An Analysis of Variability in Acquisition of Basic Sentence Structures among Japanese EFL Beginners

Harumi ITO
Nara University of Education

Hiroyuki SUGIMOTO, Yoshinobu HIRAOKA and Toshikazu MORITA
Mamigaoka Junior High School, Nara Prefecture

This paper reports a study conducted to investigate lexically-motivated variability in the acquisition of basic sentence structures among EFL beginners. The subjects were 150 first-year junior high school students. Nine basic sentence structures were chosen for this purpose and transformed into a partial translation test. For each sentence structure two different types of target sentences were prepared for translation; those with familiar lexical combinations and those with unfamiliar ones.

An analysis of the results of the translation test revealed a significant degree of lexically-motivated variability in the acquisition of basic sentence structures among the subjects. It also revealed that slow learners are generally more vulnerable to surface lexical variation than good learners. Implications of these findings for SLA research and second language teaching are also discussed.

1. Introduction

Variability in second language acquisition, both between individuals and within individuals, has been well researched and documented (Larsen-Freeman 1975; Krashen 1978; Eisenstein, Bailey and Madden 1982; Tarone 1983; Hulstijn and Hulstijn 1984; Ellis 1987; Swan 1987; Crookes 1989; Skehan 1989). The present study is concerned with the latter type of variability, i.e. variability within individuals or intrapersonal variability. Various explanations have already been presented to account for this kind of variability. Larsen-Freeman (1975), for example, touches upon variability caused by task differences; Crookes (1989) presents the amount of planning as a major cause; Tarone (1983) attributes intrapersonal variability to learners'
attentiveness; Krashen (1975) explains variability in terms of his well-known monitor hypothesis. The present paper presents a case for lexically-motivated variability among EFL beginners in their acquisition of basic English sentence structures.

Based on our own teaching experience and observation in beginning EFL classes, we tentatively assume that many Japanese EFL beginners (i.e. first-year junior high school students) will try to internalize basic English sentence structures in close association with specific lexical items used in those particular structures, or sometimes they will just try to absorb the target sentence structures as unanalyzed chunks, disregarding their underlying syntactic relations. Such being the case, it is quite probable that Japanese EFL beginners will exhibit a significant degree of lexically-motivated variability if their acquisition of basic sentence structures is assessed through target sentences which, exemplifying those basic sentence structures, are lexically quite different from those the students have frequently been exposed to.

This assumption was first triggered by an unexpected research finding reported by Ito (1992), which investigated the relationship between input and output among Japanese EFL beginners and found out that certain sentence structures were not reproduced well enough by the subjects in spite of their frequent appearance in the textbook probably because of the unfamiliarity of the lexical words in those structures. In connection with this basic assumption, we further assume that slow learners will exhibit more of such lexically-motivated variability in their acquisition of basic sentence structures than good learners because they are generally more apt to try to internalize target sentences by mimicking them rather than analyzing them in syntactic terms.

2. The Present Study

(1) Hypotheses

In order to substantiate the above assumptions regarding the variability in the acquisition of basic sentence structures, the following two null hypotheses were formed, the second one being dependent upon the rejection of the first one.

Ho: The degree of the acquisition of basic sentence structures among EFL beginners is not bound to the lexical aspects in those basic sentence structures.

H01: Slow learners will exhibit the same degree of variability in their acquisition of basic sentence structures as good learners.

If the first null hypothesis is rejected, it will mean that the degree of the acquisition of basic sentence structures among EFL beginners will vary from one specific sentence to another, that is, in accordance with lexical changes in the chunks comprising given basic sentence structures. If the second null hypothesis is rejected, it will mean that EFL beginners of different proficiency levels will exhibit differing degrees of lexically-motivated variability.
(2) Subjects

The subjects for the present study were 150 first-year students currently enrolled at a public junior high school in Nara Prefecture, Japan. They were aged between 12 and 13, and had studied English for a year. Their school is located in a suburban area, and can be regarded as a typical public junior high school, not like those private junior high schools which accept only very bright students through screening.

The 150 students were divided into three groups (upper, middle and lower) on the basis of the results of the latest two school examinations in English, in order to see whether or not there exists a significant difference in the degree of variability in the acquisition of basic sentence structures between good learners and slow learners. Each of the three groups consisted of 50 students.

The textbook the subjects had used for their first year of instruction was New Horizon English Course, Book 1, published by Tokyo Shoseki, one of the seven English textbooks for junior high school authorized by the Japanese Ministry of Education.

(3) Materials

In order to capture the variability in the acquisition of basic sentence structures, nine basic sentence structures (to be shown later in Table 1 below) were chosen out of all the sentence structures which had been taught to the subjects during the first year of instruction.*

For each chosen basic sentence structure were prepared two different types of target sentences to be elicited from the subjects which are grammatically the same but lexically quite different from each other. The first type of target sentences are called the common type since the vocabulary items used in those target sentences have appeared relatively frequently in the textbook in that particular sentence structure and in that particular subject–verb combination. The second type of target sentences are called the rare type since the vocabulary items used in those target sentences have seldom appeared in the textbook in that particular sentence structure and in that particular subject–verb combination.

The target sentences to be elicited from the subjects, either for the common type or for the rare type, were decided by referring to the same kind of the computerized English textbook data base as had been utilized in Ito (1992), which have specified the subject, sentence frame, and predicate verb for all the sentences included in the English textbook being used by the subjects of the present study. This computer data base has enabled us to list all the sentences in the textbook which correspond to the target sentence structures and thus has helped us to come up with the common type and the rare type quite easily for each target sentence structure.

The reason for preparing two different types of target sentences for each chosen basic sentence structure is to test the first null hypothesis saying that the degree of the acquisition of basic sentence structures among EFL beginners is not bound to the lexical aspects in those sentence structures.
(4) Translation test

In order to elicit from the subjects the needed output on the chosen basic sentence structures, a partial translation test was prepared in which the subjects were required to fill in the blanks in the target English sentences on the basis of the given Japanese sentence equivalents. The reason we adopted translation into English as an elicitation technique is that such a procedure seems to approximate natural speech production among average Japanese EFL beginners who usually cannot help thinking in Japanese first in trying to communicate in English.

The reason we made the translation partial is that we are mainly interested in the subjects' grammatical competence to produce a proper combination of subjects and verbs with suitable morphological modifications. Furthermore, we are not interested in whether or not the subjects know the English equivalents of given Japanese words, so predicate verbs which seem to be rather difficult for the subjects are given in their bare form along with the Japanese cue sentences just in case.

The 18 target sentences used in the translation test are shown in Table 1, which appears later when we discuss the results of the translation test. The part of the sentences in the blanks is what the subjects were required to provide as an answer for each translation question. In the actual test the question sentences with blanks were presented to the subjects in random order.

(5) Procedures

The translation test was administered in early March, 1993, as a part of the regular English lessons. The test lasted approximately twenty minutes, long enough for most of the students in the classes to answer all the test questions. The answer sheets were collected, xeroxed for later analysis, marked and returned to the students.

As far as marking is concerned, it was done on an all-or-nothing basis, disregarding careless and minor mistakes such as spelling mistakes, mistakes which have nothing to do with the subject–verb collocation in question, etc. The results of the translation test were fed into the computer and calculated for each subject, for each group of the subjects (upper, middle and lower), for each type of target sentences (common and rare), and for the individual target sentences.

3. Results

(1) Intertype variation between the common type and the rare type

Table 1 shows the results of the translation test with the number and percentage of the correct answers for each target sentence, for the whole subjects and also for each group of the subjects. It also shows the degree of intertype variability (common vs. rare) both for the whole subjects and for each group of the subjects (upper, middle and lower). The obtained results indicate that the subjects as a whole exhibited a significant degree of lexically-motivated variability in their
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>TARGET SENTENCE</th>
<th>WHOLE</th>
<th>NCA</th>
<th>PCA</th>
<th>UPPER</th>
<th>NCA</th>
<th>PCA</th>
<th>MIDDLE</th>
<th>NCA</th>
<th>PCA</th>
<th>LOWER</th>
<th>NCA</th>
<th>PCA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(Jane is) a high school student.</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(That new building is) our school.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>32.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>86.0*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(Is this) your bag?</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(Is your mother) an English teacher?</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>48.7*</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(They speak) English very well.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(Ken and Fred play) tennis in the park every Sunday.</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-6.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-14.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(Do you like) tennis very much?</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(Do you watch) TV every evening?</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>31.3*</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>48.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(I don't like) basketball very much.</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(I don't remember) his name very well.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>32.7*</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.0*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46.0*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(He likes) music very much.</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(My father washes) his car every Sunday.</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>20.7*</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(Does Fred have) a car?</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(Does your school start) at 8:30?</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>39.3*</td>
<td></td>
<td>36.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(Lucy doesn't have) a kimono.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(Mrs. Brown doesn't eat) breakfast on Sunday.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>COMMON</td>
<td>(Is he playing) baseball in the park now?</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>RARE</td>
<td>(Is your sister helping) your mother in the kitchen now?</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DIF</td>
<td>13.3*</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.0**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. NCA = Number of Correct Answers  PCA = Percentage of Correct Answers

AVERAGE

COMMON 60.8 68.3 63.4 35.4
RARE 47.5 73.8 49.3 19.3
DIF 26.6 19.3 28.2 32.2

**p < .01  *p < .05
test performance between the common type and the rare type. If we look at the figures for the whole group of the subjects in Table 1, the average variation between the common type and the rare type, 26.6%, is statistically significant at the .01 level, and the variation in each sentence structure is also statistically significant in seven cases out of the total nine cases at the .01 level except for the last sentence structure whose variation is significant only at the .05 level.

Thus the first null hypothesis may safely be rejected. This means that the acquisition of basic sentence structures by EFL beginners can be significantly affected by the surface lexical aspects and thus may be said to be lexically bound to a certain degree. This in turn explains why the subjects recorded fairly good test performance in the common type of target sentences which look quite similar to those they had been exposed to in the textbook while the subjects recorded fairly poor performance in the rare type of target sentences which, in spite of their syntactic identity, look quite dissimilar to those they had come across in the textbook.

(2) Intergroup comparison of intertype variation

The results shown in Table 1 clearly indicate that there does exist a significant difference in intertype variation between the three groups of the subjects (upper, middle and lower). The average intertype variation for the upper group (19.3%) was not statistically significant while that for the middle group (28.2%) and that for the lower group (32.2%) were both statistically significant at the .01 level. Thus the second null hypothesis may safely be rejected.

This seems to imply that slow learners' knowledge of basic sentence structures tends to be more superficial and more strongly bound to specific lexical items used in those structures, and consequently is more susceptible to changes on the surface while good learners' knowledge is comparatively less lexically dependent and less susceptible to superficial lexical changes. This explains why the lower group of the subjects performed almost as well as the upper and middle groups in the common type of target sentences while they performed very poorly in the rare type.

4. Discussion

(1) Why intertype variation

The results of the translation test clearly indicate that the subjects' overall test performance in the rare type of the target sentences was significantly poorer than that in the common type. What is it then that caused this intertype variation in the acquisition of the target sentence structures?

The accounts of second language acquisition process presented to us so far have mostly been syntax-based and rule-oriented. For example, second language learners' interlanguage has tended to be explained mostly in terms of a system of rules which are different in nature from what adult native speakers seem to follow in their daily transaction. The whole process of second language development has tended to be perceived as a series of approximative systems of
rules, each developmental stage being specified mostly in terms of grammatical rules.

The results of our study, however, seem to necessitate a revision of this traditional frame of reference. We propose to perceive the process of second language acquisition as a developmental process from item-learning to system-learning, following the framework presented by Cruttenden (1981). We suspect that this is particularly so in an acquisition-poor EFL environment such as English language learning at Japanese junior high school. The results of our translation test seem to indicate that most of our subjects still remain on the level of item-learning, absorbing particular examples of basic sentence structures, not as a realization of abstract grammatical processes but as unanalyzed wholes, just as in memorizing words. This provides a wonderful explanation for the significant intertype variation observed in our translation test. The subjects' good test performance in the common type may be considered, so to speak, as disguised attainment, because we have a good reason to suspect that their correct answers in the common type may have been so just because they had only memorized those familiar sentences as unanalyzed wholes.

The tendency to grasp whole sentences as single units in early stages of second language learning has already been well documented by Hakuta (1974) in his classical discussion of prefabricated routines and patterns. More recently, Bialystok (1988) touches upon this issue in elaborating her model of second language proficiency in terms of automaticity and analyticity. According to the model, the proficiency of L2 learners at early stages is characterized as nonautomatic and nonanalyzed.

Keeping all these things in mind and adapting the lexical phrase model proposed by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992), we suggest that second language development will proceed through the following six steps:

```
| exposure to L2 | prefabricated routines | prefabricated patterns | syntactic structures | syntactic rules | creative use of L2 |
```

**Figure 1 : Process of Second Language Development**

Prefabricated routines are characterized as 'utterances such as what's that or what dat which seem to be memorized wholes' while prefabricated patterns are characterized as 'segments of sentences which operate in conjunction with a movable component, such as the insertion of a noun phrase or a verb phrase' (Hakuta 1974:288-289). Structures are different from patterns in that the former are characterized as 'the sum of grammatical relationships within a sentence, or utterance, which distinguish it from other types of construction' while the latter as 'a less complex representation that is limited to the essentials' (Gutschow 1978:55). Finally, rules are different from structures in that the former are more abstract and analytical in nature than the latter.
The results of the translation test suggest that many of our subjects, first-year junior high school students, still remain at the stage of prefabricated routines or patterns, thus failing to grasp grammatical relationships hidden behind actual wording on the surface. This will best explain the intertype variation between the common type and the rare type observed among our subjects.

(2) Why intergroup difference

The intergroup comparison of the intertype variation between the common and rare types in the translation test has shown us that the intertype variation within the lower group was significantly larger than that within the upper group. Then what is it that has caused this difference? We consider that it has been caused by the difference in individual learners' capacity to analyze sentences. Bialystok (1988:46) describes this difference as 'the same difference which determines an individual's ability to analyze a body of information in math or the sciences for the purpose of deducing structural rules that distinguish as well the individual's ability to extrapolate regularity from a body of linguistic knowledge.'

Interpreted in terms of the process of second language acquisition shown by Figure 1 schematically, our finding suggests that good learners will in general proceed from the stage of prefabricated routines up to the stage of creative use of L2 more quickly than slow learners. Such being the case, it may be concluded that the observed intergroup difference in intertype variation has been produced because the upper group's knowledge of the target sentence structures has already proceeded to the level of syntactic structures, for example, while the lower group's knowledge still remains on the level of prefabricated routines or patterns, making them more vulnerable to lexical changes in given sentence structures.

This relatively high vulnerability to surface lexical changes among slow learners in general is supported by another finding that the co-efficient between the frequency of the target sentence structures in the textbook and the number of correct answers for those sentence structures in the translation test was significantly higher within the lower group ($r=.326$) than within the upper group ($r=.118$), although the overall accuracy rate was significantly higher within the upper group (83.4%) than within the lower group (35.4%).

5. Conclusion

The present study has shown that EFL beginners learning in an acquisition-poor environment will exhibit significant variability in the acquisition of basic sentence structures. It has also shown that this variability tends to be amplified among slow learners, who are more vulnerable to lexical changes on the surface level. These findings urge us strongly to review the whole process of second language development.

The process of second language development has traditionally been described as successive
evolutions and elaborations of grammatical rules through hypothesis-testing on the part of learners. We propose instead, along with Cruttenden (1981), to view the process of second language development as a gradual transition from item-learning to system-learning, implying the possibility that even grammatical items and structures tend to be processed at first holistically as if they were lexical items, as Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992) suggest. On the basis of the obtained results of our study, we propose that the development of second language proficiency may proceed through the stages of prefabricated routines, prefabricated patterns, syntactic structures, and syntactic rules to the final stage of creative use of L2.

When structural linguistics was replaced by Chomsky's transformational grammar in the field of theoretical linguistics, patterns and structures were replaced by rules and systems in the field of second language teaching. Pedagogical values in the former fell a sacrifice to academic interests in the latter. Nowadays it tends to be considered out of date to talk about patterns and structures when we discuss second language teaching, but the present study has clearly indicated that patterns and structures still have important roles to play in second language learning and teaching as legitimate steps toward creative use of L2.

We are keenly aware of the limitations and problems of the present study; the use of translation as a means of elicitation, the choice of basic sentence structures, the lack of longitudinal aspects in the research method, to name just a few. We are also aware that it has created more research questions than it has answered. We hope, however, that our small-scale study on variability in second language acquisition will become an impetus for further research on this subject in this country.

Notes

* Originally ten basic sentence structures had been selected, but one of them was dropped because it turned out later that the target sentences prepared for the structure were not exactly of the same structure.

References


Eisenstein, M., Bailey, N. and Madden, C. 1982. It takes two: contrasting tasks and contrasting


