The Exempt Binding of Local Anaphors: An Empirical Study of the Korean Local Anaphor Caki-casin

Formal/Syntax

Since the important work of Pollard Sag (1992), we know that even languages that lack genuine long-distance anaphors (LDAs) still allow local anaphors to be bound long-distance (LD) as exempt anaphors. For example, an English anaphor lacking a locally accessible antecedent – either because there is none (cf. 1a) or because the local antecedent cannot be the actual antecedent (cf. 1b) – behaves as an exempt anaphor in English.

(1) a. Bill remembered that the Times had printed [a picture of himself] in its Sunday edition
    b. Bill was worried about [the administration’s opinion of himself]

Since unlike English, Korean possesses both local (caki-casin, pronoun-casin) and LD anaphors (caki, casin), the possibility arises that speakers of Korean would simply reject a local anaphor bound outside its GC, resorting to LDAs instead. This possibility is especially likely since some hold that all LDAs are logophors (Y. Huang 1994).

The present study investigated whether and how Korean monolingual speakers accept long-distance binding of Korean local anaphor caki-casin. Monolingual speakers of Korean were tested on different types of sentences where caki-casin was forced to bypass the local antecedent in favor of a LD-antecedent – in violation of both the Tensed-S Condition (TSC) and the Specified Subject Condition (SSC)—as shown in (2).

(2) Inphyo -nun [kyenchalcheng -i [caki-casin , -i swumki-n cungkemwul]-ul
    I-top       police-nom       self-nom             hide-rel       exhibit–acc
    chacanayssta]-ko  malhay-ss-ta
    found-comp       say-past-decl
    ‘Inphyo said that the Police Agency found out the exhibit self (he) had hidden.’

In order to ascertain whether speakers who accept LD-bound caki-casin treat it as an exempt anaphor, we tested the subjects on the strict/slopping reading of VP-ellipsis, since preference for strict readings in VP-ellipsis contexts has been argued to be a diagnostic of exempt binding (Huang and Liu 2001, Ying 2005, Runner, Sussman & Tanenhaus 2002).

50 Korean monolingual speakers were tested with a Grammaticality Judgment Task (designed to investigate whether Korean native speakers accept long-distance bound local anaphors) and a Preferential Sentence Interpretation Task with sloppy vs. strict reading in VP-ellipsis (to test whether LD-bound caki-casin is treated as an exempt anaphor).

Overall results showed that the local anaphor caki-casin can be LD-bound, and when it is, it behaves as an exempt anaphor since the strict reading under VP-ellipsis was predominant in the case of LD-bound caki-casin. LD-bound caki-casin was also found to be sensitive to logophoricity, in that LD-antecedents that were logophoric centers (Sells 1987) were much more felicitous than those that were not.

These results also indicate that the local vs. long-distance property of anaphors is orthogonal to the core-exempt distinction. The existence of LDAs in a language does not rule out exempt local anaphors in the same language, as also shown in Oshima (2004) and Kim and Yoon (2006). One implication of this study is that approaches that take LDAs to be exclusively exempt anaphors (Y. Huang 1994) cannot be on the right track.

Word count: 478
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References: