

A Corpus-Based Analysis of Crosslinguistic Influence on the Acquisition of Concessive Conditionals in L2 English

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This study examines crosslinguistic influence on the use of concessive conditionals by Japanese EFL learners. Contrastive analysis suggests that Japanese native speakers may overuse the concessive conditional *even if* due to partial similarities to Japanese concessive conditionals, whose formal and semantic restrictions are fewer than those of English concessive conditionals. This hypothesis is tested using data from the written module of the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE). Comparison of Japanese native speakers with English native speakers and Chinese native speakers reveals the following trends. First, Japanese native speakers tend to overuse concessive conditionals compared to native speakers, while similar overuse is not observed in Chinese native speaker data. Second, non-nativelike uses of *even if* appear in contexts allowing the use of concessive conditionals in Japanese. Third, while overuse and infelicitous use of *even if* is observed at all proficiency levels, formal errors are restricted to learners at lower proficiency levels. These findings suggest that crosslinguistic influence does occur in the use of concessive conditionals, and that its particular realization is affected by L2 proficiency, with formal crosslinguistic influence mediated at an earlier stage than semantic cross-linguistic influence.

Keywords: Learner Corpus, Second Language Acquisition, Concessive Conditional, Crosslinguistic Influence, *even if*

1. Introduction

In the course of teaching English to native speakers of Japanese, the author frequently encounters infelicitous uses of *even if*. Such expressions are described as concessive conditionals in the literature. However, in the examples below, it is more natural to use a non-concessive conditional, as shown in the expressions in parentheses beneath each example¹.

- (1) Also, if you can speak English you can talk to people from overseas, so even if you talk to people from overseas in the city you can respond so studying will not be a waste of time.
(if you talk to people from overseas you can respond)
- (2) I miss Japan even if I work abroad.
(I would miss Japan if I worked abroad.)

This paper conducts a corpus-based analysis to explore the possibility that cross-linguistic influence is one cause of such infelicitous uses of *even if*, concluding that native speakers of Japanese show a tendency to use *even if* analogously to concessive conditionals in Japanese. While similarities do exist,

¹ (1) and (2) are examples gathered by the author of written production by second year university students in a Japanese EFL setting.

differences in the expression of concessive conditional meaning in English and Japanese lead to overuse and infelicitous uses of *even if*. Furthermore, learners at different proficiency levels display differing trends in their non-native like use of *even if*. In particular, formally infelicitous errors are restricted to lower proficiency levels, while semantically infelicitous errors appear across proficiency levels. This suggests that the nature of cross-language influence changes with rising proficiency, not only in terms of frequency but also qualitatively. The following section summarizes the characteristics of concessive conditionals in English and Japanese to establish a framework for the corpus analysis.

2. Concessive Conditionals in English and Japanese

In their typological survey, Haspelmath and König (1998) divide concessive conditionals into the three subtypes displayed in Table 1 below. As is evident from the example sentences, English uses different forms for each subtype. The *even if* form which is the focus of the current paper is used in scalar concessive conditionals, but not in the remaining two subtypes.

Table 1. Subtypes of Concessive Conditionals (Haspelmath & König, 1998, p. 563)

Scalar concessive conditionals (SCC)	Even if we do not get any financial support, we will go ahead with our project.
Alternative concessive conditionals (ACC)	Whether we get any financial support or not, we will go ahead with our project.
Universal concessive conditionals (UCC)	{No matter how much / However much} financial support we get, we will go ahead with our project.

Fujii (2002) compares the English concessive conditional *even if* and its translational equivalent in Japanese, *-temo*. The latter consists of the conjunctive form (or ‘*te*-form’), a non-finite verb form, combined with the focus particle *mo* ‘also’. *Even if* and *-temo* are said to share the characteristics in (3), which obtain between the antecedent and subsequent clauses (throughout this paper, the clause containing the conditional expression will be referred to as the antecedent, even in cases where it is formally preceded by the consequent clause, as in (2) above). However, *even if* and *-temo* differ in the extent to which each characteristic is essential to their felicitous use. In this paper, the properties in (3) will be regarded as exemplifying the semantic restrictions (or lack thereof) on the two expressions.

(3) Properties of concessive conditionals

Property A: Reference to an end point of scalar entailment in an evoked scalar model

Property B: Paradoxicality

Property C: Unconditionality

(Fujii, 2002, p. 257)

Properties A-C can be observed in (4) below, where scalar concessive conditionals are felicitous in both English and Japanese. Regarding Property A, the antecedent ‘study extremely hard’ describes the condition perceived as most likely to result in the event described by the subsequent, i.e. ‘pass the exam’. Other conditions can be imagined where the probability of passing the exam is lower, such as studying a little, or not studying at all. In this sense, ‘study extremely hard’ represents a quasi-endpoint on a scale of a probability. Nevertheless, in (4), ‘study extremely hard’ does not lead to the expected result. This is what is described as Property B, paradoxicality. In connection with Properties A and B, it is understood that regardless of the condition in the antecedent, the truth condition of the subsequent will not change. This is Property C, the characteristic of unconditionality.

- (4) Even if he studies extremely hard, he won't pass the exam.
 Isshoukenmei benkyou shi-temo, shiken ni goukaku shinai darou.

(Fujii, 2002, p. 256)

Crucially, while scalarity (Property A) is required for felicitous use of *even if*, it is not an obligatory property for the Japanese concessive conditional *-temo*. In other words, concessive conditionals lacking scalarity, like (5), can still be expressed with the same form. Replacing *if* with *even if* in the English translation of (5) coerces a scalar interpretation. For example, the addressee could be interpreted as waiting at the most likely place for a bus to stop (the only section of road with enough room for a vehicle to pull over safely etc.). No such interpretation is required in the Japanese sentence, as there is no scalarity requirement. In other words, the antecedent in a Japanese concessive conditional need not be what might be informally considered an 'extreme' or 'notable' situation; paradoxicality and unconditionality are sufficient conditions.

- (5) Koko de matte-i-temo, basu wa kimasen yo. Achira de o-machi ni naranai to.
 'If you wait here, the bus won't pick you up. But if you wait at that other bus stop over there, it will.'

(Fujii, 2002, p. 266)

Given the differences described above, L1 transfer may potentially occur in the production of English concessive conditionals by Japanese native speakers. For instance, the examples in section 1 appear to show Japanese native speakers using *even if* in an analogous manner to *-temo*, i.e. without a scalar interpretation. One of the aims of the present paper is to show that such examples are not simply isolated occurrences but exemplify a significant trend.

A further difference between *even if* and *-temo* lies in the variety of syntactic structures in which each can appear. Table 2 summarizes the various concessive conditional subconstructions (CCCs) of *-temo* identified by Fujii (2002).

Table 2. Subconstructions of the Concessive Conditional Construction *-temo* (based on Fujii, 2002, p. 271-272)

Alternative	Opposed Alternatives	[[[P-temo] [~P-temo]], Q]	Benkyou shi- <u>temo</u> shi-naku- <u>temo</u> onaji darou.	It's all the same whether I study or not.
	Listed Alternatives	[[[P-temo] [P2-temo] ([P3-temo] [P4-temo]...)], Q]	Denwa shi- <u>temo</u> tegami o dashi- <u>temo</u> chittomo aite ni shite kurenai.	He pays no attention whether I call him or write to him.
Universal		Wh-P-temo, Q	Uchi no bosu wa nani ga at <u>temo</u> doujinai. Doko o sagashi- <u>temo</u> mitsukaranai yo.	Whatever happens, my boss won't get upset. I can't find it wherever I look.
Reduplicative		[[[V1-temo] [V1-temo]], Q]	Denwa o kake- <u>temo</u> kake- <u>temo</u> tsujimasen.	I never reach him no matter how often I call him.

All subconstructions in Table 2 are syntactically different from the examples considered above. Alternative and Reduplicative CCCs involve multiple predicates, while Universal CCCs include an indeterminate pronoun. In other words, *-temo* is able to express not only scalar concessive conditionals (with or without 'scalarity' as such), but also the two other subtypes in Table 1, alternative and universal concessive conditionals. This paper considers the properties in Tables 1 and 2 to exemplify the differing formal restrictions on *even if* and *-temo*.

To summarize the above discussion, the Japanese concessive conditional *-temo* exhibits a wider range of use than the English concessive conditional *even if*. *-temo* can express all three subtypes of concessive conditionals, and furthermore does not force a scalarity reading on those concessive conditionals that are, at least in English, characterized by scalarity. Nonetheless, there is a strong parallel between *-temo* and *even if*, namely the use of both in examples like (4), considered as prototypical by Fujii (2002). This raises the possibility that native speakers of Japanese are inclined to use *even if* in any contexts that would allow *-temo* in L1. If this is the case, Japanese native speakers are expected to overuse *even if* in comparison to native speakers. This overuse may include infelicitous uses analogous to L1 forms or usage patterns.

Given the similarities and differences between *even if* and *-temo* described above, this paper posits the following research questions.

- RQ1: Are there quantitative and qualitative differences in the use of *even if* by native speakers of Japanese and English?
- RQ2: Are any differences observed consistent with the characteristics of concessive conditional use in L1 Japanese?
- RQ3: Are proficiency effects visible in learners' written production?

In relation to RQ1 and RQ2, Japanese native speakers are predicted to use *even if* more frequently, particularly in situations where a concessive conditional would be appropriate in Japanese. Where restrictions on English concessive conditionals disallow *even if*, this is predicted to lead to its infelicitous use in L2 English. Regarding RQ3, it is predicted that learners' proficiency levels will correlate with error trends: L1-like use will represent a greater proportion of the total production of concessive conditionals by learners at lower proficiency levels.

3. Methods

This study follows the methodology of previous studies that set out to combine elements of frameworks proposed by Granger (1996, 2015) and by the work of Jarvis (Jarvis 2000, Jarvis & Pavlenko 2008). The study most pertinent to the current research question is Gilquin (2008), so an overview is provided here (but see also Werner, Fuchs, & Gotz, 2021).

Gilquin (2008) follows the principles set out by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) for ascertaining the presence or absence of crosslinguistic influence in experimental data, but applies them to learner corpus data in a manner resembling the Integrated Contrastive Model proposed by Granger (1996). According to Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008), the presence of crosslinguistic influence is established through confirmation of three characteristics: intragroup homogeneity, intergroup heterogeneity, and crosslinguistic performance congruity (Table 3).

Gilquin (2008) describes her combination of Granger and Jarvis' models as the DEE (Detection, Evaluation, Explanation) transfer model. In practice, this consists of a) comparison of learners' interlanguage and their native language; b) comparison with native speakers; c) comparison with the interlanguage of learners from different L1 backgrounds. This is to ensure the condition of intergroup heterogeneity: if similar patterns of language are observed in learners' interlanguage regardless of their native language, crosslinguistic influence cannot be posited as a principal cause of any phenomenon under examination.

Table 3. Types of Evidence Required for the Identification of Crosslinguistic Influence (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008, p. 35)

Intergroup homogeneity	Evidence that the behavior in question is not an isolated incident, but is instead a common tendency of individuals who know the same combinations of languages.
Intergroup heterogeneity	Evidence that the behavior in question is not something that all language users do regardless of the combination of L1s and L2s that they know.
Crosslinguistic performance congruity	Evidence that a language user's behavior in one language really is motivated by her use (i.e., the way she demonstrates her knowledge) of another language.

As a case study, Gilquin examines the use of *even if* by French native speakers. While *even if* is treated as a fixed expression by Gilquin, it evidently corresponds to the concessive conditionals that are the focus of the present paper. Gilquin's findings will be considered in section 4 in relation to the findings of the current paper.

The present study adopts elements of Gilquin's methodology as follows. In order to establish intergroup heterogeneity, the written production of Japanese native speakers of English is compared with comparable data from Chinese native speakers and English native speakers. The reason for including data from Chinese native speakers in particular is that concessive conditionals in Chinese are expressed using multiple forms and there is no single expression analogous to *-temo* that expresses all subtypes of concessive conditional (Wang, 2013). The use of concessive conditionals in L2 English by native speakers of Chinese is therefore expected to be less prone to L1 influence.

In order to implement this research design, data is taken from the written module (version 2.4) of the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE). ICNALE contains data from native speakers of English and L2 learners of English from a total of 10 regions across Asia. The data set is controlled for task and proficiency, enabling researchers to focus on L1-related effects. Prompts for the two writing tasks learners completed are shown below (task-related effects will be considered in more detail in the following sections).

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Use reasons and specific details to support your opinion.

(Topic A) It is important for college students to have a part-time job.

(Topic B) Smoking should be completely banned at all the restaurants in the country.

(Ishikawa, 2013, p. 97)

ICNALE contains three native speaker subcorpora, but in the present study the student subcorpus was selected for comparison with the groups of learners. While Gilquin's (2008) study only considered high proficiency learners, ICNALE data is divided based on CEFR levels, allowing comparison of learners at A2, B1-1, B1-2 and B2 levels.

In order to process the data set, text files were imported into AntConc and concordance lines with *even if* were extracted. The author then manually removed any irrelevant hits and judged examples for their felicity or infelicity. Concordance lines with *if*, *even* and *though* were also checked manually as it was predicted that learners would in some cases omit one part of the concessive conditional (duplicate concordance lines were removed as appropriate).

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Trends

This section analyzes the quantitative trends observed in the data set. Tables 4 and 5 show the

frequency of *even if* by task and proficiency level among Japanese and Chinese native speakers respectively. The effect of topic is widely apparent, with adjusted frequency higher for the smoking task than for the part time job task in almost all groups. The same trend also appears in the native speaker data. This result is unsurprising, given that the prompt for the smoking task – consideration of the effects of a hypothetical change in the law – is arguably more conducive to the use of conditionals in general. The only exception to this pattern is seen in the data for Chinese native speakers at B2 level, but the small size of the data set means any findings should be treated with caution. Overall, it seems reasonable to group both tasks together for the purposes of further analyses, as task appears to have a comparable effect on frequency of use regardless of native language.

Table 4. Frequency of Use of *even if* (Japanese Native Speakers)

Task		Proficiency Level			
		A2	B1-1	B1-2	B2
Part-time job	Frequency	12	15	3	1
	Total Words	34959	40463	11315	4281
	Adjusted Frequency	3.43	3.71	2.65	2.34
Smoking	Frequency	26	31	10	6
	Total Words	33570	39128	11075	4251
	Adjusted Frequency	7.75	7.92	9.03	14.11
Total	Frequency	38	46	13	7
	Total Words	68529	79591	22390	8532
	Adjusted Frequency	5.55	5.78	5.81	8.20

Table 5. Frequency of Use of *even if* (Chinese Native Speakers)

Task		Proficiency Level			
		A2	B1-1	B1-2	B2
Part-time job	Frequency	0	3	1	1
	Total Words	11320	56907	26989	3360
	Adjusted Frequency	0	0.52	0.37	2.98
Smoking	Frequency	2	6	3	0
	Total Words	11200	53386	25042	3201
	Adjusted Frequency	1.79	1.12	1.20	0
Total	Frequency	2	9	4	1
	Total Words	22520	110293	52031	6561
	Adjusted Frequency	0.88	0.82	0.77	1.52

Figure 1 shows the adjusted frequencies of *even if* among each group of learners at each proficiency level (the native speaker data is also shown for reference, but should not be interpreted as representing differing L1 proficiencies of English native speakers). At every proficiency level, Japanese native speakers show a higher frequency of use than native speakers, whereas Chinese native speakers show a lower frequency of use. At B2 level there is a notable rise in adjusted frequency, particularly for Japanese native speakers. A significant rise at this level is somewhat expected, as *even if* is classed as a B2 level item in the English Vocabulary Profile, so may function as a criterial feature. However, as the frequencies involved are low it is difficult to draw firm conclusions. Regardless, this characteristic is secondary to the overall contrast between Japanese native speakers and Chinese native speakers.

Log likelihood tests were conducted to ascertain whether frequency differences between the two groups of learners were significant. At B1-1 (LL=40.75, $p < .0001$) and B1-2 (LL=15.52, $p < .0001$) levels, Japanese native speakers showed a significantly higher frequency of use. At A2 level, (LL=8.51, $p < .0001$), the Bayes Factor was negative, so the result was not considered further. At B2 level, no

significant difference was observed, presumably partially due to the small data size.

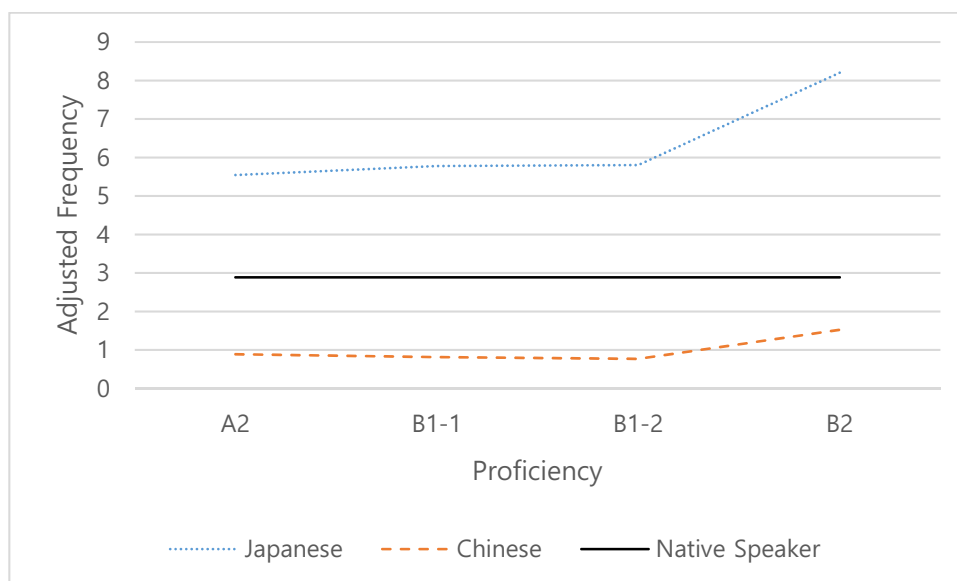


Figure 1. Frequency of Use of *even if* by Japanese, Chinese and English Native Speakers

In summary, quantitative analysis showed that for B1-level learners, native language appears to have a significant effect on the frequency of use of *even if*. In the following section, qualitative analyses will be provided which supplement this preliminary finding.

4.2. Qualitative Trends

This section analyses qualitative trends in the data. Close examination of individual concordance lines suggests that crosslinguistic influence is occurring in infelicitous uses of *even if* by Japanese native speakers. Table 6 shows the proportion of infelicitous uses across both tasks. Errors are more frequent among the Japanese native speakers, with just one infelicitous use of *even if* observed in the Chinese native speaker data set. As a result, when different error types are discussed below, it should be remembered that similar errors do not occur in the Chinese native speaker data.

Individual examples from Japanese native speakers are analyzed in the following sections and related to the characteristics of *-temo* described above. Given the results of the Log Likelihood tests reported in section 4.1, focus will be placed on examples from B1-level learners. Section 4.2.1 examines issues of scalarity, section 4.2.2 focuses on proficiency-related effects, and section 4.2.3 considers the interface between conditional concessives and (non-conditional) concessives. Section 4.2.4 will outline error trends among Chinese native speakers.

Table 6. Proportion of Infelicitous Uses of *even if*

Group	Total	Errors	Proportion	Group	Total	Errors	Proportion
JP_A2	38	5	13.2	CH_A2	2	0	0
JP_B1-1	46	5	10.9	CH_B1-1	9	1	11.1
JP_B1-2	13	3	23.1	CH_B1-2	4	0	0
JP_B2	7	0	0	CH_B2	1	0	0

4.2.1. Scalarity

As described in section 2, Japanese scalar concessive conditionals do not necessarily require a scalar interpretation. As predicted, infelicitous uses of *even if* are attested which can be understood as failures to adhere to the scalarity condition. The distinction between scalar and non-scalar

interpretations is made apparent by (6) and (7) below. The first, felicitous example expresses what can naturally be interpreted as an end point on a scale of ‘actions potentially causing inconvenience’. In contrast, (7) describes the opposite, a measure causing a minimal level of inconvenience.

- (6) Even if smoking is completely banned at all the restaurants In Japan, everyone doesn’t have a trouble .

JPN_SMK_369_B1-1

- (7) There will be little change even if smoking is banned only at the restaurant.

JPN_SMK_196_B1-1

It should be noted that while *even if* (or *if*) have been claimed to mark a lower end point, as in (8), this use typically requires an additional adverbial element such as *still*, as well as a particular intonation in spoken language. In written language, examples like (8) are likely to impose a higher cognitive burden, e.g. requiring longer processing time to obtain the intended meaning, even for native speakers. It is implausible to assume learners are familiar with such marked uses and, indeed, none of the examples provided in this section can be interpreted in this way, even with the aid of intonation. As such, examples like (8) will not be considered further in this paper.

- (8) Even if it rains I’ll cancel the date.

(Situation: I am desperate to cancel and will find the smallest excuse to do so)

(Gomes, 2020, p. 18)

Other examples from the ICNALE data set that do not fulfill the scalarity condition are shown below. It is expected for students to make mistakes (9) or not to understand their tutor (10) at times. Likewise, it is not uncommon for at least one person in a restaurant in Japan to be smoking (11). The absence of a condition interpretable as an upper boundary is the source of the infelicity of such examples.

- (9) A lot of cases, even if student make mistakes, he is excused.

JPN_PTJ_266_B1-1

- (10) Even if the student can’t understand, the tutor has to make every effort to make the student understand.

JPN_PTJ_339_B1-1

- (11) Even if one person smokes in the restaurants, all the air in the room is polluted by smoke.

JPN_SMK_172_B1-1

In (12), the writer wishes to express the idea that for many people, someone smoking in their general vicinity is sufficient to put them off their meal. As predicted, *if* is preferred to *even if*, because the antecedent expresses a lower, rather than upper, boundary.

- (12) And people who don’t feel unpleasant even if someone is smoking near them when they are eating are few.

JPN_SMK_187_B1-1

An alternative method of expressing a lower end point is to use *if even*; this may have been the learner’s intention in (13) below. Despite the surface similarities with *even if*, *if even* is a non-concessive conditional, with *even* (or, alternatively, *just*) functioning as a focus particle. As there is a possibility

that (13) is a product of mistaken word order rather than an effect of crosslinguistic influence, it has not been included in the data for Table 6, but it is nevertheless consistent with the use of *even if* analogous to *-temo*.

(13) Even if one person smokes in the restaurants, all the air in the room is polluted by smoke.

JPN_SMK_172_B1-1

This section has demonstrated the effect that the absence of a scalarity condition on Japanese concessive conditionals has on L2 concessive conditional use. The next section will consider the effect of proficiency on the types of errors observed.

4.2.2. Proficiency-Related Effects

The previous section introduced examples from B1 level Japanese learners of English, suggesting that infelicitous use of concessive conditionals is consistent with L1 patterns of use. This section focuses on the question of proficiency-related effects. Do learners at different proficiency levels make different kinds of errors?

As shown in section 2, *-temo* appears in several subconstructions that correspond to a variety of English expressions other than *even if*. In these cases, L1 influence potentially reflects itself not only in the semantics but also the form (i.e. structure) of concessive conditionals. In the current data set, errors in which learners use *even if* in one of the structures in Table 2 are attested at A2 level only. (14) is an example of an alternative concessive conditional construction erroneously applied to English. Similarly, (15) has the structure of a universal concessive conditional construction. This implies that some degree of L1 influence is occurring at a formal level among learners at lower proficiency levels.

(14) As we know, the cigarette is very bad to a body even if I am passive even if active.

‘whether I am active or passive’ (ACC)

JPN_SMK_183_A2

(15) First, when I have some dishes in a restaurant and there is the person who smokes in the nest seat, I will feel bad with my dishes even if how much delicious those are.

‘no matter how delicious they are’ (UCC)

JPN_SMK_090_A2

In addition to these characteristic errors, semantically infelicitous errors similar to those described in previous sections also appear in the writing of A2 level learners. For example, (16) is an example of a lower bound, implying there are more extreme points on the scale (e.g. smoking a cigarette oneself), and thus failing to fulfil the scalarity condition.

(16) Even if only I have the bad smell of smoking, I am tired of it.

JPN_SMK_394_A2

This section has provided evidence for the interaction between L2 proficiency and the nature of crosslinguistic influence. Crosslinguistic influence appears to affect the frequency of use of *even if* by Japanese native speakers in their L2 English writing. Some examples reflect semantically infelicitous uses of *even if*, which can be explained if we assume that by ignoring the scalarity condition, learners are using *even if* analogously to *-temo*. Formally incongruous uses of *even if* are limited to lower proficiency levels, suggesting that crosslinguistic influence is more persistent at a semantic level than at a formal level. As attested by the Chinese native speaker data, in the absence of subjective cross-

linguistic similarities between L1 and L2, both frequency of use and the occurrence of negative L1 influence are minimal.

4.2.3. The Interface between Conditional Concessives and Factive Concessives

This section considers the interface between factive concessives and conditional concessives, and pedagogical implications in the context of Japanese EFL learners. Factive concessives can be expressed using a range of expressions in English, but from a formal perspective, the interface with conditional concessives is the form *even though*. Gilquin (2008, p. 20) suggests that one of the reasons for the higher frequency of use of *even if* by native speakers of French in her study is that French *même si* not only functions as a conditional concessive, but also as a factive concessive analogous to *even though* (Gilquin describes these two uses of *même si* as ‘conditional’ and ‘concessive’ respectively).

A similar phenomenon is expected to occur in the current data set among Japanese native speakers. This is because while *even if* prototypically expresses concessive conditional meaning, *-temo* may function as both a conditional and a factive concessive. Japanese also possesses the *-noni* form, similar to *even though* in the sense that it is used exclusively to express factive concessives (17b).

- (17) a. Kusuri o nonde-mo, netsu wa sagaranai darou. (conditional concessive)
 ‘Even if I take medicine, my fever won’t go down.’
 b. Kusuri o {nonde-mo / nonda-noni}, netsu wa sagaranakatta. (factive concessive)
 ‘Even though I took medicine, my fever wouldn’t go down.’
 (Maeda, 2009, p. 207)

Just as learners at lower proficiency levels appear to assume functional equivalence between *-temo* and *even if*, we also find examples where learners appear to equate *-noni* and *even if*. In other words, *even if* and *-noni* are associated in learners’ interlanguage due to the correspondence of each with *-temo*. Examples are provided in (18) and (19) below, together with recasts to illustrate the hypothetical ‘original’ structure of the sentences. The exclamation mark in the recasts expresses the affective meaning frequently implied by the use of *-noni*. In (18) and (19) below, the learner is assumed to be expressing (with indignation): ‘People are eating around them. How can they keep smoking?’

- (18) So I can’t understand the people smoking in restaurants even if someone sits around them.
 “People smoke in restaurants even when someone sits around them. I can’t understand it!”
 JPN_SMK_080_A2

- (19) But smokers should stop smoking even if they are eating.
 ‘Smokers smoke even when they are eating. They should stop!’
 JPN_SMK_106_A2

Another reason for assuming that examples like (18) and (19) are a product of equating *even if* and *-noni* is that they also exemplify a characteristic of *-noni* that Maeda (2009, p. 208) calls ‘insubordination’. This term is used to describe the phenomenon whereby the subsequent is omitted and/or the antecedent is combined with another sentence (as shown in (17b), *-noni* may also appear without insubordination). For example, in (20) the subsequent, which is assumed to be ‘I didn’t pass the exam’, is omitted and the antecedent is (optionally) joined to a separate sentence stating the speaker’s attitude towards the state of affairs described. The fact that (18) and (19) exhibit the same process of insubordination is independent evidence that *-noni* is influencing learners’ formulations of the sentence. It should be noted that this is another example of structural crosslinguistic influence manifesting itself in the L2 English writing of lower proficiency (A2 level) learners.

(20) Isshoukenmei benkyou shita noni, zannen desu.

Lit. 'Even though I studied as hard as I could, it's a shame.'

'I studied as hard as I could (but I didn't pass the exam). What a shame!'

(Maeda, 2009, p. 219)

Finally, while not taken from the ICNALE data set, examples of Japanese learners' written production gathered by the author exhibit the same structural (in terms of insubordination) and pragmatic (in terms of affective meaning) characteristics of *-noni*, although in these cases learners select a more natural form, *even though*².

(21) Even though the average annual income is lower than in the world, it is difficult to live if taxes are taken.

'Taxes are taken from us even though our average annual income is lower than other countries around the world. It's difficult to live like this!'

(22) However, even though there is no scientific basis for blood type diagnosis, it is not good to label the person as type X and judge the person.

'People judge others based on their blood type even though there is no scientific basis for doing so. It's not good to label people like that!'

This section has provided evidence for crosslinguistic influence occurring not only between concessive conditionals but also between factive conditionals in Japanese and English. Before considering these two phenomenon together in more detail in section 5, the next section briefly considers characteristic errors observed in the writing of Chinese native speakers.

4.2.4. Comparison with Chinese Native Speakers

Thus far, the data from Chinese speakers has principally been used to provide a baseline against which the Japanese native speaker data can be compared. Chinese native speakers use *even if* less frequently than Japanese native speakers, and exhibit a lower proportion of infelicitous uses (Table 6). Both these characteristics are predictable, as Chinese lacks a form like *-temo* which is capable of expressing all subtypes of concessive conditionals. In this section, we will briefly consider characteristics of the Chinese native speaker data in its own right.

While a comprehensive analysis of the Chinese data is beyond the scope of the current paper, the examples below demonstrate that Chinese native speakers have a different error profile to Japanese native speakers. Chinese native speakers notably show prominent omission of both *though* and *if* when using concessive expressions.

Omission of *though*:

(23) Even most college students has been adult, they are too young to have a real job.

CHN_PTJ_254_B1-1

(24) There are also many researches pointed out the dangers of second-hand smoke, even it's more harmful to our health, few of us really aware of it.

CHN_SMK_096_B1-1

² (21) and (22) are examples gathered by the author of written production by second year university students in a Japanese EFL setting.

Omission of *if*:

(25) We should respect others' hobby, even it is not healthy.

CHN_SMK_235_B1-1

(26) I think the college is to educate people learning all your life and learning even you are very busy.

CHN_PTJ_266_B1-1

(27) Secondly, I think we should not allow cigarettes destroy out health even it have some many advantages to the country.

CHN_SMK_276_B1-2

What such error trends suggest is that what contributes to non-native like use of concessive conditionals and factive concessives by Chinese native speakers is not overuse as was the case with the Japanese native speaker data, but instead nonuse as a result of omissions of parts of the expressions in question. Such omissions are potentially linked to features of concessive expressions in Chinese. In colloquial spoken Mandarin Chinese, there may be cases in which the antecedent of a concessive conditional does not require an explicit marker (*jìshǐ*; *jiùsuàn* 'even if' etc.). In such cases, *yě* 'also' in the consequent is sufficient to convey the intended meaning. If learners equate *yě* with *even*, this potentially explains the omission of *if* and *though* and the marking of concessive conditional meaning with *even* alone. While a more comprehensive explanation of this phenomenon awaits further research, it should be noted that omissions similar to examples (23) to (27) do not feature prominently in the Japanese native speaker data; where omissions do occur they tend to be omissions of *even*, rather than of *if* or *though*, as shown below.

(28) If I encounter the situation, I feel some foods very terrible if they are taste very good.
'even if they taste very good'

JPN_SMK_089_A2

(29) If smokers have manners, smoke floats into the air.
'even if smokers have manners'

JPN_SMK_026_B1-1

The preceding sections have considered a number of separate issues related to the use of concessive conditionals, principally by native speakers of Japanese. The next section considers the results in their entirety and discusses their implications for processes of second language acquisition.

5. Discussion

This study has revealed some of the challenges faced by Japanese native speakers when using the concessive conditional *even if*. First, due to a certain degree of correspondence between *-temo* and *even if* in prototypical concessive conditionals, learners assume an equivalence between the two forms which goes beyond the objective linguistic reality. In other words, learners construe subjective similarities between the L1 form and the target form based on more limited objective similarities. In reality, *even if* is restricted to one of the three principal subtypes of concessive conditionals identified in the literature, namely scalar conditional concessives. As a consequence of *-temo* being capable of expressing alternative and universal concessive conditionals, learners at lower proficiency levels overgeneralize, replicating *-temo*'s subconstructions in their L2 English writing. This results in

formally infelicitous uses of *even if* that do not appear in the written production of other learners. Subjective similarities between *even if* and *-noni*, the Japanese factive concessive, also result in *even if* appearing in L1-like ‘insubordination’ structures. Both cases of such formal crosslinguistic influence are limited to lower proficiency levels.

A second, more persistent manifestation of cross-linguistic influence relates to the scalarity condition. Even once learners have supplanted L1-like constructions (e.g. the duplication of the antecedent) from their interlanguage, they still show a tendency to lack sensitivity to the scalarity condition. This kind of semantic infelicity is particularly prominent at B1 level. This suggests that in the case of concessive conditionals, acquisition of semantic restrictions is more challenging than acquisition of formal restrictions.

Part of the reason for the difficulty of acquiring concessive conditionals is that they represent the interface between the expression of conditional meaning and concessive meaning, where multiple forms converge. This is seen in the overgeneralization of *even if* to express conditional meaning on the one hand, and (factive) concessive meaning on the other. The overgeneralization is likely compounded by the surface similarities in form between *if* and *even if*, and between *though* and *even though*. The precise nature of this interlanguage will vary between individual learners, with differing degrees of native-like use.

Finally, the limitations of the present study must be acknowledged. Due to the nature of the phenomena under investigation, analyses have been conducted and conclusions reached based on a relatively small set of data. A comparison with additional L1 groups would increase the size of the data set and also provide stronger evidence for or against the assertion that the phenomena described are characteristic of Japanese native speakers. In addition, while reference was made to the relation between concessive conditionals and factive concessives, learners’ choice of different expressions could be explored in more detail. When, for instance, do learners choose to express the relation between an antecedent and consequent with a concessive conditional, and when do they instead select a conditional? Given that *if* corresponds to multiple expressions in Japanese, such factors are likely to affect the frequency of use of *-temo*.

Despite the above limitations, the current study offers a number of new insights when compared with Gilquin (2008), the closest comparable study. First, *even if* was not treated as an isolated lexical item with a translational equivalent, but as an expression of concessive conditional meaning whose range and frequency of use was open to influence from L1 patterns of marking. The unified use of *-temo* for the expression of concessive conditional meaning in Japanese was linked to the overuse of *even if* in L2 English. This allowed an analysis that went further than simply comparing frequencies across corpora and pointed to deeper typological factors. Second, by incorporating data from learners at multiple proficiency levels as opposed to selecting a single proficiency level, analysis revealed qualitatively different aspects of crosslinguistic influence, namely the distinction between what this paper has called formal crosslinguistic influence on the one hand and semantic crosslinguistic influence on the other. It is hoped that this study will encourage researchers to replicate or challenge this analysis to increase our understanding of the acquisition and expression of concessive conditional meaning in L2.

6. Conclusions

This paper has provided evidence of crosslinguistic influence on the use of concessive conditionals by Japanese native speakers in L2 English writing. Learners across proficiency levels show evidence of semantic crosslinguistic influence in their use of concessive conditionals, exhibiting overuse and infelicitous use of *even if*. Lower proficiency learners also exhibit formal crosslinguistic influence, employing *even if* in L1-like structures. These trends were explained through consideration of the

expression of concessive conditional meaning across languages, and of how subjective similarities may lead to over-simplified form-meaning correspondences, not only between pairs of expressions but also across multiple expressions in learners' interlanguage. This underlines the importance of language pedagogy that explicitly focuses on differences hidden behind apparent similarities between L1 and L2. In the current case, this could include making learners aware of the means of expressing other types of concessive conditional meaning in English, to increase the rate of native-like use. In examples involving 'insubordination' in particular, L1-like use of concessive expressions can result in global errors and so can be considered a pedagogical priority. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that once the formal characteristics of a construction have been acquired, instruction is no longer required. For instance, Japanese native speakers at B1 level who are able to produce formally target-like concessive conditionals could still benefit from explicit instruction about the semantic restrictions on the use of *even if* that make it more limited in its range of use than *-temo*.

Concessive conditionals have thus far received relatively little attention in the fields of corpus linguistics and second language acquisition, so it is hoped that the findings of the present paper will encourage further research in this area. Possible future avenues of research include comparison with native speakers of other languages, studies using different data types (e.g. spoken corpora or experimental studies), as well as more comprehensive analysis of concessive conditionals as one part of a large paradigm of conditional expressions and their patterns of expression across languages.

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