

**Saving Adjectives in Korean**  
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Despite the standard assumption that Korean has a category of A(djective) (cf. Choi 1971), it has been repeatedly pointed out that traditional criteria distinguishing A from the V(erb) in Korean are not persuasive or have nothing to do with a categorial distinction between A and V (Yu 1999, Kim 2002, Yeo 2004a, 2005, and Kim 2005). Furthermore, Kim (2002) and Yeo (2004a, 2005) explicitly claim that A should not be postulated in Korean mainly based on the following two facts: (a) in Korean, a copula *-i* is required only in N but not in both A and V and (b) a Korean A does not have an attributive function.

In this study, we present one new piece of evidence for the existence of A in Korean. We also claim that major arguments for the absence of A in Korean are invalid by showing that the two facts can be accounted for even under the assumption that Korean has a category of A.

Korean has two-place psychological predicates as in (1).

- (1) a. na-nun John-i silh-ta.  
 I-TOP John-NOM hate-DEC  
 'I hate John.'
- b. na-nun ku ttay-ka kulip-ta.  
 I-TOP that time-NOM miss-DEC.  
 'I miss that time.'

These predicates can take *-e/a ha-* as shown in (2) and with *-e/a ha-*, two changes take place: (a) an object NP is licensed with ACC but not NOM and (b) a thematic role of a subject changes from [EXP] into [Agent].

- (2) a. na-nun John-ul/\*-i silh-e ha-n-ta.  
 I-TOP John-ACC/NOM hate-E HA-DEC  
 'I hate John.'
- b. na-nun ku ttay-lul/\*-ka kuliw-e ha-n-ta.  
 I-TOP that time-ACC/NOM miss-E HA-DEC  
 'I miss that time.'

Since the two changes are typical of a little *v* (Chomsky 1995), it has been suggested that *ha-* in (2) is a spell-out of a little *v* (Choi 2017). In this regard, it is crucial to note that a little *v* in a canonical transitive verb is not realized as *ha-* in Korean as shown in (3).

- (3) a. na-nun Mary-lul manna-ss-ta/\*mann-a hay-ss-ta.  
 I-TOP Mary-ACC meet-PAST-DEC/meet-E HA-PAST-DEC  
 'I met Mary.'
- b. na-nun Mary-lul cap-ass-ta/\*cap-a hay-ss-ta.  
 I-TOP Mary-ACC catch-PAST-DEC/catch-E HA-DEC  
 'I caught Mary.'

We suggest that this difference in the realization of a little *v* is the hallmark of a categorial distinction between A and V in Korean. Assuming that a little *v* is V

(which is independently supported by its realization as *ha-*), when a root is A, it cannot move into a little *v* due to the clash in category and *ha-* is inserted into a little *v* in order to combine with following functional morphemes. However, when a root is V, it can move into a little *v* since there is no clash in category and thus a little *v* cannot be realized as *ha-*.

Independent evidence for this proposal comes from a light verb construction which is composed of a Sino-Korean(SK) noun and *ha-*, as shown in (4).

- (4) a. John-i       cungke-lul       unpye-hay-ss-ta/\*unpye-ess-ta.  
 John-NOM evidence-ACC cover up-HA-PAST-DEC/cover up-PAST-DEC  
 'John covered up the evidence.'  
 b.   kyengchal-i   pemin-ul       cheypho-hay-ss-ta/\*cheypho-ess-ta.  
 Police-NOM   criminal-ACC arrest-HA-PAST-DEC/arrest-PAST-DEC  
 'The police arrested the criminal.'

It is widely accepted that *ha-* in (4) is a realization of a little *v* as evidenced by ACC-licensing and the agenthood of the subject (Ahn 2001, Yeo 2004b). Note that the insertion of *ha-* is obligatory as shown in (4). It can be accounted for if we assume that a SK morpheme is a noun and thus it cannot move into a little *v*. Based on the above discussion, we suggest the following new criterion according to which one can distinguish A from V in Korean.

- (5)   If a two place root can take *-a/e ha-*, it is A and if not, it is V.

As for the argument involving *-i*, an alternative account for why V and A do not require *-i* is available if we follow Choi's (2001) claim that *-i* is not a copular verb but a nominative marker. That is, a predicate nominal, as an N, requires Case while V and A do not.

As for the argument involving the attributive function, we claim that its absence is not due to the absence of A in Korean, but due to its morphological property, which is [bound]. That is, when an Adjectival root precedes N to have an attributive function, it remains bound without an adnominal ending. With an adnominal ending, A in Korean can have only a predicative function, as claimed in Kim (2002).

If the present proposal is on the right track, it implies that Korean and English are the same, having a category of A and the differences regarding the syntactic and semantic properties of A in both languages stem from the difference in morphological property: An English A is [free], while a Korean A is [bound].

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