

Object Shift in Korean Negation

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I. Data: Two forms of negation in Korean

Korean has two syntactic constructions expressing negation. Examples of the two types of negation, which I will refer to as “Short Form” and “Long Form,” are given in (2) and (3). Short Form negation involves adding a negative prefix *an-* to the verbal complex. The Short Form negated sentence in (2) differs from the affirmative sentence in (1) only in the underlined morpheme. Long Form negation, shown in (3), involves several components. The verb stem is isolated from the verbal complex appearing with the suffix *-ci*. A negative marker *ani* follows, and finally the dummy verb *ha* ‘do’ appears in the sentence-final verbal complex.

- (1) John-i ppang-ul mek-ess-ta Affirmative
John-NOM bread-ACC eat-PAST-DECL
‘John ate the bread’
- (2) John-i ppang-ul an-mek-ess-ta “Short Form”[*an-V*]
John-NOM bread-ACC NEG-eat-PAST-DECL
‘John did not eat the bread’
- (3) John-i ppang-ul mek-ci ani ha-ess-ta “Long Form” [V-*ci ani ha-*]
John-NOM bread-ACC eat-CI NEG do-PAST-DECL
‘John did not eat the bread’

II. Outline of the analysis

Before proceeding to the main claim of this analysis, I will first take a moment to discuss the status of the verbal suffix *-ci*, which appears in the Long Form negation constructions. I will assume that it is a nominalizing suffix. Although I will not give a full argument here, I will briefly mention a couple of reasons for adopting this assumption.

Supposition: The *-ci* suffix in Long Form negation acts as a nominalizer

First, *-ci* can be followed by Case-marking suffixes, just as normal nominal elements can. This is shown in (4).

Reason #1: It can take Case-marking suffixes, like nominal elements

- (4) John-i ppang-ul mek-ci-lul ani ha-ess-ta
John-NOM bread-ACC eat-CI-ACC NEG do-PAST-DECL
‘John did not eat the bread’

Second, *-ci* is historically related to an undisputed nominalizer *-ki*, according to Kang 1988 and references cited there. In (5) are two examples demonstrating the normal nominalization function of *-ki*.

- (9) John-i [ppang-ul mek]-ci; ani t_i (ha)-ess-ta
John-NOM [bread-ACC eat]-CI; NEG t_i (do)-PAST-DECL

The whole nominalized VP becomes the “shifted object” in (9), being the closest nominal element to the target.

As an aside, I should also mention that I am here assuming a view of “do-support” that takes it to be a purely morpho-phonological phenomenon. In particular, “do” in English and *ha* in Korean do not occupy any position in the syntax. Rather, both are a result of presenting the pronunciation systems with a verbal affix which is not linearly adjacent to a verb. So, in Korean Long-Form negation, the occurrence of *ha-* ‘do’ is the result of the attempt to pronounce the tense affix where no verb is nearby enough to phonologically merge with the affix. This is essentially the “Affix Hopping” approach that dates at least back to Chomsky (1957) and has been adopted by several authors in recent research, indicated on the handout.

I assume that *do*-support is a purely morpho-phonological phenomenon; *ha* ‘do’ does not occupy any position in the syntax, but is simply “how you pronounce” a verbal affix not linearly adjacent to a verb (see also Chomsky (1957), Halle & Marantz (1993), Bobaljik (1994, 1995), Lasnik (1993)).

III. Evidence from child language acquisition

One curious element of this analysis is that in Short Form negation, the negative verbal prefix *an-* is just that—a verbal prefix. It never surfaces anywhere but preverbally, and nothing (including adverbs) can intervene between *an-* and the verb it negates. In other words, I’m suggesting that the underlying position of the object in constructions like (2) is one in which it is never observed on the surface...in adult Korean.

As it happens, children acquiring Korean as their native language occasionally do leave the object in its base position. It has been reported in the language acquisition literature that very young children (around the age of 2) sometimes “misplace” the Short-Form negation particle *an-* by pronouncing it before the object, away from the verbal complex. In (10) I list three such examples taken from the acquisition literature. In each case, *an-* does not appear as a verbal prefix, but is separated from the verbal complex by the object. The asterisks in (10) indicate the ungrammatical status of such sentences in adult Korean, although each of these were recorded in children’s speech.

Misplacement of short-form negation particle *an-* (Cho & Hong (1988), Kim (1992)).

[* indicates the ungrammaticality in adult Korean of the recorded child utterances]

- (10) a. *na an pap mek-e [adult: ...*pap an-mek-e*]
I NEG rice eat-DECL
 (‘I do not eat rice’) [C&H88]
- b. *an kyelan mek-e [adult: ...*kyelan an-mek-e*]
NEG egg eat-DECL
 (‘(I) won’t eat (my) eggs’) [Kim92]
- c. *Hoyeni-nun an son takk-ko siphkuna [adult: ...*son takk-ko an-siphkuna*]
Hoyeni-top NEG hand wash want-to
 (‘Hoyen does not want to wash hands’) [C&H88]

Under the analysis presented so far, these facts receive a clear interpretation—the children failed to perform the object shift which is obligatory in adult Korean. This could be interpreted as a reflex of the maturation of the ability to form A-chains, as proposed by Borer and Wexler in their 1987 paper and in subsequent work.

Interpretation: Children in these cases failed to perform the object shift.

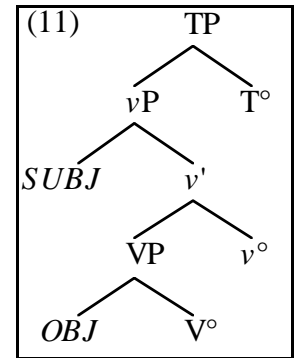
IV. Technical analysis

[10 minutes should remain]

Now that the general ideas have been presented, I will move on to a more precise statement of the analysis. The analysis is set in the framework of “minimalist” syntax, essentially as set out in chapter 4 of Chomsky’s 1995 book. I will review a couple of pertinent details of this framework rapidly here before continuing.

IV.1. The “minimalist” framework of Chomsky 1995, ch. 4

In (11) is shown the structure of the clause (below CP) which I assume. Of particular relevance is the “Split-VP” structure which involves a “light verb” in transitive and in unergative constructions (notated with a small italic *v*) which takes as its complement the VP containing the contentful verb and its object. The external argument is assumed to be in the specifier of the light verb. This structure has been proposed in several variations in the literature, some references to which are given on the handout.



- The clause (below CP) is assumed to have the underlying structure shown in (11), prior to raising of the subject to SpecTP to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle. In particular, we will assume a “Split-VP” structure involving a light verb *v*° in transitive and unergative constructions (see also Travis (1992), Bowers (1993), Bobaljik (1994, 1995), Koizumi (1993), Kratzer (1994), Harley (1995) for similar proposals).

Overt movement is assumed to occur in order to satisfy “strong morphological features” by means of an operation called “Attract-F” or “Attract-Feature.” Roughly speaking, a lexical item having a strong morphological feature F will cause the closest XP with feature F to raise into the specifier of the lexical item, “checking off” the strong feature.

- Overt (XP-) movement is assumed to occur only to satisfy “strong morphological features” of a lexical item by means of the operation “Attract-F[eature]”, which will raise the closest XP with the required feature into the specifier of the attracting head.

Lastly, this framework allows for the possibility of multiple specifiers of a single phrase. As the framework is constructed, it would require an extra stipulation to rule out multiple specifiers.

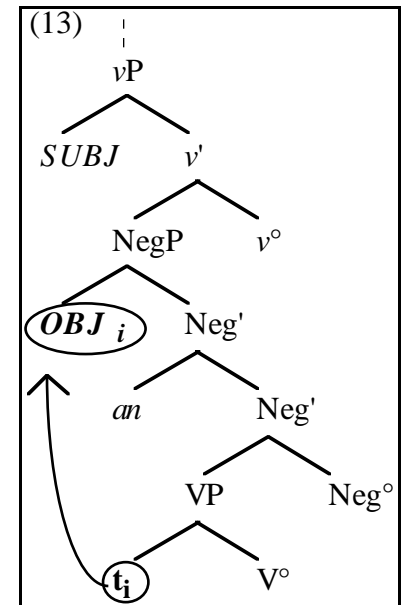
- Multiple specifiers are allowed (see Ura (1994), Chomsky (1995) for discussion).

IV.2. Short Form negation

Returning now to the analysis, I will suppose that the negative morphemes *an-* and *ani* are structurally located in the specifier of a functionally headed negation phrase, or NegP. Because maximal projections in Korean appear to be quite strictly Spec-Comp-Head order, and because the negative morpheme underlyingly precedes VP, SpecNegP is an appropriate location for these morphemes. Additional arguments have also appeared in the literature for placing the negation morpheme (at least in Long-Form negation) in the specifier position—for example, Jung 1991.

Negative morphemes (*an-*, *ani*) occur underlyingly to the left of VP; they will be assumed to occupy SpecNegP (see also Jung 1991).

Turning back to the child acquisition data, three generalizations are listed in (12) concerning the placement of the negation particle *an-* in child Korean. (12c)—*an-* sometimes precedes transitive objects—was discussed previously. It is also true that *an-* never precedes unergative subjects—(12a), although it can sometimes precede unaccusative subjects—(12b). This leaves a potential puzzle under certain assumptions about the structure of VP. Why is it that, even when the object shift can sometimes fail to occur (as in (10)), the subject never fails to appear in a position beyond negation? If these two processes (object shift and movement for the EPP) are both as similar in character as they appear, why do children not sometimes fail on both? In particular, if this is to be tied to a child's inability to form A-chains, both movements should be impossible in the same way.



- (12) Generalizations from acquisition data (based on Kim 1992)
- an-* never precedes unergative subjects
 - an-* sometimes precedes unaccusative subjects
 - an-* sometimes precedes transitive objects (as above)

Potential puzzle: If (10) is due to a failure to execute object shift, why is the subject always found beyond negation (12a)?

To resolve this puzzle, I will suggest that the reason the children never fail to place the subject left of negation is that the subject is in fact underlyingly left of negation, and doesn't shift to get there. Structurally, this implies a NegP which occurs in the junction between the two components of the "Split-VP" as diagrammed in (13).

Resolution: Accept Split-VP, split by NegP (13)

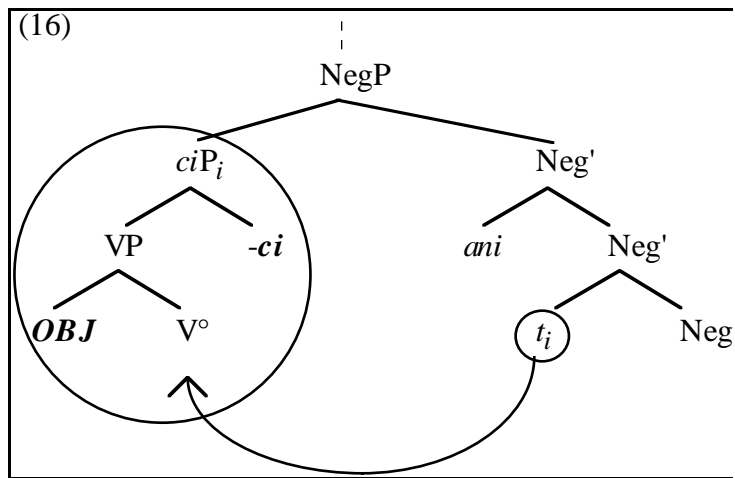
IV.3. Summary of analysis

To summarize the analysis of Short-Form negation in Korean, then, we have the two points in (14). First, the head of NegP selects for V, which has the result of placing the NegP in the middle of the "Split VP," an extension of the parameterization of NegP discussed in Ouhalla 1990. The second component of this analysis is (14b), that the negative head has a "strong nominal" feature, which forces the overt movement of the closest nominal element into the specifier of NegP. Note that since we are assuming that the negative morpheme *an-* is already in the specifier of NegP, this movement will be to a second, outer specifier, as was diagrammed in (13).

- (14) Components of short-form negation:
- (Short Form) Neg° selects for V
[NegP between vP and VP]
 - Neg° has a "strong nominal" feature

In (13), the object is raised to the outer specifier of NegP to satisfy the strong nominal feature of Neg°.

Long-Form negation differs in one respect from Short-Form negation—the head of a “long form” NegP selects for a nominal complement rather than for a V complement. This has the effect of “forcing” nominalization of the VP, in the sense that a numeration containing the long-form Neg° but not containing the VP nominalizer *-ci* will not lead to a convergent derivation. The structure of Long-Form negation is shown in (16), where the VP is nominalized by *-ci* and the whole thing raises into the outer specifier of NegP.



- (15) Components of long-form negation:
- a. (Long Form) Neg° selects for nominal [“forces” nominalization of VP]
 - b. Neg° has a “strong nominal” feature

In (16), the nominalized VP is a closer nominal element to Neg° than the object embedded within it, so the whole nominalized VP is raised into the outer specifier of NegP.

Here I should note that I have suggested that the object shift involved in negation is movement to SpecNegP, but there is another obvious position above negation to which the object might move—namely, the specifier of the light verb, which is the canonical accusative-Case checking position. I suggest movement to SpecNegP—first, because there is no asymmetry involving unaccusatives—which lack the light verb—and second, in order to get the facts right for multiple negation.

IV.4. Selection

[5 minutes should remain]

In (17) I summarize selectional properties relevant to this analysis. First, both the light verb and *-ci* (the nominalizing particle) select for either Neg or V in the sense that they both appear with either NegP or VP complements. Secondly, as above, I assume that the head of Long-Form NegP selects for a nominal complement and the head of Short-Form NegP selects for V.

- (17) a. Both *-ci* (nominalizer) and *v*° (light verb) select for either Neg or V
 b. Neg° selects for nominal (Long Form) or V (Short Form)

True predictions/corollaries:

From (17) come a few true predictions, or perhaps corollaries. First, Short-Form negation cannot be iterated; the head of neither form of negation can take another NegP as its complement. Doubled Short-Form negation constructions like *an-an-Verb* do not exist in Korean.

(18) a. Short-Form negation cannot be iterated (**an-an-V*)

*John-i ppang-ul an-an-mek-ess-ta
John-NOM bread-ACC NEG-NEG-eat-PAST-DECL
 ('John didn't not eat the bread')

Long-Form negation can be iterated, since the nominalizer *-ci* can take as its complement either VP or another NegP. An example of such an iterated negation is given in (18b). These iterations can continue indefinitely up to the limits on processibility.

b. Long-Form negation can be iterated (*V-ci ani ha-ci ani ha-...*)

John-i ppang-ul mek-ci ani ha-ci ani ha-ess-ta
John-NOM bread-ACC eat-CI NEG do-CI NEG do-PAST-DECL
 ('John didn't not eat the bread') (= 'John ate the bread')

The composition of Long- and Short-Form negation can also be formed in the same way, if the head of the NegP complement of *-ci* is a "Short-Form" Neg^o. Such an example is shown in (18c). Again, these all follow from (17) straightforwardly.

c. Long- and Short-Form negation can be composed (*an-V-ci ani ha-...*)

John-i ppang-ul an-mek-ci ani ha-ess-ta
John-NOM bread-ACC NEG-eat-CI NEG do-PAST-DECL
 ('John didn't not eat the bread') (= 'John ate the bread')

Finally, one slightly different prediction is that "verbal nouns" can be Long-Form negated without nominalization by *-ci*.

Korean has a class of these "verbal noun" predicates, generally historical borrowings from Chinese, which are uncontroversially nominal in character. They are used in combination with *ha* 'do', as in (18di). In other cases, the selection of a nominal complement by Long-Form Neg^o "forces" nominalization of the predicate via *-ci*, but if the predicate is already nominal this is not necessary, as in (18dii). However, it is also possible to use *-ci*, in which case I suppose that dummy *ha* 'do' supports it, much I assume that *ha* in (18di) is supporting the tense suffix and in neither case structurally present in the syntax. Also notice that the existence of examples like (18d) gives us a further reason to believe that *-ci* is indeed a nominalizing suffix.

d. Long-form negation of "verbal nouns" need not nominalize with *-ci*.²

i. John-i nongtam-ul ha-ess-ta
John-NOM joke-ACC do-PAST-DECL
 'John made a joke'

ii. John-i nongtam-ul (ha-ci) ani ha-ess-ta
John-NOM joke-ACC (do-CI) NEG do-PAST-DECL
 'John did not make a joke'

Incidentally, with respect to the selection properties listed in (17a), there is a complication introduced by the suggestions I just made; not only must *-ci* be able to take Neg or V complements, but it must also be able to take these verbal nouns as complements. Briefly detouring into speculation, one would hope that these three types of potential complements share some common property that would allow simplification of (17a) to a single selectional statement.

²Thanks to Young-Sik Choi (p.c.) for pointing out this data to me.

Chung (1970) has argued that, in Polynesian languages, negation has a demonstrably verbal character; if this idea can be extended to Korean, *-ci*, and perhaps also the light verb, could be said to select for “predicate” complements, independent of category. Note, however, that (17b) must still be stated in terms of categorial selection (or at least in some way prohibit self-selection by Neg^o) in order to keep the prediction (18a).

V. Potential crosslinguistic support from German negation (Santelmann 1994, Hauptmann 1994)

Lastly, I want to point out a potential source of crosslinguistic support for this analysis by noting a closely parallel analysis of German negation presented in Santelmann 1994 and Hauptmann 1994. Both argue for the involvement of object shift in German negation. German is generally considered to be underlyingly SOV (like Korean), but with the additional complication of V2 in matrix clauses.

In embedded clauses, the sentential negator *nicht* appears to the right of the object, but it has been suggested for various reasons that this is the result of shifting the object from a postnegation, preverbal position, as shown in (19).

German underlying SOV+V2. Sentential negator *nicht* appears to the right of (NP) objects (in embedded clauses).

(19) ...weil die Lehrerin [den Schüler]_i nicht *t_i* sieht
because the teacher [the pupil]_i not *t_i* sees

Also, Hauptmann cites some first language acquisition data from a 1988 paper by Clahsen which seems to indicate that children learning German occasionally fail to raise the object over negation in much the same fashion as has been seen to occur in Korean.

These surface analogies between German and Korean negation are encouraging, although I am still at the very earliest stages of exploring the extent of the parallelism between the two languages. In particular, I am not yet in a position to make any strong claims concerning the clausal structure of German sentential negation, although it appears to be an intriguing area for future research.

VI. Concluding remarks

To conclude: Besides being a potentially interesting analysis of Korean negation specifically, this interpretation of the Korean data provides a fairly striking instance of the effects of the “Attract-F” operation adopted in Chomsky 1995, and so lends some support to this view of syntax. It also provides an interesting perspective on the “A-over-A” constraint of Ross 1967, now phrasable in terms of “closest attractable entity.”

If this analysis is correct, Korean negation provides a fairly striking instance of “Shortest Move” in the minimalist framework (in fact, favoring the “Attract” version adopted in Chomsky 1995). This result is also reminiscent of the “A-over-A” constraint discussed in Ross 1967; by nominalizing a phrase containing the object, an operation which would normally shift the object will instead shift the entire nominalized phrase.

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[Concerning historical derivation, Kang (1988) cites S.J. Song (1973), H.B. Lee (1970b, 1972). All three are in the journal *Language Research*; Song is "Some Negative Remarks on Negation in Korean" 9.2, Lee 1970b is "On Negation in Korean" 6.2, Lee 1972 is "Problems in the description of Korean Negation" 8.2]