

How Accurately Can Japanese Language Learners Infer the Meaning of Japanese Syntactic Compound Verbs on a Written Test?

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Summary

This study investigated how the quantity of context, Japanese language proficiency, and type of second verb in compound verbs affect the accuracy of inferring the meaning of syntactic compound verbs in a written test. Target second verbs in compound verbs were divided into three categories according to the vocabulary level of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and the meaning of second verb in compound verbs. Participants were asked to write inferred meanings of target compound verbs under two conditions: word in isolation and word within a simple or complex sentence. The results show that (1) More quantity of context leads to more accurate inferred meanings in a written test, (2) Japanese language proficiency affects the accuracy of the inferred meanings, and (3) Accuracy of inferred meanings is affected by the extent to which the learner has the knowledge of single verbs. The tendency that Japanese language proficiency and type of second verb in compound verbs affect the accuracy of inferred meanings of target words was same as Yachi (2012) dealing with the accuracy of inferring the compound verb meanings in multiple choice test format, however, in terms of quantity of context, a simple sentence was sufficient to infer the meaning of syntactic compound verbs in a multiple choice test (Yachi 2012). This result suggests that quantity of context which requires inferring the meaning of target words accurately differ from test format.

Key words : compound verbs, quantity of context, Japanese language proficiency, second verbs, Mongolian Japanese language learners