Processing Asymmetry in Korean Relative Clauses in Dative Construction
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1. Background & Research question

- Subject/object RC processing asymmetry in post-/pre-nominal position (King & Just, 1991; Miyamoto & Nakamura, 2003)
  - Comparison between two types of filler-gap dependency in subject/object RC (Kwon et al., 2013)

- Post-nominal subject relative clause in filler-gap dependency (English)
  - The reporter (who ___ attacked the senator) admitted the error.
  - Post-nominal subject relative clause in filler-gap dependency (Korean)
  - The reporter (who the senator attacked ___) admitted the error.

- Pre-nominal subject relative clause in filler-gap dependency (Korean)
  - Pre-nominal subject relative clause in filler-gap dependency (English)

- Theories related to the asymmetry in filler-gap dependency
  - Accessibility hierarchy (Keenan & Comrie, 1977), phrase-structural distance hypothesis (O’Grady, 1997), and linear/temporal distance analysis (Gibson, 1998)
  - Different prediction on subject RC, direct object RC, and indirect object RC processing hierarchy expected

- Research question
  - What is the processing hierarchy in pre-nominal RC in dative construction? (SRC/DORC/IORC; cf. Lee & Yong, 2009)

2. Self-paced reading time experiment & norming study

- Norming study
  - Norming sentences were generated from experimental sentences
  - Participants rated the norming sentences from 1 to 7 (1: very unnatural; 7: very natural)
  - The mean rating for each norming sentence: SRC (4.74), DORC (4.94), and IORC (4.68); p > .3

- On-line Self-paced reading time experiment
  - Target sentences: 6 dative verbs (ab1 VERB ab2 to ab3) x 2 (different content) x 3 conditions (SRC/DORC/IORC)
  - Reading times for each region measured
  - Comprehension question after each stimulus

3. Results and Discussion

- Comprehension question
  - Condition did not influence comprehensibility (SRC (91.91%), DORC (86.36%), and IORC (79.54%); p > .3)

- Reading Time
  - Compare among regions: (a) main effect of condition at W5 (F(2,129) = 4.958; p < .01) and (b) W6 (F(2,129) = 3.103; p < .05)
  - Compare among conditions: (a) SRC ≠ IORC (within W5: p < 0.01; within W6: p < .05), (b) SRC ≈ DORC, and (c) DORC ≈ IORC

4. General Discussion

- How should we explain SRC ≠ IORC, SRC ≈ DORC, and DORC ≈ IORC?
  - The role of case structure in sentence processing: head N (filler) is more expected after a N[DAT] than a N[ACC] as N[DAT]-N[ACC] sequence is a canonical syntactic structure in head-final dative construction (cf. Kamide et al., 2003)
  - Effects of similarity-based interference in case markers (Van Dyke & Lewis, 2003)

References