

KOREAN LEARNERS' *BE*-INSERTION ERRORS: A LEARNER CORPUS-BASED APPROACH



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Overpassivization errors

- Second language researchers as well as ESL teachers have noted that ESL learners make *be*-insertion errors.
 - Error examples
 - a) *The most memorable experience of my life was happened 15 years ago.
 - b) *Most of people are fallen in love and marry with somebody.
 - c) *My mother was died when I was just a baby.
(Zobl 1989)
- Hubbard (1944): overwhelming majority of them appear with intransitive verbs known as unaccusatives (see also Hubbard and Hix, 1988; Yip, 1995; Hwang, 1997; Han, 19987; Ju, 2000)

Korean learners' *be* insertion errors

- Korean learners of English tend to use the verb *be* excessively not only in the unaccusative environments, but also in other contexts.
 - a. *The girl is very very like dog.
 - b. *He is eat hamburger.
 - c. *Bird was flew into the sky.

(Choi 2013)

Previous approach I

- Overpassivization (Chung 2010; Zobl 1989; Yip 1995; Lee & Choi 2011)
 - The similarity of the underlying structures between the unaccusative verbs and the passive verbs explains Korean learners' *be* insertion errors.
 - John arrived : [IP e *past* [VP arrive John]]
 - John was blamed: : [IP e *past* [VP blame John]]

Previous approach I

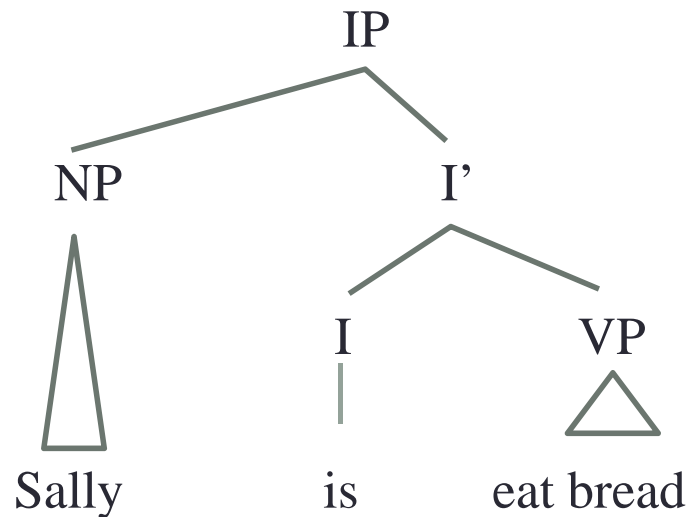
- Adversity effect (Masuko 1996; cf. Shibatani 1990)
 - Learners do not wrongly passivize intransitive verbs such as *sleep* and *walk*. They tend to passivize intransitive verbs when the activities denoted by the verbs affect their internal arguments adversely.
 - occur, happen, and suffer
 - They were suffered by the treatment.
 - kare wa tsuma ni sin are -da
he Top wife by die Pass Past
'He was adversely affected by his wife's death.' (Masuko 1996)

Previous approach II

- topic marker view” (Hahn, 2000; Shin, 2000; Ahn, 2003)
 - The erroneously inserted *be* is a topic marker.
 - kim-un apeci-ka puca-i-si-ta
Kim-TOP father-NOM rich-COP-DECL
‘As for Kim, his father is rich.’
- A language transfer effect
 - He is friend is many “As for him, he has many friends” (Shin 2001)

Previous approach III

- functional category view” (Yang, 2001).
 - an underdeveloped verbal functional category: the carrier of tense and agreement
 - Sally is eat bread.
‘Sally eats bread.’



Aims of the presentation

- To show the overall pattern of Korean learners' *be* insertion errors.
- To reveal possible reasons for the mistakes.
- To reveal the developmental characteristics of Korean learners' *be* insertion errors.

A Learner Corpus Study: KELC

- KELC: KNU English Learner Corpus
 - 168,526 words; 830 texts written by 232 children;
 - 8 times essay writing tests over 2 years in the children's English program in KNU.
 - Annotated corpus: part of speech on the basis of BNC coding system
 - 6 subcorpora in accordance with the proficiency levels: Placement tests: (Bae and Lee 2012)
 - Primary: 1,435
 - Basic: 24,012
 - Pre-intermediate: 39,454
 - Intermediate: 41,128
 - Advanced: 31,210
 - Post-advanced: 31,287

KELC: Be insertion errors

- *be* errors were retrieved from KELC through manual checking by researchers.

Types	PRI	BAS	PIN	INT	ADV	PAV	Total
V Tokens (A)	309	4,637	6,701	8,686	5,135	4,700	30,168
<i>be</i> verbs (B)	131	1,401	1,866	2,042	1,155	1,000	7,595
<i>be</i> errors (C)	25	331	374	279	176	33	1,217
$C / A * 100$	8.1	7.1	5.6	3.2	3.4	0.7	4
$C / B * 100$	19.1	23.6	20	13.7	15.2	3.3	16

Research Questions

- Are the *be* verbs a passive auxiliary?
 - checking the main verbs that co-occur with the erroneous *be* verbs
- Are the erroneously inserted *be* verbs a topic marker?
 - NP (topic) + *be* + NP + VP
 - NP + *be* + Aux + VP
- Are the *be* verbs an underdeveloped functional category?
 - checking the distribution of verbal inflection

Verbs occurring together with *be*-forms

verb	Freq	verb	Freq	verb	Freq	Verb	Freq
go	215	say	20	sit	10	fall	7
eat	97	like	16	call	9	find	7
play	61	sleep	15	climb	9	get	7
see	50	Smile	15	write	9	stop	7
look	47	Run	13	catch	8	surprise	7
come	43	will	13	cry	8	bring	6
draw	31	ride	12	fly	8	drink	6
make	30	start	12	help	8	live	6
finish	29	take	12	talk	8	love	6
sing	27	know	11	walk	8	rest	6
have	26	think	11	arrive	7	buy	5
give	20	laugh	10	disappear	7	drive	5

Result: overpassivization

- Among the 51 lexical verbs, only 5 verbs are categorized as legitimate unaccusative verbs (Levin 1993): go, come, arrive, disappear, and fall.
- The unaccusative verbs: 22.9% (279 cases)
- The other: 77.1% (938 cases)
- *go* and *come* are in a gray area (Dowty 1979).
 - a. Family are go to the sea. [KELC: BAS]
 - b. Friends is go to the picnic. [KELC: BAS]
- arrive, disappear, and fall: 1.7% (21 cases)

Adversity effect

- Sentences involving adversity implication
 - I know that my nose were disappear. [KELC: INT]
 - but dog 'Funny' was disappeared. [KELC: PAD]
 - She is fall down on the floor. [KELC: INT]
 - if one guy are fall down and very sad. [KELC: INT]
- Surely *disappear*, and *fall* induce more be-insertion errors than the verb *arrive* or other non-accusative verbs: adversity effect.
- However, the effect is extremely limited.

Result: Topic marker

- NP+ be + (NP) + VP: 39 cases
 - Today is my family go to pizza hot. [KELC: PINT]
 - Helen is family go to the mountain. [KELC: FBAS]
 - now time is does not live in stadium. [KELC: PINT]

	PRI	BAS	PIN	INT	ADV	PAV	Total
Errors	0	17	12	6	3	1	39
Error rate (%)	0	5.1	3.2	2.1	1.6	2.9	3.2

Result: Topic marker

- Ahn 2006
 - In the past computers **is** are tool of calculate machine. Computers have many advantage. Above all, speed is most advantage. Speed as well as, memory's ability is same millions of people.
- Only one case in KELC
 - 70% well. all **is** are good but robot was killed [KELC: INT]
- Other four cases
 - Sea was looks very cool [KELC: INT]
 - Anny were goes to beach [KELC: PIN]

Result: topic marker

- Other 125 cases
 - famous singer is came in the restaurant [KELC: INT]
 - He is killed the bird. [KELC: INT]
 - Friends is touched a chicken [KELC: PINT] (the only case of disagreement)

Result: topic marker

- be + Aux + VP: 24 cases
 - be + modal (must, will): 6
 - me and other people are must be careful. [092MADVVT04]
 - My class is will go to summer camp. [083MPINT01]
 - be + Negation (don't, doesn't, didn't, wasn't, can not): 18
 - father is doesn't like pizza [369FPINT09]
 - police is don't know. [018MINTTT06]

Result: Underdeveloped functional category

- The distribution of inflection
 - Type A: The strange people is come to the there. [KELC: PIN]
 - Type B: Jenny mother is made Gimbab. [KELC: PIN]
 - Type C: I was eat Pizza [KELC: INT]

Result: Underdeveloped functional category

	pri	bas	pin	int	adv	pad	total
total be errors	25	331	373	279	176	33	1,217
be[prs] + V(base)	25 (100)	253 (76.4)	251 (67.3)	161 (57.7)	91 (51.7)	18 (54.5)	799 (65.7)
be[prs] + V (past)	0	37 (11.2)	38 (10.2)	23 (8.2)	24 (13.6)	3 (9.1)	125 (10.3)
be[past] + V	0	7 (2.1)	52 (13.9)	71 (25.4)	51 (29)	8 (24.2)	189 (15.5)

Result: Underdeveloped functional category

- *be*-forms after a modal verb: 9 cases
 - my father will be buy toy for me [KELC: INT]

Result: Underdeveloped functional category

- *be*-forms as an auxiliary verb
 - Negation
 - monkey isn't eat bananas. [KELC: PINT]
 - I think her is not want this picnic. [KELC: INT]
 - Inversion
 - Why are you call Pizza hut? [KELC: INT]
 - Are you find a dog? [KELC: PIN]

	pri	bas	pin	int	adv	pad	total
Aux + be + V			1	5	1	2	9
be + SUB + V			4	5	1		10
be +not +V		3	5	2	3	1	14

Discussion

- Conspiracy effect
 - Language transfer: topic marker effect, adversity effect, ...
 - Underdeveloped verbal functional category: Once the functional projection is established (e.g., INFL), it tends to be filled with a *be*-form. (cf. Hawkins 2001)
 - Whatever the reason (e.g. topic marker), it seems to function as an inflectional category eventually... (agreement, tense, inversion, negation)

A question

- Then, why do particularly Korean learners make more *be*-insertion errors?
 - cf. According to Hubbard (1983)'s observation from nonnative learners' English compositions, more than 90% of *be*-insertion errors takes place with unaccusative intransitive verbs. Therefore, the majority of the errors were identified as the overpassivization errors.
 - As we observed, Korean learners' *be*-insertion errors cannot only be attributed to the overpassivization errors: conspiracy effect (topic, adversity effect, ...)

A possible factor

- *be* may function as the general sign of the beginning of the VP (or lexical realization of INFL).
 - be verbs / total verbs
 - BNC: 3,042,613/13,200,285 = 23.05%
 - Elementary text book (Chunjae)

	3-4 year	5-6 year
Total V	2,477	2,704
Total be	1,043	876
rate	42.1	32.4

- KELC

	PRI	BAS	PIN	INT	ADV	PAD	Total
Be	131	1,401	1,866	2,042	1,155	1,000	7595
V	309	4,637	6,701	8,686	5,135	4,700	30,168
Rate(%)	42.4	30.2	27.8	23.5	22.5	21.3	25.2