

Different Paths in the Acquisition of Japanese Negative Words Meaning Prohibition: *Dame* in the Standard Form and *Akan* in the Western Dialect

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Two versions of Japanese can follow different paths in acquisition. In Kubota (2011) a three-year-old acquired verbal and adjectival negation without making overlaps or overgeneralized errors across the standard and western Japanese, while he made significantly more inflectional errors in the standard verbal negation with *-nai* than in the dialect equivalent with *-hen*. This study examined, as in the usage-based theory (Tomasello 2003), whether the same child applied item-by-item acquisition to other negative words *dame* (standard nominal) and *akan* (western compound). Depending on the preceding verb inflection, both words mean not only prohibition but also strong suggestion. For prohibition, subjunctive verb precedes *tara akan/dame* ‘If you do, it’s no good/Don’t do’; for suggestion, negative verb precedes *n(ai)to akan/dame* ‘If you don’t do, it’s no good/You must do’. The child at two years of age knew these words’ synonymy, but each word made different structural ramifications. Morpho-syntactic structures with *akan* grew faster and further than those with *dame*. Initially, both words formed similar pivotal structures (e.g. *dame/akan* + particle; word + *dame/akan*; word + particle + *dame/akan* + particle). While *dame* remained predicative and meant ‘something is no good’, *akan* for prohibition developed earlier than for suggestion, making more verb inflectional errors for suggestion than for prohibition. Since his father used these words in similar structural variations, no interrelationship between input and his uses was observed. The results showed that, as Ito (1981) argues, language acquisition develops from emotional and egocentric aspects (e.g. prohibition) into rational or intellectual aspects (e.g. strong suggestion). Besides, the findings showed that, unlike proposition-denying verbal negations (Kubota 2011), such emotional and constraining meanings in dialect-dominant interpersonal contexts accelerated the dialect acquisition.