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**Book Reviews**


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*The Handbook of East Asian Psycholinguistics: Korean* is the final volume of a series that included Chinese and Japanese psycholinguistics. The series was designed to provide an overview of existing psycholinguistic research in the three Asian languages and a wide range of topics are addressed. We think that this series is a timely and important contribution to psycholinguistics, because it seems clear that addressing the phenomena in non-Western languages will be critical for the further development of psycholinguistic theories and it is necessary to have a resource that helps researchers to bridge between these domains.

The Korean psycholinguistics may be said to be less mature than Chinese and Japanese psycholinguistics, and this might explain why this volume was delayed relative to the other two volumes. Therefore, this volume might play an important role in raising awareness in the Korean psycholinguistic community and that might yield greater integration in future research. Furthermore, Korean phenomena have become important in various areas of global psycholinguistic research (e.g., spatial relations), but in other areas, the language seems to be underused (e.g., sentence production). This volume can highlight the features of the language that might have an impact on psycholinguistic theories as well as increasing attention on areas that have not received much focus.

A wide range of topics were covered in this volume of the handbook.
An introduction by the editors at the beginning of the volume provided a detailed summary of all of the 44 chapters and a reader can have a quite good sense of the range of topics and issues included in the whole book. The volume was organized into two broad sections on language acquisition (27 chapters) and language processing (17 chapters). The language acquisition section was broadly divided into first language acquisition and second language acquisition/bilingualism. The first language acquisition section covered issues on children’s acquisition of case markers, argument structure, noun/verb distinctions, functional categories, modalities, quantification, and prosody, and relationship between language and concept, etc. The second language section covered issues on the critical period, Korean speaker’s acquisition of various aspects of English, and nature of Korean-English bilingual speech. Chapter 27 addressed issues relevant to Korean Sign Language in terms of both first and second language acquisition processes. The language processing section covered Korean script, morphology, phonology, word recognition, prosody, parsing, working memory, word order, discourse comprehension, aphasia, and reading disorders. The chapters in the volume described research using various methodologies such as behavioral experiments, neuropsychological methods, corpus/narrative analysis, linguistic analysis, and computational modeling. Also different theoretical perspectives were represented such as generative linguistics, functional linguistics, constraint-based processing approaches, and social/pragmatic perspectives.

Much of the research in the volume focused on three aspects of the Korean language and we will use these aspects to organize our review. First, Korean is a richly inflected language and this may pose some challenges for learning and using the language. For instance, Korean learning children have to learn more grammatical morphemes than English learning children. Does this feature of language delay the process of language acquisition? What is the developmental sequence of various functional elements and what are the factors that influence it? And in the adult domain, how does the rich inflection of the language influence the behavior in language disorders such as aphasia?

Second, Korean written system is unique in that it consists of two distinctive scripts, Hangul and Hanja. Hangul is an alphabetic character system. The alphabetical characters are grouped into a square block that represents a syllable unit. These characters are unique because they provide syllable segmentation information (like the Japanese hiragana script, but unlike the English alphabet), but are also phonologically transparent (like the English alphabet, but unlike Japanese hiragana). In Korean writing, words are separated by spaces unlike in Japanese or Chinese writing and that is an important distinction in how the languages will be comprehended from written stimuli. The existence of spaces in the writing creates more agreement about the notion of a word in Korean than these other languages. The other script, Hanja, is a logographic system mainly borrowed from Chinese characters (like Japanese Kanji). Although it is being used less often than before, many Korean readers are quite familiar with Hanja as well as Hangul (there may be more variability). How do Korean readers switch between the two systems and what does their flexibility in script switching tell us about reading processes?

Third, Korean has played an important role in our understanding of the relationship between language and cognition/culture. Traditionally, it was thought that the development of spatial linguistic terms like prepositions (e.g., “on” vs. “in”) was driven by cognitive development of spatial relationships (e.g., support vs containment). Work in Korean, which does not use the same spatial relations as in English has demonstrated that the language input can have an early influence on the development of spatial linguistic terms. There is even some evidence that the linguistic distinctions in Korean can influence adult spatial thinking (e.g., Choi, McDonough, Bowerman, & Mandler, 1999). These results suggested that both language and cognition might be moving targets, constantly adjusting to the other. Another related issue is the influence of Korean culture on language use. Can the collectivist values in Korean culture such as the emphasis on group harmony and respect for elders significantly influence acquisition and processing? And in the reverse direction, does the encoding of politeness level on every verb influence how people categorize people non-linguistically?

There were several chapters which had results that were surprising for us. Related to the rich morphology features of the language, several chapters consistently show that it is not necessarily more difficult for children to learn the Korean morphological system. In chapter 14 “Development of functional categories in child Korean,” Ho Han examines from a generative
perspective the puzzle of why Korean children use functional categories earlier than English children. This is complemented by Chapter 13 “The acquisition of modality” by Chungmin Lee, who provides evidence that children use morphological forms earlier than English children. Understanding why rich morphology might be easier is an important challenge for a universal account of functional categories. In addition, Chapter 3 “Acquisition of case markers and grammatical functions” (GyeongHee No) provides a nuanced discussion of the acquisition of Korean case markers and shows how Korean children combine different cues such as case markers and word order, and how these cues change over development. To have a more complete understanding of the topic, one can read another chapter on the same topic in Chapter 1, “Acquisition of subject and topic nominals and markers in the spontaneous speech of young children in Korean” by Chungmin Lee and Sook Whan Cho. In particular, Chapter 1 introduced the surprising developmental sequence of subject and topic marker acquisition where children progress from a more specific contrastive topic/subject to a more global/neutral version. It has illustrative examples of children’s speech showing this developmental sequence.

The findings about rich morphology in development are supplemented by related findings in adult language processing. In particular, the two chapters about Korean aphasic morphology showed that the deficit is quite distinctive from English aphasia (Yu Mi Hwang, Kichun Nam and Myung-Yoon Kang’s chapter 39 “Morphosyntactic processing in Korean aphasics” and Mina Hwang’s chapter 40 “Morphosyntactic processing of Korean-speaking adults with Broca’s aphasia and in children with SLI”). These chapters illustrated the findings that Korean aphasics substitute case-markers rather than omitting closed-class elements unlike English aphasics and aphasics speakers do not differ from normal speakers in the token frequency of case markers. These phenomena were illustrated in a concrete way with an example of Korean Broca’s aphasic speech in Miseon Lee’s chapter on “Comprehension deficits in Korean agrammatic aphasia.” The similarity between the ease in which children learn Korean morphology and the fact that it is relatively spared in adult aphasia compared to English aphasics is something that needs to be explained by a universal processing/acquisition theories.

With respect to the Korean writing system, ChangHo Park’s discussion of the Korean script in Chapter 28 “Visual processing of Hangul, the Korean script” provided a lot of useful statistics about the combinatorial properties of the writing system as well as a discussion of experimental work on the units that are used in script processing. Chapter 42 “Developmental reading disorders in Korean” (Jeesun Kim and Chris Davis) showed an interesting difference between Korean and English-speaking poor readers. Korean poor readers rarely show visual problems unlike English-speaking poor readers. In other words, Korean readers who have difficulty processing dynamic visual stimuli are less likely to have reading problems than are English readers with similar problems. This advantage in Korean may be due to less demanding features in visual formats of syllabic arrangement and their regular CVC ordering. Relating this research to work with the Japanese hiragana, which also has syllable structure but no word boundaries, might help us to understand how spaces between Korean words contribute to reading behavior.

Chapter 31 “The role of phonology in word recognition of Korean Hangul and Hanja” (Jeung-Ryeul Cho) and Chapter 32 “Lexical and sub-lexical processes in Korean word recognition” (Greg Simpson and Hyewon Kang) are concerned with processing Hangul and Hanja at the word level. These two chapters discuss how phonological and semantic information in sub-lexical and lexical units guide word recognition processes in Hanjug and how these processes differs from the processing of Japanese, Chinese and English written words. In particular, Chapter 32 described some intriguing findings on how flexibly Korean readers adjust their conscious control over what levels of information they need to attend to depending on the type of written script that they expect to read. These chapters provided an exemplar case of how the study of three East-Asian languages in comparison with western languages can reveal important features of the human language processing system.

The third issue is the relationship between language and culture. Chapter 7 “Language-specific spatial semantics and cognition: developmental patterns in English and Korean” (Soonja Choi) reviewed well-known findings on how Korean-speaking people’s spatial concept of tight-fitting and loose-fitting is influenced by Korean lexical system that marks such distinction
in spatial relations. Chapter 26 “Ontological concept versus shape in word learning from a cross-linguistic point of view” (Hyeonjin Lee) introduced interesting, but less well-known findings that Korean-particular ways to individuate human, animals, concrete objects and substances influences Korean children’s acquisition of ontological concepts.

Cultural influences can be found in the chapters on bilingual interaction (M. Agnes Kang, chapter 25 “Influence of socio-psychological categories in bilingual interaction”). The speech examples in the chapter clearly showed how difference in social hierarchy leads to interesting patterns of code switching in Korean-English bilinguals. Chapter 19 “Korean as a heritage language” (Terry Kit-fong Au and Janet Sae Oh) also discussed how social factors can influence the retention of Korean knowledge by Koreans living abroad. While these chapters draw out links between culture and language, there were some cultural patterns that were not emphasized in these chapters. One phenomena that could be important to study is the large number of young people of Korean-descent who are not living in Korea. For example, many Korean adoptees are adopted at various ages and raised by non-Korean parents, but may identify themselves with Korean/Asian culture. Also, a subset of Korean children attend school for several years outside of Korea, sometimes accompanied by a parent. The input and motivation variation in these adoptees and overseas students creates a natural experiment that could tell us a lot about issues such as the critical period, social identity, and language immersion.

We would like to mention additional chapters that are not related to the issues mentioned above. Chapter 18 “Acquisition of prosody in Korean” (Youngon Choi and Reiko Mazuka) was relatively unique in that it discusses how children use prosody in processing, while the other acquisition chapters were focused more on knowledge acquisition. Chapter 36 “Understanding complex sentences: memory constraints and informational structures” (Yoonhyoung Lee and Peter Gordon) provided a careful review of recent research on parsing and also discussed how Korean processing can provide a unique contribution to theories of memory in parsing. This is in contrast to some of the other chapters that emphasized the role of universal mechanisms in Korean processing.

Although many chapters were well-written and the topics were fascinat-
of good reasons to study Korean processing and acquisition, and hopefully future work will emphasize the unique nature of Korean processing.

We feel that the limitations of the methods and topics in this volume may just reflect the present state of Korean psycholinguistics. If this is the case, then this volume provides an important service by providing a map of the research landscape and suggesting areas that are ripe for cultivation. Reading this volume, we can see the future of Korean psycholinguistics as well as its past and present. We believe that this volume helps readers to understand what topics future researchers should pursue to get a more comprehensive view of Korean acquisition and processing and what research methodologies can be adopted to provide a novel perspective of current issues.

References


