

Differential Difficulty in Processing L1–L2 Verb Splits: Dissociation with Corpus Frequency

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This study examines the Split phenomenon in EFL learning, in which a word in the L1 is manifest in two or more forms in the L2. This phenomenon is most difficult to learn in the L2 when the L1 and the L2 are syntactically and typologically different, as in the case of Korean (L1) and English (L2). Communication verbs in Korean and English are a good example of the Split phenomenon, because the Korean verb (*Malhata*) splits into four verbs (*Tell, Say, Talk, and Speak*) in English. Korean university students who had read four novels during an extensive reading course were tested to determine how correctly they used the four verbs and their subtypes in context. Results show that these verbs are not equally difficult for L2 learners to learn: *Talk* appears to be the easiest and the [say + to NP] subtype construction the most difficult. Rates at which Korean learners used these four verbs correctly were not associated with their frequencies in either the British National Corpus or a corpus based on the novels used in the study. This suggests that L2 learners' knowledge of verb semantics and argument structure information is not guided exclusively by input frequency or by contextual information in the process of learning an L2. Semantic transfer in the form-meaning mapping in L2 vocabulary learning is discussed.

Key words: Split phenomenon, corpus frequency, communication verbs, semantic transfer

INTRODUCTION

In English, ‘communication verbs’ comprise a semantic domain of verbs that can be considered a special subcategory of activity verbs that involve communication (Biber et al., 1999). English communication verbs include *tell*, *say*, *talk* and *speak*; these verbs have similar meanings but behave quite differently in syntactic functions and semantic structures. Interestingly, however, in Korean these four verb forms are all translated into one form “말하다(*malhata*)”.

Split verbs as a class belong to the most difficult level in the *hierarchy of difficulty* proposed by Stockwell, Bowen, and Martins (1965). When contrasting L1 and L2 in terms of facilitation of learning, Stockwell et al. did not presume a simple binary prediction of the form: similarity/difference = ease/difficulty. Their hierarchy is complicated and sophisticated in that it even distinguishes between structural and functional/semantic correspondence.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, pp. 53-54) simplified the hierarchy and proposed five degrees of difficulty in learning an L2. They used Spanish and English as examples. From easiest to most difficult, these are: 1) correspondences, in which L1 and L2 forms correspond structurally and semantically; 2) coalescent forms, in which several forms in L1 are represented by a single form in L2; 3) forms which are present in L1 but absent in L2; 4) forms which are absent in L1, but present in L2; and 5) splits, where a single form in L1 is manifest as two or more forms in L2 (Table 1).

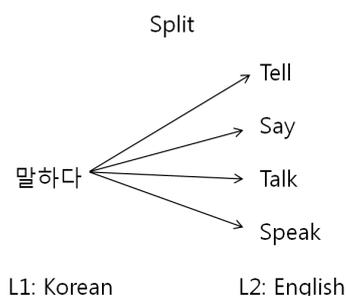
Because Splits are the most difficult phenomenon in the hierarchy of difficulty for a language learner to acquire the target language successfully, it will be interesting to go beyond English and Spanish, which have many attributes in common, and to examine this phenomenon using L1 Korean and L2 English, which are different from each other typologically and syntactically. Although the comparison between Korean and English does not demonstrate all types of difficulty in Table 1, a Split exists in which a single form in Korean (*malhata*) is manifest as four different verb forms in English

(*tell, say, talk and speak*).

TABLE 1
Hierarchy of Difficulty (Adapted from Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991, p. 54))

Type of Difficulty	L1: English L2: Spanish	Example
Correspondence	$x \text{ --- } x$	<i>-ing=-ndo</i> as a complement with verbs of perception
Coalesced	$\begin{matrix} x \\ y \end{matrix} \text{ --- } x$	his/her is realized as a single form <i>su</i>
Absent	$x \text{ --- } \emptyset$	<i>Do</i> as a tense carrier
New	$\emptyset \text{ --- } x$	marking grammatical gender
Split	$x \text{ --- } \begin{matrix} x \\ y \end{matrix}$	for $\begin{matrix} \text{por} \\ \text{para} \end{matrix}$

Splits concerning verb forms between L1 Korean and L2 English have not been extensively explored in the literature. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the form-meaning connection between L1 and L2, where the L1 has one form and the L2 has four different forms that are equivalent to the L1 form. More specifically, this study examines how L1 Korean learners of L2 English process the Split phenomenon when using communication verbs *malhata* in Korean and its equivalent verb forms, *tell, say, talk and speak*, in English. If L2 learners transfer their L1 concept to the L2 verb forms in the process of form-meaning mapping, it can be said that they may not be sensitive to the different functions of syntax and semantics of the English verbs (cf., Elston-Güttler & Williams, 2008; Jiang, 2002, 2004). In this case, Korean learners will lexicalize the four verbs to the same degree during the meaning interpretation.



The purpose of the present study is to determine how verb semantics is realized and matched between L1 and L2 in the Split environment. Specifically, this study examines whether L2 learners show different preferences in determining an appropriate communication verb, where only one L1 communication verb form can replace all the L2 communication verbs without change in meaning.

Under the assumption that providing information about discourse context would facilitate learners' understanding and choice of the correct communication verb (Gass, 2004), learners were tested using sentences selected from four English novels both before and after reading the novels. This design was intended to determine whether learners performed better in the verb-choice test if they read the same test sentences after reading the novels, in which the contextual information of the sentences was provided.

The experimental subjects participated in extensive reading (i.e., pleasure reading) of the four novels in an English course. Numerous studies show that unknown words can be learned incidentally by reading books for meaning through extensive reading (Coady, 1997; Dupuy & Krashen, 1993; Elley, 1991; Horst, 2005; Horst & Meara, 1999; Huckin & Coady, 1999; Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001; Krashen, 1993; Meara, 1992; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997; Pigada & Schmitt, 2006, among others). However, the goal of this study was not to measure incidental vocabulary acquisition after reading, because the subjects were already familiar with the four verbs. Instead, this paper aims to

determine how learners perceive and distinguish the four communication verbs in English (*talk, say, tell, and speak*) when all these four forms in L2 can be associated semantically with only one form in L1, *malhata*. The Split phenomenon was examined when learners were exposed to enhanced meaningful input through extensive reading, where they see the felicitous uses of the verbs in different contexts.

The learners' verb selection patterns were considered in terms of the input frequency effect by comparing them with two corpus data sources: a native corpus that indicated potential exposure to input, and a corpus constructed from the four novels they read and which quantified input to which they were actually exposed. When learners were trying to differentiate the correct use of the communication verbs in sentences, it was expected that learners were sensitive to the frequency of input that they have encountered during reading. Learners would do better for verbs that occurred more frequently than the ones occurring less frequently.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addresses two research questions regarding the Split phenomenon of communication verbs between L1 Korean and L2 English.

1. What is the preference pattern for the four English communication verbs by Korean learners of English?
2. How is the learner's choice among the four verbs affected by providing discourse information through extensive reading?

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were eight male and eight female university students who were taking an English reading course taught by the researcher during the winter session in 2007. All participants were majoring in science and technology in a major university in Korea, and none of them had lived in English speaking countries for more than six months. Their reported standardized test scores on TOEFL (ITP, CBT, iBT), TOEIC, and TEPS were converted into iBT TOEFL scores to simplify comparison, and the average score was 90 iBT. The students could be said to have high intermediate level of English proficiency. The average age of the students was 21.15 years.

Materials

All sentences used in the test were selected from the four novels that the participants of this study read during the course. The novels were chosen for their educational use of language (without slang or informal speech, etc.), their theme, and their capacity to interest the students. The novels were *Bridge to Terabithia* (Paterson, K.), *Hatchet* (Paulson, G.), *Holes* (Sachar, L.), and *The Giver* (Lowry, L.), all of which had won the Newbery award for distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

The test material consisted of 64 sentences using the four communication verbs (*Tell, Talk, Speak, Say*) with 16 sentences for each verb. The researcher selected test sentences containing the four subtypes of argument structure for each communication verb from the four novels. For example, the argument structures of *tell* were grouped into four subcategories in this study: *Tell* I: [tell + __]; *Tell* II: [tell + NP]; *Tell* III: [tell + NP + that clause]; *Tell* IV: [tell + NP + NP]. Table 2 shows the four verb types and the subcategories of each verb type used in the study.

TABLE 2
Four Verbs and their Subcategories Used in the Test

Subcategory	Verb type			
type	Tell	Say	Talk	Speak
I	[tell + __]	[say + __]	[talk + __]	[speak + __]
II	[tell + NP]	[say + to + NP]	[talk + about]	[speak + to+ NP]
III	[tell + NP+ that cl.]	[say + that cl.]	[talk + to + NP]	[speak + NP]
IV	[tell + NP + NP]	[say + NP]	[talk + with/during]	[speak + PP]

Note: [verb + __] in type I means no argument component follows after the verb.

A verb-choice test was administered, in which participants were given one of the sentences and asked to select one verb from among the four choices. An example sentence of *Tell* III: [tell + NP + that clause] in the verb-choice test is given below.

Example test sentence

He would just have to (tell, say, speak, talk) Leslie that he wouldn't go to Terabithia.

In some of the sentences, more than one verb form is allowed by native speakers, although the verb form used in the authentic sentence from the novel was the most appropriate one. For example, for one of the test sentences involving *speak* ("*Asher,*" *Jonas said. He was trying to **speak** carefully, and with kindness, to say exactly what he wanted to say.*), native speakers admitted that *talk* was also possible according to their judgment. Thus, in this case, both *speak* and *talk* were accepted as correct answers in the verb-choice test. Among the four verbs, only *speak* and *talk* were interchangeable, and only in two subcategories: between [talk + __] and [speak + __]; and between [talk + to + NP] and [speak + to + NP]. Sentences used in the verb-choice test are given in the Appendix.

Thirty-two sentences were used as distracters; these involved the use of prepositions (on, in, for, to). Participants were asked to select the best preposition among the given choices.

Procedure

This study was conducted during a 5-week course, during which participants read the four novels and participated in related activities including writing, discussion, and oral presentation. The class met for 100 minutes a day, for five days a week. Participants were pre-tested with the test material on the first day of instruction before starting to read the novels and post-tested using the same material after finishing all four books. The difference between pre-test and post-test was that participants were equipped with the discourse context information about the individual sentences from reading experience and were expected to use this information to facilitate their choices of the best verb.

On the test, selection of the correct verb earned 1 point. Thus, perfect scores were 16 for each verb type and 4 points for each subtype. Scores were averaged over the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The mean score of each of the four communication verbs in the verb-choice test was always higher in the post-test than in the pre-test (Table 3). In both pre-test and post-test, scores were highest for *Talk* and lowest for *Say*.

TABLE 3
Mean Scores of four Verbs in the Verb-Choice Test (N=16).

Verbs	Pre test (N=16)	Post test (N=16)
Tell	11.01 (2.42)	11.44 (2.53)
Say	9.94 (2.96)	10.01 (2.13)
Talk	13.31 (1.93)	14.01 (1.82)
Speak	10.44 (1.99)	11.56 (2.30)

Note: Numbers in parenthesis are standard deviations

To compare the mean scores of the four verbs, performance of the

participants on the verb-choice tests was assessed using a two-way ANOVA with repeated measures, using $\alpha = 0.05$. Verb category and test type were the independent variables and the mean test score was the dependent variable.

The verb category effect was significant, $F(3, 45) = 11.82$, $p < 0.05$ (Table 4). This means that the mean scores are significantly different among the four verbs. However, there was not a significant main effect on the test, ($F(1,45) = 0.39$, $p > 0.05$), which suggests that participants did not show a difference in mean scores between pre-test and post-test. This means that the act of reading did not significantly affect test scores. One purpose of this study was to determine whether providing information about discourse context and pragmatic information would facilitate learners' understanding and choice of the correct communication verb. This result means that these types of information did not play a prominent role in the verb-choice test. There was no interaction effect between test type and verb type, ($F(3,45)=0.71$, $p > 0.05$).

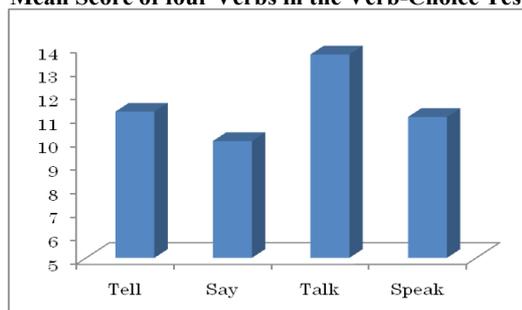
TABLE 4
ANOVA Results of four Verbs in Pre/Post Test

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Test	0.95	1	0.95	0.39
Verb	262.37	3	87.45	11.82*
Test × Verb	6.15	3	2.05	0.71
Error	129.99	45	2.89	
Total	399.46	52		

* $p < 0.05$

Post hoc analyses using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) tests revealed that the difference among verbs was $Talk > Say = Tell = Speak$ ($MSE = 5.387$, $p < 0.05$) (Figure 1). This result suggests that *Talk* seems to be the easiest of these four verbs for the participants to learn and that the other three verbs have a similar difficulty.

FIGURE1
Mean Score of four Verbs in the Verb-Choice Test

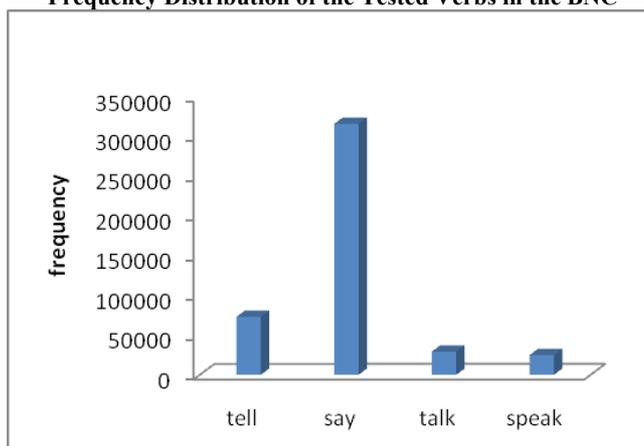


It is interesting that among the four communication verbs that show Splits between Korean and English, *Talk* is relatively easier than the other three verbs although the all four verbs share a form in Korean. One possible explanation for this result was that *Talk* was used more frequently and was consequently more available in the input to which learners are exposed than the other verbs. This hypothesis can be tested by checking corpus frequency. However, examination of the frequency of the four verbs using the British National Corpus (BNC) indicated that different difficulty among the four verbs were not correlated with corpus, or input frequency.

In the BNC, *Talk* (29,332 times) occurred slightly more often than *Speak* (24,858 times), but these verbs are used much less frequently than *Tell* (73,213 times), which, in turn, is less common than *Say* (316,896 times) (Figure 2). The frequencies of these verbs in the four novels that students read follow the same pattern of frequency as in the BNC corpus. That is, *Say* occurred most frequently (1139 times), followed by *Tell* (286 times), *Talk* (94 times), and *Speak* (53 times) order. (Figure 3). In short, in the corpus of both BNC and the four novels, the frequency or occurrence of the verbs was *Say > Tell > Talk > Speak*¹.

¹ This distribution of frequency for four verbs from BNC (*Say > Tell > Talk > Speak*) accords with the distribution frequency of the Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus (the LSWE corpus) used in the project done by Douglas Biber and his colleagues (1999), where the frequency of the four communication verbs was

FIGURE 2
Frequency Distribution of the Tested Verbs in the BNC

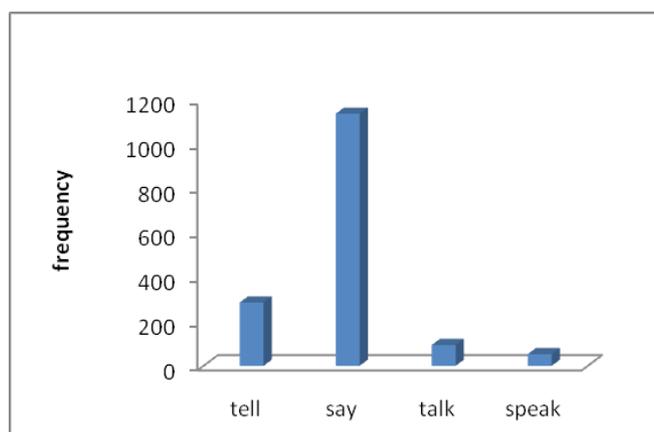


Given that *Talk* was the easiest verb for Korean learners of English, it is possible to postulate that *Talk* will be most frequent among these four communication verbs in the corpora as well. However, it was not the case: *Say* was the most frequently occurring verb in both general corpus (BNC) and text corpus (four novels). This suggests that the mere corpus frequency cannot always explain why the learners do better for some verbs than others in the verb-choice test.

FIGURE 3
Frequency Distribution of the Tested Verbs in the Four Novels

presented by the occurrence range per million words, not by the number of words as in BNC. Note that the LSWE corpus comprises four registers (conversation, fiction, news, and academic prose) from both British and American English.

conversationfictionnewsacademic proseSayover 2000 over 2000over 2000over 500Tellover 1000over 1000over 500Talkover 500over 500over 200Speak over 200over 5000 Note: Frequency indicates verbs that occur more than 300 times; per million words



It is interesting that Korean learners of English do not learn the correct usage of verbs equally well for these English verbs although these verbs have only one equivalent L1 translated form, “*malhata*”. I speculate that when a Korean learner of English activates the meaning of “*malhata*” in English, they just make the lexical-level translation connection without inheriting the semantic specifications of the L2 lexicon, usually associating with *Talk* most of the situations. This is because, for some reason, *Talk* is preferred to the other verbs at mere lexical level, although this translation connection causes interference (Elston-Güttler & Williams, 2008; Jiang, 2002).

Now I will analyze the subcategory types of each of the four communication verbs. Figures 4-7 show the mean score of each subcategory for each of the four verbs. Because there is a main effect of verb type, it is necessary to examine whether the mean score of each subcategory of the four verbs is different from the others. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA was performed, and it revealed a significant difference in student scores among subcategory type for *Tell* ($F(3, 45)=16.041, p < 0.05$) (Figure 4) and *Say* ($F(3, 45)=14.756, p < 0.05$) (Figure 5); but not for *Talk* ($F(3, 45)=1.176, p > 0.05$) (Figure 6), or *Speak* ($F(3, 45)=2.576, p > 0.05$) (Figure 7). Post hoc LSD tests showed that for *Tell*, the difference among subcategories was *Tell IV* > *Tell III* = *Tell II* > *Tell I* ($MSE= 1.496, p < 0.05$) and for *Say*, *Say I* = *Say*

III>*Say* IV>*Say* II (MSE = 1.734, $p < 0.05$).

The lowest mean score of this *Say* II [say+ to+ NP] construction (1.53) can be explained by the learners' alternative preference for *Talk* III [talk+ to+ NP] (3.09) or *Speak* II [speak+ to+ NP] (3.19) constructions instead of the *Say* II [say+ to+ NP] construction when they chose a verb in the [V+ to+ NP] construction. It is not clear why learners prefer *Talk* and *Speak* over *Say* in the [V+ to+ NP] construction. Corpus frequency of occurrence does not provide the explanation for the less used *Say* II [say+ to+ NP] construction, because *Say* occurs most frequently as compared with other verbs in both the BNC and the novels (Figures 2 and 3).

Interestingly, however, learners appear to be sensitive to input to a certain degree, although their choice of verb types does not reflect the verb frequency pattern in the BNC or in the corpus of words used in these four novels (cf., Kweon & Bley-Vroman, 2009). While the [V + to + NP] construction occurs commonly with *Talk*, *Speak* and *Say*, the *Tell* IV [tell + NP +NP] construction and the *Say* III [say + that cl.] construction occur only with *Tell* verb and *Say* verb, respectively. The fact that the [Verb + NP + NP] construction occur only with *Tell* and the [Verb + that cl.] construction occurs only with *Say* and not with other verbs leads to postulate that *Tell* IV [tell + NP + NP] construction will show higher mean scores than the other three subtype constructions with *Tell* verb. In fact, the mean score of the *Tell* IV [tell + NP + NP] construction (3.69) is greater than that for the other subcategory types (Figure 4) and the score of the *Say* III [say + that] construction (3.19) is greater than that of any other constructions involving "Say" (Figure 5). Put differently, fewer options will allow fewer mistakes. This input-sensitivity and noticing ability of L2 learners is very important in L2 learning (Schmidt, 2001) in that learning processes can occur with a small amount of input, and even surpass learning from brute frequency, if learners are sensitive enough to the input and notice a factor that is distinguishable.

FIGURE 4
Mean Score of Subcategory Types of *Tell*:
(*Tell* IV>*Tell* III=*Tell* II>*Tell* I)

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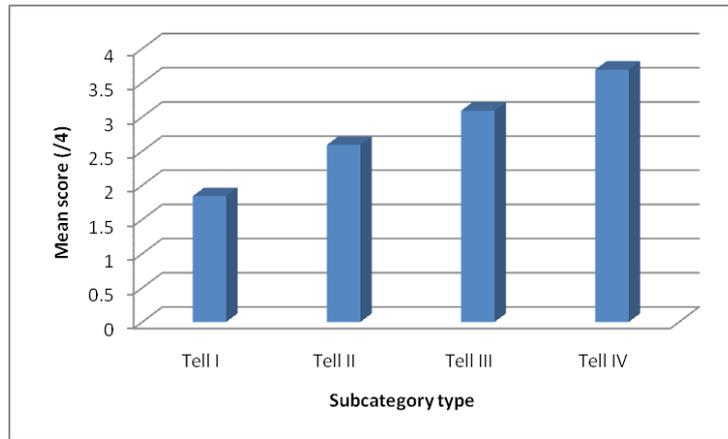


FIGURE 5
Mean Score Of Subcategory Types Of *Say*:
(Say I= Say III>Say IV>Say II)

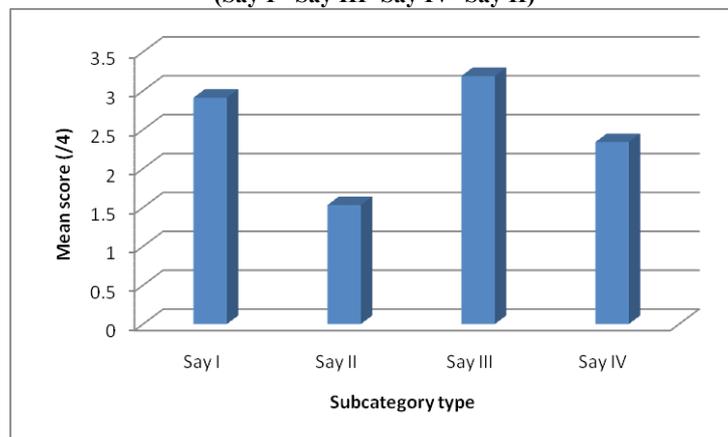


FIGURE 6
Mean Score of Subcategory Types of *Talk*:
(*Talk I*=*Talk II*=*Talk III*=*Talk IV*)

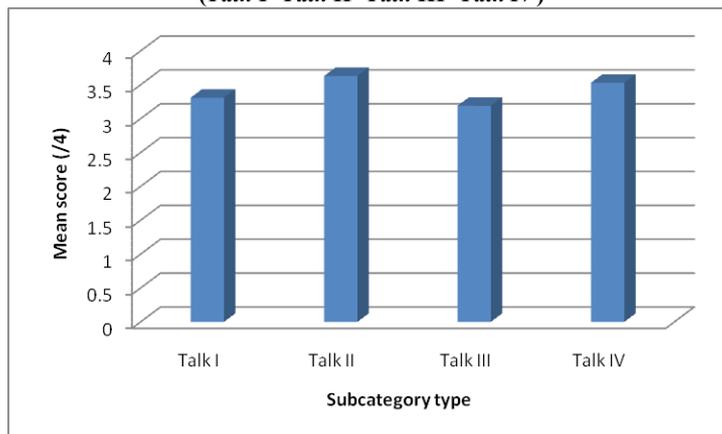
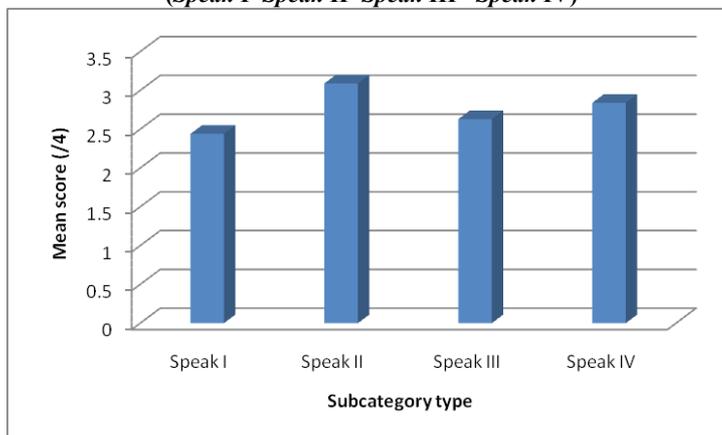


FIGURE 7
Mean Score of Subcategory Types of *Speak*:
(*Speak I*=*Speak II*=*Speak III*=*Speak IV*)



So far, the Korean verb “*malhata*” has been shown to be split into four communication verbs in English (*Tell*, *Say*, *Talk* and *Speak*) and these verbs

presented differential difficulties to Korean L2 learners of English in a verb-choice test. *Talk* was the easiest verb for the learners to use correctly, followed by *Speak*, *Tell*, and *Say*, which as a group did not show a significantly different difficulty in being used correctly. The ease of learning *Talk* does not conform to the corpus frequency.

Each verb used in the test was presented in a sentence to provide felicitous discourse information about the verb meaning. L2 learners were asked before and after reading the books to choose the best verb among the four English communication verbs that can be translated into a single verb in L1. There were not significant differences in their performances between before and after reading experience, which suggests that abundant provision of meaningful input was not very helpful to change learners' decision. Further, it can explain that verb semantic knowledge in L1 has an effect on choosing a correct verb form in L2 when the two languages are concerned with the Split phenomenon. Based on the results, I can suggest that the Splits are not easy to master in L2 learning.

Each of these four communication verbs was tested with the four subtypes categorized by the different argument structure construction. The subtypes of *Tell* and *Say* show significantly different mean scores, but the subtypes of *Talk* and *Speak* do not. In particular, the subtypes Tell I [tell + ___] and Say II [say to + NP] were the most difficult subtype constructions for the students to learn, although the corpus frequency of these two construction was not lower than the other subtype constructions.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS TO FURTHER RESEARCH

In this paper, the Split phenomenon, which is most difficult in the L2 learning process when a word has a single form in L1 and two or more forms in L2, was examined. It was found that the Splits are indeed very difficult for second language learners to use correctly. I compared the differential

difficulty of four communication verbs in English, which are all expressed as the single verb *malhata* in Korean before and after providing discourse information in which the verbs were used. I found that verbs in the Splits had the differential degree of difficulty to L2 learners: among the four verbs, *Talk* appears to be the easiest, and among all verb types and subtypes Say II, the [say + to NP] subtype construction, appears to be the most difficult. I also found that discourse information from reading novels in which the verbs were used in meaningful contexts was not informative enough to change the learners' behavior in the verb-choice test.

Differential mean scores of the four communication verbs in this study was not related with either corpus frequency or reading experience, which suggests that input frequency and contextual information do not necessarily contribute to the acquisition of communication verbs in L2 learning. Consistent L1 interference at the lexical level that makes distinguishing split L2 verbs difficult appears to hinder successful form-meaning mapping in L2.

Further study should be conducted using students who have higher proficiency levels than those who participated in the present study because form-meaning mapping is strongly associated with the developmental stage of learners' lexical knowledge: Advanced learners can have stronger connection of L2 words and concepts, so that lexical links between L2 words and their L1 translations weaken among these learners. It will also be necessary to examine different categories such as nouns or adjectives to determine the effect of the L1 semantic transfer because verbs are known to be more difficult to acquire than nouns or adjectives (Gentner, 1982; Markman, 1989; Marinellie & Johnson, 2004). Finally, different experiment techniques can be employed, including reaction time studies, in which the time required to select a specific communication verb in a particular sentential context can be measured. By doing so, it may also be possible to determine whether the preferred verb form (*talk* in this paper) in a written survey is also chosen more quickly than the other verbs. This will allow to assess the relationship between cognitive preference and behavioral promptness.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Soo-Ok Kweon is currently assistant professor of English at POSTECH in Korea. She received her Ph. D degree in linguistics from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Her primary research interests include SLA theory and practice, and corpus linguistics. She is currently working on L2 reading and vocabulary teaching and learning. She can be contacted via soook@postech.ac.kr

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APPENDIX

Tell

I. [tell + ____]

1. This one was a hippopotamus just leaving the edge of the cliff, turning over and over---you could [tell] by the curving lines---in the air toward the sea below where surprised fish were leaping goggle-eyed out of the water.
2. “It was better than a movie.” “You’re kidding.” “No, I’m not.” And she wasn’t. He could [tell] by her face.
3. He couldn’t actually see their holes but could [tell] by the size of their dirt piles.
4. “Jonas?” Mother asked. They always asked, though they knew how rarely Jonas had a dream to [tell].

II. [tell + NP]

1. He looked around and wished he had somebody to [tell] this thing, to show this thing he had done. But there was nobody
2. It would be so secret that we would never [tell] anyone in the whole world about it.
3. “What happened?” Jonas asked again, after a moment. “Please [tell] me.”
4. May Belle would [tell] Daddy, so it wouldn’t look as though he, Jess, was a bragger.

III. [tell + NP + that cl.]

1. He wanted to [tell] her he was sorry, but he couldn’t.
2. It seemed pointless to try and [tell] his counselor that he was innocent.
3. Leslie came out at recess to [tell] Jess that she had started into the girls’ room only to be stopped by the sound of crying from one of the stalls.
4. He would just have to [tell] Leslie that he wouldn’t go to Terabithia.

IV. [tell + NP + NP]

1. They would take him from here and this night, this very night, he would sit with his father and eat and [tell] him all the things.
2. Since we've entered into the topic of climate, let me give you something else. And this time I'm not going to [tell] you the name of it, because I want to test the receiving.
3. Zero was still lying doubled over on his side. "I got to [tell] you something," he said with a groan.
4. She pedaled forward silently, and he knew that she expected him to [tell] her why.

Say

I. [say + ____]

1. Easy to [say], he thought, hard to do.
2. Despite their awful luck, they always remained hopeful. As Stanley's father liked to [say], "I learn from failure."
3. And sometimes she would hear him [say], "I can fix that," and she'd feel his warm arm across her shoulders.
4. Behind him he heard Magnet [say], "But first make sure nothing's living in it."

II. [say + to + NP]

1. He looked around at the room full of red-eyed adults. Look at me, he wanted to [say] to them. I'm not crying.
2. Now he cleans him up and makes him comfy, Jonas [said] to himself, aware that The Giver didn't want to talk during the little ceremony.
3. "And this year you get your Assignment," she [said] to Jonas in an excited voice. "I hope you get Pilot. And that you take me flying!"
4. The Attorney General handed Ms. Morengo a sheet of paper. "You're free to go," he [said] to Stanley. "I know you're anxious to get out of here, so you can just keep the orange suit as a souvenir. Or burn it, whatever you want. Good luck, Stanley."

III. [say + that cl.]

1. They charge something and wear it, and then take it back and [say] it didn't fit or something.
2. "What did you say his name is? Gabriel? Hello, Gabriel," she [said] in a singsong voice.
3. I know she's not going to bite my head off or make fun of me if I [say] I don't want to go across again till the creek's down.
4. The rules [say] that if there's a third transgression, he simply has to be released.

IV. [say + NP]

1. The other boys in Stanley's tent had obviously seen Mr. Sir as well, but they had the good sense not to [say] anything.
2. She was likely to [say] no if she woke up and thought about it.
3. "What about after he got better? Did he ever [say] what he meant by God's thumb, or how he survived?"
4. At last the truck was filled, and the Aaronses and the Burkes stood around awkwardly, no one knowing how to [say] good-bye.

Talk

I. [talk + ____]

1. "For a while," the Chief Elder said, relating the story, "we had a silent Asher! But he learned." She turned to him with a smile. "When he began to [talk] again, it was with greater precision.
2. "Stanley, as your attorney, I advise you not to say anything," said the woman, "until you and I have had a chance to [talk] in private."
3. They quit spelling words when it hurt too much to [talk]. Stanley's throat was dry.
4. That's what the judge said after looking at papers in his desk and listening to the lawyers [talk].

II. [talk + about]

1. Maybe we'll [talk/speak] about it again sometime. But not now.
2. This was too real and too deep to [talk] about, even to think about very much.
3. He did not know people for whom money was not the problem. "Oh." He tried to remember not to [talk] about money with her after that.
4. We have him in the extra care section for supplementary nurturing, but the committee's beginning to [talk] about releasing him."

III. [talk + to + NP]

1. "So just leave me alone, okay? I don't want to [talk/speak] to you."
2. He wouldn't have to [talk] to anybody if he didn't want to, and all the teachers would be especially nice to him.
3. He realized that was why X-Ray didn't want to [talk] to him about the gold tube at breakfast.
4. Stanley kept his mouth shut most of the time. He didn't [talk] too much to any of the boys, afraid that he might say the wrong thing.

IV. [talk + with/during]

1. For a fleeting instant he thought he would like nothing better than to ride peacefully along the river path, laughing and [talking] with his gentle female friend.
2. The Old were sitting quietly, some visiting and [talking] with one another, others doing handwork and simple crafts.
3. They were not supposed to [talk] during lunch, but it was the first day and even Monster-Mouth Myers shot fewer flames on the first day.
4. Now he cleans him up and makes him comfy, Jonas said to himself, aware that The Giver didn't want to [talk] during the little ceremony.

Speak

I. [speak +]

1. "Asher," Jonas said. He was trying to [speak] carefully, and with

kindness, to say exactly what he wanted to say.

2. “Excuse me?” said the Warden. Stanley was too frightened to [speak].
3. “Is something wrong with my face?” The boy tried to [speak] but couldn’t. Mr. Sir had him by the throat.
4. Clyde Livingston, who had once lived at the shelter when he was younger, was going to [speak] and sign autographs.

II. [speak + to + NP]

1. So he had remained silent, shook his head and continued to stare unseeing at the countryside, and his mother had gone back to driving only to [speak] to him one more time when they were close to Hampton.
2. “My name is Mr. Sir,” he said. “Whenever you [speak] to me you must call me by my name, is that clear?”
3. When they came to the stop, he grabbed May Belle’s hand and dragged her off, conscious that Leslie was right behind them. But she didn’t try to [speak] to him again, nor did she follow them.
4. Clyde Livingston got up and dusted the dirt off his uniform. As he made his way back to the dugout, he [spoke] to the camera. “Hi, I’m Clyde Livingston, but everyone around here calls me ‘Sweet Feet.’”

III. [speak + NP]

1. His mother replied, “Her, not his. It was a female. But we are never to [speak] the name, or to use it again for a new child.”
2. In America, Elya learned to [speak] English.
3. No one in the community was starving, had ever been starving, would ever be starving. To say “starving” was to [speak] a lie.
4. If only, if only, the moon [speaks] no reply; Reflecting the sun and all that’s gone-by.

IV. [speak + PP]

1. In truth, its eyes are yellow, and it is the skin around the eyes which is red, but everyone always [speaks] of its red eyes.

2. It was he who reminded us, again and again, of the courage required. “Jonas,” she said, turning to him, but [speaking] in a voice that the entire community could hear, “the training required of you involves pain.
3. She knew she was crazy. She knew she’d been crazy for the last twenty years. “Oh, Sam,” she would say, [speaking] into the vast emptiness.
4. She [spoke] with a little bit of a Mexican accent, trilling her *r*’s.