

Focalization Analysis of Locative Inversion in English and Korean

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Chung, He-ja. 1999. Focalization Analysis of Locative Inversion in English and Korean. *Linguistics*, 7-1, 71-84. Inversion of major constituents can occur quite freely in English as well as in Korean within movement or base-generation framework. Contrary to Stowell (1981), Kim (1977), it is proposed here inversion is to be derived from focus movement for English and Korean. Following Miyagawa (1977), local IP-adjunction creates a site which can license the focus feature, guaranteeing movement of any major constituents. This is the case of locative inversion which is a result of IP-adjunction. (Iksan College)

1. Introduction

- (1) a. Behind them lie abandoned, massive amounts of equipment.
b. From upstairs comes the sound of the vacuum cleaner.
c. On the dressing table stand his few possessions.
- (2) a. Between these fields were succinct stiles.
b. On the sideboard were the two silver teapots.
- (3) a. Jandipateseo-ga chukgu-ga eleopta.
lawn-Top soccer-Nom difficult
'It is difficult to play soccer on the lawn'
b. Seoulloputeoilil manin saramtil-i oatta.
Seoul many people-Nom came
'from Seoul many people came'

In the above sentences of English and Korean, we can notice some other constituents except subject of a sentence come first, which is traditionally called inversion structure. About this inversion phenomenon, there have been two major analyses depending on the treatment of postverbal NP and preverbal PP. If we borrow the term from A. Kathol and R. Levine (1992), they are configurational approach and lexical approach. The researchers of the former approach insisted that fronted PP is a topic and the postverbal NP an adjunct of VP (Kuno 1971, Stowell 1981) or of S (Safir 1985).

On the other hand, the researchers of the latter approach have explained main verb inversion in terms of alternative lexical specification for inversion verbs. In this approach the fronted PP is associated with subject-like properties through the lexical specification of the inversion verb. In Bresnan (1990), the fronted PP is treated as an extracted topic at the c-structure representation, but this topic is identified as a subject in the f-structure representation. Kim (1977), following Bresnan, claimed that the inverted PP is a subject and a functional constraint is necessary for the inversion structure.

In section 2 and 3, we will introduce Stowell's, Kuno's and Kim's arguments for locative construction in brief. In section 4, we'll present several sets of facts showing that the fronted locative is derived by movement of focalization into the Spec of IP or VP.

2. Fronted PP as a topic

- (4) a. On the table was put a valuable book.
 b. Down the stairs fell the baby.
 c. Into the room walked my brother Jack.

Stowell (1981) claimed the fronted PP is a topic in English and the PP preposing construction needs reconstruction. His structure for inverted PP is like this;

(5) PP [s [e] [v [v V [e] NP]

The PP moves from a non A-position to any A-position with which it is co-indexed and to a topic position. Within Stowell's framework, topicalization of the derived PP subject is obligatory, otherwise the resulted structure is to be violated the CRP (Case Resistance Principle). His motivation of the topic status of the fronted PP is based on the followings : 1) the PP preposing construction shared the external distribution of Topic constructions. 2) PP preposing can be embedded within an (asserted) tensed clause complement. 3) PP can be wh-islands like a topic. 4) PP preposing can't be embedded with an infinitival complement.

His movement of PP to the topic position is motivated on the CRP, but the problem with the CRP has been discussed (Fabb 1984, Plann 1986).

(6) For [pp under the stars] to seem the best place to sleep, you must be crazy.

According to Stowell's CRP, (6) must be ungrammatical, but it is not. And if the fronted PP is in the S, where can "for" be positioned ?

On the other hand, Kuno argued that the fronted PP is basegenerated in the subject position, while the subject is put in the Spec of VP.

- (7) a. There are two books on the table.
b. Two books are on the table.

Kuno (1971) insisted in his paper of "The Position of Locatives in Existential Sentences" that in Japanese and in many other languages including English, the basic word order of existential sentences is either of (8-a, b)

- (8) a. Locative + NP indef. + V
b. Locative + V exist + NP indef.

structure of (11) seems to be not economical. From the fact that Japanese allows the multiple subject construction like the corresponding Korean sentences of (12), subject should be located in the IP. Otherwise, the multiple subject construction always gets to violate the shortest distance movement.

- (12) a. Seoul-enin taehakkyo-ga kyunmul-i manta.
 university-Nom building-Nom many
 'there are many university buildings in Seoul'
 b. Taehakkyo-ga kyunmul-i Seoul-enin manta

And it is asserted that the feature of Tense is so strong in Japanese that a subject has to move to the Spec of IP to check into feature. Even though Kuno himself didn't insist that the fronted PP is a topic or subject, we dealt with his analysis as one of "topic" analyses because in his analysis the subject always exists in VP. He only claimed the fronted PP is base-derived in the standard position of subject for the existential construction of Japanese.

3. Fronted PP as a subject

Following one of two approaches for locative inversion, which is called lexical approach, Kim (1997) proposed preverbal PP is a subject and a functional constraint to explain the locative inversion is necessary. As a rule, Kim followed Bresnan's (1990) line, but he is different from her in that she claimed the fronted PP is an extracted topic at the c-structure, but a subject in the f-structure. We'll not discuss Bresnan's analysis here, but look into Kim's (1997).

He presented 3 arguments for locative PP as subject in the locative inversion structure : a) subject - verb agreement, b) subject - raising, c) tag question

- (13) a. Between these two mounds is the grave of Mortimer Hehir.
b. Against the fence were six chipped-enamel slop jars holding brilliant red geraniums.

On the agreement between subject and verb, as Kim admitted, it's not sufficient for this to be as one of the motivation to support PP-Subject hypothesis from (13). The fronted PPs don't agree with the verb in both examples. The tag question is the typical argument the proponents for lexical analysis for locative subject present.

- (14) In the garden is a beautiful statue, isn't there ?

Kim also argued the fact that the tag subject in the tag question is the pronoun form of the subject in the main clause can be applied to (14). But, the tag subject "there" has nothing to do with "in the garden" because "there" in (14) is not the local "there". It has been discussed that the tag subject "there" doesn't need to share the syntactic features of the associated subject. There are many examples observed by many researchers.

- (15) a. Nothing was broken, was there ?
b. Hardly any progress was made, was there ?

As in (15), the tag subject "there" can appear in the sentence whose subjects are normal NPs. The tag question argument is incorrect so that it is irrelevant to the lexical analysis assumption of the fronted PP subject. As for the subject-raising assumption, Kim said that only the subject of the subordinate clause can be raised and become the subject of the main sentence.

- (16) a. Over my windowsill seems to have crawled an entire army of ants.

b. On the hill appears to be located a cathedral

It is obvious that the underlined preverbal PP in (16) is in the initial position, and moved out of somewhere. But it's not so obvious what position it moves to and whether it's a subject position or not. And, if its movement is for the satisfaction of EPP (Extended Projection Principle), the movement is strange because the moved constituent is not NP, but PP and if the fronted PP is really subject, what is the status of "an entire army of ants" ?

What seems to be crucial against the hypothesis of the inverted PP subject is that the initial underlined PPs are not predicated over by VP in the sentence. From the above facts, we tentatively conclude that his arguments turned out to be false and inconclusive for the locative inversion structure. Furthermore, he suggested Kuno and Takami (1992)' constraint to solve the unavailability of some question formation.

- (17) a. In the corner was a man
 *b. Was in the corner a man?
 (18) Is under the bed a place to hide?

Kim explained the ungrammaticality of (17-b) in terms of property of PP. In (17-b) the underlined PP is new intonation and so it's not questioned. Due to this fact this does not explain the possibility of question formation in (18). To account for this, he quoted Kuno & Takami (1992)'s constraint.

- (19) Kuno & Takami's constraints : In a sentence that has a fronted element, the rest of the sentence must be a predication about the fronted element.

According to Kim, the fronted PP in (18) has a strong predication relationship with the rest of the sentence and so it gets to be frozen,

which in turn becomes NP. Through this process, the inverted locative PP can be questioned. Here we can point a few problems about Kim's approach. Jespersen (1965 p.145) said that something new is usually expressed in the predicate. If this is the case, the inverted locative PP can't become a subject because Kim argued the inverted locative PP is new information.

It seems that the strong predication which he quoted from Kuno & Takami's constraint would be difficult to judge. How can the fronted PP be turned out to have strong predication relationship with the rest of the sentence? And how strong is a PP strong to be a frozen NP out of the PP? This kind of mechanism looks very arbitrary and implausible in terms of syntactic and semantic interpretation.

- (20) a. Eksmas ihu-ga meu chupta
 X-mas -Nom very cold
 'it is very cold after X-mas'
- b. Eosetsi- eso ilkoosisai-ga moigi-ga choapointa
 6 o'clock 7 o'clock to meet-Nom looks good
 'it looks good to get together from 6 to 7'

Kim presented (20) for a locative inversion construction in Korean and insisted the underlined fronted locative phrases have nominative case markers, and that Korean allows a locative inversion. He said locative inversion constructions are universal syntactic phenomena although their distributions vary from language to language.

As we can see in (20), the underlined phrases are not locative phrases, but time phrases and whether the facts that "ga" after time phrases is really nominative case marker and they are real subjects remain in question. We can have (21) with different case markers, but with same meanings.

- (21) a. Eksmas ihu-nin (ga) (nalsi-ga) meu chupta
 X-mas Top Nom weather very cold

- b. Eosetsi-eso ilkopsisai-e moigi-ga choapointa
6 o'clock 7 o'clock to meet-Nom looks good
- c. Moigi-ga eosetsi-eso ilkopsisai-ga choapointa
- d. Moigi-ga esetsi-eso ilkopsisai-e choapointa
- e. Moigi-nin esetsi-eso ilkopsisai-ga choapointa

The underlined phrases are time phrases and to add “ga” to “moigi” in the raising verb sentences of (21,b-d) makes the sentence better and perfect. From the above facts, his claim that the inverted locative phrase is subject proved to be insufficient. In the next section we'll present the strong evidence that the locative PP is not subject and the locative inversion is a result of focus movement.

4. Arguments for focus movement of the fronted locative

In this section we will present 3 arguments showing that the fronted locative PPs are real PPs and they are derived from focus movement.

- (22) a. In the swamp were /* was found two children.
- b. Over my windowsill seems to have crawled an entire army of ants
- c. In the garden is a beautiful statue, isn't there ?

If Kim's argument, following Bresnan's, that the locative PPs are subject is accepted, the postverbal NPs aren't to be Case-assigned. Because the locative PP is considered NP and checked off the Case feature of tense of verb, then post-verbal NP remains unchecked, and hence uninterpretable (Jang,1998)

And if the locative PPs are considered PP, not NP, why do they need Case? This phenomenon is observed in Bantu languages (Jang,1998).

- (23) a. Cheksangmit-i chotta (cheksangmit konggan-i chotta)
 table under good
 'it is good under the table'
- b. Chimdemit-i jaki-e choilket katta (chimdemitese jaki-ga
 choilket katta)
 to sleep
 'it is good to sleep under the table'
- (24) a. Cheksangmit konggan-i jopta
 table space narrow
 'it is narrow under the table'
- b. Chimdemitese-ga jaki-ga choilket katta
- (25) a. Jandibateseo-ga chukgu-ga eleopta.
 lawn-Top soccer-Nom difficult
 'It is difficult to play soccer on the lawn'
- b. Manin saramtil-i Seoul-loputeo-lil oatta.
 many people-Nom Seoul-from-ACC came
 'many people came from Seoul'

In Korean, "ka", "lul" can be attached to non-NPs. PP-ka, PP-lul are possible as shown in (24). These markers are turned out to be secondary theta-role markers, not case markers (Yoon 1989). Yoon presented 4 arguments that true case markers need to be distinguished from secondary theta-role markers: reflexive binding, nominalization, constituency problem for the antecedent problem and passive construction. We will not repeat his arguments here, but look into his explanation of theta-role marker analysis.

In (25), he claimed that "PP-ka", "PP-lul" are theta-role markers which are assigned to any XP, not real arguments, which are dominated by VP. Following Yoon, we can explain (23-25) in the same way as he did. "-i" in (23), "-ga" in (24,25) are not case markers, but secondary theta role markers. So far we have discussed that the fronted locative phrase is not a subject in terms of verb agreement,

tag question, subject-raising construction.

As another argument for the post-verbal NP subject hypothesis, quoting from Levine & Kathol (1992), there is subject gap finite clause in English.

- (26) a. Down came the rain and washed the spider out.
- b. Into the woods went the hunter and shot a hare.

In (26-b), the second VP- “shot a hare”- is obviously not predicated over the initial PP, but “the hunter”. The second VP has to combine with the hunter and the hunter is a subject. Then the initial PP can't be a subject in a coordinate clause. They are in the line of Linearization approach for this construction, which we don't follow.

- (27) a. In the garden there is a beautiful statue.
- a'. In the garden is a beautiful statue.
- b. In the woods that traversed the road on either side there were huge drifts by the wind into weird sand-dune shapes.
- b'. In the woods that ~~traversed~~ the road on either side were huge drifts by the wind into weird sand-dune shapes
- c. Under a bridge sat a cat.
- d. At the foot of a mountain he built a house.

As for the derivation of (27), we propose focus movement analysis, following Yoon (1989) and S.Miyagawa (1997). The PPs are fronted by focus movement and also the subjects have to undergo sort of heavy NP shift even though they are not that heavy. Under VP-internal subject hypothesis, (27-a) has the following structure.

- (28) a. [IP [VP is [a beautiful statue] [PP in the garden]]]
 b. [IP a beautiful statue [VP is [t] [PP in the garden]]]
 c. [there [is [a beautiful statue] [in the garden]]]
 d. [IP in the garden [IP there [VP t [VP is [a beautiful statue] [t]]]]]
 e. [IP in the garden [IP t [VP t [VP is [a beautiful statue] [t]]]]]

To get (28-e) from (28-a), it seems to need sort of reconstruction as Stowell did like (5). But following Lasnik (1995) and Zeliko (1995), we maintain the assumption that all structural Case-marking takes place under Spec-head agreement. Therefore, "a beautiful statue" has to move to the Spec of IP to get nominative as in (28-b). If this movement doesn't take place, the expletive "there" must be inserted and it gets to transmit the case to its associate "a beautiful statue", getting (28-c). (28-d,e) is a result of focus movement within our analysis. From the fact that (27,a-a'), (27,b-b') have the same meaning, we surmise that the fronted PP should be positioned out of the first IP, not in the subject position and the fronted PP should not be any subject.

The reason why PP adjoins to IP is that that position can appropriately license the focus feature, like CP position can do the topic feature. Miyagawa (1997) insisted that this kind of local IP-adjunction may be A-movement. This is the case of A-movement. In (28-c, e) we can also observe the IP-adjunction which is local A-movement.

Korean, basically as SOV language, has considerable freedom of word order with very few restrictions. Major constituents, such as NP, AdvP and PP can be scrambled (or moved) in the domain to the left of the verb. Most of the permutations encode discourse functions like topic, and focus. It has been reported that the sentence-initial position in Korean is reserved for topics, and the immediately following position or preverbal position is the focus of the clause as in Japanese. (Miyagawa 1977).

As we see in (23-25), the locative phrases move to the front of the sentence more freely than the English counterparts. Regardless of its verb, the locative PP can be located in the initial position of the sentences. The locative phrase can adjoin to VP because VP-adjunction position is one of the focus licensed positions as in (28-c, e). These locative phrases can have “-ga”, “-i” markers assigned structurally to IP- and VP-adjoined XPs through Focalization, a syntactic movement.

From the above facts, we conclude that our analysis has advantage over Kim’s and there is no positive support for dependence of functional constraint.

5. Conclusion

We have argued against the fronted locative PP subject hypothesis. Instead, we have presented strong evidence that the locative phrases are results from focus movement which is local A-movement observed in Japanese, English and Korean. We have also shown that our hypothesis that the post-verbal NP is a subject can be maintained in terms of verb agreement, tag question, case-checking and discourse function.

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