

# How does Information Structure Interact with Acquisition of Word Order by Korean English Learners?\*

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Lee, Yae-Sheik, Lee, Eunsuk & Kim, Yoo-Jin. 2008. **How does Information Structure Interact with Acquisition of Word Order by Korean English Learners?** *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 16(3), 279-299. In the literature on the ordering of main and subordinate or adverbial clauses (e.g., Hawkins 1992, Arnold *et al* 2000, Diessel 2005), and dative alternation (e.g., Pinker 1989, Pesetsky 1995, Krifka 2004), almost all analyses have tried to show what factors are responsible for the different orderings. One of the common findings of the previous analyses is that different information structures require different word orderings. To date very few studies have been conducted to show how information structure interacts with acquisition of such ordering variants by learners of English as a foreign language like Korean learners. The present study tries to show to what extent the factor of structuring information affects decisions on the word orderings of the two constructions by Korean learners of English. For this purpose, two experiments were conducted, and their results show that the syntactic knowledge of L1(Korean) plays a more decisive role in choosing correct orderings of the two constructions than the factor of structuring information.

**Key Words:** information structure, word orders, dative alternation, ordering of main-adverbial clauses, language acquisition

## 1. Introduction

Oldin (1989, 1990) argues that word order is one of the main

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\* This paper is based on and further developed from the data from Kim, Yoo-Jin (2008). We thank the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and meticulous corrections. Without them the current paper would contain more errors and shortcomings. Of course, all the remaining errors are ours.

problems language learners encounter in the course of acquiring the target language. Similarly Krifka (2004) points out that syntactic characteristics of a target language are not sufficient for the language learners to determine word order correctly. Furthermore, according to the information packaging theory, expressions are structured with the component of given information preceding the new information component. This information structuring brings out changes in word order for efficient communication (Arnold *et al.* 2000). The following examples (1) and (2) show the ordering variants of dative construction and complex sentences composed of main and adverbial clauses in accordance with their information structure:

- (1) A: Who did he give the book?  
 B: He gave the book to Beth  
 / dispreferred: He gave Beth the book.<sup>1)</sup>
- (2) A: When does time change?  
 B: It changes when/if you cross the international date line.  
 / dispreferred: When/If you cross the international date line it changes

It seems that information structure, partitioning or packaging the constituents of a sentence into two components (one is for given information; the other for new information), is not only part of linguistic competence<sup>2)</sup> but also a cross-linguistic feature. In Korean information structure plays a crucial role in determining the ordering of the components of sentences. The following Korean data exemplify this information structure:

- (3) a. insayng-un ccalb-ko yeyswul-un kil-da.  
 life-Top short-Conj art-Top long-Dec  
 'Life is short; art is long.'

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1) Cited from Krifka (2004:5).

2) Steedman and Kruijff-Korbayová (2001) states that "information structure seems to belong in what they call 'linguistic structure'- essentially the grammar."

- b. yeyswul-un kil-ko insayng-un ccalb-da.  
art-Top long-Conj life-Top shot-Dec  
'Art is long; life is short.'

In Kim (1982:220), the difference between (3a) and (3b) is explained away in terms of their information structure: the first one places more emphasis on the eternity of art, the second one on the shortness of life. The more important information value a component carries, the later it comes in its sentence in Korean as in English.

The current study is interested in the following question:

- (4) If information structure is a cross-linguistic feature, and is shared by English and Korean, how much does information structure affect Korean learners of English's choice of an ordering of the components of constructions permitting alternatives in word order?

To seek for an answer to the above question, the current study conducted two experiments with complex sentences composed of main-adverbial clauses and dative construction. As (1) and (2) show, these two constructions permit two different orderings of their components in accordance with their information structure. The experiments are designed to see what choice the subjects make from the given alternative component orderings of each construction for a given information structure. This is different from the previous analyses in the literature<sup>3)</sup>.

The current paper consists of the following sections: Section 2 for Review of the Literature, Section 3 for Method of the experiments, Section 4 for Results and Discussion, and finally Section 5 for Conclusion.

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3) The previous studies simply show what percentage of an ordering of a construction accounts for the whole available data. For example, Ignoring information structure, Diessel (2005) makes use of a large corpus (Santa Barbara Corpus) and two other large data (fictional and scientific writings) to see how many adverbial clauses precede main clauses in 2034 complex sentences. What he found was that out of 2034 complex sentences, 782 and 1252 adverbial clauses occur sentence-initially and sentence-finally, respectively.

## 2. Review of the Literature

### 2.1. Information Structure and the Principle of 'Given before New'

In a discourse, when the speaker delivers his information to his hearer(s), he tends to present the component of given information before that of new information as the following question-and-answer pair shows:

- (5) Q: What did Mary drink?  
A: (Mary drank) orange juice.

The component in the parentheses *Mary drank* carries 'old' information, whereas the remaining component *orange juice* delivers 'new' information. According to scholars (e. g., Vallduvi 1990, Lambrecht 1994, Lee, Y-S 1995, Fréy and Krifka 2008, and many others), the principle of 'given before new' is to achieve the optimal information transfer in a given discourse context.<sup>4)</sup>

As (3) shows, the 'given before new' principle also applies to Korean, and comes into play to determine an ordering of the components of expressions of which word order varies with their information structure. The data given in (6) exemplify this, too.

- (6) Q: ke-ka etise wa-sse-yo?  
he-Nom where come-past-Q  
'Where did he come?'  
A: a. ke-ka pwusan-eyse wa-sse-yo.  
he-Nom Busan-from come-past-Dec  
'He came from Busan.'  
b. # pwusan-eyse ke-ka wa-sse-yo.  
Busan-from he-Nom come-past-Dec  
'From Busan, he came.'

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4) We mean by 'new' information that it can reduce uncertainty of the interlocutors' information state. In contrast, 'old' information does not make any contribution to the reduction of the interlocutors uncertainty. This view is shared by almost all scholars in the literature.

Kim (1982) contends that (6a) is an appropriate way of answering the question (6Q); (6b) is not because the question (6Q) is asking about the hometown of the subject and the component *pwusan-eyse* ('from Busan') carrying the new information comes later than the component *ke-ka* ('he') delivering a piece of old information.

As shown above, it is safe to assume that the principle of 'given before new' for structuring sentences into the given information component and the new information component is a cross-linguistic principle. Based on this assumption, the current study tries to answer the research question given in (4).

## 2.2. Complex Sentences and Dative Constructions

As (1b) shows, complex sentences consist of two clauses: main and adverbial clauses, and the ordering of these two clauses varies in English. To date much work has focused on what factor(s) can determine the ordering of main-adverbial clauses for native speakers of English (cf. Hawkins 1992, Arnold *et al* 2000, Diessel 2005). To be more specific about the findings by Diessel (2005), his data come from three different types of source: Conversation (Santa Babara Corpus), Fiction (short stories from British and American authors), and Scientific Writings (academic articles from the Journal *Cognition*). The mean proportions of the initial and the final adverbial clauses differ from source to source. For example, the mean proportions of initial adverbial clauses are 32.1% (Conversation), 37.6%(Fiction) and 43.7 (Scientific Writings). Another finding worth mentioning and relevant to the current study is about the relative length of initial and final adverbial clauses in the short stories. That is, the longer the adverbial clauses are, the more likely they are to follow their main clauses, and vice versa.<sup>5)</sup> It might be safe to contend that the principle of 'given before new' comes to play: According to the Information Packaging Theory, the longer a

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5) Diessel (2005:453) shows that out of the initial adverbial clauses 52.1% are shorter than the final adverbial clauses. In contrast, only 15.3% of initial adverbial clauses are longer than the final adverbial clauses.

component is, the more likely it is to carry more or new information (cf. Quirk *et al* 1985). However, few studies have been done to show how foreign learners of English like Koreans resolve such alternating constructions. The current study aims to show how information structure affects the determination of the ordering of main-adverbial clauses by Korean learners of English.

As far as the previous studies on dative construction go, most of them have focused on the conditions which constrain or license the alternation between prepositional object construction and direct object construction (hereafter, PO and DO constructions respectively).

In addition to such a strong semantic condition for the alternation, Krifka (2004:27) states that "information structure plays a major role in the choice of the DO construction or the PO construction" with the following examples:

- (7) a. "You don't know difficult it is to find something which will please everybody especially the men."  
 "Why not just **give them cheques?**" I asked.  
 "You can't **give cheques to people.** It would be insulting."  
 b. You **carrying a doughnut to your aunt** again this morning?  
 [...] Looks like you **carry her some breakfast** every morning.

With regard to this role of information structure, no research has been performed to show how information structure influences foreign learners of English's choice of the DO or PO construction. The current study tries to show to what extent Korean learners of English make recourse to information structure when they choose one of the alternative constructions.

### 2.3. Korean Syntactic Features and L1 Transfer

As White (1987) and Inagaki (2001) show, L1 transfer usually occurs onto L2 in word order when the grammatically possible L1 word orderings of a construction constitute a subset of its L2 counterpart. For example, French speaking learners of English are more likely to use or choose the PO construction for the argument of a dative verb. This preference is due

to the argument structure of French dative verbs, which allow only the PO construction. Contrastively, English speaking learners of French, after a long period of learning French, still use the ungrammatical DO construction of dative verbs as the following examples show:

- (8) a. Jean a donné le livre à Marie.  
 'Jean gave the book to Marie.'  
 b. \*Jean a donné Marie le livre.  
 'Jean gave Marie the book.'

We can assume that Korean speaking learners of English demonstrate preference for the PO construction of English dative verbs to a similar extent to that of French speaking learners of English since Korean dative verbs mainly allow the PO construction.<sup>6)</sup> This is attested by several previous studies such as Moon (2004).

Similarly, the ordering of main-adverbial clauses is relatively rigid in Korean as the following examples show.

- (9) a. pi-ka o-myun sowpwung an kan-ta  
 rain-Nom come-Cond picnic Neg go-Dec  
 'If it rains, (we) do not go on a picnic.'  
 b. ?sowpwung an kan-ta, pi-ka o-myun.  
 picnic Neg go-Dec rain-Nom come-Cond  
 (Lit.) '(We) don't go on a picnic, if it rains.'

Since adverbial clauses usually come first in Korean, we can assume that Korean speaking learners of English will show a strong preference for the English complex sentences with their initial adverbial clauses. It seems that these preferences are due to the effect of L1 transfer as Moon (2004) and Kweon (2008) insist.

As (2) shows, information structure also plays a crucial role in the

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6) (i) shows a double object construction in Korean. Even though most Korean syntacticians accept such double object construction of dative verbs in Korean, Korean speakers usually would not accept the construction.

(i) John-un Mary-lul chayk-ul chwu-ess-ta.  
 -Top -Acc book-Acc gave-pst-Dec  
 'John gave Mary a book.'

choice of the alternative orderings of main-adverbial clauses. Surprisingly, to date no previous studies have been done to show to what extent foreign learners of English make recourse to information structure to determine one of the alternative orderings of main-adverbial clauses. This issue will be dealt with in the current study.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Subjects**

Adopting the procedure employed in the Nationwide Unified Aptitude Test of Listening in 2006 and 2007, a questionnaire has been composed for this study with dialogues that elicit answers consisting of information constructions in order to grasp Korean English learners' acquisition of word order based on information values. The 20 questions as a whole consist of the dialogues in the questionnaire (10 for dative verb constructions and 10 for subordinate constructions), and the constructions in each group are presented in situations of opposition between old and new information. On the basis of information values that can be grasped in relevant contexts, five questions are to be answered in the order of direct object + (preposition) + indirect object (PO), another five in the order of indirect object + direct object (DO) for dative constructions, five more in the order of main clause + subordinate clause (hereafter SL), and finally, five questions in the order of subordinate clause + main clause (hereafter SF) for subordinate constructions.

Each question is multiple-choice, in which the subjects choose the best answer to the interrogative sentence occupying the last line of the dialogue presented based on their judgment of information values. When a multiple-choice question is presented in which the direct object is either new or old information, with the indirect object correspondingly containing either old or new information, the subjects choose between the two options. There are also cases in which subordinate clauses are realized as old information, and other cases in which they embody new information. Thus, main clauses are realized either as new or as old information, and the subjects are asked to choose between the two cases.



Based on the questions composed through the above-mentioned steps, three groups were set for this study, each consisting of 50 selected students per grade, for the purpose of investigating their acquisition of the correct word order in accordance with information values, and differences in acquisition among the groups. 150 students were selected in total, of whom 100 students were from a high school in Dalseo-gu in the Metropolitan City of Daegu (50 per grade for the first and second grades), and 50 students from a university also located in Daegu. Additionally, 10 lecturers working for the language institute of a university in the same region who use English as their first language were included as subjects.

### **3.2. Sampling and Statistical Tests**

As for the samples selected for this study, 50 first grade students and 50 second grade students from the same high school, as well as 50 university students were cluster-sampled, considering each group as a grade-based set of Korean learners of English. The collected data went through technical processes of statistics using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) program, and the significance level was  $p < .05$ .

The first analysis of each construction was carried out as a frequency analysis for investigating the frequencies of the constructions selected for individual questions. The analysis of the PO, DO, Subordinate-first, and Subordinate-last constructions was performed, and the rates of the 150 subjects' selection of the individual constructions were summarized in number with the frequency tables for individual questions composed. In the second analysis, with the individual groups as independent variables and the rates of the individual groups' selection of correct answers for the 4 constructions as dependent variables, the significance of the differences in the averages among the groups was tested with MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) for performing the experiment about whether the properties of a group influence the average rate of selection of correct answers.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

#### 4.1. Pilot Test with Native-Speaking Subjects

The practical frequency of use by native speakers with respect to information structure expression was investigated by performing a preliminary investigation with the composed questionnaire applied to 10 lecturers working for the language institute of a university located in Daegu who use English as their first language. The results are as follows (reflecting the responses from 9 of the ten subjects).

Table 1. Rates of selection for each information structure among the native speakers

Rates of the Correct answers by foreigners (%)	GIVE+IO+DO	GIVE+DO+PP	Subordinate-first	Subordinate-last
	77	86.7	66	76.7

In the above table, the rate of the native-speaking instructors using the PO construction appropriately as new information is 86.7%, while the rate for appropriate DO construction responses is 77%. In the cases where one should arrange the subordinate clause in the sentence-initial position, with the main clause receiving the focus in the subordinate-first construction, the rate of native speakers answering in the pattern of 'subordinate clause + main clause' is 66%. The rate of native speakers answering in the pattern of 'main clause + subordinate clause' to the questions where the subordinate clause functions as new information in the subordinate-last construction is 76.7%. As we can see, the rate of selecting the information structure where focalization is realized in the sentence-final position in accordance with the value of old or new information in a discourse situation is 77%. Given that the foreign subjects showed an average of 76% in appropriate selection for the 4 types of questions and that the actual situations of utterance are complex, it is conceivable that they generally perform communication using information structures through word order in accordance with the old and new values of information.

#### 4.2. Analysis of Individual Constructions

In the analysis of the individual constructions, aiming to grasp the distribution of responses to the multiple-choice questions by the subjects, we have graphed the frequencies of the responses through a frequency analysis, and the whole distribution by presenting the rate of the correct answers with the ratio of the correct answers to the whole responses. The results of the analysis are recapitulatively rated in tables 2 and 3, and relevant explanations are provided.

Table 2. Rates of selection of individual informational structures by Korean learners of English

Rates of the correct answers (%)	PO_Give	PO_Send	PO_Teach	PO_Buy	PO_Make
high school first graders	64	64	66	80	76
high school second graders	64	72	68	76	72
university freshmen	70	72	72	76	82
	DO_Give	DO_Send	DO_Teach	DO_Buy	DO_Make
high school first graders	28	40	26	20	16
high school second graders	28	32	32	28	28
university freshmen	24	34	24	18	8
	SL_When	SL_Because	SL_When	SL_If	SL_Because
high school first graders	42	42	58	38	46
high school second graders	44	34	34	52	42
university freshmen	38	54	52	28	44
	SF_When	SF_If	SF_If	SF_When	SF_When
high school first graders	60	64	58	54	62
high school second graders	54	68	50	44	50
university freshmen	26	48	48	38	46

Table 3. Average rates of selection of individual informational structures by Korean learners of English

Rates of the correct answers (%)	GIVE+IO +DO	GIVE+DO+PP	Subordinate-first	Subordinate-last
high school first graders	26	70	60	45
high school second graders	30	70	53	41
university freshmen	22	74	41	43
averages	26	71	43	41

#### 4.2.1. PO Construction

The PO construction implies that when one chooses the most natural answer to the last question in a given situation of discourse, the direct object of the dative verb is already revealed information, i.e. old information, and the indirect object is new information in the discourse context. We have rated the answers as the last responses on the basis of the frequency of choosing the PO construction and the kinds of verbs among the individual grade groups. The rates of selection of the PO construction with respect to the dative verb *give* by the first and second graders in high school and the university freshmen are 64%, 64%, and 70% respectively, while those with respect to the verb *send* are 64%, 72%, and 72% respectively. In the case of the verb *teach*, the rates from the individual grade groups are 66%, 68%, and 72% respectively, while as for the verb *buy*, the rates are 80%, 76%, and 76% respectively. With the verb *make*, the rates are 76%, 72%, and 82% respectively. The total average rate of correct answers for PO constructions is about 71%.

#### 4.2.2. DO Construction

What was measured with respect to the DO construction is the

frequency of Korean learners of English using the word order of 'indirect object + direct object' in the discourse contexts. Given that in the DO construction the indirect object is the information already known by the speaker and the hearer while the direct object is the new information that the speaker wants to transmit to the hearer, we yielded in the rate of selection the frequency of Korean learners of English selecting this construction for the questions to which one should give answers in the word order of 'indirect object + direct object' on the basis of information values. As Korean lacks the word order of 'indirect object + direct object,' it was assumed previously that the mother tongue would have a negative influence on the word order. The rates of the selection of the DO construction with respect to the dative verb *give* by the first and second graders in high school and the university freshmen are 28%, 28%, and 24% respectively, while those with respect to the verb *send* are 40%, 32%, and 34% respectively. In the case of the verb *teach*, the rates from the individual grade groups are 26%, 32%, and 24% respectively, while as for the verb *buy*, the rates are 20%, 28%, and 18% respectively. With the verb *make*, the rates are 16%, 28%, and 8% respectively. The total average rate of correct answers for DO constructions is shown to be about 26%.

These lower rates of selection of the DO construction than of the PO construction can be recognized as a negative effect on the acquisition of the target language, this effect being related to the word order properties of the mother tongue in which the object is not determined by its position and two objects cannot come in succession without particles.

#### 4.2.3. Subordinate-last Structure

Next, the conditions of information realization of the subordinate construction among Korean learners of English were examined. Given that the Subordinate-last structure includes cases where the subordinate clause headed by a subordinate conjunction contains new information appearing in the discourse context, the frequency of selecting the

Subordinate-last structure where the subordinate clause is focalized in context has been included in the rate of selection. As has been seen previously, from the fact that structures in which the subordinate clause comes in reverse order do not exist in Korean, it can be conjectured that the phenomenon of first language intervention will certainly appear in early stages of learning when the recognition of word order occurs. The rates of the individual grade groups selecting constructions with an adverbial clause headed by a subordinate conjunction are as follows. The rates of selection of the *when* construction with the first and second graders in high school and the university freshmen are 42%, 44%, and 38% respectively, and those of the *because* construction are 42%, 34%, and 54% respectively. In the case of the *if* construction, the rates are shown to be 38%, 52%, and 28% respectively. The entire average rate of selection is about 41%.

#### 4.2.4. Subordinate-first Structure

The Subordinate-first structure indicates the structure (as an answer or appropriate utterance in response to the speaker's last question) in which the subordinate clause headed by a subordinate conjunction contains old information already mentioned in the discourse, while the main clause contains new information that is relatively valuable. As the order of 'subordinate clause + main clause' generally occurs in complex Korean sentences, Korean learners of English will be positively influenced by this order that also appears in their mother tongue when they acquire the order of 'subordinate clause + main clause.' We have shown the frequencies of the correct selection of this structure in the rates of selection.

The 50 first and 50 second graders in high school and the 50 university freshmen showed 60%, 54%, and 26% in the rates of the correct answers for the *when* construction while they showed 64%, 68%, and 48% distributions for the *if* construction. When we look into the rates of selection among the individual groups, we can see that apart from the university students, the first and second graders in high school

show an average frequency of selection for the sentence-initial subordinate clause that is about 15% higher than the rate of selection for the sentence-final subordinate clause. This can be interpreted as a result of the influence of the mother tongue with the order of 'subordinate clause + main clause.' Incidentally, though the frequencies of selection increase with the entire average rates of the correct answers by the individual groups being 60%, 53%, and 41%, the rates of the correct answers seem to decrease. Though the university freshmen level group recognizes that the word order of the target language differs from that of the mother tongue to some extent, the rates of correct answers are rather low, so we can see that the group simply recognizes the word order, but does not achieve the acquisition of the word order.

#### **4.3. Analysis of Individual Groups**

In the next analysis, we have investigated whether the rates of selection of the correct answers are significantly different among the groups with the individual groups as independent variables and the rates of selection of the correct answers by the individual groups as dependent variables. As the dependent variables are of more than two kinds due to their division with each construction, we have tested the significance of the mean differences among the groups through MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) using the SPSS program. MANOVA is a statistical technique extended from the analysis of variance with which we can test the difference among the averages (vector) of two test variables (dependent variables) among two or more groups. The hypothesis was verified that word order learning is thoroughly carried out, but learning of word order variations in terms of information structure is not achieved even when the learning level goes up. Thus, after applying MANOVA, we have analyzed whether there are mean differences among the groups at the 0.05 significance level. Adopting the null hypothesis, we have concluded that there are no mean differences when the significance probability is higher than the 0.05 significance level.

Table 4. Tests of the significance of mean differences in information constructions among individual groups

Sources	dependent variables	Type III sums of squares	degrees of freedom	mean squares	F	significance probability
revised models	PO	.055(a)	2	.028	.281	.755
	DO	.175(b)	2	.087	1.627	.200
	SL	.040(c)	2	.020	.253	.777
	SF	.820(d)	2	.410	4.227	.016
intercepts	PO	76.298	1	76.298	775.771	.000
	DO	9.770	1	9.770	182.134	.000
	SL	27.832	1	27.832	351.355	.000
	SF	39.480	1	39.480	407.218	.000
grades	PO	.055	2	.028	.281	.755
	DO	.175	2	.087	1.627	.200
	SL	.040	2	.020	.253	.777
	SF	.820	2	.410	4.227	.016
errors	PO	14.359	146	.098		
	DO	7.832	146	.054		
	SL	11.565	146	.079		
	SF	14.155	146	.097		
sums	PO	90.680	149			
	DO	17.800	149			
	SL	39.440	149			
	SF	54.560	149			
revised sums	PO	14.414	148			
	DO	8.006	148			
	SL	11.605	148			
	SF	14.974	148			

As the significance probability of the mean differences among the groups with the PO construction is 0.755, which is higher than the 0.05 significance level, the results of the analysis of variance in table 4 show that there are no mean differences among the groups. That is to say, we can see that the students' acquisition of the PO construction word order for the realization was not achieved regardless of grade level.

The significance probability of 0.200 from the mean differences among



the groups for the DO construction goes beyond the significance level of 0.05. Thus, the opposition hypothesis is rejected but the null hypothesis is adopted, i.e. there are no mean differences among the groups. That is to say, the information structure approach to learning of the DO construction seems not to be achieved even with the advancement of grade level.

We have shown that there are no mean differences among learner groups for the Subordinate-last structure. The significance probability of 0.777 is much higher than the significance level of 0.05, which means that there are no differences among the groups in the ability to recognize the Subordinate-last structure as a word order variation in terms of information values.

Lastly, as the significance probability for the Subordinate-first structure is 0.016, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, it has been verified that there are mean differences among the groups for the Subordinate-first structure. Though the rates of correct answers by the first and second graders in high school and the university freshmen are 60%, 53%, and 41%, which means that the perception of word order variations change with the increase of the grade level, the rates of correct answers rather tend to decrease in the same ratio. This can be interpreted to reflect the fact that though the weariness about word order variations different from those of the mother tongue with the advancement of grade level increases, the acquisition of word order variations in terms of information values is insufficient.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has tried to determine the acquisition of word order by Korean English learners from the perspective of information structure, and furthermore it has investigated the extent to which these learners appropriately acquire the flexibility of word order in terms of information values as they advance to higher grade levels. To pursue such investigations, this study has determined the acquisition of word order in accordance with information values by selecting dative verb

constructions and adverbial clause constructions in English that have an influence on word order variations with an opposition of old and new information. By dividing the subjects into three groups according to grade level, the differences in the acquisition of word order variations in accordance with information values in terms of learning levels has been examined. As a result, it has turned out that Korean learners of English have a low tendency to grasp word order variations in English in terms of information values, and there are no significant differences in the acquisition of word order variations in terms of information values as the grade level increases. These results show that the syntactic knowledge of L1 (Korean) plays a more decisive role in choosing correct orderings of the two constructions than the factor of structuring information.

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