

## A SEMANTIC RESTRICTION ON SCRAMBLING IN KOREAN

Korean is often characterized as a free word order language. “Free word order”, or “scrambling” that might derive it, is not well understood. It is open to debate how such free word order languages are to be analyzed and to what extent such free word order is subject to parametric variation. This study aims to contribute to our understanding of the free word order phenomenon by exploring the properties of scrambling in Korean from a syntactic point of view that is broadly consistent with the minimalist movement within the principles and parameters tradition. My strategy has been to assume that there is no special scrambling rule that permutes syntactic constituents but to assume that any syntactic element might be susceptible to scrambling and then to constrain that general process by a simple interface condition with the interpretative semantic component. Minimalist theories make autonomous syntactic stipulations like the headedness parameter suspicious and seem to favor theories like Kayne’s antisymmetry of syntax that relate hierarchical order to linearization at PF. From this perspective the rigorous head final property of Korean even under scrambling deserves deeper explanation.

Korean has several restrictions on scrambling as follows: it is blocked from preposing the verb, as in (1-2); scrambling of a noun phrase over another noun phrase is prohibited when they are assigned the same morphological Case, as in (3-4); it does not prepose the right member of a small clause, as in (5-6). These restrictions have been previously noted in traditional grammars but they have remained as a heterogeneous disjunctive set.

In order to provide a unified approach to these properties of scrambling in Korean, I formed two competing hypotheses. One ties scrambling to theta-role assignment. It contends that scrambling is permissible if and only if the scrambled phrase is assigned a theta-role. If a scrambled phrase lacks a theta-role, that scrambling is not acceptable. The other hypothesis is based on the distinction between semantic completeness and semantic incompleteness. In formal semantics, expressions are divided into two classes: semantically complete one and incomplete one. On the second hypothesis, scrambling is permissible if and only if the scrambled phrase is semantically complete.

The two conceptualizations diverge with regard to phrases that are semantically complete but have no obvious  $\Theta$ -role. If only  $\Theta$ -marked phrase scrambles, such a phrase should be frozen in place. If semantically complete expressions are available for scrambling, the constituent should be mobile. Significant empirical evidence, such as scrambling of adjuncts in (7-8), leads us to choose the second hypothesis that only semantically complete constituents scramble. From this we derive the generalization that predicates (i.e., semantically unsaturated constituents) do not scramble.

## DATA

- (1) Cheolsoo-ka      sinmun-ul      ilknunta<sub>i</sub>  
Cheolsoo-NOM    newspaper-ACC    read  
'Cheolsoo reads a newspaper.'
- (2)\*Cheolsoo-ka      ilknunta<sub>i</sub>      sinmun-ul      *t<sub>i</sub>*  
Cheolsoo-NOM    read            newspaper-ACC  
'Cheolsoo reads a newspaper.'
- (3) kurum-i      pi-ka<sub>i</sub>      doenta  
cloud-NOM    rain-NOM    become  
'The cloud becomes the rain.'
- (4)\*pi-ka<sub>i</sub>      kurum-i      *t<sub>i</sub>*      doenta  
rain-NOM    cloud-NOM    become  
'\*The rain becomes the cloud.'
- (5) saramtul-i      [ku-lul    puca-ro<sub>i</sub>]      saengkakhaessta  
people-NOM    [he-ACC    rich man-as ]    thought  
'People thought of him as a rich man.'
- (6)\*saramtul-i      puca-ro<sub>i</sub>      [ku-lul    *t<sub>i</sub>* ]      saengkakhaessta  
people-NOM    rich man-as    [he-ACC    ]      thought  
'People thought of him as a rich man.'
- (7) nae-ka      yeoki-seo<sub>i</sub>    hansiey<sub>j</sub>      neo-lul      kitareyssta  
I-NOM    here-LOC    one o'clock-at    you-ACC    waited  
'I waited for you here at one o'clock.'
- (8) yeoki-seo<sub>i</sub>    hansiey<sub>j</sub>      nae-ka      *t<sub>i</sub>*    *t<sub>j</sub>*    neo-lul      kitareyssta  
here-LOC    one o'clock-at    I-NOM      you-ACC    waited  
'I waited for you here at one o'clock.'