

# Constraint on case alternation in Korean ‘-ko *siphtha*’ construction: A self-paced reading study by L1 Japanese speakers

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This study addressed this issue by investigating Japanese-speaking L2 learners’ processing of Korean ‘-ko *siphtha/sipehata*’ constructions. In the Korean ‘-ko *siphtha*’ construction, which conveys the modality meaning of ‘(I) wish/want to’, the nominative marker ‘*i/ka*’ can be attached to a theme, because auxiliary predicate ‘-*siphtha*’ affect on the theme. In the ‘-ko *sipehata*’ construction, in contrast, which conveys the modality meaning of ‘wish/want to’ from the perspective of a third person, ending ‘-*ehata*’ changes adjective into transitive verb, disallowing ‘*i/ka*’ to modify a theme. In the current study, we asked whether L2 learners can apply the constraint of transitivity associated with the realization of case marking in the ‘-ko *siphtha/sipehata*’ constructions during real-time sentence processing.

In this study, 60 advanced Japanese-speaking learners of Korean and 30 native Korean speakers participated in an online self-paced reading task. Experiment stimuli consisted of 24 ‘-ko *siphtha*’ construction with either accusative (1a) or nominative case marker (1b) attached to the theme (An experiment investigating ‘-ko *sipehata*’ construction is currently in progress). The L2 learners were further divided into higher-proficiency (NNS-H, n = 30) and lower-proficiency (NNS-L, n = 30) groups, based on their scores in the Test of Proficiency in Korean. During the task, participants’ reading times in each region(R) was measured across conditions while they read target sentences at their own speed in a word-by-word manner.

For the ‘-ko *siphtha*’ construction, participants’ reading times in each region were normalized into log-transformed reading times (LogRTs). Visual inspection of the graphs (Figure) showed that all groups spent almost the same time between the two case marking conditions throughout the regions, except for the lower-level group in R4. Linear mixed-effects regression was fitted to the model that included case marking (Accusative, Nominative) as a fixed factor for each group. Results showed no significant reading time difference between the two conditions in any of the regions for the L1 and NNS-H group. However, for the NNS-L group, a main effect of case marking was found in R4, with a longer reading time in the nominative than in the accusative condition. These results suggest that both native speaker and NNS-H groups were able to process the case-marking information in the ‘-ko *siphtha*’ construction, indicating their acceptance of both case-marking conditions, whereas the NNS-L group had a difficulty with an integration of the nominative case marking on the theme with the construction. Our findings provide a useful testing ground whether the learners will show target-like sensitivity to the case marking constraint in the ‘-ko *sipehata*’ construction, where the use of a nominative case on the theme is disallowed.

## (1) Sample items for the self-paced reading task

a. Na-nun(R1) ecey(R2) Kimpap-*ul*(R3) mek-ko(R4) siph-ese(R5) siktang-ey(R6) kasse-yo(R7).

I-TOP yesterday Kimpap-ACC eat-ko siph-ACE restaurant-LOC went-SE

‘I went to restaurant because I wanted to eat Kimpap.’ [Acc-marked]

b. Na-nun ecey Kimpap-*i* mek-ko siph-ese siktang-ey kasse-yo.

I-TOP yesterday Kimpap-NOM eat-ko siph-ACE restaurant-LOC went-SE

‘I went to restaurant because I wanted to eat Kimpap.’ [Nom-marked]

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