Abstract

This thesis investigates how English language learners use the discourse marker *so*, in comparison to (Canadian) English-dominant speakers. The data were collected from audio recordings of 20 one-on-one sessions with ten English-dominant speakers, five Korean English language learners, and five Japanese English-language learners. Overall, the English language learners employed *so* in a very similar fashion to the English-dominant speakers. The results did, however, reveal a notable anomaly in the use of one of *so*’s functions in the English-language learner data. Overall, the English-language learners were found to employ Move *so* more frequently in comparison to the English-dominant speakers. Moreover, the brief examinations of a Korean discourse marker, *kulenikka*, and a Japanese discourse marker, *dakara*, demonstrated a possibility for L1 transfer in the acquisition of an L2. It was also discovered that greater English-learning experience abroad and self-declared awareness of some of *so*’s functions did not necessarily result in the learners using the discourse marker in a similar manner to the English-dominant speakers in the study.