

Will Differences in Case Marking and Word Order affect Cross-Linguistic Structural Priming among Tibetan-Chinese-English Trilinguals?

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Abstract:

Previous studies examining the role of case marking and word order in cross-linguistic structural priming obtained inconsistent results mostly in bilingual context and between languages with typologically close similarity. The present study extended the research into a trilingual context and between languages that are typologically different by examining cross-linguistic priming of ditransitive structures among Tibetan-Chinese-English trilinguals whose three languages are different in case marking (Tibetan is a case marking language while the other two are not) and word order (Tibetan is SOV but the other two are SVO). The results showed that the priming effect occurred across the three languages, indicating case marking and word order did not hind cross-linguistic priming among the trilinguals. Besides, language proficiency was found to have no moderating effect on the priming process. The results also suggest shared representation of ditransitive structure among Tibetan-Chinese-English trilinguals.

Keywords:

case marking; word order; cross-linguistic structural priming; Tibetan-Chinese-English trilinguals.