1. Introduction

It has been argued in the literature that when L2 has a parameter value different from L1, L2 learners encounter difficulty in interpreting the anaphoric relationship between a reflexive and its antecedent because they often fail to reset their parameter appropriately for the L2 value (Thomas 1991 for \textit{himself}; Shirahata 2006 for \textit{zibun}, Yuan 1998 for \textit{ziji}, among others). However, the recent grammar module approach to language acquisition has called this parameter resetting into question, and more particularly, we would like to entertain an alternative account for the acquisition of reflexives by adopting the syntax-pragmatic interface theory (Sorace 2007) rather than the principles-and-parameters approach. This paper investigates our hypothesis that short distance (SD) reading can be acquired early if ‘locality’ is the core notion of binding, whereas long distance (LD) reading takes time to acquire because the pragmatic component of ‘logophoricity’ needs to be learned.

2. Zibun: Locality and Logophoricity

Relevant to our study are two important properties of \textit{zibun}: locality and logophoricity. English reflexives only refer to the local antecedent, \textit{Tom} in the case of (1), for example.

(1) John\textsubscript{i} thought Tom\textsubscript{j} was blaming himself\textsubscript{i,j}.

On the contrary, the Japanese reflexive \textit{zibun} and Chinese reflexive \textit{ziji} can have an LD antecedent, \textit{Taro} or \textit{Zhangsan}, as well as an SD antecedent, \textit{Kazu} or \textit{Lisi}, as illustrated in (2) (Kuno 1973, Inoue 1976 for \textit{zibun}; Huang 1983, Huan & Tang 1991 for \textit{ziji}, among others).

(2) a. Taro\textsubscript{i}-ga Kazu\textsubscript{j}-ga zibuni\textsubscript{i,j}-o semeta to omotta.
   ‘Taro thought that Kazu blamed self.’

b. Zhangsan\textsubscript{i} renwei Lisi\textsubscript{j} xiangxin ziji\textsubscript{i,j}.
   ‘Zhangsan thinks Lisi trusts self.’

We assume that SD \textit{zibun}-binding is syntactically constrained because locality is a major component of Binding Theory (Chen & Wexler 1990). We further assume that LD \textit{zibun}-binding is pragmatically induced based on Kuno’s (1972) view that being in the embedded clause, the reflexive can be logophorically linked to the matrix subject (Sells 1987, Abe 1997). Given this distinction between SD and LD \textit{zibun}-binding, it is interesting to see how the similarity or the difference between (1) and (2) can or cannot affect the acquisition of \textit{zibun} by two groups of L2 learners of Japanese, namely, L1 Chinese and English speakers.

3. Previous Studies

LD reflexive binding is one of the issues extensively investigated in the SLA literature. For example, Thomas (1991) found that English speakers could come to understand LD \textit{zibun} binding, with exposure to Japanese, hence slow but rather successful parameter resetting. In contrast, Yuan (1998) indicated that L1 transfer facilitates or delays the acquisition of LD \textit{ziji} interpretation in extending the binding domain to the matrix CP in Chinese. Shirahata & Ishigaki’s (2001) discovery is interesting in that 3 year old Japanese children attained SD \textit{zibun} binding 90%, whereas they understood LD \textit{zibun} binding 48-52% at the age of 3-4 and 92% at the age of 7, respectively.
4. Experiment
4.1. Method
Three groups participated in our story-based truth value judgment task: 13 English speaking JFL learners (8 American college students in 4th yr Japanese, 5 in 5th yr) and 34 Chinese speaking JSL learners (15 1st yr residents of Japan, 19 2nd yr or above) as experimental groups, and 26 Japanese college students as a control group. The American and Chinese subjects read 18 short narratives written in English and Chinese, respectively, and judged if the stimulus sentence, written in Japanese, matched the situation they just read. The test sentences consisted of three SD and LD True and False sentences each with six fillers. Examples are given below.

(3) Taro-wa Yasuo-ga zibun-no puramoderu-o gomigako ni suteta to iimashita. (SD)
   ‘Taro said that Yasuo threw self’s plastic model away in the trash box.’

(4) Taro-wa Hanako-ga zibun-no bento-o moo tabete iru-to sakebimashita. (LD)
   ‘Taro cried that Hanako was eating self’s lunch.’

4.2. Results and Discussion
Our findings are summarized in table 1. The control group did better on the LD sentences (LD: 97.4%; SD: 93.6%), but both Chinese JSL and American JFL learners did better on the SD (C: 92.2%, E: 94.9%) than on the LD (C: 78.4%, E: 56.4%). First year Chinese residents and fourth year American learners evoked correct responses to the True LD-interpretations only 55.6% and 50% of the time, respectively. It appears that the locality condition was observed early, even in Chinese. Second year or above Chinese residents did better on LD (78.9%) compared to fifth year Americans (66.6%). This indicates that pragmatic learning was facilitated by the benefit of L1 knowledge, a similar result in the case of LD ziji binding (Yuan 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short distance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH Y1 [15]</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH Y2 [19]</td>
<td>96.5%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CH</strong> [34]</td>
<td><strong>92.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>93.1%</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN L4 [8]</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN L5 [5]</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93.3%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total EN</strong> [13]</td>
<td><strong>94.9%</strong></td>
<td><strong>91.2%</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.4%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native [26]</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>94.9%</td>
<td>97.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Conclusion
Our hypothesis is borne out in this study: The results show the early acquisition of SD zibun binding by both Chinese and English learners of Japanese, irrespective of L1 difference. They also indicate that L1 facilitates or delays the LD zibun binding because prior pragmatic learning is involved. We are thus led to the conclusion that the syntax-pragmatic interface approach can provide a more plausible account for the L2 acquisition of reflexive binding than the parameter resetting approach previously assumed in the SLA research.

Selected References

List of Technical Terms
Syntax-pragmatic interface theory: A derivation in ‘narrow’ syntax meets discourse semantics for appropriate interpretation.