Korean L2 learners’ structural priming mediated by speakers with different English accents  
Eunjin Chun, Julia Barrow, Edith Kaan  
University of Florida

INTRODUCTION

- Alignment: Linguistic behavior where interlocutors tend to be more compatible with each other.  
- Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) suggests that speakers’ convergence (i.e., alignment) can be affected by social factors.  
- Previous studies in L1 English speakers: modulated syntactic alignment by social factors.  
  - greater priming while interacting with a liked partner (Balcetis & Dale, 2005)  
  - influenced by perceived standardness of accents, perceived similarity to speaker, and preference for compromise as a conflict management style (Weatherholtz et al. 2014).  
- We investigated whether Korean L2 learners’ structural priming is affected by different accents of English speakers. Based on the similarity-attraction theory (Byrne, 1971), Korean L2 English learners were expected to show more structural priming with a Korean accented English speaker compared to speakers with other English accents.

METHODS

- Participants: 50 Korean L2 learners of English from Kyungpook National University in Korea (22 males, mean age: 24.9 yrs)  
- Procedure:  
  1) LEAP-Q, 2) MELICET (M=27.78, SD=7.03), 3) Main priming task:  
  - Three speaker conditions: a) Native American English speaker, b) Korean English speaker, c) Indian English speaker  
  - Three Prime conditions in each speaker condition  
    - Baseline: e.g.) The woman is laughing.  
    - DO Prime: e.g.) The librarian brings the boy the book  
    - PO Prime: e.g.) The librarian brings the book to the boy  
  4) Rating: degree of accent, familiarity with the accent

RESULTS

- Separate analysis (Logistic mixed-effect models) in each speaker condition  
  - Dependent Variable: PO production (versus DO and Other responses)  
  - As a function of prime condition (DO vs. PO vs. Baseline), the number of previously produced PO & DO structures, Familiarity with the accent

1) Immediate Priming Effect  
  - marginal effect for PO structure only in Korean speaker condition  
  - (b= 1.73, SE= 0.96, z= 1.81, p= 0.07)

2) Cumulative Priming Effect  
  - Korean speaker condition: interaction between DO Prime and Number of preceding DO  
  - (b= -0.21, SE= 0.10, z= -2.20, p= 0.03)  
  - American English speaker condition: interaction between PO Prime and Number of preceding DO  
  - (b= 0.17, SE= 0.08, z= 2.15, p= 0.03)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- Do Korean L2 learners align more with the Korean English speaker based on similarity attraction theory?  
  - YES!  
  - Korean L2 learners showed immediate & cumulative priming only in the Korean English speaker condition.

- Separate analyses for each speaker condition showed different priming patterns depending on the speakers’ accents.  
  - Korean L2 learners showed marginal PO alignment in Korean speaker condition and cumulative priming in both Korean and American English speaker condition.  
  - No significant alignment was observed for the Indian speaker condition.

- Future studies need to explore whether L2 learners identify themselves with speakers who have an accent similar to their own and whether this drives the L2 learners’ syntactic alignment.

REFERENCES


CONTACT

eunjinchun@ufl.edu