

The Acceptability of the Locative-Nominative Particle Sequence in Korean

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In Korean, the locative case particle *e* and the nominative case particle *ga* are sometimes combined as *e-ga*. This particle sequence (PS) can be seen, for example, in the following sentence: *i cheongbaji-neun mit-e-ga jom jjalb-eun geos gat-a*. In spite of high usage frequency, this expression is not generally accepted as correct by many commentators and language teachers (Kim 2001, Yu 2005, Lee and Lee 2006). The aim of this study is to investigate how the *e-ga* particle sequence is perceived by Korean native speakers. In order to clarify the acceptability of *e-ga*, grammaticality judgement tasks were given to participants using the DMDX software package (Forster and Forster 2003).

A total of 37 native Korean speakers (mean age: 27.25 years, SD=7.06) living in Seoul, participated in the experiment. Participants were tested individually on a laptop computer. A total of 78 stimulations were presented visually (V), and 78 stimulations were presented audibly (A). Participants were required to judge whether the sentences were acceptable or not by pushing a "yes" or "no" button. DMDX recorded the yes/no result and the reaction time.

We selected four items (V acceptable NOM, V acceptable PS, V *e-ga*, V unacceptable) from the visual presentation data and computed a repeated measure ANOVA. There was the main effect among four items [$F(3,108)=445.754, p<.001, \eta^2=.925$]. The result of Post Hoc Tests showed the order as V acceptable NOM = V acceptable PS > V *e-ga* > V unacceptable. Likewise, the audio presentation data was also tested by a repeated measure ANOVA. There was the main effect among these items [$F(3,108)=778.569, p<.001, \eta^2=.956$]. The result of Post Hoc Tests showed the order as A acceptable NOM = A acceptable PS > A *e-ga* > A unacceptable. The particle sequence *e-ga* scored between the clearly acceptable and clearly unacceptable items. We also tested visual and audio presentation data by a paired t-test. There were significant differences between V *e-ga* (M=4.43, SD=1.43) and A *e-ga* (M=5.03, SD=.57) [$t(36)=-2.541, p<.05$]. This result suggests that audio presentation was more comprehensible than visual presentation for the participants. The result of the repeated measure ANOVA also showed a significant difference between "no" responses on *e-ga* and on clearly unacceptable items [$F(4,144)=50.125, p<.001, \eta^2=.582$]. Although the participants rejected *e-ga*, on certain items, their reaction time was slower than for the clearly unacceptable items. These results provide evidence that the locative-nominative particle sequence *e-ga* is accepted among Korean native speakers.

References

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