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.
  - Facilitatory intrusion: Reading time penalty for a mismatching dependency could be reduced due to the presence of a partially matching distractor (Wagers et al. 2009; Vasishth et al. 2008; Xiang et al. 2009)
  - Similarity based interference: Processing difficulty that occurs when the intended dependency target completely matches the retrieval cues, but where there is also a partial match with the distractor (Badecker & Straub, 2002; cf. Chow et al., 2014; Dillon et al., 2013)

**Main subj Emb subj** | **W1** | **W2** | **W3** | **W4** | **W5** | **W6** | **W7** | **W8**
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
H    | H    | Teacher-nom | editor-dat | PRO | demo | cd-acc | listen-si-comp | calm | voice-in | said
NH   | H    | Minji-nom   | editor-dat | PRO | demo | cd-acc | listen-si-comp | calm | voice-in | said
H    | NH   | Teacher-nom | Tayho-dat  | PRO | demo | cd-acc | listen-si-comp | calm | voice-in | said
NH   | NH   | Minji-nom   | Tayho-dat  | PRO | demo | cd-acc | listen-si-comp | calm | voice-in | said

*The teacher/Minji told the editor/Tayho 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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