

The Korean Evidential Marker *te-* Revisited:

Its Semantic Constraints and Distancing Effects in Mental Spaces Theory

The Korean evidential marker *te-* has received much attention in Korean Linguistics, since it not only shows the typical characteristic of evidentiality, i.e. invoking the source of knowledge and encoding the speaker's stance towards knowledge (1a), but also shows unexpected semantics such as eliciting psychological distance (1b) and deictic discontinuity (2). Since the marker has seemingly incompatible characteristics such as direct evidentiality and psychological distance marking, and since existing accounts have never covered them in a unified way, some linguists have argued that *te-* is not an evidential marker, but an element which triggers an environment for evidentials (Chung 2007).

- (1) *Chelswu-ka kong-ul a. cha-te-la / b. cha-ess-ta-te-la*
Chelswu-Nom ball-Acc kick-*te*-ending / kick-Past-Decl.ending-*te*-ending
Lit. Chelswu kicked a ball (a. The speaker saw that Chelswu kicked a ball).
(b. The speaker was told by someone that Chelswu kicked a ball; She does not care about its truth conditional value).
- (2) [Seeing that it rains outside through window,]
**cikum pi-ka manhi o-te-la* Lit. Rain comes much now
now rain-Nom heavily come-*te*-ending (It's raining much now)

I argue that the marker *-te* can be given a unified treatment as an evidential marker: Within Mental Spaces Theory (Fauconnier 1997; henceforth MST), if we assume that the marker primes a memory mental space via which the speaker can have access from the Base space to his/her (in)direct perception space, we can explain the seemingly incompatible semantics. Furthermore, this paper argues that we can explain how the marker restricts (first and non-first) personal pronoun usages coupling with particular types of predicates (i.e. action and psych verbs), which previous accounts have left unexplained (Equi-Subject-Constraint; I.-S. Yang 1972; see [3]).

- (3) *?nay-/Chelswu-ka kong-ul cha-te-la* Lit. ?I/Chelswu kicked the ball
I-/Chelswu-Nom ball-Acc kick-*te*-ending ((I saw that) I/ Chelswu kicked the ball)
- (4) *na-man/-to/-cocha kong-ul cha-te-la*
I-only/-also/-even ball-Acc kick-*te*-ending
Translation: (I remembered that) only I kicked a ball; (I remembered that not anybody else, but) I kicked a ball; (I remembered that) even I kicked a ball.

I argue that the marginal grammaticality of (3), due to the absence of an explicit space builder, [e.g. *ku ttay* 'at that time'], shows that the marker *presupposes set-up* of the speaker's memory space. Finally, we can also explain exceptional cases where a first person pronoun can be licensed (see [4]), assuming that the speaker's stance toward an event can be distanced by off-staging her viewpoint, i.e. the speaker objectifies herself and limits her cognitive accessibility by building space layers in MST (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005).

Selected References

- Chung, Kyung-Sook. 2007. Spatial Deictic Tense and Evidentials in Korean. *Nat Lang Semantics* 15, 187-219.
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- Fauconnier, Gilles. 1997. *Mappings in Thought and Language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
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