</i>	<i>hope</i>
space	front	back
time	past	future

Thus, in English, *behind* ('back') refers to the past and *ahead* ('front')

2. Language Adjustment

2-1 Demonstrative Pronouns

Hawaiian has three way distinctions in demonstrative pronouns as follows:

ke:ia *manu* 'this bird' (referent is near speaker)

ke:na: *manu* 'that bird' (referent is near addressee)

ke:la: *manu* 'that bird' (referent is far from both speaker and addressee)

This is the same as the following Japanese demonstrative nouns:

kono *tori* 'this bird' (referent is near speaker)

sono *tori* 'that bird' (referent is near addressee)

ano *tori* 'that bird' (referent is far from both speaker and addressee)

I could find three way distinctions Hawaiian demonstrative pronouns because Japanese has the same usage. Japanese demonstrative pronouns can also refer to the time dimension. That is, *kono toki* ('this time') refers to the present time, *sono toki* ('the time') refers to the time at which the immediately preceding event occurred, and *ano toki* ('that time') refers to the past far from present. According to Kalama¹, conversely, Hawaiian demonstrative pronouns refer to the visible things only.

2-2 Locational Words

The following words are Hawaiian locational words:

waho 'outside,' *loko* 'inside,' *luna* 'up,' *lalo* 'under,' *hema* 'left,'

a:kau 'right'

1. He is an informant in the Field Methods 630 (one of the lectures of the department of Linguistics for graduate students offered in fall 1997 at the University of Hawaii at Manoa) conducted by Dr. Schütz. He speaks Hawaiian on the hourly basis.

when they are unstressed. This is also because Hawaiian is a stress-timed language, whereas Japanese is a mora-timed language. Japanese people often do not recognize Hawaiian reduced vowels, probably because Hawaiian has the same syllable structure as Japanese (CV structure, open syllable). That is, many Japanese people treat Hawaiian as a mora-timed language.

1-2 Grammatical Interference

1-2-1 Number Differences

In English, a plural suffix (most commonly *-s*) is obligatory, while in Japanese it is not obligatory. Native Japanese speakers, hence, often drop it because Japanese does not have such an obligatory plural suffix. This is a grammatical interference.

Some of the Hawaiian words can be pluralized mechanically as follows:

Sg	<i>wahine</i>	<i>kanaka</i>	<i>makua</i>	<i>kupuna</i>	<i>kahuna</i>
Pl	<i>wa:hine</i>	<i>ka:naka</i>	<i>ma:kua</i>	<i>ku:puna</i>	<i>ka:huna</i>
Gloss	'woman'	'man'	'parent'	'grandparent'	'priest'

Many kinship terms, thus, can be plurized by lengthening the first vowel.

1-2-2 Word Order Differences

The word order of English, Hawaiian, Japanese is SVO, VSO, and SOV, respectively. If the word order of the native and target language is the same, no interference occurs. Korean is not difficult to learn to me as long as word order is concerned because Korean and Japanese have the same word order (SOV). It takes a lot of time for American and Japanese people, on the other hand, to produce VSO order in Hawaiian because English has SVO, and Japanese has SOV order.

Actually, however, Hawaiian has a stress accent.

In the case of 3, interference occurs. For example, because /b/ is a phoneme in Japanese, Japanese people treat Hawaiian [b] (/p/becomes [b] intervocalically) as /b/. Additionally, because /r/ (pronounced as a flap) is a phoneme in Japanese, Japanese people perceive both Hawaiian /l/ and its allophone [ɾ] as /r/.

In the case of 4, interference also occurs. For example, Japanese and American people have difficulty in producing and recognizing the glottal stop /ʔ/, because Japanese and English do not have glottal stop as a phoneme.

1-1-2 Timing Differences

Interference also occurs between a stress-timed language and a mora-timed language even when a phoneme is the same. I will treat vowel length and reduced vowels in order.

1-1-2-1 Vowel Length

Vowel length can be a phoneme in both Hawaiian and Japanese because Hawaiian and Japanese have the following minimal pairs between a short vowel and a long vowel:

Hawaiian: *kane* 'skin disease' and *ka:ne* 'male'

Japanese: *ojisan* 'uncle' and *oji:san* 'grandfather'

The duration of vowel length between Hawaiian and Japanese, however, is perceived differently between Hawaiian and Japanese people, because Hawaiian is a stress-timed language, whereas Japanese is a mora-timed language. Therefore, Japanese people do not always perceive vowel length in Hawaiian correctly.

1-1-2-2 Reduced vowel

Even though Hawaiian and Japanese have the same vowel phonemes, Hawaiian vowels are more reduced (centralized) than Japanese vowels

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m	n			
Glide	w		y		
				N	Q

B Vowel Chart

	Front	Central	Back
High	i		u
Mid	e		o
Low		a	

The following are the four possible relations between a phoneme of the learner's native language (L1) and that of the target language (L2):

1. A phoneme of L1 is the same as that of L2. (e.g., /m/, /n/ in Hwn and Jpn)
2. A phoneme of L1 does not exist in the phonemes of L2 nor is it an allophone of one of the phonemes in L2. (e.g., /s/, /z/ in Jpn)
3. A phoneme of L1 does not exist in the phonemes of L2, but it is an allophone of a different phoneme in L2. (e.g., /b/ in Jpn: [b] in Hwn)
4. L1 does not have the phoneme of L2. (e.g., Jpn does not have /ʔ/ in Hwn)

In the case of 1, no interference occurs.

In the case of 2, interference sometimes occurs. For instance, high- and low-pitch accent is a phoneme in Japanese, whereas it is not a phoneme in Hawaiian.

Japanese people, hence, tend to perceive Hawaiian words as a pitch accent as follows:

meka ho lo ho lo no 'animal'

H L H H H H L

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native speaker of the Southern Paiute language) wrote down “*pa*, pause, *pa*” when he heard the actual sound [pá.βa’] (‘at the water’), he concluded that “what the naïve speaker hears is not phonetic elements but phonemes.” Swadesh (1934: 32) also explains that “The phonemic principle is that there are in each language a limited number of elemental types of speech sounds, called phonemes, peculiar to that language.”

Because people thus perceive sounds according to their own phonemes, language interference occurs when two languages have different phoneme inventories. The phoneme inventory of Hawaiian and Japanese, for instance, are as follows:

Hawaiian (Hwn) phoneme inventory (tentative)

A Consonant Chart

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p[b]	[t]		k	ʔ
Fricative	β				h
Liquid		l[l]			
Nasal	m	n			
Glide	w				

B Vowel Chart

	Front	Central	Back
High	i[I]		u[U]
Mid	e[ε]	[ə]	o[ɔ]
Low		a	

Japanese (Jpn) phoneme inventory [Shibatani (1990: 159)]

A Consonant Chart

	Labial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	p, b	t, d		k, g	
Fricative		s, z			h
Liquid		r			

0. Introduction

'Language interference' occurs when two languages have different systems, whereas 'language adjustment' occurs when two languages have similar systems. I will consider language interference in Section 1, and language adjustment in Section 2.

In Section 1-1, I will describe phonological interference, that is, language interference caused by the different sound systems between two languages: first, phoneme differences (1-1-1); and, secondly, timing differences (i.e., stress-timed vs mora-timed) (1-1-2).

In Section 1-2, I will describe grammatical interference. That is, language interference caused by the different grammatical systems between languages: first, number differences (1-2-1); and secondly, word order differences (1-2-2).

In Section 2, I will describe the language adjustment that occurs when two languages (here, Hawaiian and Japanese) have similarity in usage. First, similarity of the demonstrative pronouns (2-1), second, locational words (2-2) and third, space-time relationship (2-3).

Finally, in Section 3, I will consider causes of language interference (3-1) and how we can solve language interference (3-2).

1. Language Interference

1-1 Phonological Interference

1-1-1 Phoneme Difference

Sapir (1925: 35-49) defines the "phoneme" as "the inner configuration of the sound system of a language," and because the informant Tony (the

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