Title
The distance effect of head-complement dependency in sentence acceptability

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5g73s5dh

Journal

ISSN
1069-7977

Authors
Kambara, Toshimune
Kawashima, Ryuta
Takahashi, Kei
et al.

Publication Date
2009

Peer reviewed
The distance effect of head-complement dependency in sentence acceptability

Kei Takahashi
Tohoku University

Satoru Yokoyama
Tohoku University

Toshimune Kambara
Tohoku University

Kei Yoshimoto
Tohoku University

Ryuta Kawashima
Tohoku University

Abstract: In the linguistic literature, few researches have focused on the relation between dependency distance and acceptability on sentence comprehension. The aim of the current study was to clarify if the distance of dependency between head and complement influences sentence acceptability.

To investigate this issue, we asked online sentence acceptability judgment experiment of 19 right-handed healthy native speakers of Japanese. This experiment was approved by the ethical committee of Tohoku University. All stimuli were ungrammatical right node raised Japanese sentences. This experiment contained two conditions: a head verb and semantically incongruent complement are distant (DIST) and near (NEAR).

Since the result showed statistically higher acceptability in DIST than that in NEAR (p<.05, F(1, 19)=4.91). The implication of this result is that, in real-time sentence processing, due to the decay effect of temporally stored head-complement dependency information, the acceptability of the distant sentences is more acceptable than that of near ones.