

Path Analysis Model of Influence Factors in Japanese Keigo Learning

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Abstract

Keigo is a difficult point which perplexes Chinese students in their Japanese learning. This paper aims to analyze the factors which affect Keigo learning through path analysis. We tested the Japanese and Keigo proficiency of 120 Japanese learners and established a path analysis model. After analyzing the causal relationship between the variables, we found there was no causal relationship between the length of Japanese study and the Keigo proficiency; exalted expressions proficiency is directly affected by Jyosi and Hikatsuyogo; there is no direct relation between Katsuyougo and Hikatsuyogo, they have causal relation with Jyosi and they affect Keigo acquisition through Jyosi. The results above suggest, grammar factors such as Jyosi etc directly affect Keigo acquisition.

Keywords: Keigo; path analysis; exalted expressions; humble expressions

1 Introduction

Since 1950s, from the view of sociolinguistics, educational circles have begun the exploration of pragmatic functions of Keigo. Keigo research was placed in the framework of treatment expression and was called “specialized linguistic elements of positive treatment expression” [1]. After 1980s, affected by western pragmatic research especially Universal Theory of Politeness and politeness principle theory, Keigo research of Japanese has been promoted to the level of regards expression and marked politeness from the view of mutual politeness phenomenon of human speech act, and the pragmatic functions and acquisition have been enhanced greatly.

However, the relevant research on Keigo grammar acquisition is few. Meanwhile, we found during the education practice that the acquisition of Keigo grammar is still a difficult point [2]. Small scale empirical study in this paper which focused on Chinese oversea students suggested, no matter exalted expression or humble expression, the score of grammar is lower than pragmatic knowledge. Grammar is still a difficult point that stands on the way of Keigo acquisition of Chinese students, even harder than acquisition of grammar.

Cognitive linguistics think task handling ability interacts with language resource. The task handling

ability needed in during communication is normally counted on language resource. Language resource includes vocabulary, notional and functional knowledge and grammar. Grammar was the centre of language communication [3]. This research extended the content above and performed simple examination on the Japanese and Keigo proficiency to Chinese students established path model from Japanese language structure applying the method of computational linguistics and analyzed the factors which affect Chinese students on Japanese Keigo acquisition [5].

2 Research Method

In order to make the sample representative, we selected 34 Chinese oversea students who study under Japanese circumstance in Hiroshima University and 86 Japanese major students who study in non-Japanese circumstance. We performed simple Japanese proficiency test on grammar and Keigo proficiency test on exalted expression and humble expression with those 120 students as objectives whose mean age was 23.3 years.

The text was composed by two parts: (1) simple Japanese proficiency test which tests the grammar of Japanese learner. (2) Keigo level test which tests the Keigo level of learners. It is shown in table 1.

TABLE 1 summary sheet of test content

	Intention	Questions varieties	Quantity of questions		Scores distribution
Simple Japanese proficiency test	Test general Japanese grammar	Jyosi	50	20	1 point each and total 50
		Verb		20	
		Adjective			
		Adjective verbs			
		Adverb		10	

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Keigo level test	Test Japanese Keigo level	Wantaixi		80	30	2 points each and total 120
		Correct mistakes	Exalted expression			
		Humble expression	Distract questions on Keigo utilization			

In order to filtrate the variate and clear the relevance with Keigo acquisition so as to establish path analysis model, we analyzed the correlation between score of simple Japanese proficiency test and Keigo level test in the first place [4]. The result showed grammar knowledge such as Jyosi, Katsuyougo and Hikatsuyougo etc was positively correlated with exalted expression and humble expression strongly; exalted expression was positively correlated with humble expression strongly; the length of Japanese study was positively correlated with exalted

expression and grammar knowledge weakly. So, this research figured out two independent variables, length of Japanese study and grammar knowledge; and two dependent variables, exalted expression proficiency and humble expression proficiency. We performed causal path analysis to the four variables above. To perform path analysis, we have to establish model which can prove the causal relation between variables. In this research, we established path model as showed in figure 1, the arrow expresses the causal relation between variables.

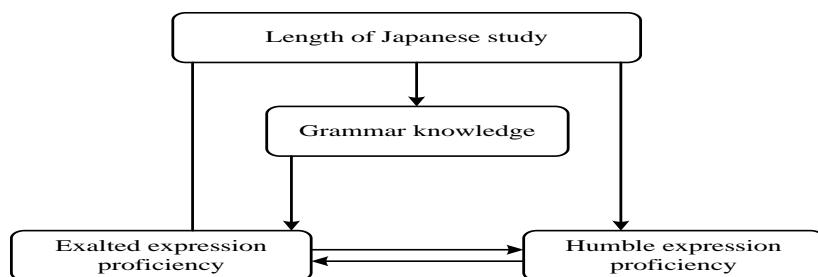


FIGURE 1 Model of relation between variables such as length of Japanese study and grammar knowledge

The length of Japanese study directly affects the acquisition of grammar knowledge, exalted expression and humble expression. The longer the length of Japanese study, the abundant the grammar knowledge is. Grammar knowledge directly affects the acquisition of exalted expression and humble expression.

3 Results Analysis

The causal relation between variables was calculated by SPSS software.

A. PATH ANALYSIS OF LENGTH OF JAPANESE STUDY

In order to verify the causal relation between length of Japanese study, grammar knowledge, exalted expression proficiency and humble expression proficiency total 4 variables, we performed path analysis showed in figure 2 according to the path analysis showed in figure 1.

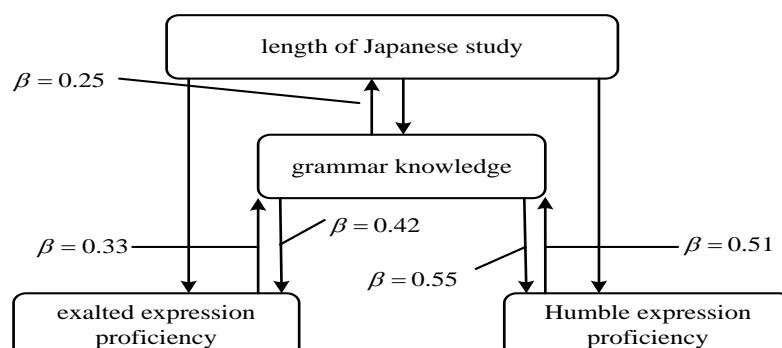


FIGURE 2 analysis results between length of Japanese study and variables such as grammar knowledge etc.

Value path coefficient β was the standard partial regression coefficient calculated by step-wise multiple regression analysis. The items not marked with value in figure 2 means there was no causal relation.

According to the result of path analysis, we can reach the conclusion below: grammar knowledge directly affects Keigo acquisition, but the length of Japanese study does not directly affect the acquisition of Keigo

proficiency or grammar knowledge. It is normally thought that the longer the length of Japanese study the better the grammar utilization ability and the better the Keigo express proficiency. But in teaching practice we found student who learnt Japanese well with short time and student who did bad in Japanese even with longer time of effort. There is no causal relation between length

of Japanese study and grammar knowledge acquisition, Keigo expression proficiency.

B. PATH ANALYSIS ON FACTORS WHICH AFFECT EXALTED EXPRESSION PROFICIENCY

In order to investigate the influence of grammar knowledge on exalted expression proficiency, we

established path model showed in figure 3. Path analysis applied step-wise multiple regression analysis with significance standard of 1%. Multiple regression analysis was performed with exalted expression proficiency, Jyosi, Katsuyougo, Hikatsuyogo as the independent variable successively and the rest as dependent variable.

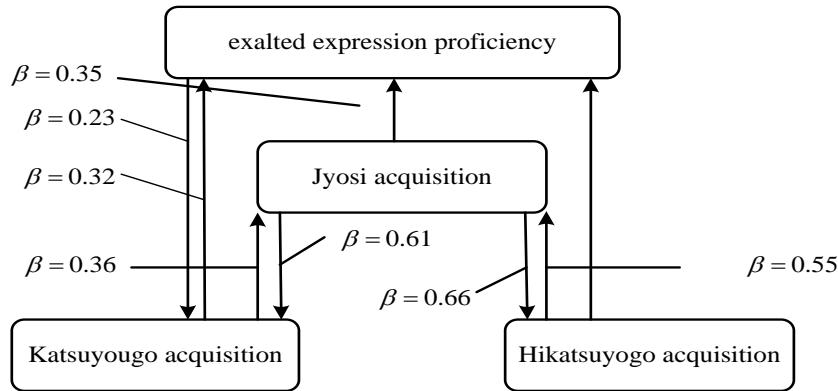


FIGURE 3 analysis model of factors which affect exalted proficiency

Value path coefficient β was standard partial regression coefficient calculated by step-wise multiple regression analysis. The items not marked with number in figure 3 means there was no causal relation.

As showed in the figure above, we found exalted expression proficiency was affected by Katsuyougo acquisition and Jyosi acquisition. And, on the contrary, there was no causal relation between Katsuyougo acquisition and Hikatsuyogo acquisition. The reason is when learn Katsuyougo, you have only to remember the form of the word, but when learn Hikatsuyogo you have

to remember extra different forms of the word changed by the following word on the basis of the word itself.

C. PATH ANALYSIS ON FACTORS WHICH AFFECT HUMBLE EXPRESSION PROFICIENCY

In order to investigate the causal relation between grammar and humble expression from inferior scale, we replaced the independent variables and performed step-wise multiple regression analysis with significance standard of 1%. Path model is shown in figure 4.

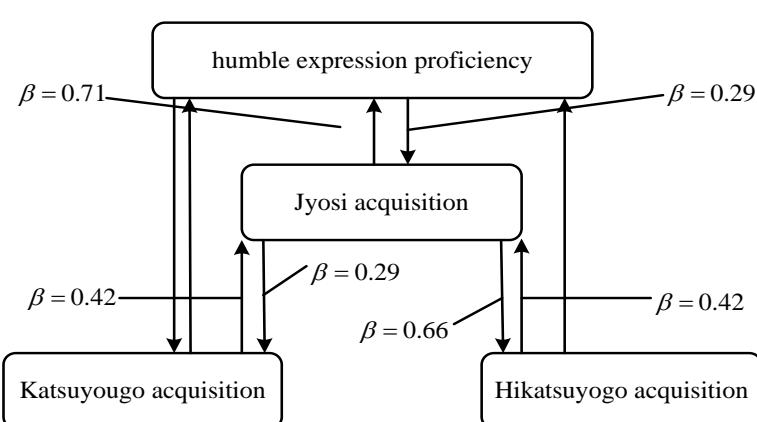


FIGURE 4 analysis model of factors which affect humble expression proficiency

Value path coefficient β was standard partial regression coefficient calculated by step-wise multiple regression. The items not marked with number in figure 3 means there was no causal relation.

The result of path analysis suggested Jyosi acquisition had great influence on humble expression proficiency. That is to say, the better you handled Jyosi, the better your humble expression proficiency is. Conversely,

humble expression proficiency benefits Jyosi acquisition. The causal relation between these two factors was verified. Contrary to the prediction, there was no direct causal relation between Hikatsuyogo and humble expression proficiency, Katsuyougo and humble expression proficiency. And there was no causal relation appeared between Katsuyougo acquisition and Hikatsuyogo acquisition. What's more, there was causal

relation between Katsuyougo acquisition, Hikatsuyogo acquisition and Jyosi acquisition, especially Hikatsuyogo acquisition which directly affected Jyosi acquisition, and the converse influence was also strong.

4 Conclusions

By now, the antecedent researches on Keigo acquisition overemphasized the importance of pragmatic factor acquisition and ignored the importance of grammar factor acquisition. This research suggested that grammar factors such as Katsuyougo and Jyosi is the main factors which affect Keigo acquisition. Keigo was yielded by the most general and obvious intervene of social factors on

grammar and social factors were face-saving strategy. In another word, to preserve the face of both sides involved in communication, humble expression was derived from the passive grammar "一れる、られる". And, for preservation of face, exalted expression was derived from the grammar item "おーになる" which expresses favor relation, and humble expression was derived from grammar item "おーする" which expresses humbleness [6]. Considering the historical origin, Keigo was closely related with grammar and it is not difficult to understand that there is causal relation between Keigo and grammar acquisition.

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