

# Effects of L1 Typology to Performance of L2 Statistical Preemption: Korean EFL learners reject 'The lifeguard swam the boy to the shore' more strongly than Chinese EFL Learners

Rakhun Kim  
Seoul National University  
kimrhee02@snu.ac.kr

Recent L1 studies have discovered that the availability of competing alternative (CA) expressions inferred from frequent input leads to the acceptability of creative expression. Thus, while a novel formulation (e.g., the magician disappeared the rabbit) is disallowed if it is expected to be consistently replaced by a more readily available CA expression (e.g., the magician made the rabbit disappear), a creative expression (e.g., the lifeguard swam the children to the shore) is judged to be acceptable if it is not expected to consistently be replaced by a more appropriate alternative construction paired with the given verb.

The present study explored whether grammatical judgment on L2 creative formulation resorts to the frequency distribution of L1 verb-construction compatibility? The participants of the study were novice-level learners of English as a foreign language with two different L1 backgrounds. The one is the EFL learners with L1 Chinese, where intransitive verb (e.g., swim) is allowed to be incorporated into caused-motion construction (e.g., ba-construction) and the other is those with L1 Korean, where such verb-construction pair is 'statistically preempted' (or consistently constrained) by a readily-available CA expression (e.g., bi-clausal intransitive construction).

Experiment 1 asked the Korean-speaking (N=34) and Chinese-speaking (N=35) EFL learners to participate in an English paraphrasing task, and investigated whether they transferred their L1 constructions in generating L2 constraints. A test item was judged as "has-CA" (or constructionally acceptable novel formulation) when more than fifty percent of the participants consistently agreed that it had a better paraphrase. Otherwise, a test item was accepted as "no-CA" (or constructionally unacceptable novel formulation). The results confirmed that caused-motion constructions with L2 intransitive verbs (e.g., S-Vi-NP-PP) were disallowed if such formulation was restricted in the learners' L1 system; Korean participants showed a tendency to replace such novel formulation of English caused-motion construction with L1 canonical bi-clausal intransitive construction, while Chinese participants accepted them.

Experiment 2 examined how Korean/Chinese EFL learners used English statistical preemption. Results of Acceptability Judgment Test (AJT) by L1 Korean (N=165) and Chinese (N=73) EFL learners were analyzed using a linear mixed model (lme4) in R software. The results of Experiment 1 allowed us to hypothesize that Korean EFL learners would give better performance in English statistical preemption than Chinese EFL learners. The results of Experiment 2 confirmed the hypothesis: Korean EFL learners failed to reject ungrammatical (has-CA) English sentences with high-frequency verbs, while Chinese EFL learners and English native speakers successfully rejected.

To conclude, this is the first study to provide empirical evidence that nonnative EFL learners' restricted use of L2 statistical preemption may be a by-product of different constructional repertoires between L1 and L2.

## References

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