

Apparent Optionality in Marking Anaphoric Definites in Korean

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How human language encodes different types of definiteness has been at the center stage in recent linguistics literature. Thanks largely to Schwarz (2009), who builds on extensive literature before him, we now know that definites are at least of two kinds, unique definites (e.g., *the moon*) and familiar definites (e.g., *the book* in the narrative sequence *I bought a book and the book was interesting*); and to account for relevant crosslinguistic data, both uniqueness-based and familiarity-based analyses of definites are needed. The languages Schwarz investigates all have articles, however, namely, English, German, Fering. Given this, a natural question that arises is how article-less languages like Korean may differentiate between the two types of definites if they do.

In the extant literature, it is already well known that Korean uses bare nominals (BNs) to mark unique definites, and it uses both BNs and demonstratives (DEMs) to mark anaphoric definites (see, a.o., Ahn 2019; Park & Kang 2020; Kang 2021; and references cited in them). But exactly when a BN is chosen over a DEM-modified N in marking anaphoric definites or vice versa is still poorly understood. In this paper, based on grammaticality judgment tasks conducted with 6 native speakers of Korean as well as some corpus data, I show that (i) there is a strong tendency for continuing topics in Korean to be modified by a DEM, as exemplified in (1), contra what has been reported in the literature (e.g., Jenks 2018); and (ii) structural case-marked anaphoric definites typically require a DEM but BNs occur if the predicate of the sentence is adjectival, as shown in (2), or using a BN form represents the social relation the intended referent bears to the speaker, as illustrated in (3).

- (1) Ecey ___ haksayng han-myeng-kwa sangtam-ul hay-ess-ta.
 yesterday *pro* student one-CL-with conference-ACC do-PST-DECL
 ‘Yesterday I had a meeting with a student.’
 *(**Ku**) **haksayng-un** cikum sa.hak.nyen-i-ta.
 that student-TOP currently fourth.school.year-COP-DECL
 ‘The student is currently in his/her/their fourth year (in college).’
- (2) a. Kakey an-uro etten kangaci han-mari-ka tulleo-ass-ta.
 store inside-to some puppy one-CL-NOM come.in-PST-DECL
 ‘A puppy came into the store.’
 Kuriko */??(**ku**) **kangaci-ka** na-uy pal-ul mwul-ess-ta.
 and that puppy-NOM I-GEN foot-ACC bite-PST-DECL
 ‘And the puppy bit my foot.’
 b. Ecey ___ haksayng han-myeng-kwa sangtam-ul hay-ess-ta.
 yesterday *pro* student one-CL-with conference-ACC do-PST-DECL
 ‘Yesterday I had a meeting with a student.’
 (??/***Ku**) **haksayng-i** cham ttokttokhay-ss-ta. Kurayse ...
 that student-NOM really smart-COP-PST-DECL so
 ‘The student was really smart. So ...’
- (3) Na-nun onul pesu-eyse etten halmeni-kkey cari-lul
 I-TOP today bus-LOC some grand.mother-DAT.HON seat-ACC
 yangpohay-ss-ta.
 yield-PST-DECL

‘Today, on the bus, I yielded my seat to an old lady (Lit.: ‘a grandmother’).’
 Kurayssteni (ku) halmeni-kkeyse na-ekey sathang-ul
 and.then that grand.mother-NOM.HON I-DAT hard.candy-ACC
 cwu-si-ess-ta.
 give-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘And the old lady gave me a hard candy (in return for my kindness).’

I account for these facts by adopting a cartographic framework building on Rizzi 1997 and Speas and Tenny 2003, and by resorting to the notion of *competition*. I claim that in Korean type languages, both BNs and DEM-marked Ns may encode anaphoric definiteness by occurring at Spec,DP whose head carries [+anaphoric], but DEM-marked Ns must be in the m-command domain of the relevant point of view (POV) licensing heads, which I argue to be Top⁰, v⁰, and V⁰ for Korean; this will be shown to capture the contrast between (2a) and (2b). I further argue that anaphoric definites in Korean are subject to two violable output constraints, *Index Continuing Topics!* and *Use Bare Nouns as Quasi-names!*, which I propose by amending Jenks’s (2018) *Index!* and Ahn’s (2019) *Overdeterminate!*, respectively; as a result, all else being equal, continuing topics in Korean are bound to occur marked by a DEM, as shown in (1). I also note, however, that BNs can occur as continuing topics, as illustrated in (4), and they may also occur as anaphoric subjects or objects, but this is because, in such cases, they function as *text-internally licensed unique definites* in a way comparable to immediate situation uses of definite descriptions in the sense of Hawkins (1978). Finally, I point out that, in coordinate structures, DEM-marked topics are strongly dis-preferred as shown in (5), and discuss how the analysis proposed in this paper may explain such phenomena.

(4) Yes-nal enu swup-sok-ey thokki han-mari-ka sal-ko
 old-day some forest-inside-LOC rabbit one-CL-NOM live-CONN
 iss-ess-ta.
 AUX-PST-DECL

‘Once upon a time, in some forest, there lived a rabbit.’
 (Ku) thokki-nun meri-ka acwu coh-ass-ta.
 that rabbit-TOP brain-NOM very be.good-PST-DECL
 ‘The rabbit was very smart.’

(5) Kakey an-uro etten namca-wa etten yeca-ka tulleo-ass-ta.
 store inside-to some man-and some woman-NOM come.in-PST-DECL
 ‘A man and a woman came into the store.’

(?/*Ku) namca-nun kapang-ul tul-ko iss-ess-ko
 that man-TOP bag-ACC carry-CONN AUX-PST-CONN
 (?/*ku) yeca-nun wusan-ul tul-ko iss-ess-ta.
 that woman-TOP umbrella-ACC carry-CONN AUX-PST-DECL
 ‘The man was carrying a bag and the woman was carrying an umbrella.’

In sum, this paper shows that anaphoric definiteness marking in Korean is governed by both grammatical factors and pragmatic factors; while morphosyntax generates suitable *forms* for anaphoric definites (e.g., BNs, DEM-marked Ns), the output filter decides which one surfaces in the end; and grammaticality judgments can be fluid depending on how each speaker ranks the relevant constraints that constitute the output filter in their grammar as well as what kind of POV they take on the sequence of events they are narrating. It will be shown that the proposed analysis has implications for anaphoric definiteness marking in Mandarin and Japanese, and the status of DP projection in article-less languages.