

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Studying Japanese Immigrants in Colombia: Community, Identity, and L2 Spanish Variation of Articles¹

Ana María Díaz Collazos
University of Florida

In 1929, the *Rakuyo Maru* sailed from the prefecture of Fukuoka, Japan and landed on the Pacific coast of Colombia with five Japanese families aboard, for a total of 25 people. In 1930, the same ship carried five other families, numbering 33 people. The *Heiyo Maru*, in 1935, arrived with ten families, totaling 105 people (ACJ, 1979, p. 24-26)². These Japanese immigrants tilled the soil of *El Jagual*, a plantation located in Corinto, a small town in southwest Colombia. Despite hardship during the first years, the community achieved high productivity and by 1955 they owned 13,000 hectares of cultivated land (Sanmiguel, 2006, p. 89). Agriculture has been the main economic activity that allowed them to be together around a single source of production, with plantations of soy, beans, rice, plantains, and bananas. They claim that perseverance and honesty played a role in their success of making a living in a new place.

The aim of this paper is to describe the construction of identity in this community of Japanese immigrants and its connection with the production of Spanish articles. In the first section, I present previous accounts about Japanese communities in Latin America, as well as issues on identity and second language acquisition by immigrants. These ideas lead to the second section in which I discuss the research question that has arisen from the gaps in the literature. I also state my hypothesis in this section. After presenting the methodology in the third section, I analyze in the fourth section how Japanese-Colombian immigrants have built their identity through a common history in which they represent themselves as part of a community. Finally, I analyze second language usage by the community through quantitative results of a linguistic analysis of Spanish articles³.

Previous studies

Social identity

According to Block (2007), identity is the construction of subjectivity in relation to the world. Migrant identity is the construction of subjectivity in individuals who go beyond the borders of their own culture. Identity is a discursive construction that has several dimensions: (1) *ethnic identity* is based on history and descent, beliefs systems, practices, language, and religion; (2) *racial identity*, somewhat related to *ethnic identity*, is derived from biological or genetic make-up; (3) *national identity* is a discursive project that ties people to a nation; and (4) *language identity* is the sense of belonging to a

community based on the means of communication (Block, 2007, p.41). The production of certain language features in a community as a mark of identity is known as *indexicality* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2010). Fox provides an example of indexicality when she discusses a community of Bangladeshis in England, in which boys with a strong Muslim identity tend to produce an English diphthong with a particular vowel quality. Through using this vowel quality, the youths appear to express their belonging to the Islamic religion. Bullock and Toribio (2008) found indexicality in a group of Dominicans who live along the Haitian border. The *fronterizos* are identified by means of an “Haitianized” prosody.

Although general notions of social identity are relevant here, we must also look at the concept with reference to Japanese immigrants and their descendents. Work in this area has been done by the International Nikkei Research Project (henceforth INRP), which is coordinated and funded by the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles (Hirabayashi, personal communication). INRP gathered researchers to study Japanese communities in Latin America and many papers and volumes have been written by the collaborators of this project. Underlying this project is the idea of *Nikkei* as a person of Japanese descent and his or her descendants who created unique communities and lifestyles within societies in which they now live. One cannot speak of a single *Nikkei* identity; however, but rather of multiple identities, since each community of immigrants follows its own discursive strategies (Hirabayashi et al., 2002, p. 19). It is a concept of ethnic identity because it assumes all people of Japanese origins are *Nikkei*, and the ideal of the older Nikkei is that their children identify themselves with their ethnic background. The problem is that, in reality, the communities are not so easily defined. *Nik-*

kei should be better understood as a process of self-identification of the Japanese immigrants in foreign lands. Thus, the concept of social identity better describes the way that they represent themselves.

Despite of the fact that each *Nikkei* community of immigrants follows its own discursive strategies, there are certain commonalities related to a common history. The Japanese initiatives of migration have been called *initiatives for globalization*. The first initiative took place in the 16th century when Japanese sailors began to explore diverse areas of Asia. The second was prompted by the Japanese government’s goal of increasing capital through colonization of other lands. Between 1892 and 1931, Japanese emigrants settled in different countries of Latin America: Mexico, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru, Argentina, and Colombia (Befu, 2002, p.6). After World War II, the “Third initiative for Globalization” took place starting in 1952 and officially ending in 1973. The Foreign Ministry sponsored a series of emigration plans, but also many Japanese women, known as the “war brides,” agreed to marry Western men as an alternative to leaving the country during this time (Befu, 2002, p. 11).

Tamura (1994) describes the process of “Americanization” in the context of Japanese immigrants who worked on plantations in Hawaii. This Americanization had a greater effect on individuals of the second generation, or *Nisei*, in contrast with the strong ethnic and national identity of those who were born in Japan, the *Issei*. The latter group maintained the hierarchical structure of relationships that developed during the Meiji era, the Samurai code, and the teachings of Buddhism and Confucianism (Tamura, 1994, p. 30). The *Nisei* gradually lost these ethnic values as well as their language. Many of them acquired English on the plantations, where they

had previously worked. The variety of English in these contexts was Hawaiian Creole, a language system based on Amerindian languages with English as the lexifier language (Tamura, 1994, p. 199).

For the Japanese communities, World War II had an impact on the discursive strategies and practices of self-identity. An example of this is the change in the *Nikkei* identities in Brazil. Before the War, *Nikkei* identification with Brazilian society was seen as desirable. During the war, however, Japanese immigrants created secret societies loyal to the Emperor. They promoted Japanese nationalism through newspapers written in Japanese. After the war, the existence of these societies came to light, and a better estimation of being Japanese has extended to the present; after the war, the Japanese felt a stronger connection to their culture and a sense of pride in their heritage (Lesser 2002). In the case of Japanese migration to Colombia, Sanmiguel (2006) suggests that persecution during World War II strongly threatened their survival as a community. Members of the community lost much of the cultivated land that they had acquired earlier. However, these difficulties only encouraged the Japanese immigrants to work harder. Due to a constant and disciplined effort, the Japanese in Colombia not only recovered from the loss resulting from the war, but actually expanded cultivated areas.

Acquisition of L2 Articles

In the negotiation of identity, learning a second language (L2) is an enterprise that involves the acquisition of non-existent features in the learners' native grammars. Features related to the usage of articles are among those that are hardest for Japanese learners. The Japanese language does not have functional words such as *the* and *a* in English, and *el, la, los, las, un, una, unos,*

unas in Spanish. The acquisition of articles has gained increasing interest in the area of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), with the most recent publication by García Mayo and Hawkins (2009), *Second Language Acquisition of Articles*. The authors explore the problem of testing the Article Choice Parameter (ACP). ACP is based on the assumption that languages with articles are of two types: the first type encodes definiteness, like English and Spanish, and the second type encodes specificity, like Samoan. Speakers of article-less languages first attempt to encode specificity when acquiring L2 articles, producing the phonological form of definite articles for specific referents, while using indefinite articles for non-specific referents. This choice results in an overgeneralization of definite articles. In contrast, speakers of languages with articles transfer their first language (L1) systems to their L2. The preferred methodology in these types of approaches is the comparison of speakers from different backgrounds: speakers of L1 with articles versus speakers of L1s that do not use articles. The difficulty of learners of languages without articles in their L1 when they learn an L2 with articles is cited as proof of ACP. (Wakabayashi & Hall 1997; Murphy 1997; Trademan 2002; and Snape 2006).

Snape (2006) performed several experiments with learners of English at the University of Essex. Among the advanced learners, he found an overproduction of the article *the* instead of *a* in singular. He interpreted this result as a selection of specificity instead of *hearer knowledge* in the choice of the appropriate article. Snape (2006) found that Japanese learners tended to produce a definite article instead of an indefinite article, but not the opposite. Most of the omissions took place when both the definite and indefinite article was possible, as it can be in example (1):

(1) he bought *a/the* book

In example (1), the direct object *book* could refer to a specific book or any book. Specificity is not an available feature to make the appropriate choice, and speakers therefore prefer omissions. It is important to distinguish between those who learn in formal settings and those who do not. Most research has been done on speakers who currently attend an institution where explicit instruction is provided, that is, formal settings. White (2003) researches spontaneous L2 speech in informal settings. The study involved a Turkish L1 speaker in Canada who received little schooling in English. Her length of exposure to L2 English was 10 years. Oral production of nouns in her spontaneous speech resulted in a high amount of article omissions. These types of results may mislead researchers to believe that development stops before all features are acquired, or undergoes *fossilization*. White criticizes the term, and prefers to call it an *end state grammar*. However, as White implies, it is more than an issue of terminology. The fact that a speaker does not produce a PF (Phonological Form) to match an L2 feature is far from evidence of poor acquisition. She found that her participant performed very well in Grammatical Judgment Tasks at matching [+/- definiteness] with the expected article. Thus, the *end state grammar* is a term that does not imply a deficient acquisition, but a mismatch in production.

L2 articles in correlation with social factors have not been studied. Most research on the acquisition of articles in any language has been performed with experimental groups of scholar learners, and not with spontaneous learners, and comparison between these types of speakers has not been undertaken. Social identity and articles have been widely studied within the field

of the sociology of linguistics, but not in an integrated fashion. This paper integrates two sides of a problem that has not been seen as a whole. In the next section I present both the research question, and the hypothesis. First, my research question is:

How is the self-identity of late bilinguals in the JC connected with their usage of L2-Spanish articles?

From this question my hypothesis derives considering that the traditional JC, or *Nikkei*, is composed of those who arrived between 1929 and 1935. Because the effects of World War II dispersed the community, a strategy evolved that brought additional Japanese in an effort to maintain their ties with their origins. New immigrants arrived between 1952 and 1965. The new members integrated into the Japanese Community through marriage and labor contracts. Both the early group and the post-war group shared the same social conditions that affected their L2 acquisition of Spanish. Their *end state grammar* of articles had a higher rate of omissions of articles as well as the beginners. Japanese people who arrived after 1990 have experienced social conditions that have allowed them to be more aware of the Spanish articles.

Methodology

I conducted field work between July 17th and August 12th, 2010⁴. Materials consisted of a questionnaire to solicit biographical information and a sociolinguistic interview conducted in Spanish. Through the questionnaire I obtained information such as age, place of birth, language history, language usage, and self assessment of Spanish proficiency from beginning (1-3), intermediate (4-5), and advance (6-7). Through the interviews, I obtained a sample of

their speech as well as information on their life stories. I created my own interview based on Tagliamonte's suggestions (2006). She explains that the interviewer should prepare a general set of topics following an order that goes from the more general and impersonal toward the more specific and personal. The script contained open-ended questions about general aspects of their life: their trip to Colombia, integration into the Colombian society and environment, preferences with respect to food, entertainment, and language, and other general issues such as work and family. Participants preferred to talk more about their experiences upon their arrival to Colombia and the efforts they made to adapt to the new environment and culture.

Each interview lasted an hour to an hour

and a half, for a total of 28.3 hours of audio-taped material. I recruited a total of 31 participants, under the criteria of being Japanese, or Colombian of a Japanese family. However, for this paper I am focusing on the people who were born in Japan, a total of 19 individuals (see Table 1 below).

We can observe that nineteen individuals were born in Japan, but not all of them belong to the JC. In fact, when I asked them about their identification with the JC, 10 of them said they do not feel part of it. All of those with that feeling arrived to Colombia after 1980 as adults. I considered the age 13 as a limit, but all participants were far from this point. Participants were also asked whether they had proficiency in languages other than Spanish, and only those who

Table 1 Information about participants.

	Participant	Identity	Proficiency	Age	Age of arrival	Year of arrival	Sex	Profession
Before 13 y/before 1965	P15	JC	Adv	82	7	1935	Woman	Farmer
	P24	JC	Adv	79	4	1935	Woman	Farmer
	P31	JC	Adv	62	5	1953	Woman	Farmer
After 13 y/before 1965	P6	JC	Adv	68	22	1964	Woman	Teacher
	P7	JC	Adv	60	21	1961	Man	Farmer
	P12	JC	Adv	73	20	1957	Woman	Teacher
	P29	JC	Adv	67	18	1961	Woman	Farmer
	P31	JC	Adv	77	24	1957	Man	Farmer
After 13 y/after 1980	P13	JC	Beg	34	31	2007	Woman	Nurse
	P14	JC	Adv	57	27	1980	Woman	Teacher
After 13y/ after 1980	P1	NJC	Beg	33	31	2008	Woman	Biologist
	P3	NJC	Adv	31	22	2001	Woman	Engineer
	P9	NJC	Adv	58	30	1982	Man	Businessman
	P10	NJC	Beg	65	63	2008	Man	Engineer
	P11	NJC	Beg	62	61	2009	Man	Businessman
	P18	NJC	Adv	23	23	2010	Woman	Secretary
	P19	NJC	Int	24	24	2010	Man	Acupressurist
	P27	NJC	Beg	52	36	1994	Woman	Minister
P28	NJC	Adv	50	31	1991	Man	Minister	

arrived after 1990 reported to have knowledge of English, so Spanish is their L3. All of them reported that they had received explicit instruction in Spanish, while all individuals of the JC reported that they had never received instruction in Spanish. They are naturalistic/spontaneous bilinguals because they have acquired Spanish by natural interaction.

The audio-recorded material was transcribed using the transcription code of Brian McWhinney in his Talk Bank, where all interviews are published. I did not use that code in detail, except for the sign (..) for the pauses made by the speaker, and xxx for incomprehensible speech. For issues involving this study, hesitation, glance, overlapping, and other conversational signs are not relevant.

To analyze the data, I took a qualitative approach for the interviews of members of the JC. I selected the main points where their life stories show similarities in terms of how the individuals of the JC identify themselves as part of a group of individuals who share a common history. I describe the way they represent this history. To account for the linguistic behavior, I focused only on those who arrived as adults, and compared the JC with the NJC. Those who arrived as children seemed to have acquired a native register of Spanish, with some Japanese features, but not as salient as those who arrived as adults. An example of speech for those who arrived as children is given in example (2):

- (2) venían los colombianos y come.3pl.IMP the Colombians and llevaba, por carga, Ø caballos (P15) take.3sg.IMP for load horses.

'Colombians used to come and take horses to drive a load, they used to come so often'

P15 acquired Spanish in her childhood. A sample of article usage is "Los colombianos" ("the Colombians"), which is proper for the Spanish language because generic meaning is marked with an article. She omits the article in other contexts where an article is expected, as in "caballos." The problem is that, being in a predicative context, the mass reading is licensed (Contreras 1996), and omission is not entirely wrong. This type of speech deserves further research for another type of study that emphasizes not only the underlying linguistic features, but also the fact that these speakers acquired Spanish in the childhood and some transference from Japanese is present.

I have also decided to measure the linguistic occurrences in its connection with groups of identity. I believe that the few male participants in the data make it irrelevant to consider sex as a variable, and the wide range of age that I have in the corpus could not reveal tendencies due to this factor. I understand that sex and age as social variables could play a role in acquisition, but they go beyond the scope of this paper, which I conceived as a qualitative description of social identity and article usage as a distinctive feature of various groups of immigrants⁵. I divided the NJC into groups of proficiency. I compared the omissions of articles in the JC with Beg and Adv of NJC. There was only one intermediate, so I did not use this person for comparison. After that, I applied a T-Test using SPSS with the purpose of determining significance.

Codification was intended to show general tendencies in Spanish L2 usage according to groups of identity. I extracted all those cases in which the Japanese speaker omitted an article in an obligatory context, as in example (3):

- (3) Es que eso era Ø filosofía Ø japoneses Is that DEM was philosophy [of]

Japanese people. (P29, JC)

‘That was the philosophy of the Japanese people’

The word “filosofía” has a referent marked for its uniqueness, where a Spanish speaker would use a definite article, and the modifying prepositional phrase is another feature that makes the article required. In Spanish the names of nationalities are also modified by a definite article, as in “japoneses.”

I recognize that this methodology has several limitations. One of them is the fact that I extracted all tokens where a definite or an indefinite article was used, without counting linguistic factors, and without taking into account whether they were target or non target. This missing piece in the methodology should be taken into account according to intradisciplinary research in linguistics, and it deserves further consideration. Another limitation is that the connection between identity and usage of articles would have required additional tools, for example, tests of assessment of foreigner talk. However, the findings of this paper demonstrate that usage of articles could be constrained by social factors too.

The construction of identity in the Japanese Community

One of the questions in the interviews asked the participants about the importance of the JC. However, 9 of the 19 participants who were born in Japan said they did not belong to the JC: “Es que yo no soy de *colonia japonesa*. O sea tengo totalmente diferente” (“I am not of the *Japanese Colony*. That’s to say, I am something totally different”, P3). P3’s interpretation of “Japanese Community” and “Japanese Colony” should be noted. Both are translations of the term *Nik-*

kei, which has two meanings involved: one is the sense of community, and the other is the sense of permanent residence. Therefore, both *Japanese Community* and *Japanese Colony* have the same meaning for all Japanese. Even people outside the community clearly understand the difference between being part of the Japanese Colony/Community, and not being part of it.

All but one of the nine participants who arrived after 1990 to Colombia expressed the view that they did not to belong to the JC. P13, who came to marry a *Nisei* of the JC. Two of those who do not feel part of the JC are scientists who work with projects to improve local agriculture in the *Centro de Internacional para la Agricultura Tropical* (International Center for Tropical Agriculture, CIAT). Four participants are volunteers for the *Japanese International Cooperation Agency* (JICA). They provide assistance with industrial and technological improvements for institutions of research and education in Colombia. All of these individuals migrated to Colombia as a volunteer option and plan to return to Japan. They live Cali, a large city in southwest Colombia, the capital of the *departamento* of El Valle del Cauca. The case of a Christian missionary couple, however, is rather different. They live in Palmira, a suburb of Cali. They are leaders of the *Colombia Iesu no Itama Kyoka*, which in Japanese means *Colombian Church of Holy Spirit*. Both of them were born in Japan and followed traditional Japanese religions, but they later converted to the Church. Their decision to establish their church in Colombia came to them as a divine revelation.

The first group of individuals who feel part of the JC is composed of those who arrived between 1929 and 1935. P15 and P24 are two women who arrived in 1935, at the ages of 7 and 4 respectively. In Japan, they were from the prefecture of Fukuoka. After landing at the port

of Buenaventura in El Valle, they undertook a journey toward the *departamento* of Cauca, where they arrived at the traditional plantation of *El Jaguar* (ACJ, 1979, p. 32). The economic activity that seemed so promising for these migrants was agriculture. As an anonymous Japanese person declared: “Yo pensaba ir al Brasil, pero cuando [sic] vi en un boletín informativo de inmigración que decía: ‘si hubiera un paraíso en este mundo, sería la Colonia de Colombia’ y heme aquí” (“I was thinking to go to Brazil, but when I saw in an informative brochure of immigration that said: ‘if there was a paradise in this world, it would that of the Colombian Colony’, and here I am”, ACJ, 1979, p. 46). They did not encounter a ready-made paradise, however. They had to start by preparing the soil, to build such a paradise little by little. They began by building their houses with *iraca*, a type of local palm. The adaptation to the new environment was a long process of withstanding the annoying *niguas*, types of fleas that are not perceived with a naked eye, but that reproduce in the toenails. They share the same representation of their own history as a past full of a heroic effort that led them to succeed as a community. They emphasized the value of hard work when they talked about their first years in Colombia.

The first contact with the Colombian society was through work. In their plantations, they hired Colombian labor. P29 explains the difficulties she experienced with the Colombian workers. They were not used to the amount of work expected. She solved the situation by having workers wear different colored uniforms. She monitored their work through binoculars. Workers received payment according to the amount of work completed, but also received extra payment if they did more than required. With this method, she also prevented the workers from stealing hens and other things from the

farm. She proudly believes that she was inculcating in them the values of honesty and hard work.

The first farmers formed a shared company for all Japanese, or *cooperativa*, to support each other and maintain their ties. The Japanese immigrants formalized their relationship through this *cooperativa* as a society that kept the families together in order to share the profits and support each other in cases of loss. However, the *cooperativa* came to an end during the World War II, because they were accused of having airports for the German airplanes, as P15 reports. This situation forced them to leave *El Jaguar* and disperse throughout the region from town to town (ACJ, 1979, p. 71). The impossibility of communicating by mail isolated them even more from their relatives in Japan. Moreover, as P24 asserts, many of their family members died after the bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A strategy to recover from the crisis left by the war was the creation in 1951 of the *Sociedad de Agricultores Japoneses* (Society of Japanese Farmers, SAJA, ACJ, 1979, p. 94). Many Japanese moved to Palmira and other cities of El Valle. By this time other Japanese people arrived in Colombia. Only after the treaty with the allies in 1952 did Colombia resume diplomatic relationships with Japan, and migration was allowed after having been prohibited since the beginning of the war (ACJ, 1979, p. 110). In 1953, P30 arrived with her family in Colombia. Her father was a soldier from Fukuoka, who could not find employment after the war. He migrated and joined the Colombian JC by helping with farm work. P31 states that, like others, the post-war crisis forced him to emigrate. According to him, the Japanese landowners preferred to make contracts with people of Japanese descendant because they felt more confident about their countrymen. In 1961, P7 arrived with other young men to work in the banana plantations of

Tumaco, a city in the *departamento* of Nariño. He was part of a campaign of expansion promoted by the Tenrikyo church⁶. As with P31, he had to learn how to drive heavy agriculture machinery, such as tractors, and to manage a type of soil with different properties than that in Japan. He arrived in Palmira ten years after working two and a half years in Tumaco, where he integrated into the JC.

Partly moved by the post-war crisis and partly taking advantage of a marriage proposal, P6, P12, and P29 were all women who arrived in Colombia in 1964, 1957, and 1961 respectively. They married *Nisei*. While the original community of *El Jagual* preferred Japanese spouses for their children, the new community of the 1950's had a different attitude, and more marriages with Colombians were allowed. P12, who arrived in 1957, said that if she came to Colombia to look for a Colombian husband, she could expect their children to find a Japanese spouse. This change in mentality led to a gradual attrition of the Japanese language.

An additional factor that produced attrition of Japanese was the growth of Cali as a metropolitan area. The lands of the JC were located in rural zones where schools are small and have fewer resources than urban schools. The most prestigious and modern schools were established in the cities like Cali, and the JC saw the need for their children to be educated in these schools. Therefore, the *Nisei* who grew up in the 60's and 70's were more exposed to a Spanish speaking environment from an early age than those who grew up in the 30's and 40's. The Japanese do not find integration of their children as negative. For example, P31 says that he speaks Spanish to his children, not Japanese, because they "don't need Japanese" ("no necesita japonés"). Due to the increase of interethnic marriages, children had more contact with the mainstream community

and with the Spanish language.

Most *Issei* people currently live in Cali. Few of them continue to live in Palmira. P12 reported that a cultural center for the Japanese colony of Fukuoka exists in Palmira, where they get together for leisure activities, such as karaoke. In Cali, there are two main places for the JC: one is the ACJ facility, located on the border between a high class neighborhood and downtown, and the other is the Tenrikyo church in the suburbs of Cali. However, the Tenrikyo community is also conceived as a different association, even though few individuals belong to both the *Nikkei* and to Tenrikyo. The ACJ is the continuation of the former SAJA. Agriculture is not as prosperous as in the past, but traditional immigrants keep their ties through membership to a society that originated from the old cooperatives of farmers.

Language among the JC

The interest in speaking the Japanese language and passing it to the next generation was a project of the first settlers. Inside the colony of *El Jagual*, the Japanese language was spoken, and participants agree that it was non-standard Japanese. The communication code was the dialect of Fukuoka. The dialect did not receive the same innovations as in Japan due to isolation. Hence, the vocabulary remained obsolete because in Japan much of it was replaced by English loanwords. As expected, as time passed and new generations arose, the JC accepted loanwords from Spanish. To maintain the language, a school for children was created in 1936. In this school, the Japanese language was principally spoken, but they also received instruction in the Spanish language as a subject. P21, a *Nisei* who was born in 1935, reports to have participated in the activities of this school.

The *Issei* people had contact with the Span-

ish language through the local farm workers, who used to speak a non-standard variety of Spanish. Participants report that their parents felt ashamed of speaking Spanish in "educated" settings, such as school meetings, because of their awareness of speaking a non-standard variety, not only because of the Japanese influence. Adult settlers of the period between 1929 and 1935 and who made an effort to maintain the language caused other conflicts. Since their dialect became obsolete, traditional settlers who used a modern variety had trouble adapting to it. P6 reports that her husband told her "Usted no está hablando japonés" ("You are not speaking Japanese", P6, JC), and she had to explain to her husband that his language was that of "hace sesenta, setenta años" ("sixty, seventy years ago").

All of the *Issei* people said that they speak mostly in Spanish to their children, contrary to

what former settlers did. The women say they were actually learning Spanish from their children. The language situation in which *Issei* people were using Spanish created an acceptance of their non-native features without systematic correction or explicit instruction. The most common pattern of interaction was *Issei* people talking to their children or to their employees. A person speaking L2 Spanish would typically be a Japanese speaker addressing a person of lower status. This situation should have created an acceptance of non-native features such as the omissions of Spanish articles due to lower-level addressees. Table 2 shows article omissions of around 75%, in both the JC and the beginners who do not belong to it (see Table 2 below).

The NJC-Adv shows only a 33.9% of omissions, while the NJC-Beg show a similar percentage of omissions: 75.4%, the JC; 75.7%, the

Table 2 Spanish L2 article usage among Japanese bilinguals according to groups.

	Participant #	Production	Omissions	Total	Omissions%
JC	6	72	341	413	82.566586
	7	115	269	341	78.8856305
	12	151	142	293	48.4641638
	13	28	98	126	77.7777778
	14	33	152	185	82.1621622
	29	53	259	312	83.0128205
	31	46	136	182	74.7252747
		498	1397	1852	75.4319654
NJC Beg	1	43	188	231	81.3852814
	10	86	135	222	60.8108108
	27	94	428	136	90.4411765
		236	874	589	75.721562
NJC Int.	19	84	173	261	66.2835249
NJC	3	192	84	276	30.4347826
	9	190	34	224	15.1785714
	18	76	87	163	53.3742331
	28	191	129	320	40.3125
		649	334	983	33.9776195

NJC-Beg. The t-test shows that the pattern of omissions among the JC and the NJC-Beg is not significant ($p = .715$). In contrast, the difference between the JC and the NJC-Advanced JC is significant ($p = .007$). This result shows that the people who do not belong to the JC have acquired a system of articles, even if we do not discuss how “target-like” it is. Similarity between the JC and the NJC-Beg could lead to different interpretations. One possibility is that the JC have accepted an article-less type of speech due to the lack of explicit instruction. The JC frequently speak Spanish to their employees and to their children, which requires a lower need of correction. The community has acquired a prestige toward the Colombian mainstream community, which allowed them to keep a Japanese usage of nouns. With regard to cognitive factors, explicit instruction seems a requirement for adult acquisition of L2 articles. Speakers need a series of explicit statements and rules to be able to recognize an abstract system not present in their L1s, and this system is not accessible to adults through pure naturalistic input.

In the subject position, where definite articles are preferred in Spanish, the word “barrio” (neighborhood) refers to a unique referent where a Spanish speaker would use a definite article. Individuals from both the JC and the NJC omit the article in these cases, as in examples (4) and (5):

- (4) Ø barrio, Ø barrio es son toda neighborhood neighborhood is are all residencial residencial. (P29, JC)

‘The neighborhood was residential, but people of low income live nearby [right in front of us this neighborhood started].’

- (5) En Ø barrio (..) solamente japonés (P11, NJC-Beg).
In neighborhood only Japanese

‘Only Japanese live in the neighborhood.’

Definite articles are used as part of fixed expressions, such as expressions of time *todos los días* (lit. “all the days”, ‘everyday’), or *por la noche* (“in the night”, ‘every night’), as examples (6) and (7) show:

- (6) Pero vino otro de (..), sobrina de él, para But came other of niece of him, for llevárselo en la noche. (P6, JC)
take.CL(DO).INF in the night.

‘But another person came from... his niece, to take her at night.’

- (7) Por la mañana, siete. (P11)
For the morning, seven

‘At seven in the morning.’

A NCJ-Adv shows a more variety of contexts for using articles, as example (8) shows:

- (8) Porque cuando yo estaba estudiando el Because when I was studying the bachillerato me interesaba mucho la secondary interested much the historia mundial, la CL. 1sg época history of. world, the age medieval de la historia, España tuvo medieval of the history, Spain had un gran territorio mundial donde no a great territory of. world where no cae el sol falls thesun (P9, NJC-Adv)

‘[I decided to study Spanish] because when I was in high school, I was interested in world history, the medieval age of the history, [when] Spain had a great territory around the world where the sun never set.’

The content of the extract from P9 also reveals a different attitude from people who arrived after the 90’s. They have learned Spanish due to a personal interest, and not for obligation, as many of the JC had to do it.

Conclusions

Among the Japanese who currently live in the cities of Cali and Palmira, *departamento* of El Valle, those who identify themselves as part of the JC share certain elements of identity. They feel as though they are a strong and persevering people who were able to succeed despite difficulties in an agricultural community. In fact, at the entrance of ACJ, there is a large board, written in Japanese, with a proverb that states: “Perseverance is the strength.” The ACJ is the continuation of a society whose members share a history of migration that goes back to 1929.

During and after World War II, ties with Japan decreased abruptly, and the method to reestablish them was through ethnic marriages and labor contracts. Japanese people who arrived after 1952 integrated into the community, so that their language and culture were maintained. This integration had to follow a process of adaptation between a traditional community and the newcomers. The former had not experienced the changes in the language and culture of Japan after the war, while the latter brought a new cultural background. An element of conflict was dialect. The traditional community used to speak an old variety of Fukuoka’s dialect, while the others had very different elements of speech they felt were more standard and mod-

ern. In addition, families formed after 1952 experienced a change in mentality regarding the ethnic marriages. Parents of these new families tend to believe that integration toward Colombian culture and Spanish language was a better legacy for their children. Responsibility for language maintenance was given to the school and associations.

Regarding the L2 Spanish, the community of 1952 was forced to learn Spanish through spontaneous contact with their workers and their children who acquired Spanish in the formal setting of school. In this situation, their acquisition of nominal systems followed a process in which they felt the referent could be successfully expressed without articles, as Trenkic says (2009). Thus, their *end state grammars* have a tendency to signal most referents with features that do not need to specify definiteness as in Japanese.

In conclusion, directions for future research should take into account other methods to collect information about indexicality. Foreign Accent Judgment tasks could give more information about whether the people of the JC identify themselves because of language features such as article omissions. A task like that would also reveal whether the Japanese are aware of the functionality of articles in Spanish, but intentionally omits them as a way to express themselves as part of the JC. This type of information, along with a more detailed integration of linguistic features, would make a contribution to how social factors interact with linguistic factors in the acquisition of articles.

Notes

1 This research is the result of a class project that started in the Fall of 2009 with Dr. Ana de Prada Pérez, in the university of Florida. She encouraged me to continue with it, and I completed a proposal in the Spring of 2010. I received a grant from NSF through the I-Cubed program.

Petta-Gay Hannah, Jeanne Holcomb, and Diego Pascual, helped me refine the materials for the sociolinguistic interviews. In addition, Diego Pascual collaborated in the field, and transcribed the biographical information of the participants into a spreadsheet. I acknowledge the facilitation provided by the Asociación Colombo-Japonesa to contact the participants and perform the interviews. Ángela María Collazos produced the first draft of all the transcripts, and Dr. Brian MacWhinney assisted me in the production of a cleaner version of them. Dr. Hirabayashi recommended valuable material for the sociology portion of this paper. I am grateful to my family, Clara Inés Collazos Sandoval and Guillermo Alberto Díaz Tobón, who housed me and provided me transportation to the field. Carlos Enrique Ibarra devoted a long time in the organization of the quantitative data, and in the statistical tests. Special thanks to all people who supported me during the most challenging stages of this process, David Vásquez Hurtado, my husband, who encouraged me to publish the results of this portion of the project, and Cindie Moore, who also proofread this paper all the times I needed. And I want to acknowledge the support of Dr. David Pharies and Dr. Gillian Lord, who helped me overcome administrative difficulties related to this project. To all of them thank you for allowing me to take this step toward a personal project, not related to my dissertation, which started four years ago when I first became fascinated with the Japanese language and culture.

2 The Colombian *Nikkei* recounts this story in *Los pasos de 50 años: Historia de la Inmigración Japonesa a Colombia*. Information is taken from this primary source. ACJ stands for Asociación Colombo Japonesa (Colombian-Japanese Association). This institution is made up of individuals who belong to the Japanese Community of Colombia

3 I will use the following initials in this paper: *JC* for *Japanese Community*; *NJC* (*Non-Japanese Community*) for the Japanese immigrants who live in Colombia, but do not feel part of the *JC*. *Beg*, *Int*, and *Adv* refers to the levels of proficiency in Spanish: *Beginner*, *Intermediate*, and *Advanced* respectively. I will refer to all participants with a *P* plus an identification number of, such as *P18*, meaning participant 18. In addition, the *Asociación Colombo-Japonesa* (Japanese-Colombian Association) will be referred to as *ACJ*.

4 IRB2 was approved on July 23, 2010.

5 In the description of social identity, quotation will be given in Spanish, with indirect translations of meaning. For discussion of linguistic features, I will pro-

vide glosses as well as translations of meaning.

6 Tenrikyo is a monotheistic religion founded in the 19th century in Japan by Oyasama, a young, female farmer. Followers of the religion believe that she received a revelation from God. People of any ethnic origin may belong to the religion.

References

- Asociación Colombo-Japonesa. (1979). *Los pasos de 50 años. Historia de la Inmigración Japonesa a Colombia*. Cali: Asociación Colombo-Japonesa.
- Befu, H. (2002). Globalization as Human Dispersal: Nikkei in the World. In L. R. Hirabayashi et al. (Eds.), *New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America* (pp.1-18). California: Stanford University.
- Block, D. (2007). *Second Language Identities*. London: Continuum.
- Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2010). Locating identity in language. In C. Llamas and D. Watt (Eds.), *Language and Identities* (pp.18-28). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bullock, B. & Toribio, J. A. (2008). Kreyol incursions into Dominican Spanish: The perception of Haitianized speech among Dominicans. In M. Niño-Murcia and J. Rothman (Eds.), *Bilingualism and Identity. Spanish at the Crossroads with Other Languages* (pp.175-200). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Contreras, H. (1996). Sobre la distribución de los sintagmas nominales no predicativos sin determinante. In I. Bosque (Ed.), *El sustantivo sin determinación. La ausencia de determinante en la lengua española* (pp. 141-168). Madrid: Visor.
- Fox, S. (2010). Ethnicity, religion and practices: Adolescents in the East End of London. In C. Llamas and D. Watt (Eds.). *Language and Identities* (pp.144-156). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- García, M. del P., M. & Hawkins, R. (Eds.). (2009). *Second Language Acquisition of Articles: Empirical findings and theoretical implications*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Hirabayashi, L. R., Kikumura-Yano, A. & Hirabayashi, J. A. (2002). The impact of contemporary globalization on Nikkei identities. *New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America* (pp.19-27). California: Stanford University.
- Lesser, J. (2002). In the search of the hyphen: Nikkei and the struggle over Brazilian national identity. In Hira-

bayashi, L. R. et al. (Eds). *New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America* (pp.37-58). California: Stanford University.

- Murphy, S. L. (1997) *Knowledge and Production of English Articles by Advanced Second Language Learners*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Universidad of Texas at Austin.
- Sanmiguel, I. (2006) Japoneses en Colombia: Historia de inmigración, sus descendientes en Japón. *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, 23, 81-96.
- Snape, N. (2006) *The Acquisition of the English Determiner Phrase by Japanese and Spanish Learners of English*. (Doctoral dissertation, unpublished version consulted). University of Essex.
- Tagliamonte, S. A. (2006). *Analysing Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Trademan, J. (2002). *The Acquisition of the English Article System by Native Speakers of Spanish and Japanese: A Cross Linguistic Comparison*. (Doctoral dissertation). Northeastern Illinois University.
- Trenkic, D. (2009). Accounting for patterns of article omissions and substitutions in second language production. In García Mayo, P. (Ed.). *Second Language Acquisition of Articles: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Implications* (pp. 115-143). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wakabayashi, S. & Hall, C. (1997). *The Acquisition of Functional Categories by Learners of English*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Cambridge University.
- White, L. (2003). Fossilization in steady state L2 grammars: Persistent problems with inflectional morphology. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* (6)2, 129-141.