Interlanguage Acquisition of a Postposition 'e' in Korean: Analysis of the Korean Novice Learners' Output

Authors : Eunjung Lee

Abstract : This study aims to analyze the sentences generated by the beginners who learn 'e,' a postposition in Korean and to find out the regularity of learners' interlanguage upon investigating the usages of 'e' that appears by meanings and functions in their interlanguage, and conditions that 'e' is used. This study was conducted with mainly two assumptions; first, the learner's language has the specific type of interlanguage; and second, there is the regularity of interlanguage when students produce 'e' under the specific conditions. Learners' output has various values and can be used as the useful data to understand interlanguage. Therefore, all the sentences containing a postposition 'e' by English speaking learners were searched in 'Learners' corpus sharing center in The National Institute of Korean Language' in Korea, and the data were collected upon limiting the levels of learners with Level 1 and 2. 789 sentences that were used with 'e' were selected as the final subjects of the analysis. First, to understand the environmental characteristics to be used with a postposition, 'e' after summarizing 13 meaning and functions of 'e' appeared in three books of Korean dictionary that summarized the Korean grammar, 1) meaning function of 'e' that were used in each sentence was classified; 2) the nouns that were combined with 'e,' keywords of the sentences, and the characteristics of modifiers, linkers, and predicates appeared in front of 'e' were analyzed; 3) the regularity by the novice learners' meaning and functions were reviewed; and 4) the differences of the regularity by level 1 and 2 learners' meaning and functions were found. Upon the study results, the novice learners showed 1) they used the nouns related to 'time(□□), before(□), after(□), next(□□), the next(□□□), then(□), day of the week(□□), and season(□□)' mainly in front of 'e' when they used 'e' as the meaning function of time; 2) they used mainly the verbs of 'go(□□),' 'come(□□),' and 'go round(□□□)' as the predicate to match with 'e' that was the meaning function of direction and destination; and 3) they used mainly the nouns related to 'locations or countries' in front of 'e,' a meaning function postposition of 'place,' used mainly the verbs 'be(□□), not be(□□), live(□□), be many(□□)' after 'e,' and 'i(□) or ka(□)' was combined mainly in the subject words in case of 'be(□□), not be(□□)' or 'be many(□□),' and 'eun(□) or nun(□)' was combined mainly in the subject words in front of 'live at' In addition, 4) they used 'e' which indicates 'cause or reason' in the form of 'because(□□□),' and 5) used 'e' of the subjects as the predicates to match with the predicates such as 'treat(□□□), like(□□), and catch(□□□).' From these results, 'e' usage patterns of the Korean novice learners demonstrated very differently by the meaning functions and the learners' interlanguage regularity could be deduced. However, little difference was found in interlanguage regularity between level 1 and 2. This study has the meaning to try to understand the interlanguage system and regularity in the learners' acquisition process of postposition 'e' and this can be utilized to lessen their errors.

Conference Title : ICKS 2018 : International Conference on Korean Studies
Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan
Conference Dates : September 10-11, 2018