

An EEG study on Korea honorifics: Multi-modal modulation hypothesis in Dynamic Syntax

In this talk, I will propose the Multi-Modal modulation hypothesis (MMH) as in (2) based on the electroencephalogram (EEG) study on Korean honorifics (N=30, Seoul Korean speakers). In addition, I will show how the notion of MMH and multi-dimensional meanings can be captured and explained by multiple application of LINK relations in Dynamic Syntax (Cann et al 2005) and Pragmatic Syntax (Kiaer 2014). Our core example is given in (1). (1a) and (1d) are socio-pragmatically unnatural/awkward compared to (1b) and (1c) because of the honorific mismatch between the vocative particle and ending particle. In (1a), the awkwardness occurs because the vocative particle *-a/-ya* creates a prediction of a close, informal relationship between the speaker and hearer where the speaker is senior to the hearer. However, this prediction is jeopardised by the use of *-seyyo* ending which indicates a relationship where speaker wants to establish a polite yet distant relationship where the speaker is junior to the hearer.

(1) ??? a. *Mina-ya, kongpwuha-seyyo*. [honorific mismatch]

M-VOC study-POL+DECL.

‘Mina, please study.’

b. *Mina-nim, kongpwuha-seyyo*.

M-VOC study-POL+DECL.

‘Mina, please study.’

c. *Mina-ya, kongpwu hay*.

M-VOC study-POL+DECL.

???d. *Mina-nim, kongpwu hay*.

M-VOC study-POL+DECL.

‘Mina, please study.’

In the (audio-input) EEG study, when the honorific mismatch is found as in (1a), N400 effect was observed, yet P600 effect was not observed. I shall discuss the implication of the findings within DS framework in the talk.

(2) Multi-modal modulation hypothesis (MMH)

The core linguistic ability found in human communication is to be able to modulate or attune/orchestrate different levels/modes of information in a harmonious way, sensitive to the socio-pragmatic needs of each situation. If conflicting or inconsistent meanings are

communicated, the communication will become socio-pragmatically inappropriate, insincere or unreliable.

Bibliography

Cann, R. Kempson, R. & Marten, L. (2005) *The Dynamics of Language*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Kiaer (2014) *Pragmatic syntax (Bloomsbury studies in theoretical linguistics)*. London: Bloomsbury.