

Accusative adverbials in Korean: Delimiting Phrase and Case

It has been noted in the literature (e.g., Maling 1989; Kang, Y.-S. 1986; Kim, Y.-J. 1990) that certain adverbials in Korean can surface bearing the Accusative Case (ACC) marker *-lul*. *Lul*-marked adverbials have the following intriguing properties. First, when co-occurring with a transitive predicate, *lul*-marked adverbials cannot precede the verbal object, as shown in the (b-c) examples in (1). Second, as noted in Maling 1989 and Wechsler and Lee 1996 (henceforth W&K), among others, not every adverbial can be *lul*-marked. For instance, locative, temporal, manner, and frequency adverbials are incompatible with *lul*-marking, as in (2). Third, *lul*-marking on adverbials has little to do with the argument structure of the verb: both DP and PP adjuncts of intransitive verbs can be *lul*-marked, as in (3). Fourth, *lul*-marked adverbials differ from their non-*lul*-marked counterparts, both syntactically and semantically. Whereas only the latter can occur preceding the object, as in (1) and (4), only the former can occur in a progressive sentence that has a definite topic (or reference) time, as in (5).

The aim of this paper is twofold: First, I offer an account of why and how only certain kinds of adverbials in Korean are *lul*-marked. Second, I challenge the previous analyses (e.g., Kim, Y.-J. 1990; W&L) that *lul*-marking on adverbials is optional, by demonstrating that there are syntactic and semantic differences between adverbials with *lul*-marking and those without it.

The analysis is set in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995, 1998), which assumes that movement is feature-driven. Crucially, however, I distinguish “Case-marking” from “Case-licensing”. Following Chomsky (1995, 1998), I assume that the abstract Case feature [ACC] on a DP object must be “licensed” or “checked off” by the head of the Light verb phrase (*v*P) via Spec-head agreement. But I suggest that the morpheme *-lul* does not itself bear [ACC]. Rather, I assume that [ACC] on an object is abstract, as in English, and that there is a spell-out rule of the form in (6).

The core idea of the proposal is the following. Building upon W&L's insight and along the lines of Tenny (1994), I assume that *lul*-marked adverbials are situation delimiters (SDs), which quantify “temporally” or “spatially” over the set of EVENTS or STATES that a VP denotes. I diverge from the previous analyses, by arguing that non-*lul*-marked adverbials are not SDs. I propose that in the course of numeration, adverbials can acquire the delimiting feature [+DLM], which is a formal feature, and hence must be checked off in overt syntax. I posit that in Korean, there is a functional projection Delimiting Phrase (Dlmp) between VP and *v*P, whose head licenses [+DLM]. I assume that Dlmp can have multiple Specifiers, hence each sentence can have more than one SD. I argue that elements with [+DLM] must have the feature checked by raising to a [Spec, Dlmp]. Further, I argue that when the object serves as a delimiter, it presumably carries [+DLM]; hence it has to stop by at a [Spec, Dlmp] to have its [+DLM] licensed and then raises to [Spec, *v*P] to have its [ACC] licensed.

Given the spell-out rule in (6), the Minimal Domain of *v* includes the Specifier position(s) of Dlmp. I propose that by virtue of appearing at a [Spec, Dlmp], adverbials carrying [+DLM] surface *lul*-marked; This is an instantiation of Case-marking rather than Case-checking/licensing, since they lack [ACC]. Finally, I assume, following Chomsky 1995 and Cinque 1996, that adverbials can be base-adjoined to various maximal projections in the sentence depending on their semantics. I attribute the differences between adverbials with *lul*-marking and those without it to their semantic differences: being SDs, the former are base-adjoined to VP, whereas the latter are base-generated outside *v*P. Although it is theoretically possible that non-*lul*-marked adverbials might carry [+DLM], if they did, the derivation would crash, for downward movement is banned.

The current proposal finds remarkable typological correlates from various languages such as English, German, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian. In all these languages, SDs surface ACC-marked (although arguably so in the case of English and Chinese), regardless of the argument structure of the verb of the sentence. This supports that the possibility of marking ACC on elements inside the Minimal Domain of *v* extends beyond Korean and raises interesting questions about the typology of structural Case.

Data:

- (1) a. Na-nun **ecey tennis-lul han sikan-tongan-ul** chi-ess-ta
 I-TOP yesterday tennis-ACC one hour-period-ACC play-PST-DECL
 'Yesterday I played tennis for an hour'
 b. */?Na-nun **ecey han sikan-tongan-ul tennis-lul** chi-ess-ta
 c. */?**han sikan-tongan-ul** na-nun **ecey tennis-lul** chi-ess-ta
- (2) a. John-un Mali-lul Seoul-ese-(***lul**) manna-ess-ta
 John-TOP Mary-ACC Seoul-in-(ACC) meet-PST-DECL
 'John met Mary in Seoul'
- (3) a. Na-nun [_{DP} **han sikan-tongan**]-ul kel-ess-ta
 I-TOP one hour-period-ACC walk-PST-DECL
 'I walked for an hour'
 b. na-nun onul [_{PP} **sicang-ey**]-ul ka-ess-ta
 I-TOP today market-to-ACC go-PST-DECL
 'Today I went to the market'
- (4) a. Na-nun tennis-lul **han sikan-tongan** chi-ess-ta
 I-TOP tennis-ACC one hour-period hit-PST-DECL
 'I played tennis for an hour'
 b. Na-nun **han sikan-tongan** tennis-lul chi-ess-ta
 c. **Han sikan-tongan** na-nun tennis-lul chi-ess-ta
- (5) a. Nay-ka tochak-ha-ess-ul-ttay, John-nun han sikan-tongan#/??(-ul)
 I-NOM arrival-do-PST-REL-when, J-TOP one hour-period(-ACC)
 ca-ko-iss-ess-ta
 sleep-COMP-PROG-PST-DECL
 'When I arrived, John had been sleeping for one hour'
- (6) (i) Spellout any XP in the Minimal Domain of *v* as XP+lul,
 where the minimal domain is defined as (cf. Chomsky 1995:299):
 (ii) XP is in the Minimal Domain of a head Y iff XP is dominated by a projection of Y,
 and there is no head Z such that Y c-commands Z and Z c-commands XP.

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