**BILINGUAL PROCESSING OF FLEXIBLE CONSTITUENT ORDER IN KOREAN**

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**BACKGROUND**

- SOV is canonical in Korean and all other logically possible orders are grammatical (e.g., Chung 2012) and the degree of freedom in word order largely depends on the style of speech (Kim 1997).
- Contact can result in changes to the canonical order in a language and constituent order systems have been shown to reduce in flexibility due to language contact (Heine 2008).
- How bilingual speakers use their knowledge of one language in their processing of another?

**HOW DO KOREAN-ENGLISH BILINGUALS PROCESS FLEXIBLE CONSTITUENT ORDER IN KOREAN?**

- Acceptability Judgment Task with audio stimuli (on a 1-7 scale, in Praat).
- 30 native Korean speakers, 27 English dominant Korean speakers (heritage speakers) participated. English dominant participants were sub-categorized based on their Korean proficiency: 14 passive & 13 active bilinguals.
- 5 items from each of 6 logically possible orders of subject (S), object (O) and transitive verb (V) and both S and O are overtly marked for case
- Animacy was controlled: animate S, inanimate O
- 56 fillers of varying acceptability were added and the experimental stimuli were counterbalanced and distributed using Latin square.

**METHODS & MATERIALS**

- **STIMULI**
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORDER</th>
<th>EXAMPLE SENTENCE</th>
<th>ORDER</th>
<th>EXAMPLE SENTENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOV</td>
<td>sonyeo-ka nokcha-lul masi-ess-ta girl-NOM green tea-ACC drink-PST-DECL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSV</td>
<td>nokcha-lul sonyeo-ka masi-ess-ta green tea-ACC girl-NOM drink-PST-DECL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVO</td>
<td>sonyeo-ka masi-ess-ta nokcha-lul girl-NOM drink-PST-DECL green tea-ACC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVS</td>
<td>nokcha-lul masi-ess-ta sonyeo-ka green tea-ACC drink-PST-DECL girl-NOM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>VSO</td>
<td>masi-ess-ta sonyeo-ka nokcha-lul drink-PST-DECL girl-NOM green tea-ACC</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOS</td>
<td>masi-ess-ta nokcha-lul sonyeo-ka drink-PST-DECL green tea-ACC girl-NOM</td>
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</tbody>
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**HYPOTHESES**

**HYPOTHESIS 1**

English order affects Korean thus Korean SVO should be more acceptable for English dominant participants (heritage speakers)

**PREDICTION**

- Higher acceptability for SVO (Transfer)
- Lower acceptability for SVO (Hyper-correction)

**HYPOTHESIS 2**

Because heritage speakers showed lowered acceptability for difficult constructions (e.g., Scontras et al. 2015), all non-canonical orders will be less acceptable for English dominant participants

**PREDICTION**

- Lowered acceptability for all non-canonical word orders

**RESULTS**

**DISCUSSION**

- Experience with English is associated with decreased acceptability of non-canonical orders compared to the Korean-dominant group (Hypothesis 2 is confirmed). This can be interpreted that the English dominant bilinguals showed decreased flexibility in terms of processing different constituent orders in Korean.
- No evidence for special status of SVO order was found (Hypothesis 1 rejected).
- The results of the acceptability judgment experiment provide the relative acceptability of Korean constituent order as a whole and the results show 4-way distinction in acceptability: SOV canonical order was preferred among other orders followed by OSV and verb medial orders (SVO, OVS) were rated higher than the verb-initial orders (VSO, VOS).

**SOV > OVS > [SVO, OVS] > [VSO, OVS]**

- The same 4-way distinction is found for the English dominant group
- Flexibility has been said to reduce with contact (e.g., Heine 2008) and the results of the current study is in line with such findings. Also the results align with the previous study investigating the processing of flexible constituent order of Malayalam in contact with English which is tested using the same methodology (Namboodiripad 2017).

**REFERENCES**

- Scontras, S., Chung, D. (2012). Contrast-induced word order change without word order change: Language contact and contact languages.