

## The Effects of *Hunminglish* Word Order (HWO) Instruction on Improving the English Listening Ability

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**Abstract.** This study aims to improve the English listening ability on the basis of *Hunminglish* Word Order (HWO) Instruction for 128 Korean high school students, who are mostly below the average level of English. It also seeks to verify the learning effects by the pre- and post-questionnaire surveys and nationwide English listening tests from March through December 2014. *Hunminglish* is a paradigm-shifting combination of *Hunminjeongeum*, the original name of Hangeul, and English. The results from this study indicate that the HWO Instruction increased students' interest and motivation levels. This increase led the students to get about two times greater in scores after 10 months. Therefore it might be desirable that more English teachers use the HWO Instruction to improve their students' listening ability as well as interest and motivation.

**Keywords:** *Hunminglish*, *Hunminjeongeum*, motivation, listening skills, pop songs, below-average

### 1 Introduction

It is easy and natural social development phenomenon to use one's own mother tongue but it is not at all easy to learn a foreign language and to communicate naturally in the foreign language. The reason is that there are many differences between two languages and the fundamental difference is the one in sequence of language rather than difference in word. For instance, most words between Korean language and Japanese one are different each other but Korean people can learn Japanese language easily.

However, roots of Korean language and English language themselves are fundamentally different each other. Such difference clearly appears in sentence structure, i.e. word order. Basic word order of Korean language is [S-O-V] while that of English language is [S-V-O].

Valette (1997) summarized teaching-learning method in 5 ways to develop and improve English listening skill and he emphasized 'understanding of sentence structure' as the key of the ways. Kim (2000) also classified 11 factors of obstruction to English listening and he suggested 'unfamiliar sentence pattern' and 'difference in logical structure' out of such factors.

## 2 Theoretical Background

### 2.1 Classification of Word Order Structure in 30 Languages

Greenberg (1966) conducted a comparative analysis of world 30 languages and said that all the languages belonged to one of following 6 types based on arrangement order of major components of subject (S), object (O), and verb (V). Among such 6 language types as SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OVS, and OSV, the types of SOV, SVO and VSO most frequently appeared and the common point of languages in such word order was that subject preceded object.

### 2.2 Word Order Differences between Korean and English Language

Chomsky (1963) divided all the world languages into the head-initial and the head-final language and he formalized the fact that a head preceded a modifier in [VO] type language like English while a modifier preceded a head in [OV] type language like Korean (Choi, 2002).

In addition, Korean language has [SOV] word order structure but it has affixes of grammar function after roots and so, it has clear communication and relatively free location shift as follows:

**Table 1.** Functions of Affixes after Roots in Korean Language

No.	Korean	English
1	내 아들이 쥐를 죽였다.	My son killed a mouse.
2	= 쥐를 내 아들이 죽였다.	≡ A mouse my son killed.
3	= 쥐를 죽였다 내 아들이.	≠ A mouse killed my son.
4	= 죽였다 내 아들이 쥐를.	≠ Killed my son a mouse.

As seen in above Table 1, it is generally possible to diversely shift word order of Korean language due to role of postposition but English has no postposition so that most of English sentences seem awkward if word order gets out of its position.

### 2.3 Research on the Word Order Practice in English Education

According to the outcome of a research to investigate how students, who had their own mother tongue of Korean, Japanese, French, or German language, properly used the article of English, Park (1998) said that students using French or German language showed far better achievement than those using Korean or Japanese language.

In addition, pursuant to an analysis on influence of Korean word order over

English learning through a test to grasp 3, 4, 5-form sentence pattern on 100 middle school students who started to learn English, Suh (1994) and Kim (2014) found out that intervention of Korean language (mother tongue) was a key obstacle to English (foreign language) learning.

### 3 Method

#### 3.1 Participants and Period

This study was conducted on 128 high school students with a lower level of English in March through December 2014. Their progress in the listening ability was evaluated by the comparison between pre- and post-nationwide English listening tests.

#### 3.2 The Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Surveys for Interest

The same survey with 20 questions was conducted for investigating students' interest in English and taken twice, before and after the experiment. The questions were closed-ended and asked in the manner of a Likert scale, ranging from item 1 (Definitely Yes) to item 5 (Definitely No).

#### 3.3 The Pre- and Post-Nationwide English Listening Tests

The students' progress in listening skills could be evaluated by the scores of two nationwide English listening comprehension tests, which are composed of general understanding of dialogues between native speakers. The first one was conducted on March 17<sup>th</sup> and the second was on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Their advance for 10 months in listening skills is shown by comparison between the two results.

### 4 Outcomes

The 128 students' progress in English listening ability for 10 months was evaluated by the comparison between pre- and post-questionnaire surveys and nationwide English listening tests from March through December 2014 as follows.

**Table 2.** The Pre- and Post-Questionnaire Surveys for Interest

Item	Response					
	Definitely No	No	So so	Yes	Definitely Yes	
1. I like English	Pre	10.2	19.3	44.1	20.7	5.7

and would like to be good at it.	Post	0.1	0.3	5.2	37.8	56.6
Difference (%)		-10.1	-19	-38.9	17.1	50.9

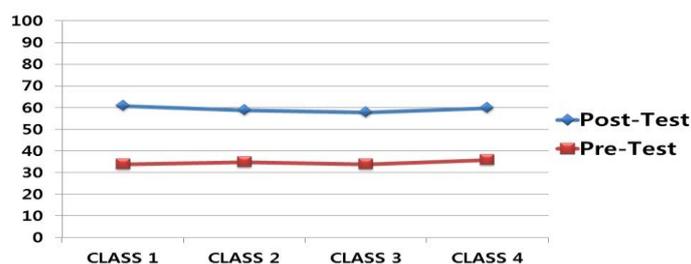


Fig. 1. The Results of the Pre- and Post-Nationwide English Listening Tests

## 5 Conclusion

The goal of this study aimed to improve the English listening ability of high school students with a lower level through *Hunminglish* Word Order (HWO) Instruction and verify the effects by the pre- and post-questionnaire surveys and nationwide English listening tests for 10 months.

The students tried to get accustomed to acquire that while English is S-V-O language, Korean is S-O-V. The verb-final in Korean is strict, but the other constituents such as the object or adverb are flexible without causing any change of meaning. On the contrary, objects in English sentences determine the meaning and that of the adverb is constrained syntactically.

This comfortable perception of learning English first enhanced their listening skills, which are considered the most fundamental requirement for learning languages. The average score of students in March was 35, but in December it rose to 60.

With the meaningful improvements in outcomes above, it can be concluded that using HWO Instruction is a very effective way of teaching and learning English for below-average level of high school students by motivating them to pay comparatively more attention to learning, which led to two times higher scores in the national English test after 10 months.

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