Sluicing in Korean

Jong-Bok Kim & Peter Sells
jongbok@khu.ac.kr & peter.sells@york.ac.uk

Kyung Hee University & University of York

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In this talk we look at sluicing in Korean, adapting the perspective on this construction proposed in Ginzburg and Sag (2000; GS00).

(1)  a. He looked like someone I know, but I can’t think who.
    b. We always knew he would succeed at something, but we didn’t know what.
    c. Unfortunately, the supply seems to have dried up. I don’t know why.
    d. They know it is coming, but they don’t know when.
The assumed transformational derivation is *wh*-movement and deletion, or base-generation of *wh* in SpecCP with accommodation of a clause (Ross 1969, Chung, Ladusaw and McCloskey 1995, 2011, Merchant 2010), deriving (2)b from (2)a, or base-generating something equivalent.
Korean

Korean is SOV and is a *wh*-in-situ language, but seems to have sluicing. Without the red parts, examples are ungrammatical.

(3) a. pi-ka onta-ko hay-ss-nuntey, *encey-i-nci*
   rain-NOM come-COMP say-PAST-but when-COP-QCOMP
   molukeyssta
   not.know
   ‘They say that it will rain, but I do not know when.’

   b. ku-nun nwukwunka-lul talm-ass-nuntey,
   he-TOP someone-ACC resemble-PAST-but
   *nwukwu-i-nci* molukeyssta
   who-COP-QCOMP not.know
   ‘He resembled someone, but I do not know who.’

(See e.g., Kim 1997, Park 2001, Jo 2005, Choi 2012.)
Island insensivity

Sluicing in English is not sensitive to islands. The correlate of the *wh*-expression in Korean can be also within an island (Sohn 2000, Park 2001, Ok and Kim 2012).

(4) a. Seoul-uy han tayhak-ey tani-nun haksayng-ul Seoul-GEN one college-DAT attend-MOD student-ACC chotayahay-ss-nuntey, etten tayhak-i-nci invite-PAST-but which college-COP-QCOMP molukeyssta not.know

‘I invited the student who attends a university in Seoul, but I don’t know which university.’

(*I don’t know which university I invited a student who attends.*)
Island insensitivity

(4) b. Mimi-ka khu-n cha-lul sa-ss-nuntey, elmana
Mimi-NOM big-MOD car-ACC buy-PAST-but how
khu-nci molukeyssta
big-QCOMP not.know
‘Mimi bought a big car, but I don’t know how big.’
(*I don’t know how big Mimi bought a car.)

Korean sluicing shows familiar facts of case-matching as well (GS00, Sag and Nykiel 2011).
Approaches to Korean sluicing

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How to analyze Korean sluicing?

- Korean appears to have sluicing.
- As there is no *wh*-movement, an analysis just like English movement and deletion may not be motivated.
- As there is usually a copula present, after the *wh*-fragment, a derivation involving deletion from a pseudocleft has been argued for (for Japanese and Korean), as this is a type of copular clause.
How to analyze Korean sluicing?

However, this makes incorrect predictions, and so a “pseudo-sluicing” account has been proposed. Pseudo-sluicing (e.g., Craenenbroeck 2010, Choi 2012) involves a copular clause and a pronominal subject:

(5) Mimi bought something but I don’t know [**what** [it was]].
A postposition must be present in the focus of a pseudocleft, but not in a fragment sluice expressing the same sort of content:

(6) a. Mimi-ka senmwul-ul pat-un kes-un
    Mimi-NOM present-ACC receive-MOD NMLZ-TOP
    haksayng-* (ulopwuthe)-i-ta
    student-*(from)-COP-DECL

    ‘[“The one” Mimi received a present] is *(from) a student.’
(6) b. Mimi-ka etten haksayng-ulpwuthe senmwul-ul
Mimi-NOM some person-from present-ACC
pat-ass-nuntey, na-nun etten
receive-PAST-but I-TOP which
haksayng-(ulpwuthe)-i-nci molukeyssta
student-(from)-COP-QCOMP not.know
‘Mimi received a present from a student, but I do not know which student.’
Multiple fragments are relatively acceptable in sluicing, while they are less acceptable as the foci of a single pseudocleft.

(7) a. *encey nwukwu*-i-nci al swu-ka epsta
    when who-COP-QCOMP know possibility-NOM not.exist
    ‘It is not possible to know when and who.’ (corpus)

b. ?nwukwunka-ka cip-eyse mwuesinka-lul
    someone-NOM home-at something-ACC
    hwumchiekass-nuntey, **nwu-ka mwues**-i-nci
    steal.go-but who-NOM what-COP-QCOMP
    molukeyssta
    not.know
    ‘Someone stole something from my home, but I don’t still who and what.’
Pseudo-sluicing

Pseudo-sluicing is compatible with the optionality of the adposition:

(8) Mimi received a present from someone, but I don’t know
{from whom/who} it was.

As the subject in Korean can be a null subject (*pro*), Korean sluices might be exactly like English “Was it *wh*-phrase?”, with a silent *it*.

One future research topic is whether we can distinguish this from a proposal that Korean embeds true fragments (i.e., utterances that are not syntactically full clauses, even if they have a declarative or interrogative interpretation).

Adopting the GS00 account of sluicing, we can just analyze the fragments directly.
Korean sluicing

What is embedded as a sluice in Korean must always be a predicate and an interrogative clause-type marker. A bare *wh*-word or phrase by itself does not satisfy the selectional requirements of the embedding predicate (such as “not know”).

In the absence of any other predicate, Korean uses the copula to introduce the fragment phrase(s); but a copula is not obligatory.
Korean sluicing

(4) b. Mimi-ka khu-n cha-lul sa-ss-nuntey, elmana
Mimi-NOM big-MOD car-ACC buy-PAST-but how
uku-nca molukeyssta
big-QCOMP not.know
‘Mimi bought a big car, but I don’t know how big.’

ku-cta is the Korean predicate ‘to be big’.
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Predicate and non-predicate fragments

Korean has fragment utterances. In some cases, they are predicates:

    b. iss-e; eps-e. (‘(He) is.’; (He) isn’t.’) (Yes; No.)
Predicate and non-predicate fragments

Or arguments or adjuncts:

(10)  
a. Kim-i nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni?  
     ‘Who did Kim meet?’

   b. chelswu. chelswu-lul. *chelswu-ka.

(10)b shows case matching with the contextually-given utterance; bare or accusative is OK, nominative is not.
Interrogative fragments

‘Kim will come here.’

b. way? way-yo? ettehkey?
why? why-LEVEL? how?
nwukwu-wa? encey? encey-yo?
who-with? when? when-LEVEL?
Interrogative fragments

Either the fragment (which must not conflict in case), or a predicate which is a fragment plus copula plus an interrogative marker:

(12) a. I think that Kim met someone.
    b. nwukwu? nwukwu-lul? nwukwu-i-ni?
       who? who-ACC? who-COP-Q?
    c. *nwukwa-ka?
       who-NOM
Embedded fragments and selection

Only the predicate-type, such as the one with the copula in the last example, can be embedded in Korean sluicing. The first two utterances in (12)b are acceptable at the matrix level, expressing an interrogative content, but they cannot be embedded in that bare form.
Embedded fragments and selection

We propose to augment the account in GS00 with selection for a syntactic feature as well:

(13)   a. Declarative complement: semantic type of *proposition*, but also some syntactic feature of Declarative marking.
       b. Interrogative complement: semantic type of *question*, but also some syntactic feature of Interrogative marking.
There must be embedded clause typing

In fact, *etteh-key* (‘how’) in Korean is also a (non-finite) predicate (lit. ‘to be how’), but it cannot be directly embedded in sluicing:

(14) a. **ettehkey-i-nci** molukeyssta ‘I don’t know how.’
    b. *ettehkey* molukeyssta $\rightsquigarrow$ ‘?How don’t I know.’
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Constructing sluiced meanings

In GS00, a question meaning is built from a proposition meaning by abstracting out one or more parameters from the proposition.

In the ‘merger’ type of sluicing, the meaning of one wh-phrase substitutes for the meaning of a quantificational phrase in the contextually given utterance. (“Kim met someone but I don’t know [who].”)
Constructing sluiced meanings

- In GS00, a *question* meaning is built from a *proposition* meaning by abstracting out one or more *parameters* from the *proposition*.
- In the ‘sprouting’ type of sluicing, the extra parameter is abstracted out of the proposition. (“Kim went to Reno but I don’t know [for how long].”)
Simplified representation, Sag and Nykiel (2011)

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{SYN} & S \\
\text{SEM} & \lambda \Sigma \Phi \\
\text{CNTXT} & \begin{bmatrix}
\text{SAL-UTT} & \left\{ \begin{bmatrix}
\text{SYN} & [\text{CAT} \ \ X] \\
\text{SEM} & [\text{IND} \ i]
\end{bmatrix} \right\} \\
\text{MAX-QUD} & \lambda \{ \} \Phi
\end{bmatrix}
\end{bmatrix}
\rightarrow
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{SYN} & [\text{CAT} \ \ X] \\
\text{SEM} & [\text{IND} \ i] \\
\text{STORE} & \Sigma
\end{bmatrix}
\]

where \( \Sigma \) is non-empty.
GS00: *hd-frag-ph*

**hd-frag-ph**

\[
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{HEAD} & \text{S} \\
\text{CTXT} & \text{SAL-UTT} \\
\end{bmatrix}
\left\{
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{CAT} & 1 \\
\text{CONT} & \text{INDEX} & 2 \\
\end{bmatrix}
\right\}
\rightarrow
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{CAT} & 1 \\
\text{HEAD} & \text{nominal} \\
\text{CONT} & \text{INDEX} & 2 \\
\end{bmatrix}
\]

The basic form of a fragment phrase, it has a category and a content in the context of a Salient Utterance (which essentially defines the form that the fragment has to be compatible with).
Korean sluicing – *pred-frag-ph*

- In Korean, if the **Head** is nominal, this can be a fragment utterance but it cannot be embedded. Korean also allows a fragment with a *verbal* **Head**, which can be embedded.

- So what we need to define for Korean is a *pred-frag-ph*, which will parallel *hd-frag-ph* but be headed by a (finite) predicate, which can also be marked for clause type.
Korean sluicing – *pred-frag-ph*

- If the predicate itself provides a parameter, this can license the question meaning directly. If the predicate is the copula, which we assume has no (relevant) semantics, the phrase(s) it combines with can provide the parameter(s).
- We might need to do something a bit special for multiple fragment examples.
- So Korean sluicing is quite like what we see in other languages, with the clear need for selection of the embedded clause type; the fact that the “sluice” must be a predicate follows from this.
Selected References I


