

An Experimental Investigation into the Placement of the Verb in the Clause Structure of Japanese

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Background

Findings and proposal in Han, Lidz and Musolino (in press):

- In a head-final language, evidence for V-raising is hard to come by.
- In Korean, scope of negation and argument QPs give linguists a way to test for V-raising, though such data is not obviously available to a learner.
- Speakers of Korean show split response in scope judgments obtained from Truth Value Judgment Task (TVJT) experiments.
- The paucity of evidence leads to distinct grammars in a single speech community: one with V-raising and one without.

Research Questions

- As in Korean, in Japanese, scope of negation and argument QPs is informative because: (i) scope rigidity; (ii) negation *-na* is an inflection on V.
- So, if an argument QP is in a canonical A-position, the scope of negation and the QPs directly reflects the height of the verb.
- But there is no consensus in the literature as to what the facts are (Kato 1986, 1988; Kitamoto 1986, Miyagawa 2001).
- Is this disagreement due to a limitation in methodology in data extraction, or does it reflect real difference in the grammar between different speakers?

Methods

- TVJT experiment:** Stories are acted out with toys. At the end of the story, a puppet makes a statement about the story. The participant says whether the puppet's statement is true or not (Crain and Thornton 1998).
- Example scenario and test sentence**



Neg>2 = True
2>Neg = False

Junko-ga futa-ri-no otokonoko-o rooka-de kera-na-katta.
Junko-Nom two-Cl-Gen boy-Acc hallway-in kick-Neg-Pst
'Junko did not kick two boys in the hallway.'

- 2x2 design:** QP position (Subj vs. Obj) x Scope (Neg>2 vs. 2>Neg)

Grammatical Function	Scope	# of Participants
Subject QP	Neg>2	N=32
	2>Neg	N=32
Object QP	Neg>2	N=32
	2>Neg	N=32

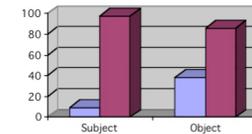
Procedure

- Participants introduced to the task
- 4 practice trials
- 4 test trials with 5 fillers (in pseudorandom order)

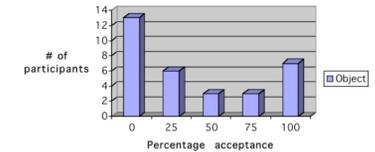
Results

Percentage acceptance

Grammatical Function	Scope	Percent
Subject QP	Neg>2	9.38%
	2>Neg	97.66%
Object QP	Neg>2	38.28%
	2>Neg	85.94%



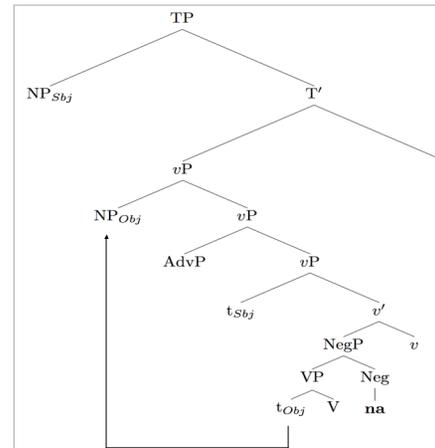
Bimodal distribution of acceptances of Neg>2



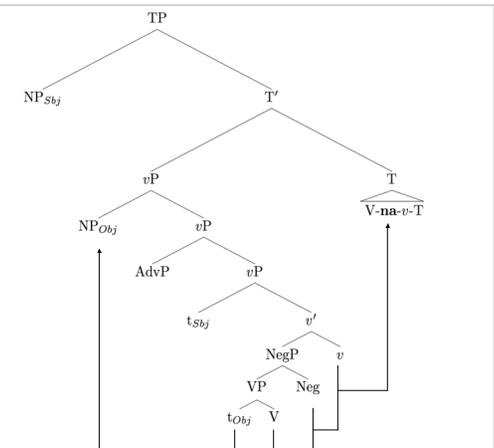
- Independent of grammatical function, speakers are more likely to accept the 2>Neg reading than the Neg>2 reading ($F(1,126)=9.433, p=.0026$).
- Speakers are more likely to accept the Neg>2 reading on an object QP than they are on a subject QP ($F(1,126)=16.810, p<.0001$).
- Although many of the speakers accepted the Neg>2 reading on an object QP, there were many that did not.
- Participants in general either always accepted or always rejected the Neg>2 reading, giving rise to a bimodal distribution of responses.

Implications for the Grammar

Half of the population has acquired a non-V-raising grammar and the other half has acquired a V-raising grammar.



Grammar A: Non-V-raising grammar
Object QP>Neg, Subject QP>Neg



Grammar B: V-raising grammar
Neg>Object QP, Subject QP>Neg

Conclusion and Future Work

- Even given the restricted hypothesis space determined by UG, insufficient input can lead to grammar competition between distinct grammars in a single population (Kroch 1989, Roeper 1998, Yang 2003).
- How stable is the split? Is the split predictable? Are there any other syntactic/semantic phenomena that correlate with the split?

Selected References and Acknowledgments

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