Learning Japanese *Ni* Passives: Viewpoint/Adversity or 'Affectivity'[1]

Akiko Furukawa

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to relate theoretical findings to the practice of teaching *ni* passives, or passives with the agent marked with *ni* (by) (Kuroda 1979), to non-native speakers. Many JFL (Japanese as a foreign language) learners, or even JSL (Japanese as a second language) learners, are observed to have problems learning Japanese *ni* passives. For instance, in the production of the possessor passive, which is a subtype of Japanese passives, Tanaka (2000:230) stated that the average score of the advanced JFL learners was only 44.9% in the written production task in which the learners were asked to describe the situations depicted in a set of pictures. Even after twelve months' stay in Japan, the average score of all the learners only rose to 54.4%. These figures indicate the difficulty learners face in learning to produce these passives. Finding an effective way to teach these passives is necessary in order to assist learners to use *ni* passives naturally in communicative situations.

This paper attempts to propose one way of teaching Japanese *ni* passives to JFL learners and provide some empirical evidence of its effectiveness. It follows up the study presented in Furukawa

(2006), in which the issue of teaching possessor passives to JFL learners was discussed and the evidence of short-term effects of instruction presented.

In Section 2, a model of second language acquisition proposed by Gass (1988, 1997) will be presented. This model explains each process involved in language acquisition in detail, from when a learner encounters language data to when s/he uses it in production, and these processes are relevant regardless of the learning environment (whether JFL or JSL). In Section 3, I shall explain Japanese *ni* passives with a focus on the problems learners are likely to face, and propose a possible solution. After this in Section 4, the experiments I have conducted with the former students of the University of Reading will be described and the results presented in Section 5. These results will be discussed in Section 6, and finally some limitations of the present study will be pointed out in Section 7.

2. A Model of Second Language Acquisition (Gass 1988, 1997)

Learners are surrounded by an overwhelming amount of information and can only process a limited amount of such information at a time. According to Gass (1988, 1997), the process of second language acquisition involves the following five components: *apperceived input, comprehended input, intake, integration* and *output.*

First, learners must recognise that there is something to be learned. Gass calls this 'apperception'. It is 'the process of understanding by which newly observed qualities of an object are initially related to past experiences' (Gass 1997:4). Apperception is a

priming device that enables further analysis of the input. The next stage of input processing is the *comprehended input*. Gass takes the position that comprehension ranges from semantic analysis (or the understanding of the general message) to detailed structural analysis. It is claimed that the latter is more useful than the former in converting the input to *intake*. *Intake* is the process that mediates input and grammars and it is where information is matched against the learner's prior knowledge, and processing takes place against the existing internalised rules of grammar. The intake data may be used in forming hypotheses regarding the second language grammar. A hypothesis formed at the *intake* component may be *integrated* into the learner's linguistic system if it is confirmed by new input data. If it is rejected, it is modified and awaits further input for confirmation. If the input contains the information that is already part of the learner's grammar, the intake data may be used to re-confirm the hypothesis or strengthen the rule. This may assist the learner in automatising the retrieval of information from his/her knowledge base. In another case, the intake data may be stored after some level of understanding has taken place and may await more relevant input that confirms or disconfirms the hypothesis. Finally, the *output* component is seen not only as a manifestation of the outcome of acquisition but also as playing an active role in acquisition (Swain 1985, 1993, 1995, 1998), by serving as a means of testing hypotheses and also by forcing the learner to engage in syntactic rather than solely semantic analysis of language. The former feeds into the *intake* component and the latter the *comprehended input*.

Following this model, it can be hypothesised that providing

learners with the kind of input that may be comprehended at the level of syntax rather than its general meaning would be useful for further processing. I have therefore attempted to focus learners' attention to the form-meaning relationships of *ni* passives. Before describing how this was done, let us examine some of the examples of Japanese *ni* passives.

3. Japanese *Ni* Passives

Japanese passives have been widely discussed in theoretical linguistics and triggered controversies and disagreement in analysis at various levels including syntax, semantics and cognitive linguistics (see, for instance, Matsushita 1930/1977; Mikami 1953/1972; Kuno 1973, 1983, 1986; Howard and Niyekawa-Howard 1976; Shibatani 1978, 1997, 2000; Kuroda 1979, 1985; Teramura 1982; Masuoka 1987; Moriyama 1988; Kudo 1990; Nitta 1991, 1992; Takami 1995; Onoe 1998–1999, 2003; Oka 2002; Takami and Kuno 2002; Koguma 2004; Machida 2004; Taniguchi 2005).

Japanese passives are classified into direct and indirect passives at the structural level. (1) is an instance of the direct passive:

> (1) *Ken-no musume-ga sensei-ni sikar-are-ta.*
>   Ken's daughter-Nom teacher-by scold-Pass-Past
>   (Ken's daughter was scolded by the teacher.)

It has the active counterpart (Howard and Niyekawa-Howard 1976):

(2) *Sensei-ga Ken-no musume-o sikat-ta.*

　　teacher-Nom Ken's daughter-Acc scold-Past

　　(The teacher scolded Ken's daughter)

In (1) the patient *Ken-no musume* (Ken's daughter) is assigned the nominative case and the agent *sensei* (teacher) is marked with *ni* (by). The passive is marked by the morpheme *(r)are*[2]. (3) is an instance of the passivisation of an intransitive verb *huru* (to fall):

(3) *Ken-ga ame-ni hur-are-ta.*

　　Ken-Nom rain-by fall-Pass-Past

　　(It rained and Ken was negatively affected by this.)

It has no active counterpart and is called an indirect passive. (4) is what is sometimes referred to as the possessor passive:

(4) *Ken-ga sensei-ni musume-o sikar-are-ta.*

　　Ken-Nom teacher-by daughter-Acc scold-Pass-Past

　　(Ken had his daughter scolded by the teacher and was negatively affected by this[3].)

It contains Ken, the possessor of the patient *musume* (daughter) as the grammatical subject, which is assigned the nominative case. The agent *sensei* (teacher) is marked with *ni* (by), and the patient *musume* (daughter) with the accusative case *o*. The issue of whether possessor passives are direct or indirect passives is controversial (see Yamauchi 1997, for a review). However, it is generally located between direct and indirect passives, functioning as a bridge

between them (e.g. Teramura 1982; Moriyama 1988; Kudo 1990; Nitta 1992).

At the semantic level, direct passives are characterised as neutral, and indirect passives as adversative. Thus, in (3) and (4), the subject *Ken* is described as having been 'adversely affected' by the rain and having his daughter scolded by the teacher respectively, whereas there is no adversity meaning arising from passivisation in (1).

However, the dichotomy of direct and indirect passives is not always sustained since there are instances of direct passives with adversity meaning, as in (5) (Shibatani 2000:180), and indirect passives without this meaning, as in (6) (Kuno 1983:210)[4].

> (5) *Hanako-wa Taroo-ni ohuisu-no soto de 1-zikan mo mat-are-ta.*
> Hanako-Top Taro-by outside her office for as long as an hour wait-Pass-Past
> (Hanako had Taro waiting for her outside her office for as long as an hour and was negatively affected by this.)

> (6) *Boku-wa kodomo-o sensei-ni home-rare-ta.*
> I-Top (my) child-Acc teacher-by praise-Pass-Past
> (I had my child praised by the teacher and was positively affected by this.)

Also, as pointed out by Shibatani (2000:179), there is little semantic difference between the direct passive (7) and the indirect passive (8), and a clear difference in meaning between the indirect

passives (8) and (9).

> (7) *Ziroo-wa Taroo-ni nagur-are-ta.*
> Ziro-Top Taro-by beat-Pass-Past
> (Ziro was beaten by Taro.)

> (8) *Ziroo-wa Taroo-ni atama-o nagur-are-ta.*
> Ziro-Top Taro-by head-Acc beat-Pass-Past
> (Ziro had his head beaten by Taro.)

> (9) *Ziroo-wa Taroo-ni otooto-no atama-o nagur-are-ta.*
> Ziro-Top Taro-by younger brother's head-Acc beat-
> Pass-Past
> (Ziro had his younger brother's head beaten by Taro
> and was negatively affected by this.)

In other words, the distinction between direct and indirect passives is blurred in some cases[5]. This can be confusing for learners and a pedagogic approach that can explain the characteristics of Japanese *ni* passives in a manageable manner is necessary.

If we look at all the above examples, it can be said that all of them have the meaning that the grammatical subject was *affected* by the occurred event, if not always adversely. Thus, *ni* passives can be characterised as in (10), following and elaborating on the notion of 'affectivity' proposed by Kuroda (1979).

> (10) Uniform description of *ni* passives
> *Ni* passives encode the information that the speaker

has perceived that the passive subject has received another's action and its effect, and has chosen to describe the event from the passive subject's point of view.

If we introduce all instances of *ni* passives as *affective*, rather than *adversative* for indirect passives and neutral for direct passives, learning of these forms may become more efficient. Also, learning *ni* passives with positive meanings, such as *homerareru* (praise-Pass-non-Past) is likely to be more effective if we describe *ni* passives as *affective*, without any implication that the nature of this affectedness is necessarily negative. If the notion of *adversity* is adopted, *ni* passives with positive meanings will have to be treated as exceptional. Thus, the following hypotheses can be formed:

Hypothesis 1
It is more effective to teach all instances of *ni* passives, whether they are direct or indirect passives, as affective, rather than teaching multiple types of these passives with direct passives as semantically neutral and indirect passives (and possessor passives) as adversative.

Hypothesis 2
Teaching *ni* passives as *affective* rather than *adversative* leads to improved learning and production of *ni* passives with positive meanings.

In order to test these hypotheses, I conducted an empirical study

in which two groups of learners were provided with two different kinds of metalinguistic knowledge regarding *ni* passives, and the effects of instruction compared.

4. Experiments

4.1. Subjects

The subjects were seventeen former undergraduate students reading BA degree courses with Japanese as a minor subject at the University of Reading. All the students spent the first two years at Reading studying Japanese language and culture for six hours per week for the total of sixty weeks. In the third year they spent at least one semester in Japan studying at one of the exchange universities in Tokyo. After this, they returned to Reading to complete their final and fourth year. Out of the seventeen subjects, seven were assigned to the control group, and ten, the experimental group.

Data were also collected from ten native speakers of Japanese, who were undergraduate students in Professor Yoshida Seiji's seminar group and one Faculty assistant at the English Department of Seijo University.

4.2. Materials

Passives were taught using *Minna no Nihongo* vol. 2 and its accompanying translation and grammar notes. Since this textbook excludes passivisation of intransitive verbs, these were added in the instructional treatment. An additional input session was provided later on, in order to differentiate the two groups further. In

this session, *ni* passives were re-introduced with two other constructions that encode feelings, that is, the *te simau* construction that encodes regret, and benefactives that encode positive meanings such as a sense of gratefulness. Differentiations between the two groups were made in the following manner:

Grammar explanation

Experimental group (ten learners): all *ni* passives with a human grammatical subject carry the meaning that the subject is affected by the event;

Control group (seven learners): direct passives have the same meaning as the active, with a different viewpoint in describing the event, and possessor passives and passivised intransitive verbs have the adversity (negative) meaning

Input session

Experimental group: *ni* passives, benefactives and *te simau* (encoding a sense of regret) were re-introduced with an emphasis on the feelings these constructions encode;

Control group: *ni* passives, benefactives and *te simau* were re-introduced with an emphasis on the viewpoint from which a description is made (for *ni* passives and benefactives), and additionally as constructions that encode feelings.

After going through example sentences, the learners in both groups engaged in a short practice session. Here again, emphasis

was given to the feelings the three constructions encode with the experimental group, and the viewpoint from which a description is made with the control group.

Explicit grammar explanation was adopted in the instructional treatment and was designed to encourage the learners to notice (Schmidt 1990, 2001, etc.) the form-meaning relationships of *ni* passives.

The use of *ni* passives was tested using oral tasks, in which the learners were asked to look at a set of pictures that are similar to the ones used by Tanaka (e.g. 2000), and describe them to a close friend. All the tasks were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Those verbs that did not trigger the use of *ni* passives in native speakers, and those that involved the intransitive vs. transitive distinction, causing confusion on the part of the learners that made analysis difficult, were removed from analysis[6]. Table 1 shows the verbs that appeared in the two posttests and were used for analysis.

Table 1. Verbs Used in the Two Posttests

Verb / Posttest	*Sikaru* (to scold)	*Tataku* (to hit)	*Homeru* (to praise)	*Warau* (to laugh)	*Iu* (to say) (Neg)	*Iu* (to say) (Pos)	*Nusumu/Toru* (to steal)	*Humu* (to step on)
1	Yes	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*The use of *iu* was tested with a negative (*iu* Neg) and positive (*iu* Pos) comment in the complement clause as in *Kireida/Kakkoii to iwareru* (to be told 'You are good-looking') and *Kiraida to iwareru* (to be told 'I don't like you'), respectively.

4.3. Procedure

Data from the native speakers were collected in November 2001 at Seijo University, using the same picture description tasks as the ones the learners performed. With the learners, a pretest was conducted first, to exclude any learners who could produce *ni* passives orally before the instructional treatment. The results of this test was also used to check the comparability of the control and experimental groups, to make sure that the experimental group did not have overall higher proficiency. This was necessary to establish that better performance of the latter group is due to the instructional treatment, rather than the higher proficiency of this group.

Passives were taught in Week 13 or 14 (in the Spring Term) of the second year and the input session in around Week 28 (in the Summer Term), when the learners were more familiar with various constructions.

In the week after the input session, the first posttest (Posttest 1) was conducted to check short-term effects of instruction. The second posttest (Posttest 2) was administered after the learners had studied at a Japanese university for one semester. The main purpose of Posttest 2 was to check if the tendencies observed in Posttest 1 were still retained. Additionally, I checked some of the other available data from the same learners on their return to Reading in their final year. However, due to space limitations, these data will not be discussed here.

4.4. Analysis

After transcription of the spoken data, the learners' perfor-

mance in the two posttests was compared to that of the native speakers, particularly in the use of *ni* passives as opposed to actives. To compare the proficiency levels of the two learner groups before the instructional treatment, the pretest was marked for the use of the particles on the agent, patient, experiencer and the possessor, as well as the verbs. It was necessary to limit the marking to the core elements such as the agent, patient and so on, to avoid penalising those learners who produced longer utterances in more detailed descriptions of the pictures, and consequently took the risk of producing more errors. Since passives had not been taught at the time of this test, grammatical actives such as *Doroboo-ga kamera-o nusunda* (The thief stole my camera) were marked as correct.

The data obtained from the two posttests were analysed in terms of the forms produced by the learners. Metalinguistic comments made by the learners were also collected where possible to examine the role of metalinguistic knowledge. Any ungrammatical utterances that can be regarded as intermediate forms that the learners produced in the course of learning to produce *ni* passives were also noted and analysed.

In classifying the learners' utterances, verbal forms that can be regarded as passive attempts (e.g., *humuremasita* for *humaremasita* (stepped on-Pass-Polite-Past)) were regarded as correct. Also, if the learners' comments referred to a particular verbal form as the passive (e.g., *warareta* used instead of *warawareta* (laugh at-Pass-Past) and referred to as the passive), this was regarded as the use of the passive verb. It is the learners' attempted production of passives that is considered to be crucial in the present study and morpho-

logical errors are not regarded as significant.

Following the above guidelines, the learners' utterances were classified into the following four categories:

1. The use of correct passives;
2. The use of passive verbs with incorrect particles;
3. The use of passive particles or other notable particles with active verbs; and
4. The use of *te simau* (a sense of regret), and benefactives for positive situations.

In this paper, I shall focus on categories 1 and 2, since a discussion of other cases will require a more detailed description of the significance of these forms in leaning, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

5. Results

5.1. Results of Posttest 1

Table 2 shows the correct use of *ni* passives by the learners in the two groups, and Table 3 the use of the passive verbs with incorrect case particles. The use of the passive verb can be regarded as the learner's attempt to produce a passive utterance and is therefore significant in the process of learning. However, the errors in particles led to ungrammaticality of the utterance as a whole. In all of the data presented below, the use of percentages is only intended for the comparison between the groups with different total numbers of learners. Also, although the terms 'direct pas-

Table 2. Correct Use of *Ni* Passives by the Two Learner Groups, Posttest 1

Type	Direct passive				Possessor passive	
Verb	*Sikaru* (to scold)	*Warau* (to laugh)	*Iu* (to say) (Neg)	*Iu* (to say) (Pos)	*Nusumu/Toru* (to steal)	*Humu* (to step on)
Group						
Control (n = 7)	1/7 (14%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)
Experimental (n = 10)	3/10 (30%)	1/9 (11%)	1/9 (11%)	0/9 (0%)	4/10 (40%)	3/10 (30%)

*Since the data from one of the learners in the experimental group were invalidated for *warau* and *iu* (negative and positive), the total number is regarded as nine instead of ten for these items. The same applies to Table 3.

Table 3. Use of Passive Verbs with Incorrect Particles by the Two Learner Groups, Posttest 1

Type	Direct passive				Possessor passive	
Verb	*Sikaru* (to scold)	*Warau* (to laugh)	*Iu* (to say) (Neg)	*Iu* (to say) (Pos)	*Nusumu/Toru* (to steal)	*Humu* (to step on)
Group						
Control (n = 7)	1/7 (14%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)	0/7 (0%)	1/7 (14%)
Experimental (n = 10)	1/10 (10%)	1/9 (11%)	0/9 (0%)	0/9 (0%)	1/10 (10%)	3/10 (30%)

sive' and 'indirect passive' are used, this classification was not adopted in teaching the learners in the experimental group.

From the results presented in the two tables above, it can be said that overall the experimental group outperformed the control group, particularly in the production of the correct *ni* passives (Table 2). In the control group, there was only one use of the correct passive with *sikaru*. Although the difference between the

groups seems to be less clear in the use of the passive verbs with incorrect particles (Table 3), it is notable that the difference is prominent in the use of the passive verb with or without correct particles in the possessor passive items. In the use of *nusumu/toru*, 50% of the learners in the experimental group belong to this category, in comparison with no one (0%) in the control group. With *humu*, the ratio is 60% (experimental group) to 14% (control group). The use of passive verbs, whether or not accompanied by correct particles, reflects learners' attempts to produce passive utterances and this is very important in the process of learning to produce *ni* passives, as argued above.

5.2. Results of Posttest 2

Let us now turn to the results from Posttest 2, which took place after the learners had spent one semester in Tokyo on the Period Abroad Programme. Table 4 shows the use of the correct *ni* passives, and Table 5 the use of the passive verbs with incorrect case particles.

Again, the experimental group performed better than the control group in the production of correct passives, and the difference is even more notable than in Posttest 1. In the control group, there was only one learner who used the correct passive with *sikaru* and *humu*.

As for the use of the passive verbs with incorrect particles, it may look as if the control group were catching up with the experimental group. However, these forms were produced mostly by the same learner.

Only the learners in the experimental group produced correct

Table 4. Correct Use of *Ni* Passives by the Two Learner Groups, Posttest 2

Type	Direct passive						Possessor passive	
Verb Group	*Sikaru* (to scold)	*Tataku* (to hit)	*Homeru* (to praise)	*Warau* (to laugh)	*Iu* (to say) (Neg)	*Iu* (to say) (Pos)	*Nusumu/Toru* (to steal)	*Humu* (to step on)
Control	1/7	0/7	0/7	0/7	0/7	0/7	0/7	1/7
(N = 7)	(14%)	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	(14%)
Experi- mental (N = 10)	4/10 (40%)	4/10 (40%)	5/10 (50%)	3/10 (30%)	3/10 (30%)	3/10 (30%)	4/10 (40%)	4/10 (40%)

Table 5. Use of Passive Verbs with Incorrect Particles by the Two Learner Groups, Posttest 2

Type	Direct passive						Possessor passive	
Verb Group	*Sikaru* (to scold)	*Tataku* (to hit)	*Homeru* (to praise)	*Warau* (to laugh)	*Iu* (to say) (Neg)	*Iu* (to say) (Pos)	*Nusumu/Toru* (to steal)	*Humu* (to step on)
Control	2/7	1/7	2/7	1/7	0/7	0/7	1/7	2/7
(N = 7)	(29%)	(14%)	(29%)	(14%)	(0%)	(0%)	(14%)	(29%)
Experi- mental (N = 10)	1/10 (10%)	0/10 (0%)	1/10 (10%)	0/10 (0%)	0/10 (0%)	0/10 (0%)	1/10 (10%)	2/10 (20%)

*There was one additional learner in the experimental group who produced a verbal form that may have been intended as the passive in the use of *nusumu/toru*. Given the uncertainty, I have excluded this.

passives with positive meanings in the use of *homeru* and *iu* (positive). One learner in the experimental group and two in the control group used the verb *homerareru* (praise-Pass-non-Past) with incorrect particles. No learners in the control group seem to have attempted to produce the passive with *iu* (positive).

6. Discussion

The results from the two posttests show the faster pace of learning and higher levels of accuracy achieved by the learners in the experimental group. This is reflected particularly in the production of the correct *ni* passives. The better performance of this group in Posttest 1 in particular indicates that the instructional treatment for the experimental group was more effective than that for the control group. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 has been supported. Also, the correct use of *ni* passives with positive meanings was observed only in the learners in the experimental group[7], and no learners in the control group showed evidence of attempted use of the passive with *iu* (positive). The notion of 'affectivity' can be applied to positive situations as well as negative ones and this may have meant a wider applicability of this notion to a range of situations. This means that Hypothesis 2 has also been supported.

There are a number of factors that seem to have affected learning of *ni* passives. One of these factors is the possession of metalinguistic knowledge of the form and/or the meanings of *ni* passives. Detailed qualitative analysis of the learners' performance indicates that all the learners who displayed such metalinguistic knowledge were observed to show at least some progress in the production of *ni* passives. The contents of this metalinguistic knowledge were of two types. One was the mention of the term 'passive' during the experiment, which indicates that the learners had paid conscious attention to the form they were producing or had produced. More specifically, these learners mentioned the term 'passive' during the picture description, exhibiting an explicit

association between the situation depicted in the picture and the use of the passive form. This seems to have assisted them in making decisions regarding which form to use. The other type of metalinguistic knowledge involved the meanings of *ni* passives such as affective (in the case of the learners in the experimental group) and negative, irritation, unhappiness and victimisation (in the case of the learners in the control group). In fact, the only learners in the control group who showed clear evidence of progress in Posttest 2 were the ones with metalinguistic knowledge of the meanings of *ni* passives. It can therefore be concluded that such explicit knowledge was useful in the production of these forms in the tasks used in the present study. This is not to say that one cannot learn *ni* passives without metalinguistic knowledge, since the present study was not designed to test the roles of implicit and explicit learning or knowledge. However, the metalinguistic comments made by the learners provide a clue to the question of what might have assisted them in making their decisions in utterance production. As the results of the experiments indicate that the notion of 'affectivity' might assist learning, the next question is whether or not this notion can be learned without an explicit grammar explanation. This must be tested in further studies.

Qualitative analysis of the learners' performance also revealed the appearance of passive-like properties in their utterances. Two examples of these forms are the possessor in the possessor passive items and the 'agent-*ga* (Nom)/-*wa* (Top) passive' form.

First, as mentioned earlier when explaining the possessor passive in Example (4), it is necessary to encode the possessor separately from the patient in the production of this type of passive.

The appearance of this separate possessor (with the passive verb) occurred only in the utterances of the learners in the experimental group in Posttest 1. Although one learner in the control group uttered *Suri-ni saihu-o* (pickpocket-by purse-Acc) and asked 'How do you say stolen?' (in which the (separate) possessor 'I' as the topic may have been implicit), this learner subsequently used the active verb *totte simaimasita* (stole regrettably-Past). This indicates the lack of confidence of this learner in the use of passives and a limit of his/her ability. There was another learner in the control group who temporarily produced the separate possessor in the use of *humu* in the passive verbal form in Posttest 2[8]. However, the fact that this only happened in Posttest 2 indicates the slower pace of learning of this learner, compared to the successful learners in the experimental group. The appearance of the separate possessor in the possessor passive items means that the learner attempted to describe the event as what happened to the possessor *watasi* (I) rather than to the patient (e.g., *asi* (foot) in the use of *humu*) and thus can be considered as significant in the process of learning to produce these passives.

Secondly, many learners in both groups used the form with the agent marked with the nominative *ga* or the topical *wa* in combination with the passive verb. This phenomenon was also observed by Tanaka (e.g., 1999), who refers to VanPatten's (1996) first noun strategy (or more recently, the First Noun Principle in VanPatten 2004). What seems to have happened is that the learners first mentioned the agent and marked it with *ga* or *wa* because this is where the action described in the picture originates. In other words, the source of the action attracted their attention. Then the

passive verb was used (at least in some cases) to encode the meanings of affectedness (experimental group) or adversity (control group). Interestingly, this phenomenon was also observed in native speakers as in (11).

> (11) *Sakkii Mike-**ga** kimi tte kawaii ne tte **iwarete** mettyakutya uresii yo.
>
> earlier Mike-**Nom** that you are pretty **say-Pass-Ger** I am extremely happy.

It is possible that the same cognitive perception of the event was in operation in the learners and these native speakers. Examination of the cognitive sates of both native and non-native speakers who produced the 'agent-*ga/-wa* passive' forms is necessary in future studies since this may through light on the process of learning to produce *ni* passives.

7. Conclusion

The theoretical plausibility of the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching all instances of *ni* passives as affective has been proven empirically. The better performance of the learners in the experimental group was clear, particularly in the production of correct *ni* passives. The progress made by the learners in the control group was limited to fewer learners as well as to fewer test items. However, these conclusions must be drawn with caution due to certain limitations and shortcomings of the present study.

First, the main limitation of this study is the issue of generalis-

ability. Given the small number of the learners who participated in this study, the claims made above must be tested on a larger sample of learners. The same can be said about the verbs tested in the experiments. A larger number of verbs in all types of passives should be tested. It is also necessary to examine if the learners can produce *ni* passives in spontaneous speech in real life situations. Despite these shortcomings, the findings of the present study are promising to those learners who have very limited exposure to the target language and rely heavily on classroom learning as it is the case with most of the learners in the UK.

Abbreviations

Acc: Accusative
Ger: Gerundive
JFL: Japanese as a foreign language
JSL: Japanese as a second language
Nom: Nominative
Pass: Passive
Top: Topic

Notes

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2   The suffix *are* is used when the verb stem ends with a consonant and *rare* when it ends with a vowel.

3   The translations are literal so that they may reflect the structures of the original sentences/utterances.

4   The gloss and translations are mine in quoted example sentences in Japanese.

5   See Shibatani (2000) for a proposed solution to the above-mentioned problems in the analysis of Japanese passives.

6   This includes the passivisation of the intransitive verb *naku* (to cry). Dropping this item meant limiting the analysis to direct and possessor passives.

7   The use of the passive verb *homerareru* (praise-Pass-non-Past) with incorrect particles was observed in two learners in the control group. This clearly indicates their intention to produce a passive utterance. However, the lack of accuracy in the use of the particles indicates the slower pace of learning by these learners.

8   This learner changed possessor-*ni* to patient-*ni.*

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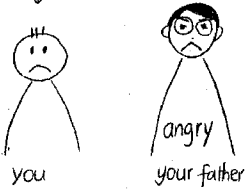
Notes in English. Tokyo: 3A Network.

Appendix. Examples of the Pictures Used in the Experiment

4 Y3-4
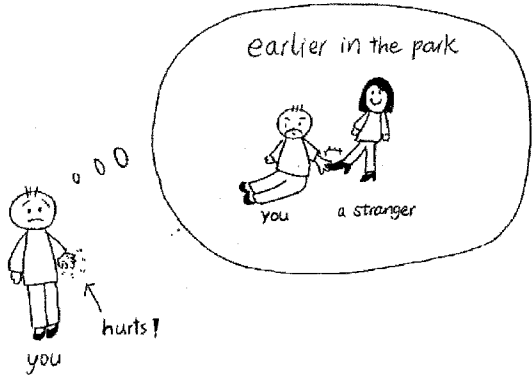
Yesterday

came home at 2 A.M.
↓

you   your father

angry

Describe this situation to your close friend Ken using

しかる ⋯ to scold, to tell off
(group 1)

6 Y3-6

earlier in the park

you   a stranger

hurts!

you

Describe this situation to your close friend Ken using

ふむ ⋯ to step on
(group 1)