Islands in Danish and Japanese L2 English

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WORK IN PROGRESS
Transfer

- Assumption
  - TRANSFER: Properties of L1 grammar is ‘transferred’ to (affects) L2 grammar

- The Full Transfer Full Access Hypothesis
  - Full Transfer: initial L2 grammar = L1 grammar
  - Full Access: There is full access to UG (interlanguage grammars are constrained by UG) (see White 2003, 61)

- Prediction:
  - Danish ‘lenient’ grammar affects English L2 ⇒ extractions from islands are more acceptable
  - Danish +cP-recursion is transferred.
  - Perhaps: More restrictive grammar is transferred

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Tasks

• Standard Cloze test: measure of L2 proficiency

• Acceptability judgment test: WH-extractions and RC extractions
  • (same as English L1 tests, Christensen & Nyvad submitted, in prep)

• Participants: Danish L1 and Japanese L1 speakers with English as L2
For each blank in the following passage, please circle one of three options given. Please choose the option appropriate for the context. Please choose one option only for each blank.

Joe came home from work on Friday. It was payday, but he wasn’t (1) even / more / ever excited about it. He knew that (2) then / when / while he sat down and paid his (3) checks / bills / salary and set aside money for groceries, (4) driving / pay / gas for the car and a small (5) deposit / withdrawal / money in his savings account, there wouldn’t be (6) quite / not / too much left over for a good (7) pleasure / leisure / life. He thought about going out for (8) eat / dinner / eating at his favorite restaurant, but he (9) just / only / very wasn’t in the mood. He wandered (10) around / at / in his apartment and ate a sandwich. (11) In / For / After a while, he couldn’t stop himself (12) for / from / about worrying about the money situation. Finally, (13) he / she / it got into his car and started (14) drive / driven / driving. He didn’t have a destination in (15) head / mind / fact, but he knew that he wanted (16) be / to be / being far away from the city (17) which / there / where he lived. He turned onto a quiet country (18) road / house / air. The country sights made him feel (19) as good / better / best. His mind wandered as he drove (20) past / in / to small farms and he began to (21) try / think / imagine living on his own piece of (22) house / land / farm and becoming self-sufficient. It had always (23) being / been / be a dream of his, but he (24) having / have / had never done anything to make it (25) a / one / some reality. Even as he was thinking, (26) their / his / her logical side was scoffing at his (27) favorite / practical / impractical imaginings. He debated the advantages and (28) cons / disadvantages / problems of living in the country and (29) growing / breeding / building his own food. He imagined his (30) farmhouse / truck / tractor equipped with a solar energy panel (31) at / out / on the roof to heat the house (32) in / for / over winter and power a water heater. (33) She / He / They envisioned fields of vegetables for canning (34) either / and / but preserving to last through the winter. (35) Whether / Even / If the crops had a good yield, (36) maybe / possible / may he could sell the surplus and (37) store / save / buy some farming equipment with the extra (38) economy / cost / money. Suddenly, Joe stopped thinking and laughed (39) at / out / so loud, “I’m really going to go (40) through / away / in with this?”

Adapted from:
WH: Stimuli

• The target stimuli consisted of 72 target sentences, 12 sets corresponding to:
  1. The mother explained that they should treat the children very leniently. (Baseline)
  2. Which children did the mother explain that they should treat very leniently? (Long ARG)
  3. How leniently did the mother explain that they should treat the children? (Long ADJ)
  4. Which children did the mother explain how leniently they should treat? (Across ARG)
  5. How leniently did the mother explain which children they should treat? (Across ADJ)
  6. The mother explained how leniently which children they should treat. (Anomaly)

• Plus 10 fully grammatical fillers, 10 completely ungrammatical fillers, and 48 other sentences that form the basis for a different experiment [extraction from RCs] (140 in total).

• Target sentences were distributed evenly over 6 lists such that each participant saw only one member of each set.

• Same 20 fillers occurred all lists, such that each list consisted of 40 sentences in randomized order. Each participant chose a list based on the month of their birthday: January-February = list 6, March-April = list 5, etc.

• The 6 lists were presented as online surveys using Google Drive sent to various forums for English speakers on Facebook.
English L2, Danish speakers, WH

- Participants:
  - n=59 (28F, 31M; mean age=37.6 (23-58))
  - 11 linguists; 23 stud. Eng.
  - Proficiency: mean=0.94 (0.78-1.00; SD=0.05)

- No main effect of
  - Years of education (p=0.62), Proficiency (p=0.63)
  - Studying English (p=0.35), Being a linguist (p=0.33)
  - Trial (p=0.71)

- Danish L2-English acceptability pattern is a replication of the Danish L1 pattern (Christensen et al. 2013)

- And is very similar to English L1 (Christensen & Nyvad submitted) (high proficiency)


Christensen, Ken Ramshøj, and Anne Mette Nyvad. submitted. "No Escape from the Island: On Extraction from Complement Wh-Clauses in English".
Same overall pattern, except ARG/ADJ asymmetry in the island conditions

L1 English
(Christensen & Nyvad, submitted)

Danish L1
(Christensen et al. (2013))

Nicely compatible with a processing account + parametric variation in cP-recursion.
English L2, Japanese speakers, WH

- Participants:
  - n=55 (28F, 27M; mean age=21.3 (19-28))
  - 8 linguists; all stud. Eng.
  - Proficiency: mean=0.70 (0.43-0.93; SD=0.10)

- No main effect of
  - Years of education (p=0.34)
  - Proficiency (p=0.33)
  - Being a linguist (p=0.16)
  - Trial (p=0.29)

- Influence from Japanese scrambling? Resumption??

### Mean acceptability ±1SE

- Baseline: 3.98 ± 0.42
- Long.ARG: 3.41 ± 0.43
- Long.ADJ: 3.66 ± 0.44
- Across.ARG: 2.95 ± 0.45
- Across.ADJ: 2.94 ± 0.46
- Anomaly: 2.94 ± 0.47
RC: Stimuli

- The target stimuli consisted of 48 target sentences, 12 sets corresponding to:
  1. Peter once kissed a girl who preferred that type of man.  
     (Baseline)
  2. What type of man did Peter once kiss a girl who preferred?  
     (Wh)
  3. That type of man Peter once kissed a girl who preferred.  
     (Topic)
  4. *What type of man did Peter once kiss a girl who preferred men?  
     (Anomaly)

- Plus 10 fully grammatical fillers, 10 completely ungrammatical fillers, and 72 other sentences that form the basis for a different experiment [extraction from complement wh-clauses] (140 in total).
- Target sentences were distributed evenly over 6 lists such that each participant saw only one member of each set.
- Same 20 fillers occurred all lists, such that each list consisted of 40 sentences in randomized order. Each participant chose a list based on the month of their birthday: January-February = list 6, March-April = list 5, etc.
- The 6 lists were presented as online surveys using Google Drive sent to various forums for English speakers on Facebook.
English L2, Danish speakers, RC

- No significant main effect of
  - Education (p=0.89), Proficiency (p=0.23)
  - Studying English (p=0.09) (marginal at p<0.1)
  - Linguist (p=0.57), Trial (p=0.60)

- Danish L2-English acceptability pattern is very similar to the Danish L1 pattern (Christensen & Nyvad 2014)
  - Extractions are degraded
  - Same ‘smeared’ pattern: A lexical effect (plus WH>TOPIC (marginal))
  - Unlike the English L1 pattern (Christensen & Nyvad in prep)

- For Danes, In English L2, RCs are not strong islands.
  - Transfer Danish L1 +cP-recursion

Christensen, Ken Ramshøj & Anne Mette Nyvad. in prep. “On the nature of inescapable relative clauses in English.”
English L2, Japanese speakers, RC

• Small negative main effect of education ($\beta=-0.09$, p=0.005)

• Small positive main effect of being a linguist ($\beta=0.86$, p<0.001)

• No main effect of
  • Proficiency (p=0.23)
  • Trial (p=0.60)

• Influence from Japanese scrambling? Resumption??
Extraction from RC

- For the Danes, extractions are significantly better than ANOM.
- This is not so for the English L1 speakers (extraction is junk).

L1 English
(Christensen & Nyvad, in prep)

Danish L2 English

Japanese L2 English
Extraction from RC

Danish L2 English

Japanese L2 English

Mean acceptability ±1SE [-Extraction]

Mean acceptability ±1SE [+Extraction]
Conclusions: Transfer of parameter setting

- Extraction from WH-clauses and from RCs are grammatical but degraded in Danish ➔ +cP-recursion parameter
- This parameter is transferred to L2 English

- Pattern is not due to participant bias or training (Education, Proficiency, Studying English, Linguist, Trial – not significant)

- (Japanese? Other factors most likely play a role...)}