On the Korean Inferential Cleft Construction*

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Kim, Jong-Bok and Peter Sells. 2011. On the Korean Inferential Cleft Construction. *Studies in Modern Grammar* **64, 45-72.** Rather like English examples such as *It is that he is a genius*, Korean also has what has been called an "inferential cleft construction". This paper looks at the motivations of why speakers would introduce such a construction instead of using a simple declarative sentence, at what kind of semantic and pragmatic relations are evoked in the construction, and at grammatical properties of the construction of interest. In particular, the paper shows that unlike the English counterpart, the Korean inferential construction has no expletive pronoun, and conveys much wider inferential relationships such as explanation, reason, cause, consequence, and even paraphrase. This wide array of uses allows the construction to be used to facilitate cohesion in a variety of contexts.

Key words: inferential cleft, copula, predicational copula, specificational copula, identificational copula

1. Introduction

Every language presumably has a device to focus an entire clause. In English, this can be accomplished by employing an expletive matrix consisting of a non-referential *it*, a copula, and a subordinate clause, as attested from the following naturally occurring data (cf. Declerck 1992, Delahunty

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and Gatzkiewicz 2000, Delahunty 2001, Koops 2007):

(1) a. What do you think makes the program successful? I would say [it is just that the students are engaged].

 b. If there be any reasonable objection to the bill, [it is that it does not go far enough].

 c. When you have finished the novel, [it is not that you have really finished it, but that you have decided to do no more work on it].

Unlike the referential *it*, the pronoun *it* here has neither referential properties nor an overt linguistic antecedent in the preceding clause.[1] We can notice from these examples is that the proposition following the complementizer *that* offers an explanation for the state of affairs in the preceding clause. In this sense, the construction (marked by the brackets) helps a listener to 'infer' that some explanation or reason exists and is forthcoming after the complementizer *that*, even if no grammatical form overtly signals this.

The construction shares some formal properties with English *it*-cleft constructions like *It is the students that are engaged*. The inferential cleft and *it*-cleft are lexico-grammatically similar in that they both use the expletive pronoun *it* and the copular verb *be*. Both are focusing constructions, evoking alternatives in the sense that the positives assert the relevance of the focused element over the other alternatives (cf. Declerck 1992, Delahunty 2001).[2] However, a difference comes from what is focused.

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[1] The lack of referential properties can be checked by questioning *it* here: We cannot question *it* by the *wh*-pronoun *what* as seen **What is just that the students are engaged?*. See also Declerck 1992 and Delahunty 2001.

[2] Negations of the *it*-cleft and inferential cleft deny the relevance of the focal constituent in the context:

(i) a. It is not the critics who count.

 b. It is not that the critics count.

In the *it*-cleft (a), there are many individuals who count. Of these, the critics are

While the canonical *it*-cleft construction disambiguates between the focused expression in the pivot XP and the presupposed information in the *that* clause, the inferential cleft construction simply presents an assertion in the *that* clause. This assertion is linked to the previous context by an inferential relationship. In this sense, it seems justified to say that such examples are syntactically similar to clefts and pragmatically induce an inferential relationship, leading us to call the construction 'inferential cleft' (cf. Lambrecht 2001).[3]

Korean also employs a similar construction for focussing a whole clause (cf. Kim and Sells 2007, Kim and Lee 2008). Compare the following examples:[4]

(2) a. Simple declarative:

kuttay　　　cha sako-ka　　　na-ss-e
that moment　car accident-NOM　　happen-PST-DECL

'At that moment, a car accident happened.'

b. Inferential cleft:

kuttay　　　cha sako-ka　　　na-n　　　kes-i-ya
that moment　car accident-NOM　　happen-PNE　　KES-COP-DECL

'At that moment, it is that a car accident happened.'

These two examples have the same propositional content, that a car accident occurred, but are different in the sense that (2b) has the formal noun *kes* (literally 'thing' or 'fact'; glossed simply as KES here) followed by the copula verb *i-*. This example, unlike the canonical declarative, also conveys

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excluded. Meanwhile, the inferential cleft (b) denies the proposition of the embedded clause as an alternative value to the variable given in the context.

[3] Different names have been given to this English construction: sentential focus cleft (Horn 1989), inferential construction (Delahunty 2001), *it-is-that* construction (Otake 2002), and so forth.

[4] The abbreviations used in this paper are: COP (copula), COMP (complementizer), DAT (dative), DECL (declarative), GEN (genitive), LOC (locative), PST (past), PL (plural), PNE (prenominal ending), TOP (topic), QUE (question), etc.

an inferential relationship, for example, that the reason for a state of affairs in the previous context is due to the fact that there was a car accident.[5] The following attested example illustrates the effect of evoking an inferential relationship more clearly:

(3) etise sicakhay-ya ha-na? [[ku-ey tayhay a-nun kes-i   cenhye
     where begin-COMP do-QUE he-LOC about know-PNEKES-NOM at.all
     eps-nun   kes]-i-ta
     not.exist-PNE KES-COP-DECL
     'Where should (I) begin? (I do not know where to begin).
     The reason is that there is nothing at all that I know about him.'

The second sentence here provides an explanation for the situation denoted by the first sentence. The embedded clause of *kes* provides us with an explanation or reason for the first sentence 'I do not know where to begin'. The inferential cleft thus helps us to convey an inference relationship between the previous sentence and the subordinating clause -- an explanation with respect to the state of affairs denoted by the previous sentence.

Many research questions arise from this construction. The first question concerns the formal properties of the construction, compared to other canonical clefts. The next question is why speakers use such an inferential cleft construction instead of the truth-conditionally identical simple declarative one. This question is related in turn to the issue of what kinds of inferential relationships are conveyed by the construction. It has been noted that in English, the construction canonically conveys the meaning of reason or explanation, but languages may be different in the type of inference relationships conveyed by the construction (cf. Delahunty 2001, Declerck 1992, Otake 2002, Delahunty and Gatzkiewicz 2000). Our corpus search indicates that Korean introduces the inferential constructions in a

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[5] For detailed discussion of the formal properties of KES, see Kim and Sells (2007) and references therein.

much wider context even for paraphrasing and simply adding information.

In answering these questions, we first review the formal properties of the three types of clefts (predicational, identificational, and inferential) to see how the inferential cleft is different from the others. We then look into the discourse and pragmatic properties of the inferential cleft in detail. Based on naturally occurring data extracted from the Sejong Corpus,[6] we also look into the possible inference relationships that are evoked in the construction. We also suggest a direction for syntactic analysis for the construction.

2. Cleft Constructions in Korean

2.1 Three Types of Cleft Constructions

As noted, the Korean inferential cleft construction subordinates a declarative clause under the formal noun *kes*.[7] One of its important uses is in cleft constructions marking a constituent as a discourse prominent element. There are at least three main types of clefts with *kes*, including the inferential cleft:

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[6] The balanced corpus Sejong Corpus has 100 million words.

[7] The noun *kes* has a variety of uses and is one of the top five most frequently used words in the language. In terms of its morphosyntactic properties, the formal noun *kes* can be classified either as a noun meaning 'fact' or 'thing' or as a pure sentential nominalizer (cf. Kim and Sells 2007):

(i) a. nay kes-i   ne   kes-pota khu-ta   ('thing')
       my thing-NOM your thing-more big-DECL
       '(Lit.) My thing is bigger than your thing.'

   b. [[John-i __ mek-un]kes]-ul   mek-ess-ta   ('thing')
      John-NOM   eat-PNE thing-ACC   eat-PST-DECL
      '(We) ate the thing that John ate.'

   c. [[John-i   talli-nun] kes]-ul   moll-ass-ta   (S-Nmlz)
      John-NOM   run-PNE   KES-ACC   not.know-PST-DECL
      '(We) didn't know that John was running.'

(4) a. [John-i __$_i$ ilk-un kes-un] [kacca]$_i$-i-ta
John-NOM read-PNE KES-TOP fake-COP-DECL
'What John read is a fake.'

b. [i chayk]$_i$-i palo [John-i __$_i$ ilk-un kes-i-ta]
this book-NOM very John-NOM read-PNE kes-COP-DECL
'This book is the very book that John read.'

c. [John-i kuchayk-ul ilk-un] kes-i-ess-ta
John-NOM the book-ACC read-PNE KES-COP-PST-DECL
'It is that John read the book.'

These three types of cleft constructions consist of a cleft clause, a pivot XP, and the copular verb.[8] The predicational cleft in (4a) consists of a cleft clause with a missing object, coindexed with the precopula expression *kacca* 'fake'. In the identificational cleft (4b) the nominative phrase *i chayk* 'this book' functions as the pivot XP coindexed with the missing object. In these two clefts, the pivot XP is linked to the content of the cleft clause introduced by *kes*, though the exact semantic function is different. Meanwhile, in the inferential cleft (4c), the whole clause preceding the *kes* expression (followed by the copula *i-*) is focussed and functions as the pivot phrase. The syntactic and information structures of these three types of clefts can be schematized as follows:

(5) a. Predicational cleft:
[[$_{NP}$ [$_S$ 'clause'] *kes*]-TOP   XP-COP-DECL
       given   new

b. Identificational cleft:
XP-NOM   [[$_{NP}$ [$_S$ 'clause'] *kes*]-COP-DECL
new   given

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[8] For detailed discussion of Korean cleft constructions, see Kim (2008) and references therein.

c. Inferential cleft:

(adverbial)   [[NP [S 'clause'] *kes*]-COP-DECL
    ....
                      new

As shown here, both the predicational and identificational cleft have a pivot or focused expression like the English cleft constructions. In the predicational cleft, the *kes* phrase typically hosts the topic marker, and so describes given information against which the precopular XP presents new information. In the identificational cleft, the initial phrase bears the nominative marker, expressing new information whereas the precopular *kes*-headed clause conveys given information. Meanwhile, in the inferential cleft the clausal complement of *kes* is all presented as new information.

In what follows, we will review the similarities and differences between these three clefts so that we can better understand the formal properties of the inferential cleft construction in question.

2.2 Predicational and Identificational Cleft

The canonical cleft clause, usually representing given or discourse-old information, has a syntactically missing argument or adjunct linked to the pivot XP. In this respect, Korean clefts behave like relative clauses:

(6) a. [John-i   __ilk-un]   ku chayk
        John-NOM   read-PNE   the book
        'the book that John read'

     b. *[John-i   ku sosel-ul ilk-un]   ku chayk
        John-NOM the novel-ACC read-PNE   the book
        'the book that John read the novel'

(7) a. *[John-i ku sosel-ul   ilk-un   kes]-un palo   I chayk-i-ta
        John-NOM the novel-ACC read-PNE KES-TOP very this book-COP-DECL
        'It is this very book that John read the novel.'

  b. *i chayk-i   palo [John-i ku chayk-ul   ilk-un kes]-i-ta
     this book-NOM very John-NOM the book-ACC read-PNE KES-COP-DECL
     'This book is the very one that John read the novel.'

As illustrated in (6), the relative clause is required to have a missing argument (or adjunct) linked to the head noun, and cannot be a complete clause. The same constraint holds for the predicational and identificational cleft. The examples in (7) illustrate that the cleft clause in (5a) and (5b) cannot be a complete clause with no missing element.

   As for the possible type of the pivot phrase in predicational copula, the phrase can be either an argument or an adjunct. A postpositional or semantic marker associated with the focused expression is optional:

  (8) a. John-i   Mary-lul   manna-n   kes-un [kongwen-(eyse)]-i-ta
          John-NOM Mary-ACC meet-PNE   KES-TOP park-at-COP-DECL
            'It was at the park that John met Mary.'

      b. John-i Mary-eykey senmwul-ul cwu-n   kes-un wupyen-(ulo)]-i-ta
         John-NOM Mary-DAT present-ACC give-PNE KES-TOP mail-by-COP-DECL
            'The way John gave Mary a present is by mail.'

Canonically an adverb cannot be in the pivot XP position, but when it is categorically nominal, it can function as the pivot phrase in the precopular position:[9]

  (9) a. John-i   Mary-lul   manna-n   kes-un   [ecey]-i-ta
          John-NOM Mary-ACC meet-PNE   KES-TOP yesterday-COP-DECL
            'It is yesterday when John met Mary.'

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[9] True adverbs cannot be focused in either the predicational or identificational cleft:
  (i) a. *John-i   talli-n   kes-un   chenchenhi-i-ta
          John-NOM   run-PNE   KES-TOP   slowly-COP-DECL
            '(lit.) The way John ran was slowly.'

      b. *[chenchenhi]-ka John-i   talli-n   kes-i-ta
         slowly-NOM   John-NOM   run-PNE   KES-COP-DECL

b. John-i   Mary-lul manna-n kes-un [siksa-lul ha-ko   nase]-i-ta
   John-NOM Mary-ACC meet-PNE KES-TOP meal-ACC do-COMP after-COP-DECL
   'It is after having a meal when John met Mary.'

Meanwhile, the identificational cleft does not allow an adjunct to be focused, regardless of the presence of the postposition:

(10) a. *[kongwen-(eyse)]-ka [John-i   Mary-lul   manna-n kes]-i-ta
        park-at-NOM   John-NOM Mary-ACC meet-PNE ES-COP-DECL
        '(At) the park is where John met Mary.'

   b. *[sanso-ka pwucokhayse]-ka swum-i   taptapha-n   kes-i-ta
      oxygen-NOM short.do-NOM   breath-NOM choking-PNE ES-COP-DECL
      'Lacking oxygen is what is hard to breathe.'

The impossibility of having a postpositional phrase as the pivot phrase means that the identificational cleft only allows an NP to serve as its pivot (focused) XP. More specifically, in the identificational cleft, the pivot NP in the initial position must be a referential NP.

The gapped element in these two types of cleft constructions can be in the embedded clause, allowing a potentially long-distance relationship between the gap and the linked XP:

(11) a. [John-i   [Mary-ka __cohahanta-ko] sayngkakha-nun kes]-un
        John-NOM Mary-NOM   like-COMP   think-PNE   KES-TOP
        i kulim-i-ta
        this picture-COP-DECL
        'What John thinks Mary likes is this picture.'

   b. i kulim-i   [John-i   [Mary-ka __ cohahanta-ko]
      this picture-NOM John-NOM Mary-NOM   like-COMP
      sayngkakha-nun KES-COP-DECL
      think-PNE   kes]-i-ta
      'This picture is what John thinks Mary likes.'

In both predicational and identificational clefts, the pivot phrase *i kulim* 'this picture' is linked to the object of the embedded clause. This pivot XP, however, cannot be an adjunct in the embedded clause. This is once again similar to relative clauses:

(12) a. [John-i   [Mary-ka   ku chayk-ul ilkessta-ko]] sayngkakha-n ecey
        John-NOM Mary-NOM the book-ACC read-COMP think-PNE yesterday
         'the time when John thought Mary read the book'

   b. [John-i [Mary-ka   ku chayk-ul   ilkessta-ko] sayngkakha-nun kes]-un
      John-NOM Mary-NOM the book-ACC read-COMP think-PNE   KES-TOP

      ecey-i-ta
      yesterday-COP-DECL

       'The time when John thought Mary read the book was yesterday'

In both relative and cleft examples here, the relativized and cleft adjunct is linked to the higher main clause, not to the embedded clause, illustrating the long-distance relationship.

   In sum, both the predicational and identificational clefts behave alike in many respects. They both partition the presupposed expression and the pivot (focused) phrase, require a missing element in the cleft clause linked with the pivot phrase, and display unbounded dependency properties. However, they are also different with respect to what can be in the pivot XP. The noticeable difference is that the pivot XP in the identificational cleft must be a referential NP.

2.3 Inferential Cleft

As noted earlier, unlike the predicational and identificational constructions, in the inferential cleft *kes* can nominalize a whole preceding S, highlighting an event. Consider the following pair:

(13) A: way   motwu-ka coyongha-ci?
         why   all-NOM   quiet-QUE
         'Why is everyone quiet?

     B: sensayngnim-i   hwakana-n   kes-i-ya
         teacher-NOM   angry-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
         'It is that the teacher got angry.'

(14) A: atul-i   nemwu   nollasse.
         son-NOM   very   surprised
         'The son was surprised a lot.

     B: kuttay   apenim-i   tuleo-si-n   kes-i-ya
         that moment   father-NOM come.in-HON-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
         'It is at that moment that father came in.'

Unlike the predicational or identificational cleft in which the focused element is either a precopula phrase or the referential first argument of the copula, the inferential cleft here is focusing a whole clause. For example, in (14a), the proposition that the teacher got angry is given as the pivot information, offering an explanation why everyone (in the classroom) is quiet. This 'sentential focus' property of the inferential cleft can be supported by the fact that the construction functions as a canonical answer to a question asking for an explanation:

(15) A: achim-ey   way kulehkey solansulep-ess-ni? mwusun il-i-ya?
        morning-LOC why   so   noisy-PST-QUE   what thing-COP-QUE
        'Why was it so noisy in the morning? What happened?'

    B: elin haksayng-i totwuk-ul cap-ass-ten   kes-i-ya
        young student-NOM thief-ACC catch-PST-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
        'It is that a young student caught a thief.'

One main difference from the two cleft constructions discussed above is that in the inferential cleft, there is no syntactic gap in the *kes* clause that is linked to the pivot XP:

(16) a. haksayng-tul-i motwu sihem-ul cal   po-ass-ten   kes-i-ta
     student-PL-NOM   all exam-ACC well take-PST-PNE KES-COP-DECL
       'The students all took the exam very well.'

    b. haksayng-tul-i motwu __cal po-ass-ten   kes-i-ta
     student-PL-NOM all   well take-PST-PNE   KES-COP-DECL

As we saw above in the other cleft types, the gap in the cleft clause semantically matches the pivot XP.[10)] However, such a gap does not exist in the inferential cleft.

This difference is related to the status of *kes*. The noun *kes* in the predicational and identificational cleft can be replaced by a common noun, but this is not possible in the inferential cleft:

(17) a. [John-i   __$_i$ ilk-un   kes/chayk-un]   [kacca]$_i$-i-ta
     John-NOM   read-PNE KES/book-TOP   fake-COP-DECL
     'What/the book John read is a fake.'

    b. [i chayk]$_i$-i   palo [John-i __$_i$ ilk-un   kes/chayk-i-ta]
     this book-NOM very John-NOM   read-PNE KES/book-COP-DECL
     'This book is the book/what John read.'

(18) a. kuttay   sako-ka   na-n   kes/*iyu-i-ta
     the moment accident-NOM occur-PNE KES/reason-COP-DECL
     'At the moment, it is that an accident occurred.'

    b. kuliko nase hyeng-i os-ul   twici-nun kes/*swunkan-i-ess-ta
     and then brother-NOM clothes-ACC search-PNE KES/moment-COP-PST-DECL
     'And then, it is that brother was searching for the clothes.'

The contrast in (17) and (18) shows that *kes* in the inferential cleft has different syntactic properties from the predicational and identificational cleft constructions.

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[10] For discussion of syntactic aspects of Korean cleft constructions, see Kim (2008) and references therein.

3. Interpretive Properties of the Inferential Cleft

3.1 Relation to the Specificational Copular Construction

All of the cleft constructions of interest have the copula as the matrix verb. It is familiar from works such as Heggie (1988), Den Dikken (2001), Heycock & Kroch (2002) or Mikkelsen (2004) that there are at least three types of copular constructions in English: predicational, identificational (or equational), and specificational. Illustrative examples are given in the following:

(19) a. The hat is big.
    b. Sylvia is Tully.
    c. Who is the director? The director is John.

In the predicational copular construction (19a), the post-copula expression *big* predicates a property of the subject *the hat*. The equational copula in (19b) equates the referents of the two surrounding expressions: the referent of Sylvia is identical with that of Tully. Hence the subject in both of these interpretations is referential. Finally, in the specificational copular construction (19c), the subject expression provides a description or characterization and the post-copular expression provides specifies a referent: 'John' is the value that satisfies the variable 'the x who is the director'.

Copula constructions in Korean can be also classified into these three types, as illustrated in the following (cf. Kim and Sells 2007):

(20) a. Predicational:
        i   moca-nun   kacca-i-ta
        this hat-TOP   fake-COP-DECL
        'This hat is fake.'

    b. Identificational:

       Chelswu-ka   palo   kusalam-i-ta
       Chelswu-NOM   very   that person-COP-DECL
       'Chelswu is that very person.'

    c. Specificational:

       nay-ka   manna-n   salam-un   Chelswu-i-ta
       I-NOM   meet-PNE   person-TOP Chelswu-COP-DECL
       'The person I met is Chelswu.'

The referential properties of each argument here are slightly different, due to the interpretation of the copula. For example, in the predicational (20a), the first subject argument is referential while the precopular NP is non-referential. In the identificational copular example (20b), both NPs are referential, but in the specificational (20c), the subject argument is non-referential whereas the precopular argument can be either referential or non-referential (cf. Mikkelsen 2004).[11]

    Just like English, the Korean specificational copula displays canonical specificational properties. The precopula XP provides a value to the variable

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[11] According to Mikkelsen (2004), the referential property of the English copula subject is seen from the contrast in the following:

  (i) a.   The tallest girl in the class is Molly, isn't it?
       b.   The tallest girl in the class is Swedish, isn't she/*it?

The specificational clause (ia) allows *it* in a tag question, implying that the subject is non-referential and in fact denotes a property. Meanwhile, the predicational example in (ib) has the feminine pronoun, indicating that the subject is referential.

    For the Korean examples, this non-referential property of the specificational subject can be found in examples like (ii):

  (ii) [nay-ka   manna-n   kes-un]   Chelswu-i-ta
       I-NOM   meet-PNE   KES-TOP   Chelswu-COP-DECL
       'The person I met is Chelswu.'

The formal noun *kes* canonically refers to an inanimate object, not a person, but the formal noun *kes* here at first glance refers to the individual 'Chelswu'. This is possible, given that *kes* is non-referential here, but the bracketed clause just provides a partial description of an object in an event, which is then specified to be 'Chelswu'. See Kim and Sells (2007) for further discussion.

'x' as set up by the *kes*-clause. In addition, the cleft has an exhaustive implicature and induces a contrastive reading. That is, 'Chelswu' in the example above is understood as the only value that satisfies the variable, but the implicature of exhaustiveness can be cancelled.

Korean inferential clefts share many semantic and pragmatic properties with the specificational copula construction. First, just like specificational copula, the inferential cleft construction provides a value to the variable provided from an inferred relationship:

(21) amwu-to   tola o-ci   anh-ass-ta.   kyelkwuk, motwu-ka
   anyone-also return come-COMP not-PST-DECL. ultimately everyone-NOM

   silphayha-n   kes-i-ta
   fail-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
   'Nobody came back. Ultimately, everyone failed.'

The example (21) can be interpreted as 'x is the following y'. We infer that the variable 'x' is about the reason that nobody came back and the value is provided by the inferential cleft such that everyone failed. The inferential construction thus provides specificational information for the variable 'x'.

Second, just like specificational copula, the inferential cleft has an exhaustiveness implicature. That is, the inferential cleft provides a value to the variable 'x' (denoting an inferential relation such as 'reason') that is inferred from the previous context. When the value is provided, it means that there is no other value satisfying the variable apart from the one provided by the inferential cleft.[12] Consider the following:

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[12] This position is derived from Declerck (1992) for English inferential constructions. Delahunty (2001) provides a different perspective, which space limitations do not allow us to discuss here. The properties of the Korean inferential cleft lead us to follow Declerck's analysis.

(22) on   maul-i   canchi-i-ess-e.
     whole village-NOM   party-COP-PST-DECL

     palo Mia-ka   kummeytal-ul   tta-n   kes-i-ess-ta
     very Mia-NOM   gold.medal-ACC   get-PNE KES-COP-PST-DECL

     'There was a big bustling in the whole village. It is that Mia got a
       gold medal.'

The inferential cleft here provides the value to the reason why the whole
village is having a party. It implies that there is no other reason for the
village to have the party. The exhaustiveness of the value is also supported
by the adverbial element *palo* 'very'. However, the this implicature can
be cancelled overtly (e.g., if Mia is also getting an award from the
president).

Another characteristic property of the specificational copular construction
is the tendency for it to be interpreted as contrastive (cf. Declerck 1981,
1992). The following example shows how the inferential cleft can often
be interpreted as contrastive:

(23) ku-nun   ilccik sapep sihem-ey   hapkyekha-yess-ta.
     he-TOP   early bar   exam-LOC   pass-PST-DECL

     ku-ka   chencay-i-n   kes-i   anila nolyek-uy kyelkwa-i-ess-ta
     he-NOM genius-COP-PNE   KES-NOM not effort-GEN result-COP-PST-DECL

     'He passed the bar exam early. It is not that he is a genius, but that
       he tried hard.'

The two values are contrastive here: the inferential cleft provides the value
for the variable of the reason he passed the bar exam early. The value
is the proposition that he tried hard. This asserted value contrasts with
the rejected value that he is a genius.

The observations we have made suggest that just like the specificational
copula, the inferential cleft also provides a value to the variable given in
the context, has exhaustiveness implicature, and offers a value that contrasts

with other possible values for the variable 'x'.

3.2 Discourse Constraints and Inference Relations

One intriguing constraint on the inferential cleft is that it cannot be used discourse initially. That is, a discourse cannot start with an inferential cleft:

(24) a. annyeng! nay-ka   tola   oasse/*o-n   kes-i-ya
         Hello   I-NOM return came/come-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
         'Hello, (*it is that) I came back.'

   b. Uh! ton-i   han pwun-to   epskwuna/*eps-nun kes-i-ya
      Uh money-NOM one penny-even not.exist/not.exist-PNE KES-COP-DECL
      'Oh, (*it is that) I do not have any money.'

The ban on having the inferential cleft in the discourse initial position is related to the specificational property. The cleft provides a value to the variable 'x' which needs to be provided either by context or linguistically prior to the cleft. The inferential cleft is therefore not interpretable in isolation or from the beginning of a given discourse.

As noted by Mikkelsen (2004), the subject of the specificational copula canonically functions as topic whereas the precopular argument is focus. The same fact holds in the Korean inferential cleft: in the inferential cleft, the topic is the previous context, though not overtly realized in the inferential cleft whereas the *kes*-clause is focus as the whole. For example, consider the following attested example:

(25) kulentey   enunal-pwuthe   tongney-ka   solanswulewe-ci-ess-ta.
      by.the.way someday-from   village-NOM   noisy-become-PST-DECL

      tongney-ka   caykaypal   toynta-nun   kes-i-ta
      village-NOM   redevelopment become-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
      'By the way the village became so noisy from a certain day.
      It is that the village is going to be redeveloped.'

The precopula expression is the inferential cleft denoting new information. The subject, not realized here, can be a variable 'x' that is set up in the previous context. We can then interpret the
unrealized subject as the given information, supporting Mikklesen's (2005) observation.

The constraint that the inferential cleft cannot be discourse-initial and thus requires an antecedent is essential in providing an inference relationship. We can observe that even in non-initial position, it requires an antecedent.

(26) ecce-ci? #nay-key ton-i   han phwun-to eps-nun   kes-i-ya
     how-QUE   I-NOM money-NOM one penny-even not.exist-PNE KES-COP-DECL
     'What should I do? I do not have any money.'

Even though the inferential cleft here is in the non-initial position, its use is infelicitous since the antecedent for the inference relationship we need to evoke is not available. This requirement is also observed even when the cleft is in a question:

(27) yosay-nun   mikwuk-ey cacwu an   kaney.
     nowadays-TOP   America-to often   not go

     icey hankwuk-ulo wancenhi tolao-n   kes-i-ya?
     now   Korea-to   completely return-PNE KES-COP-QUE
     '(I see that) you are not going to America often nowadays.
     Is it that you now returned to Korea forever?'

The inferential cleft questions if the reason why 'you are not going to America often' is the one provided in the cleft.

Note that English inferential construction requires an overt linguistic antecedent, whereas the Japanese *no da* inferential cleft can take either a linguistic or nonlinguistic antecedent (cf. Kuno 1973, Otake 2002):

(28)   The speaker scratches his leg.

    a. ka   ni   sasareta   n   desu (Japanese)
       mosquito by was.bitten-PNE   COMP   COP.PRES

       '(lit.) I was bitten by a mosquito.'

    b. It is that I was bitten by a mosquito.

The inferential cleft in Japanese is triggered by the preceding nonlinguistic information. However, this cannot happen in English. Interestingly, the Korean inferential cleft also seems to behave like English, requiring a linguistic antecedent. Observe the following examples:

(29)   The speaker scratches his leg.

    a. [moki-eykey   mwulli-n]   kes-i-ya
       mosquito-by   bitten-PNEKES-COP-DECL

       '(I) was bitten by a mosquito.'

    b. [moki-eykey   mwulli-n] kes   kath-ta
       mosquito-by   bitten   KES   seem-DECL

       'It seems that (I) was bitten by a mosquito.'

Given the context in which the speaker is scratching, he or she cannot use the inferential cleft, but instead can introduce a raising construction which requires no overt preceding contextual information.

The natural question is then what kind of inference relationship is available in the Korean inferential cleft? Similar to English, the Korean inferential cleft also conveys the meaning of cause, reason, and explanation. We have identified 132 corpus examples from the 100 million word Sejong corpus, noting that they support these relations, often cued by an adverbial element:

(30) a. ku   ttay   saken-i   ilena-n   kes-i-ta
      the moment accident-NOM occur-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
      'At the moment, it is that the accident occurred.'

    b. kulayse   tongsayng-i   maum-i   apha-ss-ten   kes-i-ess-ta
       so   brother-NOM   mind-NOM sick-PST-PNE KES-COP-PST-DECL
       '(lit.) So, the bother's mind was hurt.'

The adverbial elements *ku ttay* 'at the moment' and *kulayse* 'so' help us to build a reason or consequence relationship between the prior context and the cleft here. In addition to these common inference relationships, the attested examples also convey meanings such as conclusion, consequence, and condition, which are also cued by an adverbial element:

(31) a. Reason:
      kulayse hoysa-ka   mangha-n   kes-i-ess-ta
      so   company-NOM   collapse-PNEKES-COP-PST-DECL
      'So, it was that the company was collapsed.'

    b. Conclusion:
      kyeloncekulo motwu-ka   sengkong-ul ha-yess-ten kes-i-ess-ta
      in conclusion everybody-NOM success-ACC do-PST-PNE KES-COP-PST-DECL
      'In conclusion, it was that everybody succeeded.'

    c. Consequence:
      ku   kyelkwalo   ku-nun   pwucang-ulo   sungcin
ha-yess-ten kes-i-ta
      the consequencehe-TOP   chief-LOC   promotion do-PST-PNE
  KES-COP-DECL
      'As the consequence, it was that he was promoted as the chief.'
    d. Conditional:
      i sangthay-ka cisoktoy-myen, pyenghwa-ka cengchak toy-nun
  thissituation-NOM continue-if   peace-NOM settlement ecome-PNE
      kes-i-ta
      KES-COP-DECL
      'If this situation continues, it is that peace is settled.'

This does not mean that an adverbial cue is always provided. Context can

also provide a cue to the semantic relation. Consider the following attested examples:

(32) a. Reason

　　ku　hoysa-nun　　　olhay　　cekca-lul　　nayessta.
　　the　company-TOP　　this.year　deficit-ACC　produced
　　yenghwapwunya-eyse　khun　sonsil-ul　　ip-ess-ten　　kes-i-ta
　　movie.area-at　　　　big　　loss-ACC　wear-PST-PNE　KES-COP-DECL
　　'The company is in deficit this year. (The reason is that) it has a
　　 big loss in the investment in movies.'

　b. Consequence

　　ku-nun　　icwung　suphai-to mata　　ha-ci　　　anhassta.
　　he-TOP　　double　spy-also　rejection　do-COMP　not
　　cengpo-lul　ppaynay samkwuk-ey-to　　nemki-n　　kes-i-ta
　　information-ACC steal　third country-to-also　hand.out-PNE KES-COP-DECL
　　'He even acted as a double agent. (That's why) he stole information
　　 and handed it over to the third country.'

It is noted in the literature on English, that the predominant 'inference' relations are explanation, reason, but not relations like conclusion or consequence (Bolinger 1972, Declerck 1992, Bearth 1999). In particular, the English inferential cleft cannot have a paraphrasing relation (see (33a)), mainly because of the existence of the complementary *that-is* construction (Otake 2002):

(33) a. They completely clammed up. *It is that/That is, they refused to
　　　speak.
　　b. Nobody has invited me to dance. It is that/*That is, I am not pretty
　　　enough.

Even though both *that-is* and *it-is* inferential construction add information to the previous context, the two are different in the sense that the former

expresses a 'paraphrase' while the latter gives us an 'interpretation' as a kind of reason.

Japanese is similar to English in that it does not license a paraphrasing inference relation. Otake (2002) points out that the Japanese inferential cleft, *no da* construction, can rarely be preceded by an adverb like *sunawati* meaning 'that is':

(34) kokkai-wa niin kara   naru.
     Diet-TOP two chambers   consist

     sunawati, syuugiin to   sangiin   de aru/*na nodearu
     that is   House and councilors be/be   C   be
     '(Lit) The Diet consists of two chambers.
     That is, the House of Representatives and the Councilors.'

However, the direct counterpart of the Korean inferential cleft can follow an adverb like *cwuk* 'that is':

(35) aitul-i   wancenhi malmwun-ul   tat-ass-ta.
     children-NOM   completely speak.door-ACC close-PST-DECL

     cwuk   malha-nun kes-ul   kecelha-nun   kes-i-ta
     that is   speak-PNEKES-ACC   refuse-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
     'They completely clammed up. That is, they refused to speak.'

Further attested examples are given in the following:

(36) a. Paraphrasing:
        motun i-tul-i   ku-lul   pwulewe ha-yess-ta.
        all   person-PL-NOM he-ACC   envious do-PST-DECL

        tasi   malhaca-myen ku-nun khukey sengkongha-n kes-i-ta
        again say-if   he-TOP big   succeed-PNE KES-COP-DECL
        'Everyone envied him. To say it again, it is that he succeeded greatly.'

b. Additional information:

ku-nun   wuntong-ul cal   ha-yess-ta.
he-TOP   sports-ACC well   do-PST-DECL

ppwunman anila, ttohan, kongpwu-to cal ha-yess-ten kes-i-ta.
only   not   also study-even   well do-PST-PNE KES-COP-DECL

'He did well in sports. In addition, (he) studied well.'

The inferential cleft here in (36a) paraphrases the previous context, explaining the previous message in a more plain way. This kind of paraphrase function is cued by the adverb *cwuk* 'that is' or *tasi malha-myen* 'if saying it again'. Unlike English and Japanese, Korean inferential construction can thus convey information that paraphrases the preceding context.

As we have seen, the Korean inferential cleft conveys a wider range of meanings, including reason, explanation, consequence, as well as paraphrasing. It appears that the inferential cleft is used as long as it can improve coherence in the text. The inferential cleft is introduced to establish relationships between the preceding context and the event denoted by the *kes* subordinate clause. As Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday and Kirkwood (1985) point out, the 'cohesion' relationship allows the parts of a text to 'hang together' in a clear relationship. Among the ways to achieve stronger cohesion, English can use conjunctions:[13]

(37) a. additive: and, furthermore, likewise, ...
    b. adversative: yet, in fact, however, ...

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[13] Other ways of establishing 'cohesion' among parts of a given text include the use of referential nouns, substitution, and ellipsis:

(i) There was a fire in a downtown apartment last night. The morning newspaper didn't carry a story about *it,* but the event paper has *one.* The fire was the worst __ that I've ever seen so far.

The pronoun *it* refers to *a fire,* whereas *one* substitutes *a fire.* In addition, *fire* was elided in the phrase *the worst.* All these are introduced as a way of building cohesion relationships within the text.

      c. causal: so, therefore, as a result, thus, because, ...

      d. temporal: then, first, second, third, ...

Interestingly, more than 85% of the corpus examples of inferential clefts that we identified also co-occur with one of these c o r r e s p o n d i n g conjunctive adverbs to aid in establishing a cohesion
relation in the text. This makes plausible the claim that the inferential cleft construction is introduced to help the readers or hearers establish a strong cohesion relationship between the previous context and the state of affairs denoted by the *kes* subordinating clause.

4. The Syntax of the Inferential Cleft

    The syntax of this construction is also of interest: Does the copula take only one argument, the *kes* nominalized sentence? It seems somewhat implausible to treat this copula different from the predicational or specificational copula selecting two arguments. If the copula here also is dyadic, the immediate question that arises is what is the subject in the inferential cleft? Honorification marked by *si* on the predicate indicates that the first nominative phrase is not the matrix subject:

  (38) a. ku ttay   sensayng-**nim**-i   o-**si**-n   kes-i-ta
         then   teacher-HON-NOM come-HON-PNE   KES-COP-DECL
         'And then the teacher came.'

     b. *ku ttay sensayng-**nim**-i o-**si**-n kes-i-**si**-ta

     c. *ku ttay sensayng-**nim**-i o-n kes-i-**si**-ta

The honored subject agrees only with the subordinate predicate, not with the copula.

    We suggest that the copula in the inferential cleft is minimally different from the copula in the predicational or identificational cleft in that the

first argument is an 'obligatorily' unrealized *pro* element linked to a discourse antecedent.

(39)
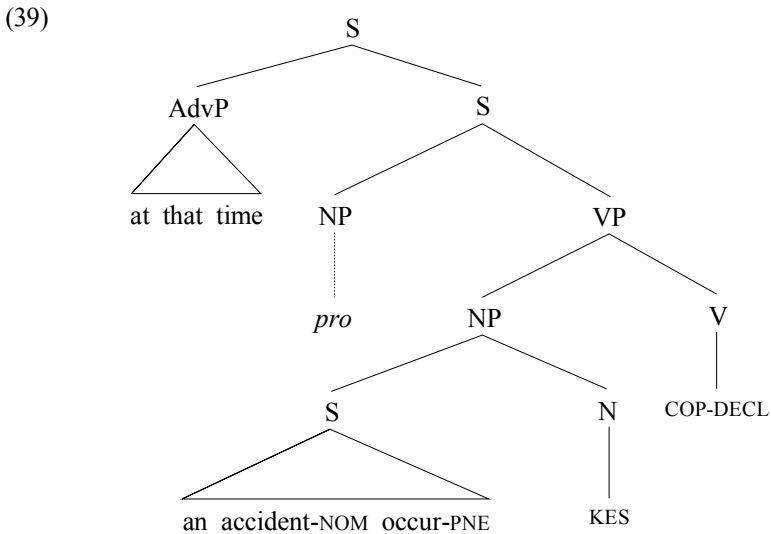
There is no clear evidence for the existence of the subject *pro* here, but one possible piece of evidence comes from the fact that the *pro* subject can be replaced by an NP corresponding to the inferential relation evoked in the context. For example, in (15), having the subject *the reason* (which is optional) makes the inferential relationship more visible and clear:[14]

(15) A: achim-ey   way kulehkey solansulep-ess-ni? mwusun il-i-ya?
        morning-LOC why so   noisy-PST-QUE   what thing-COP-QUE
         'Why was it so noisy in the morning? What happened?'
     B: ku iyu-nun [elin haksayng-i totwuk-ul cap-ass-ten kes-i-ya]
        the reason-TOP young student-NOM thief-ACC catch-PST-PNE KES-COP-DECL
         'It is that a young student caught a thief.'

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[14] To be more precise, the noun *reason* has an argument position ("the reason for X"); the head noun *iyu* 'reason' together with the definite article *ku* 'the' render this position salient.

As we have observed, the available inference relations in the construction include cause/reason, explanation, conclusion, consequence, and even para-phrasing. These relations correspond to the variable provided by the context. This in turn means that the variable can be lexicalized as a nominal element (or an adverbial nominal like *kyelloncekulo* 'in conclusion').[15] A unified account of the copula verb *i-ta* can be achieved at the cost of postulating the invisible *pro* element, but at this stage it seems to be the most optimal way to account for the properties of the construction. What this assumption further indicates is that the inferential cleft is a subtype of the specificational copula, together with its own additional constructional constraints.

5. Conclusion

In terms of formal syntactic and semantic properties, the inferential cleft is closely related to the copula constructions, in particular the specificational copula construction, with which it shares some interpretive properties. Yet the inferential cleft construction in Korean has a very wide set of discourse functions, inducing an 'inference' relation, dependent upon the preceding context. In particular, similar to its English and Japanese counterparts, it triggers the hearer to 'infer' a relationship between the previous context and the construction, in addition to supplementing the information denoted by the cleft clause. The interpretation process is either a bridging or

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[15] Declerck (1992) also points out that only the variables lexicalized as nouns in the 'NP-is-that' construction can take the 'that' clause as their value. However, the problem is that there are many exceptions as shown in the following example:

  (i) a.   The possibility/prediction is that he would pass the exam.
      b. Nobody has invited me to dance. It *will/*can/*should/*ought to be that
        I'm not pretty enough.

Even though a noun like *possibility* can occur in the 'NP-is-that' construction, it cannot function as the variable in the inferential cleft construction. This implies that there is a restriction on inferring the relationship between the inferential cleft construction and the previous context: the inference relationship need be a strong one based on direct or indirect evidence. The *possibility* cannot provide a strong inference.

elaborative 'inference' process to increase cohesion whose meaning is either marked by an overt conjunctive element or by a discourse. Like English, the semantic relation between the inferential cleft and its antecedent can be 'cause, conclusion, reason, explanation' but the Korean inferential construction can induce much wider functions. For example, unlike English and Japanese, the Korean inferential cleft can convey information that paraphrases the preceding context.

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