

A Study of the Child Acquisition of GA and WA in the Stage of Multi-Word Utterances

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In my previous study, "The Occurrence of GA and WA in the Stage of Two-Word Utterances,"¹ Sumihare's stage of two-word utterances was seen to begin at the age of 1:06 (one year and six months). The criterion to decide the stage of two-word utterances was that the child produced two-word and two-word timed utterances. What I meant by a two-word timed utterance was a unit of one word and a following particle. Most of the particles at that stage were sentence particles and the topic marker WA with the question intonation, and all other new particles that first appeared during that stage² were used always at the end of utterances.³

Since in the Japanese language the syntactic relation between the words in an utterance is mostly marked by a particle attached to a word, what particle appears between two words in the child utterance and when it appears have to be examined. Especially since the relation between a nominal and a predicate word depends on the particle,⁴ our concern here is especially with the particles that appear after nominals in the utterances that contain predicate words.

The first particle that appeared between words in Sumihare's utterances was NI, the direction marker,⁵ at the age of 1:09, which was a misuse for TO, 'with.' The next one was GA, the subject marker,⁶ at the same age. GA appeared three times at this age. At the age of 1:10, he began to use NO, the possessive / attributive marker,⁷ and he used O, the object marker,⁸ once. He used GA four times here. At the age of 1:11, he used WA as the topic marker a couple of times.⁹ At the age of 1:12 he used DE 'by means of'¹⁰ once. He used GA three times, and came to use NO quite often. At the age of 2:01 he first used NI¹¹ and E,¹² the direction markers, once. He used TO three times and GA four times. At the age of 2:02, he used MO 'also'¹³ for the first time and only once, and he came to use NI, NO, E, and TO quite often. GA appeared forty-four times, and WA four times. At the age of 2:03 he frequently used all the particles except O above, and two more new particles MADE 'up to'¹⁴ and KARA 'because'¹⁵ once. At the age of 2:04, all the particles above appeared, and he used O three times.

As for O, the object marker, he first produced it at the age of 1:10 only once, and it did not appear until the age of 2:04, when he began using KARA, which is attached to a verb, and thus he began to use a new form of the verb. This resulted in his producing several numbers of complex sentences containing two predicate verbs. Also at this age he used GA in about 70 percent of the possible GA sentence constructions.¹⁶ Thus

we can see that the child arrived at another stage of language acquisition at the age of 2:04.

For the purpose of this study of Sumihare's acquisition of GA, the subject marker, and WA, the topic marker, all the possible GA and WA sentence utterances between 1:09 through 2:03 were chosen as the data.

GA Acquisition

At the age of 1:09, Sumihare produced three GA sentences, but all of the predicates were the same (o)*kutta*, and they were not produced in actual communicative situations: 'sent'

the first one was talking to himself, the next one was talking in his sleep, and the last one appeared while talking with his father, but it was out of context of the conversation going on.

The fourth GA sentence appeared two weeks later at the age of 1:10 as a communicative utterance indicating a real occurrence but using the same expression, *okutta: Baachan ŋa okuttatta omochi*. At this stage he produced three more GA's between 'Grandma' 'sent' 'rice cake'

words.¹⁷ Another predicate verb of a sentence, to which the child began to put GA at this age was *atta* 'be-Past': *Mikan GA atta* and *Baachan GA atta*. Between these two 'orange' 'Grandma'

utterances, though, he also said *Oudon atta* dropping GA in the same kind of situation. 'noodle'

At the age of 1:11, he produced no GA sentences. At the age of 1:12, he produced three, whose predicate verbs were all different. One of them was *tootta* 'passed,' with which he did not put GA at the age of 1:11.¹⁸ At the age of 2:01, he produced four GA sentences, all of whose predicates were new and different from each other. But here, too, he did not put GA into a sentence that had the same predicate. For example, on March 13, he said *A beito GA ochita yo* 'Ah the biscuit fell,' but on the 21st, he said 'biscuit' 'dropped' SP¹⁹

Otoohu ochita 'Beancurd fell'; on the 16th, he said *Bachu GA kita yo*. *Tootta* 'A bus came. 'beancurd' 'bus' 'came' 'passed'

(It) passed,' but on April 4, he said *Dencha kita* 'A street car came,' and on April 8, he 'street' 'came car'

said *Bachu kita*. *Baachan notta* 'A bus came. Grandma got on.' At the age of 2:02, he 'bus' 'came' 'Grandma' 'rode'

produced forty-three and at the age of 2:03 ninety-six GA sentences. The predicates consisted of a variety of kinds, which showed his confidence in using GA, and we can say at this stage his acquisition of GA as the subject marker had become quite complete.

However, even at this stage the child produced the same or almost the same utterances with GA at one time and without GA at another. Below are examples of such utterances:

Boku no taitai agatta.
'I' P²⁰ 'fish' 'climbed'

Taitai GA agatta.
'fish' 'climbed'

Abunai yo. Bachu kuru yo.
 'dangerous' 'bus' 'come'
 SP

Wakame wakame ojichan GA kuru.
 'sea food' 'man' 'come'

Buubuu iku yo.
 'car' 'go' SP

Buubuu GA iku yo.
 'car' 'go' SP

Batabata kita.
 'three-wheeled car'
 'came'

Chinchin GA kita.
 'bicycle' 'came'

Batabata itchatta.
 'three-wheeled car'
 'has gone'

Bachu GA itchatta yo.
 'bus' 'has gone' SP

Sheiji-chan naiteru.
 (the name 'crying'
 of a boy)

Seeji-chan GA naiteru.
 (the name 'crying'
 of a boy)

The drop of GA from the sentence which the child seemed to have become fully able to produce with GA can be considered as a phenomenon which, though quite rare, does occur among adult native speakers of Japanese, and in fact some of the child's utterances may be due to this natural drop. Another reason for the child's drop of GA may be the length of an utterance. Is GA dropped when the number of words used in an utterance increases? This does not seem to be the reason, for we find the following longer utterances with GA:

Neechan GA akai no yoofuku kiteru ne.
 'older' 'red' P 'dress' 'wearing'
 girl' SP

'The girl is wearing a red dress.'

Kaachan akachan GA hitoi miteru yo.
 'Mommy' 'baby' 'alone' 'seeing' SP

'Mommy, the baby is looking at
 (something) alone.'

Seeji-chan GA chinchin-te ashoboo kiten?
 (the name 'tricycle-do' 'let's play' 'came'
 of a boy)

'Seeji came to play with a tricycle?'

Kaachan Keiko-chan GA okaachi itta.
 'Mommy' (the name 'funny' 'said'
 of a girl)

'Mommy, Keiko said 'funny.' '

Kaachan mimiju GA ippai oru yo.
 'Mommy' 'worm' 'many' be-Present
 SP

'Mommy, there are many worms.'

Obachan GA ohunepoo ii ne itta yoo.
 'woman' 'boat' 'nice' 'said' SP
 SP

'The woman said that the boat was
 nice.'

Akachan GA naku kara oite-iku.
 'baby' 'cry' 'because'
 'leaving-going'

'Because the baby cries, I'll
 leave him (home).'

The examples above are not only comparatively longer than other utterances at this age but also they contain modifiers or adverbials, and some are complex sentences with two predicate words.

When we compare the situations in which the child produced the same or almost the same utterances with GA and without GA, we see no particular situational differences which would lead him to use or drop GA.

However, when we examine all the Nominal+GA/ ϕ +Predicate Word constructions and Nominal+GA constructions the child produced at the age of 2:02 and 2:03, we can judge that there is consistency in his choice. Emphasis in his expression seems to be the clue. When he wanted to emphasize the subject nominal, he seemed to put in GA.

In the Japanese language when the predicated nominal is understood or taken for granted, it is usually dropped. The whole utterance, therefore, may consist only of the predicate. Also, the predicate in an utterance may be said first and the predicated nominal may be added at the end. Among Sumihare's utterances we find such utterances:

~~~~~ Mata katte ne. Ne. <span style="border: 1px solid black;">Boku</span> GA ⁺ <span style="text-decoration: wavy;">~~~~~</span> mata katte ne. 'again' SP SP I P	+mis-usage for NI 'Buy (me) again. To me buy (me) again.'
'buy-me'	

(when talking about purchasing Sumihare's rice bowl)

~~~~~ Iku iku. <span style="border: 1px solid black;">Ookii no shuppoko</span> . 'go' 'big' P 'train'	'(There) goes; (there) goes. A long train.'
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(when watching a freight train passing)

~~~~~ Ano bachu notta-n <span style="border: 1px solid black;">Toochan</span> GA? 'that' 'bus' 'rode' P 'Daddy' P	'Did (you) ride that bus, Daddy?'
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(seeing a bus)

~~~~~ Hachaa ittan yo <span style="border: 1px solid black;">ojichan</span> GA. 'all aboard' SP 'man' P 'said'	'The man said all aboard.'
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(hearing a bus conductor)

~~~~~ Ki-ita. <span style="border: 1px solid black;">Buuwa</span> <span style="text-decoration: wavy;">~~~~~</span> ki-ita. 'went out' 'light'	'(It) went out. The light went out.'
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(seeing the light went out)

~~~~~ Okaachan yuuta <span style="border: 1px solid black;">Keiko-chan</span> GA. 'Mommy' 'said' (the name P of a girl)	'Keiko said Mommy.'
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(hearing Keiko called "Mommy")

Mata kita wa. Bachu GA kita wa.
 'again' P 'bus' P
 'came'

'A bus came again.'

(hearing a bus passing)

Kita yo torakku GA.
 'came' SP 'truck' P

'The truck came.'

(hearing a truck for an election campaign)

Itcho ni natta ne bachu GA. Bachu GA itcho ni natta ne.
 'together' 'became' 'bus' P
 P P

'The busses came
 at the same time.'

(seeing two buses came)

Mother: Ohune uiteru ne.
 'boat' 'floating'
 SP

'A boat is floating.'

Sumihare: Uiteru booto GA.
 'boat' P

'The boat is floating.'

(watching the boat on the pond)

Okottoru. Kee-chan GA okottoru.
 (the name 'getting angry'
 of a child)
 P

'Kee is getting angry.'

(seeing Kee getting angry)

In these utterances above in which the predicates precede the predicated nominals, the subjects, we can see that what attracted Sumihare's attention first was "what HAPPENED," not "WHAT happened." He expressed the motion, the predication, first and then added the agent, the subject, that caused the motion. The focus of the description of a scene was on the motion rather than on the agent.

When his attention was attracted to the whole scene of "what happened" or "what was happening," he produced such sentences as below:

Shuppoppo tekkoo tooru yo. Tekyoo.
 'train' 'bridge' 'go' P 'bridge'

'A train is passing on the bridge.'

(watching a train passing on the bridge)

Neechan okachii yuuta.
 'older' 'funny' 'said'
 girl'

'The girl said, "Funny."'

(reporting what the neighbor's girl has said)

Huppopo kuru. (Goton goton mite ikoo.) 'A train will come. (Let's wait and
'train' 'come' watch it.)'
(waiting for a train to come)

Torakku kita. 'A truck came.'
'truck' 'came'
(hearing an election campaign truck coming)

Akachan wutkun yuuta yo. 'The baby said *wutkun*.'
'baby' (onomatopoeia
for a burp) P
'said'
(when the baby burped)

In these utterances we can see what the child wanted to say was "something did something," the description of the whole scene. The child produced the elements in a sentence in normal order and dropped GA after the subject nominal. In this way the agent and the motion were equally emphasized or equally NOT emphasized.

On the other hand, Sumihare used many such utterances of Nominal+GA constructions as *Moo GA*, *Ara Tooohan GA*, and *Araa ohunepoo GA*. In this kind of construction, most of the deleted predicates are *aru* 'is/(I've) found (it),' *atta* 'was/(I've) found (it),' or otherwise what the agent did is well understood or taken for granted within the context scene. When the child was attracted to a thing or an agent, he produced this kind of construction. In the utterance of this construction, WHAT, the subject nominal, is important for him to convey. As a good example, we find among the child's utterances *Bachu GA. Kita* 'A bus came.' This utterance shows that his

'bus' 'came'

interest or attention was on a bus, and that was what he wanted to convey primarily, rather than the COMING of a bus. In addition, we also find such utterances as below:

Bachu kita yo. Bachu GA. 'A bus came.'
'bus' 'came' SP

Bachu itta bachu GA. (Ano bachu boku notta yo.) 'A bus went. (I rode
'went' 'that' 'I' 'rode' that bus).'

Shinbun kiteru yo. Yuukan GA yuukan GA. Yuukan GA. 'The evening paper
'newspaper' 'evening
'has come' paper' has come.'

Ame hutte-kita yo. Ame GA. 'The rain began
'rain' falling.'
'falling-began'

Obachan GA nattoo nattoo-tte kita. Obachan GA. 'A woman came
'woman' (a kind of 'doing' calling "nattoo.")
food) 'came'

In these utterances the child repeats the subject of the sentence after the whole description of a scene. In the description of a scene, the agent is an important thing for him to convey. In "something happened," the "something" is where the focus of his message is, and thus is repeated and enforced.

From these examples above we can judge that the child used GA discriminatingly in order to convey what attracted him. He used GA when it was the agent in a scene that drew his attention rather than the whole scene that he took notice of. GA following the subject nominal shows that the focus in the description of a scene was on the agent. The child used GA when he wanted to emphasize the subject nominal.

This his usage of GA as an emphasisizer is further obvious from the fact that he often put in GA after *boku* 'I.' In most of his utterances in which he expressed that he did something, there was no particle after 'I,' and when he put in GA, he meant that HE did something emphasizing that it was he who did something. Interestingly, he misused GA for NI in order to emphasize "to HIM" in the utterance *Mata katte ne. Ne. Boku*
'again' SP 'I'
'buy-me'

GA mata katte ne 'Buy (me) again, will you? Do. Buy me again, will you?!' Another example of misuse can be ascribed to his GA function of emphasis also. He said *Kaji GA naru*, in which the particle should have been NI to mean 'It becomes fire.' Here 'fire' 'become'

even if he might not have fully acquired NI as the meaning of 'become,' he could have just said *Kaji naru* without using a particle, but he wanted to enforce *kaji*, so he put in GA.

WA Acquisition

Sumihare's first WA between words appeared at the age of 1:11 in *Otoohu WA takitaki*
'beancurd' 'boiling'

naa 'As for the beancurd, (we) boil (it).' He said this touching beancurd left in the SP

kitchen. The next one appeared about ten days later when asked *Ombu shit-age yoo ka?*
'piggy- 'do-give'
backing' SP P

'(Shall I) carry (you) piggyback?' He answered *Ombu WA iran* 'As for the piggyback,
'need-not'

(I) don't want (it).' Here after no WA within sentences appeared until the age of 2:02, when he produced five WA sentences, and at the age of 2:03 he produced eleven.

Appearances of WA within sentences are much fewer than appearances of GA, though Sumihare quite often produced Nominal+WA construction with the question intonation asking about that nominal. Among the child's number of utterances we do find possible WA sentence constructions such as *Bubuu batabata nenne shita* 'As for
'car' 'three- 'sleep' 'did'
wheeled truck'

buses and three-wheeled trucks, (they) fell asleep,' *Chunchun nai ne* 'As for sparrows, (they)
'sparrow' 'not' SP

are not (there),’ *Onmo ame zaazaa hutteru* ‘As for outside, (it is) raining,’ or
 ‘outside’ (onoma- ‘falling’
 ‘rain’ topoiea for the sound of rainfall)

Kore nan nee? 'As for this, what's (this)?'
'this' 'what' SP

In the Japanese language, the first nominal without a particle in a basic sentence mostly means that it has something to do with the rest of the sentence. It should not necessarily be the subject of the predicate, the rest of the sentence. (In fact the dropping of GA is rare, and if the first nominal is the subject, GA is generally used.) The first nominal without a particle may be the topic of the rest: the rest, in this case, contains the subject whether overtly expressed or not. Below are examples from Sumihare's utterances:

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|----|---|--|
| 1. | Kore boku GA bachu notta.
'this' 'I' 'bus' 'rode' | 'As for this, (it is) the bus I rode. |
| 2. | Onmo ame zaazaa hutteru.
'outside' (onomatopoeia
'rain' for the sound of rainfall)
'falling' | 'As for outside, (it is) raining.' |
| 3. | Okaachan kaimono NI itta.
'Mommy' 'shopping' 'went'
P | 'As for Mother, (she) went shopping.' |
| 4. | Tamatama seetochan GA ⁺ moratta. ⁺⁺
'egg' 'student' 'received' | ⁺ misuse for NI/ ⁺⁺ misuse for
<i>kureta</i> 'gave'
'As for eggs, the students gave
(them to us). / . . . , (we)
received (them) from the students.' |
| 5. | Ano bachu notta-n Toochan GA.
'that' 'bus' 'rode' 'Daddy'
P | 'As for that bus, Daddy rode.' |
| 6. | Dooro bachu chinchin batabata kuru?
'street' 'street car' 'come'
'bus' 'three-wheeled
truck' | 'As for the street, do street cars,
buses, and three-wheeled trucks
come?' |
| 7. | Kotch bachu kuru. Kotch ikoo ne.
'this' 'bus' 'come' 'let's SP
side' go' | 'As for this side, buses will come.
Let's go this side, shall we?' |

in some of them we can use other kinds of particles as follows:

- (1) Kore WA boku GA bachu notta.
- (2) Onmo WA ame zaazaa hutteru.
- (3) Okaachan WA/GA kaimono NI itta.
- (4) Tamatama WA/O seetochan GA moratta.
- (5) Ano bachu WA/NI nottan Tootchan GA.
- (6) Dooroo WA/NI bachu chinchin batabata kuru?
- (7) Kotch WA/NI bachu kuru. Kotch ikoo NE.

The particles other than WA inserted above are used when the nominals which those particles follow appear in their original positions within the sentences. Thus, sentence elements can be picked up from their original positions and put at the beginning of the sentence. In this case the original particle may remain or may be replaced with WA so as to show that the utterance is going to be about the element preceding WA. But usually in spoken colloquial Japanese, the topic marker WA is often dropped, and we naturally understand those nominals without following particles at the beginning of sentences as the topics. The dropping of WA in Sumihare's utterances, then, cannot necessarily be considered as his incomplete acquisition of WA. It can be a natural phenomenon resulting from the speech of the adults around him.

We do intentionally use WA, sometimes even with stress, after the topic. We insert and or stress WA when we want to point out / bring out the topic in contrast to some other item which is overtly shown in the rest of the utterance or covertly shown in the context scene. In other words, if we put WA after the topic even when it will be well understood as the topic without the particle, the characteristic function of WA as the topic marker is intensified.

Since the general function of WA in colloquial language is the reinforcement of an item as the topic of the sentence, and since the child utterances without WA were rightly understood by the adults around him, we can say that Sumihare's dropping of WA is the result of the functionlessness of the particle in speech, as I pointed out in my previous paper.²¹

There is, however, also the problem of interpretation in the analysis of Sumihare's utterances, in which we find the first nominal as the possible subject of the sentence but without a following particle. Did he mean the nominal as the subject or the topic? For example, in the utterance, *Okaachan kaimono ni itta*, did he intentionally drop GA 'Mommy' 'shopping' 'went'

in order to simply describe the scene of "Mommy went shopping," as we have seen above, or was it the result of the natural drop of WA from *Okaachan WA kaimono ni itta* 'As for Mommy, (she) went shopping'? We can tell whether the child dropped GA or WA only in the situational context in which he produced the utterance.

In order to confirm our interpretation of the child's first nominal without a particle

either as the subject or the topic in reference to the situation, we should see whether or not he has acquired the differential usage between GA and WA at this stage. We have examined his GA acquisition in the previous section. Now we should check if his WA is rightly used in appropriate situations. Below are all the WA utterances whose WA are syntactically changeable with GA:

1. Father: Ombu shit-age yoo. 'I'll carry (you) piggyback.'
 'piggy-back' SP
 'do-give'
- Sumihare: Ombu WA iran. 'As for the piggyback, (I) don't
 'need-not' want (it).'
- (Father said to Sumihare that he would carry him piggyback, and)
 (Sumihare replied that he didn't want to be carried piggyback.)

Ombu 'piggyback' was an old item at the time of his utterance.

2. a. Boku tantaan churu yo ne. 'As for me, (I) will do stamping.'
 'stamping' 'do' SP SP
- b. Boku WA tantaan shita yo. 'As for me, (I) did stamping.'
 'did'
- (Sumihare was taking a walk with his father. On the way there
 was a concrete cover on the street, on which he used to stamp
 every time he passed it. While going toward that place, he
 uttered (a), then he added (b).)

According to his rule for GA usage, he could not use GA in (b), which would have emphasized *boku* 'I'. In this situation, the experience of "what HE had done" was what he wanted to convey, and not just the experience of doing it, nor that it was HE that did it.

3. Father: Kore WA doo desu. 'As for this, how is (it)!/What
 'this' 'how' 'is' a mess!'
- Sumihare: Kore WA doo da.
 'is'

(Father exclaimed what a scene it was seeing the room in disorder.)

Sumihare repeated the utterance without dropping WA.

4. Tootchan boku WA bachu noru yo. 'Daddy, as for me, (I) am going to
 'Daddy' 'I' 'bus' 'ride' SP ride on a bus.'
- (Saying that he was going to ride on a bus, he rode on a tricycle.)

He wanted to explain what HE was going to do.

5. Kotchira WA chamuu nai. 'As for this place, (it) is not cold.'
 'this place' 'cold' 'not'
- (While taking a walk with Father in the afternoon, he uttered this.)
 (When he took a walk that morning, it was cold.)

He was explaining about the place where he was in regard to the temperature in contrast to the place where he had been that morning.

6. Bunbu WA nai nee. 'As for the water, (it) is not (there).'
- 'water' 'not' SP
- (Taking a walk, he came to a place where it had been muddy)
- (the last time he passed by.)

He was expecting the place to be muddy. Muddiness was in his mind, and he wanted to tell about that muddiness.

7. Sumihare: Jidoosha WA? 'As for cars, (what about them)?'
- 'car'
- Father: Jidoosha WA doko e demo tomaru no. 'As for cars, (they) stop
- 'where' 'even' 'stop' P anywhere.'
- P
- Koko demo asoko demo. '(They stop) here and
- 'here' 'there' there.'
- Sumihare: Un jidoocha WA koko atchi tomaru ne. 'Yes, as for cars, (they)
- 'yah' 'there' stop here and there.'
- (When talking about the bus stop, he asked what about cars.)
- (Father explained they would stop anywhere.)

Sumihare repeated Father's utterance without dropping WA.

8. Koko e boku WA tsukeru-n yo. 'As for me, (I) will apply (it) here.'
- 'here' 'I' 'apply' P SP
- P
- (Seeing Mother applying an ointment to his baby brother, he)
- (said this.)

He meant that in contrast to the baby, as for himself, he would apply the ointment somewhere else.

9. a. Takai ne. '(It's) high.'
- 'high' SP
- b. Koko WA takai ne. 'As for here, (it's) high.'
- 'here'
- (Having layed up blocks, he said (a), and added (b), pointing)
- (at the top.)

He explained how the top was.

10. Mother: Nani? 'What (is this)?'
- 'what'
- Sumihare: a. Kore takuwan. 'As for this, (it is) pickled radish.'
- 'this' 'pickled radish'

- b. Kore WA ochuchi. 'As for this, (it is) *sushi*.'
'sushi'

(When he was playing house, Mother asked what he was cooking.)
He replied (a) and (b).

He was explaining what each dish was. He put in WA in (b) pointing out the next thing in his explanation.

11. a. Kita yo. 'came' SP ' (Here it) has come.'
- b. Bachu ga chuitoru yo. 'The bus has arrived.'
'bus' 'arrive (Stative)'
SP
- c. Atchi WA Yokogawa iki. 'As for that one, (it is) bound
'is bound for' for Yokogawa.'
- (Hearing a bus coming, he said (a), (b), and (c) in the house.)

(Hearing a bus coming, he said (a), (b), and (c) in the house.)

He was explaining where that bus would go.

12. Sumihare: a. Karachu WA kaakaa yuute naku-n yo. 'As for crows, (they)
'crow' (onomatopoeia 'cry' P SP cry *kaakaa*.
for the crying of the crow)
'saying'

Mother: Soo suzume WA? ‘(Is that) so? (What about) sparrows?’
 ‘sparrow’

Sumihare: b. Chujume WA chuuchuu yuute naku-n yo. 'As for sparrows,
'sparrow' (onomatopoeia (they) cry *chuuchuu*.
for the crying of the sparrow)

He explained how each bird would cry.

All his WA sentences above were rightly used in reference to the respective situations in which he produced them.

The general difference between WA and GA functions is that the former presents the item, about which the rest of the sentence gives the explanation—therefore, the topic—and the latter leads the agent in the description of a scene—therefore, the subject. If we have a pair of data whose difference from each other is only the particles WA and GA, we could ascertain his differential usage between these particle by examining the respective situations. Though we do not have such pairs, we have the following data in which the kind of nominal and / or the predicate word are the same or almost the same kind:

Hearing a bus pass by, he said (12), which was a description of a scene he heard, emphasizing the bus driver. Utterance 12 was an explanation about a bird while pointing out each bird.

From the examples above we can say that Sumihare had acquired general differential usage of WA and GA. Our identification of his first nominal without a particle in an utterance either as the topic or the subject can now be seen as correct.

Conclusion

By the age of 2:04, Sumihare seemed to have acquired the subject marker GA and the topic marker WA in their respectively correct usage. We have seen the explanation for his dropping GA and WA in the respective GA-possible and WA-possible utterances. As to the dropping of GA, he was consistent. He seemed to make an overt differentiation between inserting and dropping GA—when he wanted to emphasize the agent in a scene, he inserted GA to mark the subject of the sentence; when the focus of his attention was on the whole scene, he dropped GA. As to the dropping of WA, it is due to the fact that adult speakers of Japanese often drop WA in the spoken language, a natural phenomenon; and the appearance of WA in an utterance can be taken as the reinforcement of the characteristic function of the topic marker.

NOTES

1. Cf. *Kobe College Studies* Vol. 26. No. 3 (1980).
2. 1:06—1:10
3. to 'with': *Kaachan nenneta Toochan to*. 'Mommy, (I) slept with Daddy.' *ga* the subject marker :
'Mommy' 'sleep-did' 'Daddy'
Toochan ga. 'Daddy (did it).' '(There is) Daddy.'
Daddy
4. *Kaachan mita* may be *Kaachan*, (*boku*) *mita* 'Mommy, (I) saw it,' *Kaachan GA mita* 'Mommy saw (it),' *Kaachan WA mita* 'As for Mommy, (she) saw (it),' *Kaachan O mita* '(I) saw Mommy,' or *Kaachan MO mita* 'Mommy also saw (it).'
5. *Toochan NI nenne ta* 'With(?) Daddy, (I) slept.'
'Daddy' 'sleep did'
6. *Baachan GA (o)kutta* 'Grandma sent (it).'
7. *Ringo NO toko* 'the place of apples.' He meant 'The place where they sell apples.'
'apple' 'place'
8. *Taata O choodai ya* 'Give me socks.'
'sock' 'give-me' SP
9. *Otoohu WA takitaki naa* 'As for the beancurd, (we) boil it,' and *Ombu WA iran* 'As for piggyback,
'beancurd' 'boiling' SP
'piggy-back'
'need-not'
10. Mother: *Sumihare-chan WA dooshite iku no?* 'How are (you), Sumihare, going?' Sumihare:
'how-do' 'go' P
Kakko DE ne ton ton ton 'With kakko.'
'geta' P (onomatopoeia for the sound for *geta*)
11. *Koko NI oita* '(I) put (it) here.'
'here' 'put(Past)'

12. *Ouchi I kaere* 'Go back to (your) home.'
'home' 'return (Command)'
13. *Ano bachu boku BO nontan yo* 'I also got on that bus.'
'that' 'bus' 'I' 'rode-P' SP
14. *Toochan tooku MADE iku. Tooku MADE iku. Saa ikimacho* 'Daddy, (I) go far. (I) go far.
'Daddy' 'far' 'go' 'let's go'
Let's go.'
15. *Akachan ga naku KARA oite iku* 'Because the baby cries, (I) am going to leave him (home).'
'baby' P 'cry' 'leave' 'go'
16. About one third at 2:02 and half at 2:03.
17. *Mikan GA atta* '(I) found oranges,' *Chii-tan GA Shima-chan to* 'Chii with Shima,' and *Baachan*
'orange' 'be (Past)' (the name (the name P
of a child) of a child)
GA atta '(I) found Grandma.'
18. *Toochan GA tootta* 'Daddy passed.' Cf. *Ottoochan shuppoko tootta* 'Daddy, a train passed.'
'Daddy' 'passed' 'Daddy' 'train'
19. SP stands for the sentence particle.
20. P stands for the particle.
21. "A Study of the Occurrence of GA and WA in the Stage of Two-Word Utterances"

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April 30, 1981.

A Study of the Child Acquisition of GA and WA in the Stage of Multi-Word Utterances

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The objective of the present study of the multi-word utterances is to describe and discuss the acquisition of GA, the subject marker, and WA, the topic marker, by Sumihare, a native child speaker of Japanese, and his acquisition of differential usage of WA and GA. All the utterances with GA and/or WA between words in sentences and the possible GA and/or WA sentence utterances that appeared between the age of one year and nine months through two years and three months were chosen as the data.

The child seemed to have acquired both particles in their respective correct usage by the age of two years and four months. His dropping GA and/or WA in the respective possible utterances was found to be consistent. He seemed to make an overt differentiation between inserting and dropping GA—when he wanted to emphasize the agent in the description of a scene, he inserted GA to mark the subject of the sentence; when the focus of his attention was on the whole scene, he dropped GA. As to the dropping of WA, it is due to the fact that adult speakers around him often drop WA in the spoken language, which is a natural phenomenon in Japanese; the appearance of WA in an utterance seemed to be the reinforcement of the characteristic function of the topic marker.