Different case marking does not dampen attraction effect in comprehension: Evidence from an eye-tracking study of subject-verb honorific agreement in Korean

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Different case marking does not dampen attraction effect in comprehension: Evidence from an eye-tracking study of subject-verb honorific agreement in Korean

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**Background & Research questions**

- Memory retrieval is content addressable (Lewis & Vasishth, 2005; Lewis et al., 2006; McElree et al., 2003; Van Dyke & McElree, 2006)
- Potential targets in memory are activated in parallel in response to retrieval cues.

**Experimental conditions**

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<th>Main subj</th>
<th>Emb subj</th>
<th>W1</th>
<th>W2</th>
<th>W3</th>
<th>W4</th>
<th>W5</th>
<th>W6</th>
<th>W7</th>
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</table>

*The teacher/Minji told the editor/Tayhoi in a calm voice that she would listen to a demo cd.*

**Methods**
- Participants: 40 native Korean speakers
- Procedures: calibrated for every stimuli
- Eyelink 1000 Plus

**Results**

- At the critical verb (W5): go-past durations (interaction $t = 2.06$)
- At W6 (spill-over): first fixation durations (main object $t = 1.93$)
- At W6 (spill-over): go-past durations (main subject $t = 3.12$)

*The attraction effect did not differ from an analogous parallel study that employed the same case markers for licit and illicit antecedents (interaction with experiment $t < 1.2$)

**Discussion & Conclusions**

- These results suggest in agreement comprehension distinct overt case marking of a distractor (here, dative case) from that of the licit antecedent (here, nominative case) did not weaken attraction.
- The strong attraction effect in this experiment could be due to proximity of a distractor to the critical verb as it linearly intervenes with the subject-verb agreement.
- This suggests that attraction effect (or retrieval of potential antecedents) is more strongly modulated by proximity rather than morpho-syntactic cues such as case marking in comprehension.

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