

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: The Second Language Acquisition of Japanese Particles WA and GA

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One of the most difficult aspects of the study and use of Japanese grammar is the distinction between WA and GA (Imamura, 2002; Hasegawa, 2014). The differences between these two particles are typically complicated since they each contain multiple functions and the selection criteria for these functions are not always exclusive (Hasegawa, 2014). Hence, both teachers and students continue to suffer from the ambiguities concerning WA and GA (Tomita, 1995). Obviously, there have been numerous studies to investigate these particles. However, for the most part, the objective of these studies was primarily concerned with the identification of linguistic elements or the development of existing linguistic classification systems for WA and GA, and a number of questions on identifying the major source of L2 learner's troubles across their functions remain to be addressed. Therefore, the current study explored six selected functions of WA and GA based on earlier L2 Japanese studies and examined these particles in a discourse context in order to determine the types of functions that elicits more errors than others and the effect of language proficiency acquiring the different functions of WA and GA. To address these research questions, a web-based online cloze test involving 82 multiple choice questions on Japanese particles was distributed to students in Japanese language courses at a mid-size university. Participants were asked to choose the appropriate particle for each context. The data were

statistically analyzed using logistic regressions. The study found that there were certain functions of WA and GA that L2 Japanese learners find more difficult than others, and there was an effect of proficiency on particular functions. These findings suggest that learners' accuracy on WA and GA is function-dependent, and proficiency effects are also modulated by function.