Three Types of \textit{\text{\textit{\text{-iss}}}} Constructions in Korean: A Decompositional Approach

\textbf{Goal:} The primary goal of this paper is to examine how different types of interpretations can be obtained from a sentence with the predicate \textit{\text{\textit{\text{-iss}}}} 'exist' in Korean, which selects for a dative (or location) and a nominative argument. Most studies have observed that there are two readings possible in the \textit{\text{-iss}} construction, such as 'location' (or 'existential') (cf. (1)) and 'possession' (cf. (2)). However, there is at least one more reading available from the superficially identical construction, which has not received much attention: i.e., as in (3), the construction can also be interpreted as denoting an event. To derive these interpretations, I adopt a lexical decomposition approach, claiming that \textit{\text{\textit{\text{-iss}}}} is not an independent lexical item but a combination of two abstract heads, \textit{BE} and \textit{P\_LOC} or \textit{P\_HAVE}. This departs from the previous studies concluding that \textit{\text{\textit{\text{-iss}}}} belongs to a lexical category, which is either a verb or an adjective (e.g., Seo (1991), Nam (1993) and Yoo (1996), among many others).

\textbf{Issues:} As extensively discussed by Shin (2002), the predicate in (1) and (2) differs from the one in (3) with respect to the following morphosyntactic properties: (i) the possibility of imperative or exhortative clause formation (cf. (4)); (ii) the co-occurrence with the progressive suffix \textit{\text{-nun}} (cf. (5)); and (iii) the modifiability by a manner adverb (cf. (6)). To explain these facts, Shin (2002) relies on Jackendoff’s (1990) analysis and takes \textit{\text{-iss}} to have a different lexical conceptual structure (LCS) depending on the interpretation of a sentence that it heads. Although Shin nicely distinguishes the locative-possessive \textit{\text{-iss}} construction from the eventive \textit{\text{-iss}} construction, her analysis does not seem to be free from a long-standing problem for the approach in terms of LCS, as the way of linking each LCS to an actual argument structure has not been systematically developed.

\textbf{Proposal:} This paper proposes that \textit{\text{-iss}} is not a single lexeme but a complex head consisting of an abstract verb \textit{BE} and a preposition (e.g., Benveniste (1966), Guéron (1986), Freeze (1992); cf. Harley (2002)). In particular, I assume with Harley (2002) that 'possession' or 'location' can be represented by decomposing a predicate into two abstract heads—i.e., \textit{BE} and \textit{P\_LOC} or \textit{P\_HAVE}. Notice, however, that unlike Harley’s analysis denying incorporation in Japanese-type languages, the present analysis argues that either preposition should be incorporated into \textit{BE} (and spelled out as \textit{\text{-iss}}) depending on the way the sentence is interpreted, and that \textit{P\_LOC} and \textit{P\_HAVE} are defined as in (7a) and (7b), respectively. Crucially, it is argued that the different morphosyntactic properties of \textit{\text{-iss}} in each type of construction are due to a different syntactic structure. In short, \textit{\text{-iss}} in (1), (2) and (3) is decomposed into a structure in (8), (9) and (10), respectively. The intuition underlying the present analysis is that two arguments in (8) through (10) are equivalent to an indirect and a direct object in double object construction. To be more specific, 'location' is derived from incorporation of \textit{P\_LOC} to \textit{BE}, as in (8), while 'possession' is made possible by head movement of \textit{P\_HAVE} to \textit{BE}, as in (9). Finally, 'eventiveness' is attributed to the existence of VoiceP above VP, as in (10): since VoiceP whose head is marked [+Agentive] hosts an external argument in its Spec, the morpho-syntactic properties of the 'eventive' \textit{\text{-iss}} naturally follow (cf. Kratzer (1996)).

\textbf{Consequences:} On the theoretical aspect, the proposed analysis is desirable as (i) we can derive not only locative and possessive interpretations but also an eventive reading, and (ii) it provides a simpler way to explain the similarities and differences between the three types of \textit{\text{-iss}} construction, by positing the abstract functional heads, such as \textit{BE} and \textit{P\_LOC} and \textit{P\_HAVE}. Empirically, the current analysis makes correct predictions about the locative-possessive interpretations. First, since PRO must be controlled by the possessor in the possessive construction in (9), the fronting of the DP including the possessee will render the sentence ungrammatical, which is borne out by (11) as opposed to (2) (cf. Shin (2002) for Korean and Tsuijoka (2001) for Japanese). Second, we can also explain why there is an asymmetry between the DAT-NOM ordering and the NOM-DAT ordering in (12), particularly, regarding their interpretation patterns. While the former allows for both a locative and a part-whole reading, the latter prohibits the part-whole reading (cf. Muromatsu (1997)). The contrast immediately follows from the current analysis: that is, the fronting of the second argument prevents PRO from being properly controlled, getting rid of the possessive reading.

\textbf{Data:}

(1) \begin{tabular}{llll}
John-eykey & Mary-uy & chayk-i & iss-ta. \quad \text{[LOCATION]} \\
J.-DAT & M.-GEN & book-NOM & exist-DEC
\end{tabular}

'Mary’s book is with John/Mary’s books are with John'
(2) John-eykey ttal-i iss-ta.
   J.-DAT daughter-NOM exist-DEC
   'John has a daughter'

(3) Hakkyo-ey halucongil haksayng-tul-i iss-ess-ta.
    school-LOC all.day.long student-PL-NOM exist-PAST-DEC
    'The students stayed in school all day long'

(4) IMPERATIVE AND EXHORTATIVE CLAUSE FORMATION
   a. *chayk-i iss-ela. a'. *chayk-i iss-ca.
      book-NOM exist-IMP book-NOM exist-EXH
   b. *ttal-i iss-ela. b'. *ttal-i iss-ca.
      daughter-NOM exist-IMP daughter-NOM exist-EXH
   c. hakkyo-ey iss-ela. c'. hakkyo-ey iss-ca.
      school-LOC exist-IMP school-LOC exist-EXH

(5) AVAILABILITY OF PROGRESSIVE SUFFIX
      J.-DAT M.-GEN book-NOM exist-PROG-DEC
      J.-DAT daughter-NOM exist-PROG-DEC
   c. Hakkyo-ey halucongil haksayng-tul-i iss-nun-ta.
      school-LOC all.day.long student-PL-NOM exist-PROG-DEC

(6) CO-OCCURRENCE WITH MANNER ADVERBS
      J.-DAT M.-GEN book-NOM quietly exist-DEC
      J.-DAT daughter-NOM quietly exist-DEC
   c. Hakkyo-ey halucongil haksayng-tul-i (coyonghi) iss-ess-ta.
      school-LOC all.day.long student-PL-NOM quietly exist-PAST-DEC

(7) a. [[PLOC]] = λx.λy.λe.[Theme(e,x) & Location(e,y) & in/at(x,y)]
   b. [[PHAVE]] = λx.λy.λe.[Theme(e,x) & Experiencer/Benefactor(e,y) & to-the-possession(x,y)]

(8) LOCATION (9) POSSESSION (10) EVENTIVENESS
    
    VP
    PP V
    Location P' BE
    Possessor P' BE
    Locatee P' HAVE
    Location P' BE
    Possessum D
    proi PLOC

(11) *? ttal-i1 John-eykey t1 iss-ta. (cf. (2))
    daughter-NOM J.-DAT exist-DEC

(12) a. Cha-ey engine-i iss-ta. b. Engine-i1 cha-ey t1 iss-ta.
    car-LOC engine-NOM exist-DEC engine-NOM car-LOC exist-DEC
    Locative: There is an engine in a car. Locative: There is an engine in a car.
    Part-whole: A car has an engine. Part-whole: *A car has an engine.