

A Predicate Approach to Korean Sluicing-like Constructions

1. Basic Facts

Sluicing, first investigated by Ross (1969) based on English data, is a linguistic phenomenon in a sentence where a single *wh*-phrase (remnant) in the second clause has a sentential interpretation as illustrated in (1a). In the same sense, sluicing-like constructions (hereafter SLCs)¹ exist in Korean as shown in (1b). Although Korean SLCs and English sluicing constructions share some properties in terms of the interpretation of remnants, their syntactic properties are not identical. One of the syntactic properties of Korean SLCs is that the possible categories of the remnants are not limited to *wh*-phrases as shown in (2). Another property is that case marking to remnants is not allowed in Korean SLCs when the case markers are functional as shown in (3). The most marked difference between English sluicing constructions and Korean SLCs is that the presence of a copula *-i* seems to be obligatory in Korean SLCs (as in (3) again) which has aroused a controversy over the derivation of Korean SLCs.

2. Previous Analyses

One approach to Korean SLCs is that these constructions are the result of focus movement of a *wh*-phrase followed by TP/VP deletion (Kim 2000). This approach claims that the copula *-i* insertion follows VP deletion to support the remaining Tense. However, the copula *-i* in Korean SLCs does not reflect the same tense information as the first conjunct (as in (4)) in spite of the fact that the copula *-i* in Korean does reflect tense information in fully-fledged declaratives or interrogatives. Moreover, under the movement analysis it is hard to explain why functional case markers must be deleted, which is contradictory to Merchant's (2001) Case-matching effects which is assumed to be evidence of syntactic movements. In opposition to the movement approach to Korean SLCs, other approaches include the cleft approach which claims that cleft structures are their underlying structures of Korean SLCs (Park 1998) and the copula approach which assumes a null pronoun of *kukes* in the subject position in the second conjunct (Sohn 2000). All of those previous approaches are based on the assumption that the presence of a copula in Korean SLCs is obligatory. However, an English sluicing example in (5a) and the parallel Korean example in (5b) show that it is not clear that the copula is an obligatory component in Korean. It is also noteworthy that the remnant can be of any category without restricting its property to interrogatives as shown in (6).

3. An Alternative View to the Derivation of Korean SLCs

With the empirical data, we argue that the presence of a copula is one way to establish a predicate relation to its implicit subject *pro* that is required to be activated by the first conjunct or by discourse. The suggested structure for Korean SLCs can be schematically illustrated as in (7). We also assume that there is a dependency link between the correlate and the remnant in Korean SLCs, and that its interpretation is affected by the amount of information given in the preceding discourse or in the first conjunct. This could provide a more convincing explanation on properties and types of remnants in Korean SLCs.

Data

- (1) a. Sheldon ate something_i at a Korean restaurant yesterday, but I don't know what_i.
b. Sheldon-i ecey hansiktang-eyse mwuenka_i-lul mekessnuntey,.
Sheldon-Nom yesterday Korean restaurant-at something-Acc ate but
mwues_i-i-nci molukeyssta.
what-Cop-Q not know
'Sheldon ate something at a Korean restaurant yesterday, but I don't know what.'

¹ We use a term 'sluicing-like constructions (SLCs)' for Korean examples in order to distinguish them from general sluicing constructions especially in English.

- (2) John_i-i ecey halwucongil Syntax-lul kongpwuhaysstanuntey, John_i-i-nci hawksilchianhta.
John-Nom yesterday all day Syntax-Acc studied be told but John-Cop-Q sure not
'It is told that John studied Syntax all day yesterday, but I'm not sure whether it was John.'
(Q is a question Complementizer and is interpreted as 'whether')
- (3) John-i Mary-eykey mwuenka-lul cwuessnuntey,
John-Nom Mary-Dat something-Acc gave but
mwues-i-nci/*mwues-ul-i-nci/*mwues-nci molukeyssta.
what-Cop-Q/ what-Acc-Cop-Q/what-Q not know
'John gave something to Mary, but I don't know what.'
- (4) John-i mwuenka-lul mekessnuntey, mwues-i/iessnu-nci molukeyssta.
John-Nom something-Acc ate but what-Cop/Cop(past)-Q not know
'John ate something, but I don't know what.'
- (5) a. She bought an {expensive/fast/big} car, but I don't know how {expensive/fast/big}.
(Merchant 2001:167)
- b. kunye-ka {pissa/ppalu/ku}-n cha-lul sassnuntey,
she-Nom expensive/fast/big-Mod car-Acc bought but
elmana {pissa/ppalu/ku}-nci molukeysse.
how expensive/fast/big-Q not know
'She bought an {expensive/fast/big} car, but I don't know how {expensive/fast/big}.'
(OK and Kim 2012:164)
- (6) a. John-i ecey Syntax-lul kongpwuhaysstanuntey, (cengmal) hayssnu-nci kwungkumhata.
John-Nom yesterday Syntax-Acc studied be told but really did-Q wonder
'It is told that John studied Syntax yesterday, but I wonder whether he really did.'
- b. Salamtul-un Mary-ka yeypputanuntey, na-nun (cengmal) yeypu-nci kwungkumhata.
People-Top Mary-Nom pretty say but I-Nom really pretty-Q wonder
'People say that Mary is pretty, but I wonder whether she is really pretty.'
- (7) , [CP [TP *pro* [_{predicate} remnant-(Cop)]-Q]]

Selected References

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