

First Language Attrition: Syntax, Interfaces and Processing

Bohye Ko

B.Ko@sms.ed.ac.uk

The University of Edinburgh

Previous research on language attrition shows that the L1 grammar of bilingual speakers who had an extensive exposure to an L2 exhibits various aspects that are different from that of the monolinguals. However, it remains largely unsettled 1) which areas of grammar are affected by attrition 2) what the source of this attrition is – whether the effect of attrition has more to do with the mental representations of grammatical properties or real-time processing limitations and 3) how closely crosslinguistic influence is associated with the effect of attrition on representations and/or processing. Findings to date suggest that grammatical properties at interfaces (e.g. syntax-discourse) are more vulnerable to attrition than purely syntactic properties and problems with interface properties are possibly due to on-line processing difficulties rather than underspecification of representations (Hopp 2007, Sorace & Filiaci 2006, Tsimpli et al. 2004). In an attempt to test these hypotheses, the present study investigates two types of grammatical properties of Korean – the acceptability of the plural marker *-tul* and the interpretation of the reflexive *caki* – in attrited L1 grammar. Two groups of Korean speakers under attrition who have been exposed to different L2s (English and Japanese) will be compared with monolingual controls in off-line and on-line tasks. The research design and preliminary findings of a pilot study will be presented in the talk.

References

Hopp, H. (2007). *Ultimate attainment at the interfaces in second language acquisition: Grammar and processing*. PhD thesis, University of Groningen.

Sorace, A. & Filiaci, F. (2006). Anaphora resolution in near-native speakers of Italian. *Second Language Research*, 22(3): 339-368.

Tsimpli, I., Sorace, A., Heycock, C. & Filiaci, F. (2004). First language attrition and syntactic subjects: A study of Greek and Italian near-native speakers of English. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 8(3): 257-277.