

## The Activations of Relational Structures in Processing Second Language Noun–noun Compound

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**Lee, Junkyu. 2011. The Activations of Relational Structures in Processing Second Language Noun-noun Compound. *Linguistic Research* 28(1), 143-157.** A theoretically interesting aspect of noun-noun compounds is how two nouns in the compounds are conceptually combined to be interpreted. Along this line of semantic interpretation, previous first research found a relation priming that the processing of a noun-noun compound is facilitated by previous exposure to another compound particularly when the two compounds share the same first constituent and the same semantic relation (Gagné & Shoben 1997). However, it is controversial whether the relation priming emerges even when two compounds (e.g., orange juice - chocolate cake) have only the same semantic relations but not share a constituent (Estes, 2003; Gagné, Spalding, & Ji, 2005). In order to expand research base of compound processing, this study investigates whether first (L1) and second language (L2) speakers demonstrate relation priming particularly when two compounds have the same relations, yet do not have any identical constituent. In an online lexical sense decision task, an L1 and an L2 group were asked to judge whether a series of compounds had a sensible interpretation. Results showed that neither L1 nor L2 speakers did yield the effect of relation priming, suggesting that sharing the same semantic relations may not be a sufficient condition to observe the activations of relational structures of compounds.  
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**Key Words** L2 psycholinguistics, second language acquisition, relation priming, the lexicon, noun-noun compounds