

Seminar on L2 Acquisition in Japanese

There will be a seminar by **Haruka Woods, PhD candidate, ANU College of Asian and the Pacific**, as follows:

Title: **Syntax-discourse interface on second language acquisition: Case of Japanese *wa* and *ga***

3:30 pm, Tuesday, 27 March

Venue: **Engma Room (#5019, Coombs Bldg #9)**

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the ongoing debate of the Interface Hypothesis (Sorace and Filiaci, 2006) by using L1 English speakers' acquisition of Japanese particles *wa* and *ga* as an evidence. The study also attempts to shed a light on the process of SLA of these particles by examining the effect of syntactic and discourse factors. [Office1]In Japanese SLA, acquisition of *wa* and *ga* has been widely discussed in the past (e.g. Sakamoto, 2000; Tamura, 1994). However, not enough attention has been paid to the distinction between syntactic and discourse influence on the choice of these markers. In English, the extra-propositional functions represented by the use of *wa* and *ga* is not explicitly demonstrated on grammar. Therefore, examining how L1 English speakers acquire these markers will provide a strong evidence of the acquirability of interface properties.

L1 English [Office2]/ L2 Japanese speakers (N=124) and Japanese native speakers (N=36) as a control group participated in a cloze test, in which they were instructed to choose either *wa* or *ga* to fill a gap in a sentence under various syntactic and discourse conditions. The tentative result revealed that L2 speakers' choice is affected by various factors and their interactions. The findings include that, while the use of *wa* that marks the topic (the topic *wa*) and *ga* that marks an exclusively selected NP (the exhaustive-listing *ga*) are highly affected by both syntactic and discourse factors, there is no significant effect of syntactic factors on the choice of *wa* that mark a contrast between NPs (the contrastive *wa*). I also found a significantly low probability of choosing the exhaustive-listing *ga* in an adjectival sentence in all the non-native groups and also in the native group, which makes a vivid contrast to nominal and verbal sentences.

ALL WELCOME!

Best regards,
Duck-Young