The Structure of Verbal Noun and Psych-Verb Constructions

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1. Introduction

Light Verb Constructions (LVCs) in Korean, as exemplified in (1), have been discussed by many Korean linguists because of its interesting syntactic phenomena including theta role and Case assignment, Move-alpha, Negation, etc. in an attempt to provide more convincing syntactic structures for them.

(1) Swuni-ka saken-ul cosa(-lul) ha-ass-ta[1]

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[1] For Korean transcription, Yale Romanization is adopted.

In this paper we will examine the current analyses of Korean LVCs and then propose the more elaborated structure for them. We will also propose another structure for the transitive psych-verb construction that shows similar syntactic behaviors as LVCs.

2. The Verb Ha- Complex

As reviewed in Chae (1996) there are various types of verb *ha-* complex in Korean but we will see here the distribution of verb *ha-* complex that counts as LVCs and what property of *ha-* makes it a light verb (LV). Following Grimshaw and Mester (1988), verb *ha-* is thematically incomplete because it assigns no theta-roles in the LVC. That means, any theta-marking must be done by another item, its preceding noun in the verb *ha-* complex in Korean. In the LVC an NP is combined with verb *ha-*, which turns the noun into the functional equivalent of a verb. Such a noun is called a Verbal Noun (VN). Thus we will claim that the verbal noun in the verb *ha-* complex is a theta-assigner in the LVC while the verb *ha-* does assign accusative Case and carry inflection, in the same line with Kang (1997).

2.1. Light Verb Construction

In Kim (1990)[2] the Case-marked version (2a) has different syntactic structure from the incorporated version (2b) on the ground that some elements such as genitive-marked PP's and demonstratives

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2) Kim, J. (1990) "Noun Incorporation of *Ha*-Verbs in Korean" is cited in Park (1995).

cannot modify the VN when it appears in the incorporated version as shown in (3).

(2) a.Swuni-ka ku saken-ul cosa-lul ha-ass-ta
    b.Swuni-ka ku saken-ul cosa ha-ass-ta
(3) a.Swuni-ka Yengswu-wa-uy hapsek-ul ha-ass-ta
    b.*Swuni-ka Yengswu-wa-uy hapsek ha-ass-ta

Thus Kim (1990) assumes that the VN and the LV *ha-* constitute a single unit in (2b) since the modifier cannot have an access to the internal structure of the combined VN-*ha* complex.

But we see here that not only some morphological affixes but adverbs can be inserted between a VN and a LV.

(4) a. swusakwan-tul-i ku saken-ul cosa-**tul** ha-ass-ta
   b. Swuni-ka ke saken-ul cosa-**man/nun/to** ha-ass-ta
   c. Swuni-ka ke saken-ul cosa (**cengmal**) **yelsimhi** ha-n-ta

Also, *Yengswu-wa* is compatible with both constructions as in (5), different from genitive *Yengswu-wa-uy* in (3).

(5) a.Swuni-ka Yengswu-wa hapsek-ul ha-ass-ta
    b.Swuni-ka Yengswu-wa hapsek ha-ass-ta

It means, the VN *hapsek* has its argument structure and functions as a theta-assigner.

Moreover, there is no difference in transitive examples as indicated in Park (1995:323-324).

(6) a.*Swuni-ka ku nonmwun-ul ppalun chwulphan-ul ha-ass-ta
    b.*Swuni-ka ku nonmwun-ul ppalun chwulphan ha-ass-ta

(7) a.Swuni-ka ku nonmwun-ul ppalli chwulphan-ul ha-ass-ta

    b.Swuni-ka ku nonmwun-ul ppalli chwulphan ha-ass-ta

What is noted here is that the contrast is shown between (6) and (7) rather than (6a) and (6b). Adjectival modifiers do not go with both Case-marked and incorporated versions but adverbial modifiers go with them.

    Considering all these differences and similarities, we make sure that the noun in the *ha-* complex has verbal properties and subcategorizes its argument structure, as its name Verbal Noun (VN) suggests, and we will claim that the structure of a sentence in (2a) may be analyzed two ways.

(8) a.Swuni-ka enehak-ul yenkwu-lul ha-ass-ta

    b.Swuni-ka enehak-ul yenkwu ha-ass-ta

(9) a.Swuni-ka enehak-uy yenkwu-lul ha-ass-ta

    b.*Swuni-ka enehak-uy yenkwu ha-ass-ta

(10) a.Swuni-ka enehak yenkwu-lul ha-ass-ta

    b.*Swuni-ka enehak yenkwu ha-ass-ta

The contrasts between (8) and (9) suggest that (8a) and (9a) have different syntactic structures. We can clearly see their structural differences when (8), (9), and (10) are passivized.

(11) a.enehak-i Swuni-ey-uyhay yenkwu-ka toy-ess-ta

    b.enehak-i Swuni-ey-uyhay yenkwu toy-ess-ta

(12) a.enehak-uy yenkwu-ka Swuni-ey-uyhay toy-ess-ta

(13) a.enehak yenkwu-ka Swuni-ey-uyhay toy-ess-ta

At this point, we may say that (8a) and (8b) have the same LVCs

and Case seems to be assigned by the LV *ha-*, while (9a) and (10a) have a heavy verb *ha-* that functions the same as in (14).

(14) a. (Swuni-ka) pap-ul ha-ass-ta

    b. pap-i (Swuni-ey-uyhay) toy-ess-ta

Let us take a look at the constructions with respect to Move-alpha. Transitive examples also show no contrast with respect to scrambling of the VN and relativization is not possible in both versions.

(15) a.*yenkwu-lul Swuni-ka enehak-ul t ha-ass-ta

    b.*yenkwu Swuni-ka enehak-ul t ha-ass-ta

    (cf. enehak-uy yenkwu-lul Swuni-ka t ha-ass-ta)

(16) * Swuni-ka enehak-ul t ha-n yenkwu

    (cf. Swuni-ka t ha-n enehak-uy yenkwu)

Following our claim on theta-role assignment, we can say that the empty categories in (15) and (16) cannot be lexically governed because the LVs lack theta-role.

So far we have seen that the two versions, incorporated and Case-marked versions, do not exhibit different syntactic behaviors. Also there is no evidence for a syntactic process merging the VN and the light verb because some inflectional element, delimiters, and adverbs can be inserted between them as in (4). Thus we assume that the incorporated and Case-marked versions have the same structure, along with Park (1995) and Kang (1997).

What is so distinctive in the LVC? It is the VN in the complex, not the verb *ha-*, that subcategorizes the argument structure outside its maximal projection, as indicated in Chae (1996).

2.2. Transitive Psych-Verb Construction

In Chae (1996a) a transitive psych-verb construction, as exemplified in (17), is not classified as a LVC, but Kang (1997) classifies it as a subtype of LVCs.

(17) Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul coha ha-n-ta

In this section, we will review syntactic behaviors of a transitive psych-verb construction to show why it can be classified as a subtype of LVCs.

First, look at where any inflectional affixes or other elements can be inserted in the transitive psych-verb constructi)n.

(18) a. Yengswu-lul coha-**tul** ha-n-ta
    b. Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul coha-**man/nun/to** ha-n-ta
    c.?Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul coha-**lul** hay
    d.*Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul coha **cengmal/cal** ha-n-ta
    (cf. Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul **cengmal** coha ha-n-ta)

A plural affix and some delimiters are inserted between *coha* and the verb *ha-*. The Case marker *-lul* may appear in very colloquial speech but it does not sound natural in ordinary speech. Adverbs cannot be inserted between them. Here we can say the *ha-*complex functions like a complex word.

(19) a. Swuni-nun Yengswu-ka coh-ta
    b.*Swuni-nun Yengswu-lul coh-ta

In (19) without the verb *ha-* the nominative Case is assigned to *Yengswu* by a stative verb *coh-*, as contrasted with the accusative

Case in (17). For psych-verb constructions we may offer the same account as for LVCs. The verb *ha-* functions as a Case assigner while the theta-role of *coh-a* in (17) remains the same as in (19a).

There is one more thing to consider: the distribution of the negative article *an* with psych-verb *ha-* complex.

(20) a. Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul **an** coha ha-ni?
　　b. Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul coha **an** ha-ni?
　　c. Swuni-ka Yengswu-lul coha ha-ci **an** ha-ni?

The negative particle *an* is inserted between *coha-* and the verb *ha-*. It suggests that this complex be a phrase rather than a word.

Thus we have to conclude that the transitive psych-verbs including verb *ha-* are morphologically and syntactically complex, which is on the way to a typical LVC.

3. Current Analyses

Among the various analyses of the LVCs, we will focus on two analyses, Park's (1995) and Kang's (1997), in this chapter to provide a better solution for the *ha*-complex constructions.

3.1. View 1: Light Verb Ha- Hosts Inflection

Park (1995) claims that the VN in the LVCs is the head of a VP and it carries the capacity to assign Cases as well as theta roles. In fact, it is a defective verb. To formalize the defectiveness, he takes the feature [-N] category. It goes with the traditional assumption that a [-N] category such as V or P may assign Cases.

But the VN does not carry the feature [+V] so the defectiveness prevents the affixation and triggers the introduction

of the LV *ha-* in Korean. V to I movement ensues. Also the LV *ha-* functions as a Infl carrier.

Let us draw the structure of the LVC as suggested by Park.

(21)   IP
                    /   \
          NP   I'
                    /   \
      Swuni-ka   VP   I
                /   \
           NP   V [-N]   ha-ass

          saken-ul   cosa
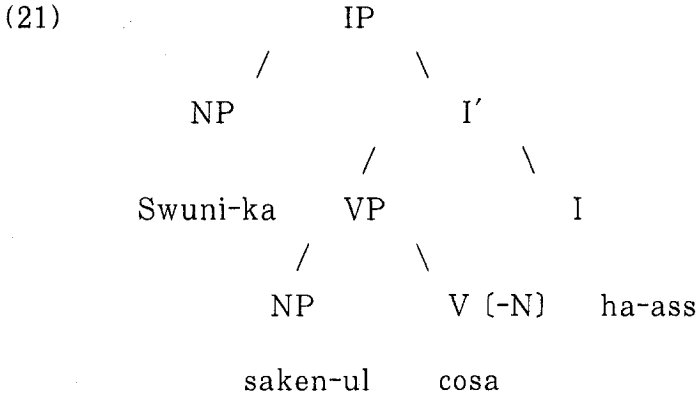
With the structure (21) we do not need the mechanism of "Argument Transfer" invented by Grimshaw and Mester to avoid the violation of the locality condition on theta-marking because the direct object *saken* is a sister to the verbal noun *cosa*.

The LV *ha-* does not play any role in the Case assignment in the 'Verbal' system working for the feature [+/- transitive] but the VN that carries the feature [+/- transitive] functions as a Case assigner. The only function of the verb *ha-* is to host the stranded inflectional affixes.

At this point, let us take Kang's critical review (1997) on Park's claim. First, the LV *ha-* does not necessarily host inflection.

(22) Swuni-ka saken-ul cosa ha-ci an ha-ass-ta

Here the second *ha-* hosts inflection while the first *ha-* is a LV

without any inflection. We may wonder what the function of the LV *ha-* in (22) is.

Second, there is no clear evidence that *ha-* is inserted under either the Infl or the Neg nodes.

Sells (1995:378)[3] takes the following example to support his claim that VNs determine the accusative Case of their arguments.

(23) ..cipcwung yenkwu-kyelkwa, saylowun sasil-ul palkyen

In (23) *palkyen* seems to assign Case to *sasil* in the absence of the LV *ha-*. But we would like to point out that the LV *ha-* or the passive *toy-* may drop out in certain context such as headlines, telegrams and the like.

(24)   kyengchal-ey uyhay sewul-lo isong (*ha/toy-ten) cwung,
        pemin(-i) thalchwul

But we assume that *ha-* or *toy-* must be present at some level of syntactic representation to be interpreted in the same line with Kang (1997).

To support Kang's claim (1997) let us add one more example. Suppose we see the following phrases as the headline of the newspaper.

(25) a. yangtampay-ka swuip chelphyey
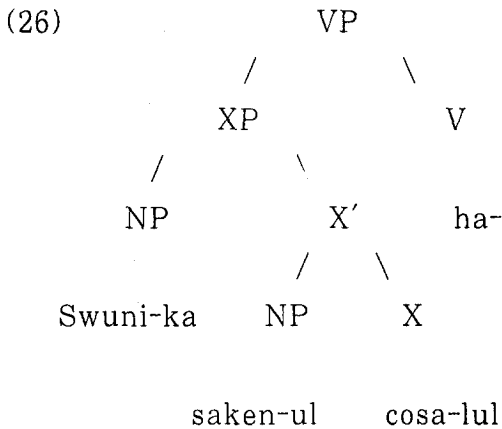   b. yangtampay-lul swuip chelphyey

According to the Principle of Full Interpretation at LF, *toym* and

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3) Sells (1995) is cited in Kang (1997).

ham should be recovered in (25a) and (25b). So we argue that the easily recoverable verb *ha-* or *toy-* is a Case assigner.

3.2. View 2: Light Verb Ha- Heads its Own VP

Kang (1997) offers another idea to account for the syntactic phenomena of Korean LVCs. He claims that the LV *ha-* heads its own VP and that it takes as its complement the maximal projection of the VNs in the LVC.

```
(26)                    VP
                      /      \
                   XP          V
                  /   \
              NP        X'      ha-
                       /  \
         Swuni-ka    NP     X

                  saken-ul    cosa-lul
```

In (26) XP indicates the maximal projection of a VN in the LVC. Here the VN provides argument structures and the LV *ha-* licenses accusative Case.

Kang provides examples showing the Case difference as in (17) and (19) as well as in (8) and (11) for evidence to support his claim that *ha-* is responsible for checking off accusative Case in the LVCs.

Kang does not specify the category of a VN and leave it as a XP. The category XP does not have any syntactic features and no prediction is made. XP should be specified.

4. The Proposal

The structures offered by Park and Kang have some problems as indicated in the previous section. In this section we will propose a better structure that can explain its syntactic phenomena.
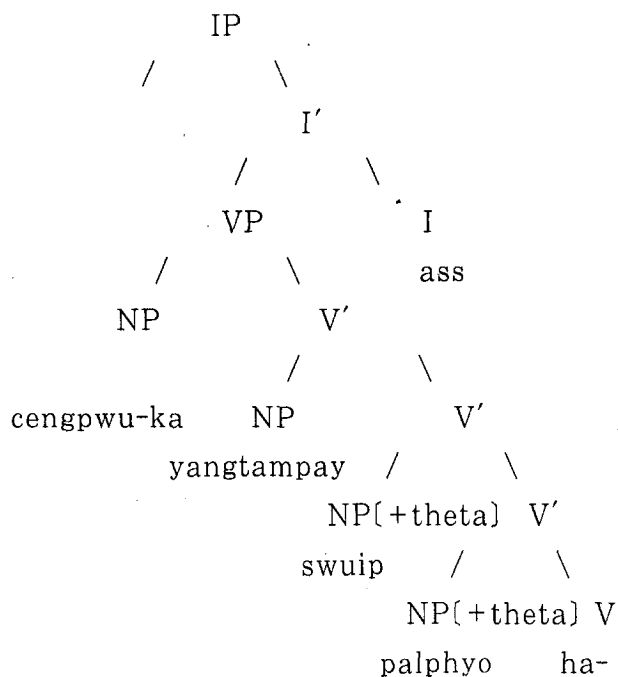
We will accept Chae's idea (1996) that VNs are nouns and their category should be projected in the structure.
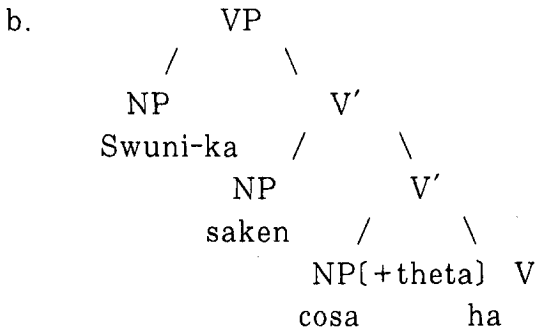
(27) cengpwu-ka yangtampay-lul swuip-ul kumci-lul palphyo-lul ha-ass-ta

In (27) including VNs, how is Case assigned to the direct object? Case is licensed by the verb *ha-* through an adjacent VN. The LV *ha-* functions as a main verb. In (28) the structure proposed by Chae (1996a) is modified.

(28) The Structure of LVCs

a.

```
                          IP
                        /     \
                              I'
                            /    \
                        VP          I
                      /    \        ass
                   NP        V'
                           /    \
          cengpwu-ka    NP         V'
                  yangtampay  /      \
                          NP[+theta]  V'
                          swuip     /    \
                               NP[+theta]  V
                               palphyo    ha-
```

b.
```
                VP
              /    \
          NP          V′
      Swuni-ka      /    \
              NP          V′
            saken      /    \
                  NP[+theta]  V
                  cosa       ha
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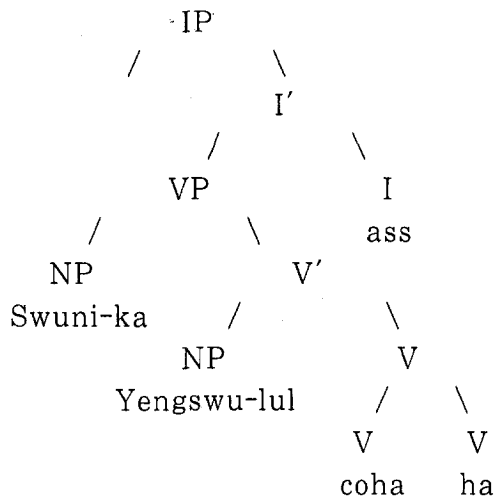
As indicated in Yoon (1991), a VN is a non-saturated noun so it should be marked with [+theta] in the structure to show that they are different from the ordinary saturated nouns. They can assign a theta role to its complement, which is in sister relationship in our structure. In our structure we can see how Case assignment is done. In (28a), *palphyo+ ha-* assigns Case to *swuip*, whose combination in turn assigns Case to *yangtampay*.

At the moment, consider the structure of transitive psych-verb construction, a subtype of LVCs.

(29) The Structure of Transitive Psych-Verb Constructions
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                          IP
                       /      \
                              I′
                           /     \
                        VP          I
                      /    \        ass
                  NP          V′
              Swuni-ka      /     \
                      NP          V
                  Yengswu-lul   /   \
                              V     V
                             coha   ha
```

5. Conclusion

We have discussed the syntactic phenomena of the LVCs in Korean including that of the transitive psych-verb constructions, a subtype of the LVCs. Then we have proposed the structures of both constructions which can account for their syntactic behaviors by modifying Chae's (1996) in the current parameters-and-principles approach to natural language.

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국 문 초 록

본 논문의 목적은 우리말 경동사 구문의 통사적 특성을 살펴보고 그 특성을 반영할 수 있는 경동사 구문의 구조를 제시하려고 한다. 우선 Grimshaw & Mester(1988)의 분석을 따라서 경동사 구문이 무엇인가를 설명하고, 여러 기존 연구 가운데 박갑용(1995)과 강선영(1997)을 중점적으로 논의한다. 우리말 경동사 구문에서 주동사는 하-동사이지만 하위범주화 구조를 부여하지 못하고, 격부여 능력을 가진다. 이런 이유로 하-동사는 동사적 속성을 결여하였으므로 일반 동사와 구분해 경동사라고 불린다. 그리고 경동사는 보충어로 동사적 명사를 취하게 되며, 이 동사적 명사가 하위범주화 구조를 지닌다. 이러한 경동사 구조로 채희락의 구조 (1996)를 X′ syntax에 맞게 보완해 제시한다. 또한 강선영과 같이 심리 타동사 를 경동사의 일종으로 보고 그 구조도 제시한다.