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German Language Acquisition in the context of Spatial Cognition of Korean native speaker

- the case of Korean locative particle '(wi)-e', English Prepositions 'on', 'above', 'over' and German Prepositions 'an', 'auf', 'über'-

Abstract

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This presentation is based on the concept that one of the difficulties a Korean native speaker can face when learning German as a second or third language could be related to the linguistic cognitive system which is different from what is innate to the speaker whose mother tongue is the target language. Also the main question we deal with is whether the target language learners can overcome their innate linguistic knowledge of L1 enough through controlled DaF study in the Korean secondary school setting. When they cannot, what kind of barriers would the learners face?

In order to figure this out, the use of prepositions in German and English and that of the locative particle in Korean whose usage is presumed to be similar, are observed through an empirical experiment. German prepositions 'an', 'auf', 'über' and English prepositions 'on', 'above', 'over' are considered within the category of meaning that each of their 'proto scenes' presents with the concept of 'landmark' and 'trajector' that Langacker proposed. In addition, the usages of those prepositions and the verbs that can co-occur, like 'stehen', 'liegen' and 'hängen', are to be filled in the blank in the questionnaire to describe various pictures stating spatial relations between the trajectors and landmarks. This experiment is conducted with Korean native speakers as a test group and German native speakers as a control group with the possible variables controlled. To analyse the experiment result and to draw a conclusion, SLA and Markedness theories are also discussed. The reason why English is considered as well, is that ESL education in the Korean secondary school precedes the DaF lessons.

We assumed Korean native speaker to have apparent Transfer and Interference between their German and English but in fact the result was not obviously as expected. The good knowledge of English the Korean subjects have with several years of sojourn experience in the country where English is spoken, did not lead to good German skill in this experiment. This is also likely to be the same for the Korean subjects who had lived in German-speaking countries. This gave us the conclusion that it is not easy for L2 or L3 learners to figure out the minute difference of the target language in the field of the spatial cognition system.

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