

## Deriving Three Interpretations of the Verb *-iss* in Korean

**Synopsis:** It has been observed that ‘location’ (or ‘existential’) (cf. (1)) and ‘possession’ (cf. (2)) in Korean can be expressed with the predicate *-iss* that is roughly equivalent to ‘exist’ in English. However, in addition to these two interpretations, there is one more reading that is obtained with the same predicate, which has not received so much attention as the other two readings: that is, the construction is interpreted as denoting an event, as in (3). Although they have not reached an agreement regarding the categorial status of *-iss*, most analyses in the literature on Korean syntax have concluded that the predicate is a lexical category (e.g., Seo (1991), Nam (1993) and Yoo (1996), among others). This paper, however, argues that *-iss* is not an independent lexeme but a Spell-Out of two abstract heads  $P_{HAVE}$  and  $P_{LOC}$  (cf. Harley (2002)), and that three different interpretations such as ‘location,’ ‘possession,’ and ‘eventiveness’ are determined depending on the way the two heads are decomposed.

**Problems:** The previous analyses of *-iss* in Korean have mostly been concerned with two issues: first, whether the predicate *-iss* is a lexical verb or an adjective; and second, how many ways the *-iss* construction can be interpreted. With respect to the second issue, only two types such as locative (1) and possessive (2) have been highlighted by Korean researchers, but not the third type (3). However, as Shin (2002) extensively discusses, the former two types do not pattern with the latter in terms of morphological and syntactic properties, as illustrated in (4) through (6). To explain these facts, Shin (2002) appeals to Jackendoff’s (1990) analysis and takes *-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 *-iss* construction from the eventive *-iss* construction, her analysis does not seem to be free from a long-standing problem for the approach in terms of LSC as the way of linking each LSC to an actual argument structure has not been systematically developed.

**Proposal:** In order to avoid the problems of the previous analyses, this paper claims that *-iss* is not a single lexeme but a complex head resulting from the combination of two heads (cf. Benveniste (1966), Guéron (1986), Freeze (1992), and Harley (2002)). In particular, under Distributed Morphology (cf. Marantz (1997) and Harley and Noyer (1998)), I assume that *-iss* can be decomposed into two heads, such as BE and  $P_{LOC}$  or  $P_{HAVE}$ , whose denotations are defined in (7a) and (7b), respectively. Crucially, it is argued that different morpho-syntactic properties of *-iss* in each type of construction are due to a different syntactic structure: in short, *-iss* in (1) through (3) is decomposed into a structure in (8) through (10), respectively. The proposal is based on the traditional intuition that two arguments in (8) through (10) are equivalent to an indirect and a direct object in the double object construction (e.g., Kayne (1993)). ‘location’ is derived from the incorporation of  $P_{LOC}$  to BE, as in (8), while ‘possession’ is made possible by head movement of  $P_{HAVE}$  to BE, as in (9). What makes ‘eventiveness’ distinguished from ‘location’ and ‘possession’ is 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’ *-iss* naturally follow (cf. Kratzer (1996)).

**Consequences:** On the theoretical aspect, the proposed analysis is advantageous because (i) it can derive not only locative and possessive interpretations but also an eventive reading, and (ii) provides a simpler way to explain the similarities and differences between the three types of *-iss* construction, by positing the abstract functional heads, such as  $P_{LOC}$  and  $P_{HAVE}$ . Empirically, the current analysis makes important predictions about the locative-possessive interpretation. Among them is that since PRO must be controlled by the possessor in the possessive construction in (9), the fronting of the DP including the possessum will render the sentence ungrammatical, which is borne out by (11) in contrast to (2) (cf. Shin (2001) for Korean and Tsujioka (2001) for Japanese). Second, it is possible to explain why there is an asymmetry between the DAT-NOM ordering and the NOM-DAT ordering in their interpretations in (12). That is, while the former allows for both a locative and a possessive reading, the latter prohibits the possessive 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.

**Data:**

(1)	John-eykey	Mary-uy	chayk-i	iss-ta.	[LOCATION]
	J.-DAT	M.-GEN	book-NOM	exist-DEC	

- (2) 'Mary's book is with John/Mary's books are with John'  
 John-eykey ttal-i iss-ta. [POSSESSION]  
 J.-DAT daughter-NOM exist-DEC
- (3) 'John has a daughter'  
 Hakkyo-ey halucongil haksayng-tul-i iss-ess-ta. [EVENTIVENESS]  
 school-LOC all.day.long student-PL-NOM exist-PAST-DEC
- (4) IMPERATIVE AND EXHORTATIVE CLAUSE FORMATION
- |              |           |               |                   |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|-------------------|
| a. *chayk-i  | iss-ela.  | a'. *chayk-i  | iss-ca.           |
| book-NOM     | exist-IMP | book-NOM      | exist-EXHORTATIVE |
| b. *ttal-i   | iss-ela.  | b'. *ttal-i   | iss-ca.           |
| daughter-NOM | exist-IMP | daughter-NOM  | exist-EXHORTATIVE |
| c. hakkyo-ey | iss-ela.  | c'. hakkyo-ey | iss-ca.           |
| school-LOC   | exist-IMP | school-LOC    | exist-EXHORTATIVE |
- (5) AVAILABILITY OF PROGRESSIVE SUFFIX
- |                |              |                |                |
|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| a. *John-eykey | Mary-uy      | chayk-i        | iss-nun-ta.    |
| J.-DAT         | M.-GEN       | book-NOM       | exist-PROG-DEC |
| b. *John-eykey | ttal-i       | iss-nun-ta.    |                |
| J.-DAT         | daughter-NOM | exist-PROG-DEC |                |
| c. Hakkyo-ey   | halucongil   | haksayng-tul-i | iss-nun-ta.    |
| school-DAT     | all.day.long | student-PL-NOM | exist-PROG-DEC |
- (6) CO-OCCURRENCE WITH MANNER ADVERBS
- |               |              |                |             |                |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| a. John-eykey | Mary-uy      | chayk-i        | (*coyonghi) | iss-ta.        |
| J.-DAT        | M.-GEN       | book-NOM       | quietly     | exist-DEC      |
| b. John-eykey | ttal-i       | iss-ta.        | (*coyonghi) |                |
| J.-DAT        | daughter-NOM | exist-DEC      | quietly     |                |
| 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. [[P<sub>LOC</sub>]] = λx.λy.λe.[Theme(e,x) & Location(e,y) & in/at(x,y)]  
 b. [[P<sub>HAVE</sub>]] = 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

Locatee P<sub>LOC</sub>

VP

PP V

Possessor<sub>i</sub> P' BE

DP P<sub>HAVE</sub>

PRO<sub>i</sub> D'

Possessum D

John-eykey J.-DAT

VoiceP

Locatee<sub>i</sub> Voice'

VP Voice

PP Y

Location P' BE

pro<sub>i</sub> P<sub>LOC</sub>
- (11) \*? ttal-i<sub>i</sub> John-eykey t<sub>1</sub> iss-ta. exist-DEC (cf. (2))  
 daughter-NOM J.-DAT
- (12) a. Cha-ey engine-i iss-ta. b. Engine-i<sub>1</sub> cha-ey t<sub>1</sub> 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.

**Selected References:** [1] Harley, Heidi (2002) "Possession and the Double Object Construction." *Yearbook of Linguistic Variation* 2, pp. 29-68; [2] Shin, Sun-Kyung (2002) *The Lexical Meanings and Syntax of '-issa'* [written in Korean]. Seoul: The Society of Korean Linguistics.