

ADVERSITY PASSIVES OF ENGLISH ERGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS BY EAST ASIAN EFL LEARNERS: Pragmatic and Morphosyntactic Transfer of L1*

Hyun-tahk Chay **

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Abbreviations:

^x: non-occurrence of an error in a specific language (e.g. ^xJ: not occur in J), AP: adverse passive, Asp.: aspect, C: Chinese (EFL learners' IL), EA: East Asian, EEC: English ergative construction, EFL: English as a foreign language, J: Japanese (EFL learners' IL), K: Korean (EFL learners' IL), L1: first language, L2: second language, Obj.: object, OP: overpassivization, Pass.: passive, Passiv.: passivization, Pfv.: perfective, Pres.: present, Q: Question, ST: strange transitive, Stat.: statement, Subj.: subject, Top.: topic, Transit:

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** Professor in English Department at Gyeongju University

transitivization

1. Introduction

English has change-of-state verbs called ergative verbs, “where the direct object in the transitive sentence is the same as the subject of the verb in the intransitive one”(Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 34, cf. Chomsky 345):

(1) a. John opened *the door*. / *The door* opened.

b. Inflation increased *prices*. / *Prices* increased.

As Yip, “Interlanguage” (45) observes, “[e]ven very advanced learners have difficulty acquiring the ergative construction, and consistently passivize this class of verbs,” What is of special interest about this construction with East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) EFL learners is that they have a strong tendency to passivize not only these verbs but also certain groups of other “intransitive verbs that describe the processes that lack volitional control” (Perlmutter 58-9; Ellis 73).

(2) a. The ship was sunk (instead of *sank*) slowly. (Ellis 73)

b. What was happened yesterday? (Yip, “Interlanguage” 45)

I call this excessive passivization of East Asian EFL learners

overpassivization. Please be noted that throughout this paper asterisks (*) will not be put on sentences even if they are ungrammatical except when the distinction is necessary. Neither will the errors be corrected.

Most studies of this issue (for example, Yip, “Interlanguage” on Chinese, Masuko on Japanese, and Jung on Korean) attribute the source of the errors mainly to the same pragmatic factor, the so-called umbrella term ADVERSITY PASSIVE.

However, the approach solely based on pragmatics does not provide an appropriate explanation for the distinctive error patterns among different L1 learners. To illustrate, some error types (e.g. passivization of *disappearance* verbs in 3a) are specific to a certain L1 group of learners while others (e.g. transitivity of intransitive verbs in 4a) are common to the two L1 groups, i.e. Chinese and Japanese.

- (3) a. Rush hour traffic can be vanished...
 (C, Yip, “Interlanguage”)
 b. I was went to the Temple Square... (J, Watabe et al. 126)
- (4) a. They happened something. (common to C and J: Yip,
 “Interlanguage” 48, Masuko 200)
 b. He disappeared himself. (C, Yip, “Interlanguage” 48)
 c. I went him to school. (^XJ, cf. Masuko 201)

A careful comparison of each language in different error patterns suggests that the discrepancy among East Asian (EA) EFL learners in overpassivization should be dealt with in terms of the interaction of

pragmatic and morpho-syntactic interference from the learners' L1. The result of this interaction is dependent on how influential the pragmatic factor is in the learners' language and whether verbs of concern can be passivized in the L1.

Theoretically, this cross-linguistic study of second language acquisition will clarify the distinctive nature of learning styles with respect to different language backgrounds. At the same time, it will help learners to acquire relevant English ergative constructions by facilitating the learning process.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I will postulate the overpassivization model of EEC for EA EFL learners. Then, in the following sections, typical error patterns for EECs will be analyzed one by one: adversity passives (common and language-specific) in section 3, and transitivity of ergatives in section 4.

2. Model of East Asian EFL Learners' Overpassivization of EEC

In order to handle the phenomena observed above properly, I will first build up the basic model for error patterns dividing oft-used English ergative verbs as in (5).

- (5) English Ergative verbs from EFL perspective (adapted from Yip, "Interlanguage" 48)

Type 1: ergatives without a transitive/ causative counterpart:

die, happen, occur, suffer, (dis)appear, vanish,
come/go, rain, sit

Type 2: ergatives with a transitive / causative counterpart:

break, change, melt, sink, decrease/increase, develop,
improve, gather, buy, eat,

The examples in (2) and (3) evidently indicate that OVERPASSIVIZATION of EA EFL learners results, to some extent, from adverse feelings, some (e.g. *happen*, *sink*, etc.) common to all EA learners, and others specific to the learners with a certain L1 background (e.g. *vanish* for C and *go* for J). On the other hand, STRANGE TRANSITIVIZATION of intransitive verbs in (4) needs some speculation. I interpret it as a reflection of a strong adverse feeling since taking an object is an essential condition for being a transitive verb. Further, I assume, in terms of typology (6), that strange transitivization is a combinatory effect of basic adverse feeling and interference from the learners' L1 (i.e. pragmatics in the case of C or morphosyntax in the cases of J and K).

(6) Typology of C, J, K

Chinese: PRAGMATICS-CENTERED

Japanese & Korean: MORPHOSYNTAX-CENTERED

(where X-CENTERED means that a rule at linguistic level X is to be applied by default when there is no specific rule or when rules at different linguistic levels can apply at the same time)

Along with this typology, I posit in Table 1 the schema of East Asian EFL learner s' overpassivisation of EECs.

L1	Adversity passives		Beyond Adversity passives (~ = -orienteted)		
	common	language-specific	pragmatics ~ L1 rule	syntax ~ L1 rule	morphology ~ L1 rule
C	•	•	• > Transit.	•	
J	•	•		• > Transit.	•
K	•				•

Table 1. East Asian EFL learners' overpassivization of EEC

Table 1 implies that there are two major types of overpassivisation of EECs by East Asian EFL learners: adversity passives (common and language-specific) and errors resulting from the interference of learners' L1 other than adverse feelings. > *Transit.* indicates that transitivization is caused by the interference of an L1 specific rule to passivize intransitive verbs, say, a pragmatically oriented intransitive passivization rule in the case of C. Notably, for the nature of passives in Japanese, Masuko (209), following Gunji, suggests that 'the distinction between linguistically-encoded and extralinguistically-inferred adversity [be] made', which respectively indicates passives involving transitive and intransitive verbs (so-called, direct passives and indirect passives). A detailed discussion will be provided in section 4.

Now I will first consider adversity passives and then other types of errors.

3. Adversity Passives (APs)

As presented above, two kinds of APs are attested in the previous studies of East Asian ESL/EFL learners: one common to all L1s and the other L1-specific.

3.1 APs Common to East Asian EFL Learners.

As pointed out in the introduction, most research associates Asian EFL learners' overpassivization of EECs with adverse emotion regardless of the transitivity of the verbs. For example, from the adversity perspective, Yip, "Interlanguage," Masuko, and Jung "A Pragmatic" respectively, account for typical Chinese, Japanese, and Korean EFL learners' errors in (7).

- (7) L2 errors common to C, J, and K (for type 1 verbs such as *suffer*, and *happen*)
- a. What was happened yesterday? (C, Yip, "Interlanguage" 52; see Jung "A Pragmatic", and Masuko for K and J)
 - b. They were suffered by the treatment. (J, Masuko 197; see Jung "A Pragmatic" for K)
 - c. [T]he fish ... get died. (K, Jung "A Pragmatic"; see Masuko and Yip "Interlanguage" for J and C): punctual event
 - d. The leaves were fallen down. (C, J, Yip, "Interlanguage" 52; K, my observation)
 - e. Few errors are reported for simple intransitive verbs (e.g. sleep, walk; see Masuko 197 and Jung "A Pragmatic" 47)

Also, the results of several studies (e.g. Yip, "Interlanguage", Masuko, and Jung "A Pragmatic," respectively on C, J, K) show that a certain group of Type 2 verbs (e.g. to break, sink, change in 8) representing *visible change* tend to be overpassivized in all of the three languages.

- (8) L2 errors common to C, J, and K (for type 2 verbs such as *break*, and *sink*)
- a. His car window was broken suddenly (K, Jung 76, see also Yip, "Interlanguage" 59-60 for C)
 - b. The glass broke by the girl. (Ellis 73)
 - c. The ship was sunk slowly (when it hit the iceberg). (J, Ellis 73)
 - d. The ship sank by the enemy. (C, Yip, "Interlanguage" 49)
 - e. The seasons have been changed many times. (K, Jung 76, also see Yip, "Interlanguage" 54, 56 for C)

By and large, two major error types are observed in the EFL literature (e.g. Ellis): erroneous passivization in the expression of ergative meaning (8a, c) and misuse of ergative forms for passive meaning (e.g. *by phrase* as in 8b, d). Of the two types, this paper is mainly concerned with the first one, because this type is especially problematic for East Asian EFL learners coupled with adverse concept, which is related to certain verbs.

Considering the above examples (7) and (8) together with the arguments in the related references, I postulate a pragmatically-oriented assumption as in (9):

(9) Adversity Passivization (in IL of C, J, K)

East Asian (C, J, K) EFL learners tend to use passive voice to represent adverse feelings associated with:

- a. EVENTS such as: to happen, suffer, occur, be born, die, fall
- b. VISIBLE CHANGE such as: to break, change, close/open, freeze, melt, sink, and decide

The basic idea of this assumption seems to be agreed upon, though implicitly (Shibatani 318-19; Yip, “Interlanguage” 46). Still, several questions, especially related to its vague notion, have yet to be answered: What is considered adversity in each culture? Is this dichotomous or a continuum?

A couple of language-internal questions need to be answered, too: How does this assumption interact with other intra-lingual factors? How should it be interpreted cross-linguistically? I will first consider the language-external questions and then, deal with some language-internal issues.

3.2 APs Specific to Certain L1.

Except for the concepts classified as *event* and *visible change* above, the adverse feelings seem to vary among the different cultures. Of these, two concepts are worth mentioning. Judging from Yip’s (“Interlanguage”) data (10), Chinese people seem to associate the notion of (dis)appearance with adverse feeling. In contrast, Japanese people tend to feel adverse regarding daily activities such as *going*,

buying, and *drinking* (see 11).

As shown in (10), except for *event* verbs, the majority of Yip's ("Interlanguage") overpassivization data in Chinese L1 is closely related to the *(dis)appearance* and *development* of the immediate issues.

(10) Overpassivization of APPEARANCE verbs in Chinese IL (all adapted from Yip, "Interlanguage")

a. Type 1 ergatives

- This kind of diglossic situation can be appeared in society ... (advanced)
- Rush hour traffic can be vanished... (intermediate)

b. Type 2 ergatives

- For last 15 years computers have drastically affected our life and this will be continued in the future. (intermediate)
- Overcrowding and crimes are derived from same source.
- The population of LA was rapidly grown these years.

On the other hand, a number of studies of Japanese IL (e.g. Masuko, Watabe, et al., Izumi and Lakshmanan) reveal that simple *daily* actions (e.g. *to come, go, cry, run*) are quite often associated with adverse feelings. Look at the following examples:

(11) Overpassivization of DAILY verbs in Japanese IL

a. Type 1 ergatives

- I was went to the Temple Square (Watabe et al., 126)...

- I was came by/come from my friend late last night. (Izumi and Lakshmanan 85)
- The man was run/ran away by his wife. (Izumi and Lakshmanan 85)
- But last story was very good. And I was cried [= cried] because they meet their dorgutor [= daughter]. (Watabe et al. 126)
- b. Type 2 ergatives (Izumi and Lakshmanan)
 - I was damaged my car by somebody, I was worn my new shoes by brother and I was drunk my expensive whisky by my son. (92)
 - I was eaten final cake by friend. [= The last piece of cake, which I had wanted to eat, was eaten by my friend.] (81)
 - I was bought shoes and cookies. (92)

My main concern here is the sources of passivization in the IL of each language: Is passivization triggered by adversity or any other extra-linguistic or linguistic factors?

Many studies of C (e.g. Yip, “Interlanguage”) do not distinguish between ‘event’ and ‘appearance’ verbs with regard to adversity. Following this line, I assume that passivization of *appearance* verbs in C as in (10) is attributed to the strong adverse feeling like that of event verbs.

However, in the case of *daily* verbs in J, some other factors might come into play. First, as shown in (11), the sentences containing *daily* verbs are much less adverse than those containing *event* verbs (see Watabe et al.). Further, when we think of the fact that Japanese is a morphosyntax-centered language (cf. 6, for language typology), it is not likely that *daily* verbs are passivized just because they have weak

adversity. Rather, the passivization seems to be syntactically-motivated: Of the three languages in East Asia, only Japanese allows an intransitive verb to passivize, especially when the verb implies adversity or affectedness (see Masuko 197). As Shibatani (317-318) notes, “in Japanese... the passive suffix *-(ra)re...* attaches to both transitive and intransitive verbs ... in passive of intransitive clauses ... some adverse effects befell on the referent of the subjects.’

For example, in (12), the verbs ‘to die’ and ‘to rain’ normally take passive forms as they are involved with adverse feeling.

(12) Passivization of Japanese intransitive verbs: possible

a. *kare wa tsuma ni shin are -da* (Masuko 198)

he Top wife by die Pass Past

‘He was adversely affected by his wife’s death.’

(= His wife died on him.)

b. *John ga ame -ni hur -are -da* (Song 85)

John Subj rain Dat fall Pass Past

‘John was rained on.’

In order to explain this Masuko insists, that “intransitive as well as transitive verbs can be passivized in Japanese” cannot be the reason for the Japanese students’ overpassivization of English ergative verbs because “the students tend to passivize verbs [only] when the sentences that contain them imply affectedness or adversity.” (197) While Masuko provides good evidence for the role of adversity in triggering overpassivization, she does not disprove the role of passivization of intransitive verbs.

Unlike Japanese, Korean intransitive verbs cannot passivize as shown in (13) and Korean EFL learners are liable to think that English intransitive verbs do not passivize, either. In romanizing Korean, I have used 'Romanization of Korean' established by National Institute of Korean Language on July 7, 2000.

(13) Passivization of Korean intransitive verbs: impossible

a. geu neun ane ga jugeo (*-ji) -eoss -da
 he Top. wife Subj. die Pass. Past Stat.

'His wife (*was) died.'

b. John i bi reul/*e(**euihae) mad -eoss -da (Song 85)
 John Subj. rain Obj./Agent hit Past Stat.

'John was rained on.'

As a result, the syntactic interference solution to passivization of *daily* verbs in J provides a natural explanation for *why Korean and Japanese (belonging to the same language family) show different behavior with respect to passivization of intransitive EECs*.

So far I have shown how certain level of L1 rules trigger overpassivization of EEC in the IL of each language: pragmatic interference (i.e. AP) in C and morphosyntactic interference (i.e. passivization) in J and K. In order to explain this cooperation of L1 and L2 rules, I propose the Interaction principle as in (14).

(14) Interaction of L1 and L2 rules/principles (in IL of C, J, K):

Preliminary version

L1 transitivity rule overrides the same type of L2 rule only if the L1 rule is a DOMINATING rule in that language,

where a rule is dominating if it originates in a strong cross-cultural convention such as adversity passivization or belongs to the central part(s) of a specific language as classified in (6).

According to the SLA theory, this proposal is not surprising at all, since the major type L1 rule is expected to interfere with L2 rules throughout the learning stage. Thus, in terms of the above interaction condition, pragmatically oriented adversity in C and morphosyntactically oriented passivization in J respectively, supersede L2 rules of EECs.

From this perspective, I also suggest that Adversity passivization (9) be revised as (15) so that it could accommodate interference of L1 pragmatic and morphosyntactic rules by means of (14).

(15) Adversity passivization (in IL of C, J, K): Revision of (9)
Passive voice tends to be used for English ergative expressions associated with

- (i) strong adverse feelings such as *a* and *b* below, or
- (ii) weak adverse feelings such as *c* reinforced by an L1-specific (i.e. J-specific) intransitive passivization rule.
 - a. event or visible change (Common to C, J, K)
 - b. appearance or gradual process (Specific to C)
 - c. daily activities (Specific to J)where the types of English ergative verbs are as in (16)

(16) English Ergative verbs (in EFL terms for C, J, K)
Type 1: ergatives without a transitive/causative counterpart:
a. event: die/be born, fall, happen, occur, suffer, erupt,

- b. appearance: (dis)appear, arise, arrive, emerge, vanish,
- c. daily actions: come/go, cry, rain, run away

Type 2: ergatives with a transitive/causative counterpart

- a. visible change: break, change, close/open, freeze, melt, sink, decide, (steal)
- b. gradual process: decrease/increase, develop, continue, derive, grow, improve
- c. daily activities: buy, drink, drive, eat, meet, (damage, encourage, experience, lose)

Although my limited research needs elaboration through relevant tests with more empirical studies, the cross-cultural data as in (17) imply that there might exist some sort of universal and language-specific concepts of adversity passives at the same time.

- (17) L2 errors across various cultures (Zobl 204)
- a. My mother was died when I was just a boy. (Thai; high intermediate)
 - b. The most memorable experience of my life was happened 15 years ago. (Arabic; advanced)

4. Residue of Adversity Passives: Strange Transitives in C and J

In the previous section, I characterized AP as pragmatically-oriented over-passivization of EEC reflecting the common and distinctive nature of adverse feelings in the IL of East Asian EFL

learners. In this section, I will consider another frequent type of errors regarding EECs, transitivization of intransitive ergatives as in (18) [= reproduction of (4)], which I call STRANGE TRANSITIVES (STs) following Masuko's (201) terminology.

(18) STs in the L2 of C & J

- a. They happened something. (Common to C and J: Yip, "Interlanguage" 48, Masuko 200)
- b. The accident suffered many lives terribly ... (Common to C and J: Yip "Interlanguage" 53, Masuko 200)
- c. He disappeared himself. (C, Yip, "Interlanguage" 48)
- d. The chauffeurs arrived the guests. (C, Yip, "Interlanguage" 48)
- e. I went him to school. (^XJ, cf. Masuko 201)

Seemingly strange transitives are closely related to APs and I put these two together in table 2 to capture the generalization centering on intransitive EECs.

	EVENT verbs		APPEARANCE verbs		DAILY verbs	
	Passiv.	Transit.	Passiv.	Transit.	Passiv.	Transit.
C	• < AP	•	• < AP	•		
J	• < AP	•			• < L1 Passv. rule	X
K	• < AP	X				

Table 2. East Asian learners Error types for intransitive EECs

Passiv.= passivization, Transit.= transitivization

Passivization columns on Table 2 reflect my analysis in section 2 that attributes passivization of intransitive EECs to strong AP (in the case of *event* verbs) or the combinatory effect of weak AP and an L 1 specific intransitive passivization rule (in the cases of *appearance* and *daily* verbs).

On the other hand, transitivity columns relate to the questions revealed in (18): Why do EVENT verbs often transitivize in C and J, but not in K (cf. 18a, b)? And in the same way, why do *appearance* verbs in C (e.g. 18c) trigger transitivity while *daily* verbs in J (e.g. 18e) don't? Eventually, the issue centers on the sources of transitivity (this time 'taking an object') in each language.

For the source of ST in C, Yip, "Interlanguage" (53), within the framework of PRINCIPLES and PARAMETERS theory as in Burzio, claims that Chinese and perhaps other native EFL learners interpret English ergatives as 'underlying transitive', since only transitive verbs can passivize and take objects in English. As additional evidence, Yip, "Interlanguage" provides in (19) the acquisition errors from L1 and L2 of various native languages.

(19) STs in other than L2 of C & J

- a. L1 errors (Bowerman cited in Yip, "Interlanguage" 53):
 - Don't giggle me. (As father tickles her. E 3; 0)
 - He disappeared himself. (C 4; 2)
 - Do you want to see us disappear our heads? (Then, with a friend, she ducks down behind the couch. J6+)
- b. L2 errors in various languages (Rutherford cited in Yip,

“Interlanguage” 53)

- The shortage of fuels occurred the need for economical engine.
- This construction will progress my country.
- Careless currency devaluation will go back us to old habits.

Aside from some serious theory-internal problems, however, Yip’s (“Interlanguage”) syntactic treatment of STs is fruitless for several reasons. As is often found in theory-internal approach, Yip’s argumentation, particularly on psychological reality of underlying structure is hard to test. In a sense, her ‘underlying transitive’ argument is circular because to prove that the underlying form of English ergatives are transitive in C, she has to refer back to a property of transitivity itself (i.e. ‘taking objects’). Moreover, it does not clarify the cross-cultural concept of adversity and distinctive linguistic patterns thereof (i.e. why both *event* verbs and *appearance* verbs can transitive in Chinese IL, only the former can in Japanese, but neither can in Korean).

Rather, the source of the errors might be interference from the learners’ L1. As shown in Table 2, it is only the forms undergoing AP conditioned by strong adverse feelings that undergo ST. I interpret this as ‘ST takes place only when strong adverse feelings are combined with certain aspects of L1’. In terms of this interpretation, non-occurrence of ST in *daily* verbs in J is naturally explained, because passivization of these verbs is largely triggered by L1 passivization rule (see the discussion in the previous section), not by AP.

In order to account for the remaining problems (i.e. ST in *event* and *disappearance* verbs), I assume that ST is motivated by the combinatory effect of the conditions stated in (20).

(20) Conditions for ST (in East Asian EFL learners' IL)

- a. Pragmatic condition: the ergative verb is associated with a strong adverse feeling in L1
- b. Syntactic condition: intransitive verbs can be passivized in L1

The conditions in (20) imply that ST takes place when an EEC associated with strong adverse feeling is reinforced by L1 rule to passivize intransitive verbs.

A significant implication of the conditions about intransitive *event* verbs is that L1 pragmatic condition (i.e. AP), not syntactic (i.e. L1 passivization rule), directly triggers passivization of them, while the latter is primarily concerned with transitivization of them (i.e. ST). Otherwise, the different error patterns of J and K with regard to AP cannot be explained, since only J tends to transitivize the forms of concern although both J and K often passivize them.

Apparently, however, my approach based on L1 knowledge causes some problems in dealing with the error patterns of Chinese EFL learners, because Chinese, like Korean, is claimed to disallow intransitive verbs to be passivized (= violation of 20b). Look at the examples in (21).

(21) Chinese passive (Adapted from Yip, "Interlanguage" 52)

- | | | | | |
|----|-------|--------|--------|------|
| a. | Sheme | (*bei) | fashen | le? |
| | What | Pass. | happen | Asp. |

*‘What was happened?’

- b. Shuyeh (*bei) diaoxialai le.
leaf Pass. fall down Asp.

*‘The leaves were fallen down.’

Presenting these examples with English equivalents, Yip, “Interlanguage” claims that “The passivized [intransitive] ergatives ... have no obvious source in either L1 or L2.” Then, how can we explain Chinese learners’ ST in L2 acquisition of English?

Of interest is the comparison of the grammaticality judgment of Chinese examples in (21) with that of their Korean equivalents in (22).

(22) Korean passive

- a. museun il i ileona (**-i) -eoss -neunga?
What matter Subj. happen (**Pass.) Past Q

- b. namu ip i tteoleoji (**-i) -eoss -da
tree leave Subj. fall down (**Pass.) Past Stat.

Note that I put single asterisk on Chinese passives and double on their Korean equivalents. The judgment is based on the comparative role of the passive marker in each language.

In Chinese, two types of passivization seem to be recognized (Yip 108): one is through topicalization (23b), and the other by means of using *bei* (23c). Li & Thompson observe that while the passive construction is common in subject-prominent languages, it is less

productive in topic-prominent languages. If we apply their idea to Chinese passivization, it can be argued that the *topicalization* type as in (23b) is the unmarked form and *bei* type as in (23c) is the marked form.

(23) Chinese passivization in transitive constructions (adapted from Yip 108-109)

- a. Zhangsan (wo) chengzan le.
 Zhangsan I praise Pfv.
 ‘I praised Zhangsan; Zhangsan praised someone.’
- b. Zhangsan, (wo) chengzan le.
 Zhangsan, (I, someone) praise Pfv.
 ‘Zhangsan, I praised.’
- c. Zhangsan bei chengzan le.
 Zhangsan Pass. praise Pfv.
 ‘Zhangsan was praised.’

Then, non-existence of *bei* form in intransitive passivization can be construed as an accidental gap. So even if the forms in question lack overt passive marker, Chinese speakers perceive certain Type 1 adversity verbs as emotion provokers.

In contrast, as shown in (22), in Korean, in order for a construction to be passivized, a passive inflectional morpheme has to be attached to a verb and that to the transitive form. The crucial point in this process

is that in Korean (also, in Japanese) the passive marker plays a role not only as a grammatical marker but also as a word coiner.

Judging from the contrastive analysis of English and East Asian languages (C, J, K) so far with respect to the overpassivization of EEC, I have found that my language classification (6) roughly fits into Li & Thompson's (henceforth L&T 460) language typology under reinterpretation in EFL terms.

- (24) Reinterpretation of Li & Thompson's language typology (EFL terms)
- a. Subject-prominent (Sp.) languages (Sp., e.g. English) are structure-centered.
 - b. Topic-prominent (Tp.) languages (e.g. Chinese) are pragmatics-centered.
 - c. Sp. and Tp. languages (e.g. Japanese, Korean) are semantics-centered.

Partly for the purpose of parallelism, and partly to reflect more morphological nature of J and K than syntactic, I have used the term semantics- instead of morphosyntax- here.

Now, by means of L&T's language typology, East Asian EFL learners' Adversity passivization (15) can be more explicitly represented as (25):

- (25) Adversity passivization in IL of C, J, K (in terms of L&T's typology) An L1 passivization rule overrides an L2 rule only if the L1 rule is a PROMINENT rule in that language,

where an L1 passivization rule is prominent in each type of language defined in EFL version of L&T's language typology (23):

- (i) in pragmatics-centered languages (e.g. C), only if L1 has the same type of pragmatically oriented passivization convention, regardless of whether the convention is language-specific or cross-cultural.
- (ii) in semantics-centered languages (i.e. J and K), if L1 has both strong cross-cultural convention (e.g. adversary feelings), and a definite intransitive passivization rule.

Otherwise, L1 rule can substitute L2 rule partially, at the most. Literally, the priority of rule application in East Asian EFL learners IL should be as follows: prominent L1 rules > prominent L2 rules > non-prominent L1 rules > non-prominent L2 rules.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to probe into the characteristic of East Asian EFL learners' overpassivization of English ergative constructions. Contrary to the predictions from the research on individual L1 (e.g. Jung, Masuko, Yip, "Interlanguage"), the results of our cross-linguistic study revealed that overpassivization and strange transitivization of the forms in question are attributed to L1 internal interaction of syntactic/semantic rule and pragmatic condition (i.e.

passivization and adversity passive) as well as to the correlation between L1 and L2 rules.

In Chinese, a pragmatically oriented language, mainly the strong feelings of adversity seem responsible for the phenomena. On the other hand, in Japanese and Korean, morphosyntactically oriented languages, the existence of passivization in L1 is also an important factor. In Japanese, a number of intransitive verbs can passivize, too and Japanese EFL learners are liable to overpassivize and transitivize the counterparts in English. However, in Korean, where no intransitive verbs can passivize, such phenomena have not been found.

Consequently, EVENT verbs associated with the direct concept of adversity tend to be passivized in the IL of all three languages. While DISAPPEARANCE verbs are passivized in Chinese IL as they are conceived as seriously adverse in Chinese, certain categories of intransitive verbs (e.g. DAILY verbs such as *eat*, *drink*, *rain*) are passivized in Japanese IL only as those verbs can passivize in Japanese. Presumably, the strange transitivization common to Chinese and Japanese has two different sources: one from the amplified effect of adversity passive, and the other from the combinatory effect of adverse emotion with L1 passivization.

Putting all these aspects together, I have suggested languages should be classified as (24) in terms of L&T's typology from EFL perspective. Based on this EFL version of L&T typology, I have proposed Adversity passivization principle of East Asian learners (25) repeated here as (26):

(26) Adversity passivization in IL of C, J, K

An L1 passivization rule overrides an L2 rule only if the L1 rule is a PROMINENT rule in that language, where an L1 passivization rule is prominent in each type of language defined in EFL version of L&T's language typology (23):

- (i) in pragmatics-centered languages (e.g. C), only if L1 has the same type of pragmatically oriented passivization convention, regardless of whether the convention is language-specific or cross-cultural.
- (ii) in semantics-centered languages (i.e. J and K), if L1 has both strong cross-cultural convention (e.g. adversary feelings), and a definite intransitive passivization rule.

Otherwise, L1 rule can substitute L2 rule partially, at the most.

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Abstract**ADVERSITY PASSIVES OF ENGLISH
ERGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS BY EAST ASIAN
EFL LEARNERS: Pragmatic and Morphosyntactic
Transfer of L1****Hyun-tahk Chay**

This paper analyzes the East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean) EFL learners' *overpassivization* (OP) of the English ergative constructions (as in 1a) and *transitivization* of related intransitive verbs (as in 1b): 1 a. *What was happened yesterday? b. *He disappeared himself. Most EFL studies of individual languages (e.g., Masuko on Japanese; Chung on Korean) attribute the source of the errors mainly to the pragmatic factor, so called ADVERSITY PASSIVE. However, a close cross-linguistic investigation has shown that only the OP of *event* verbs is due to the adverse feelings common to the East Asian culture and that other types of OP and strange transitivization depend on L1-specific adverse feelings and whether intransitive verbs of concern can passivize in the L1.

Key Words: overpassivization, adversity passive, ergative, transitive, transitivization

