

SOME CONTROL AGREEMENT PROBLEMS IN KOREAN: A GPSG
ANALYSIS OF HONORIFIC EXPRESSIONS

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1.1. It is well known among Korean grammarians that the honorific particle attached after a verb stem cooccurs with an honorific subject:

- (1) harapuci-ka o-si-n-ta.
Grandfather-SM come-HON-Present-Dec(declarative sentence marker)
(SM: Subject Marker, HON: Honorific Particle)
'Grandfather is coming.'

The occurrence of the honorific particle -si depends on the honorific subject harapuci 'Grandfather.'

It is important to note, from the outset, that the honorific particle occurs only when the speaker chooses to look upon a particular individual as someone (or something) that deserves to be respected. If the speaker thinks otherwise, he is free from using the particle -si. In such a case, the non-honorific version of (1) is perfectly normal:

- (2) harapuci-ka o-n-ta. 'Grandfather is coming.'

This sentence may be used either in case the speaker regards the grandfather in question as nonhonorific, or in case the speaker is noncommittal to the question of honorificity for some reason. On the other hand, one may use the honorific particle for anything whatsoever one chooses to believe to be honorific. For instance, a sentence like (3) may be uttered by those who happen

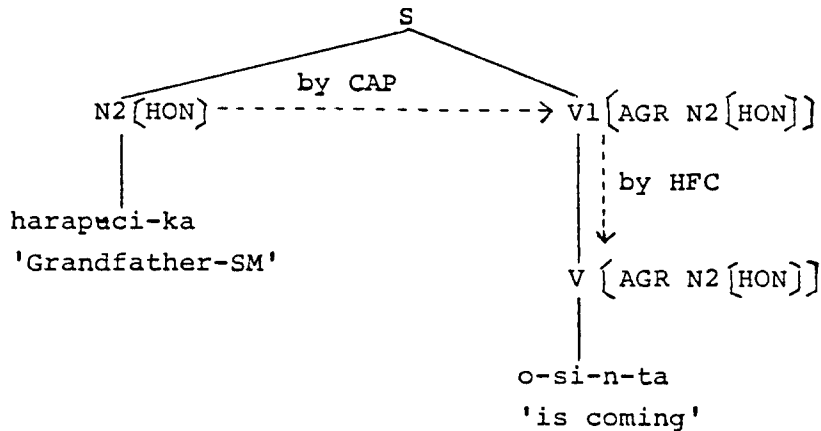
to believe that the rain is something that ought to be respected, while it may sound unnatural to those who do not have such a belief.

- (3) pi-ka o-si-n-ta.
rain come
'It is raining.'

But it is impossible to deny the honorificity of the subject noun as in a sentence like (1) or (3) once the honorific particle is used, nor is it possible to assert honorificity without using it as in a sentence like (2).

Clearly, the occurrence or nonoccurrence of the honorific particle reveals one's view about the world. Thus, on the one hand, it belongs to the realm of semantics and pragmatics of the Korean language, and on the other it is intricately interwoven with the syntax of the language. This paper attempts to investigate the syntactic-semantic interactions of honorific expressions, employing the Control Agreement Principle (CAP) propounded by the GPSG advocates (Cf. Gazdar and Pullum (1982), Gazdar, Klein, Pullum and Sag (1984), Pullum (1985)).

1.2. The description of the honorific particle occurring in simple sentences like (1)-(3) is simple enough, and is accommodated nicely by the CAP¹ under one assumption: there is a concord feature HONORIFIC assignable to a noun or to a verb. In each case of the three sentences above, the subject is a controller and the verb is its target in the sense of Gazdar *et al* (1984). Hence the concord feature of the controller agrees with that of the target by the CAP, as shown in the following tree:



The honorific feature of the head daughter V is transmitted from its mother V1 by the Head Feature Convention (HFC). (The HFC ensures that the head features of a mother be identical with those of the head daughter of the mother.)

2. Now consider complex sentences such as (4) and (5). We will see that the notion "subject" is not sufficient for the description of the honorific.

(4) na-nin harapuci-eke yungu-ril paeu-si-ke ha-yuss-ta.
 I-TM Grandfather-DM English-OM learn-HON-COMP make-Past-Dec
 (TM: Topic Marker, DM: Dative Marker, OM: Object Marker)
 'I made Grandfather learn English.'

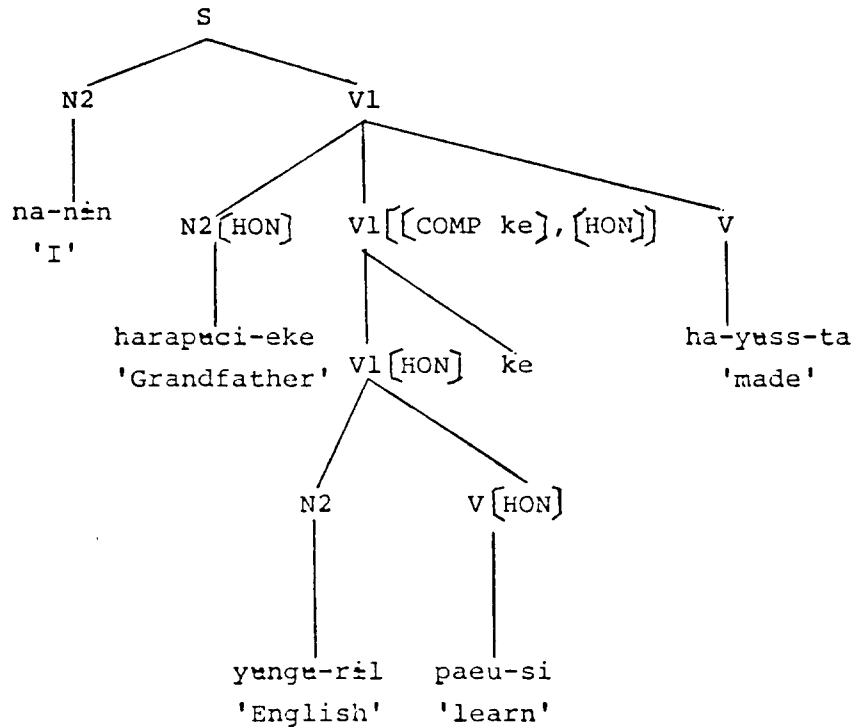
(5) harapuci-ka na-eke yungu-ril paeu-si-kess-ta-ko
 me-DM English-OM learn-HON-Future-COMP
 yaksokha-si-uss-ta.
 promise-HON-Past-DEC
 'Grandfather promised me to learn English.'

Assuming the following ID rules and translation rules, we will have the interpreted structures (8) and (9) for (4) and (5) respectively:

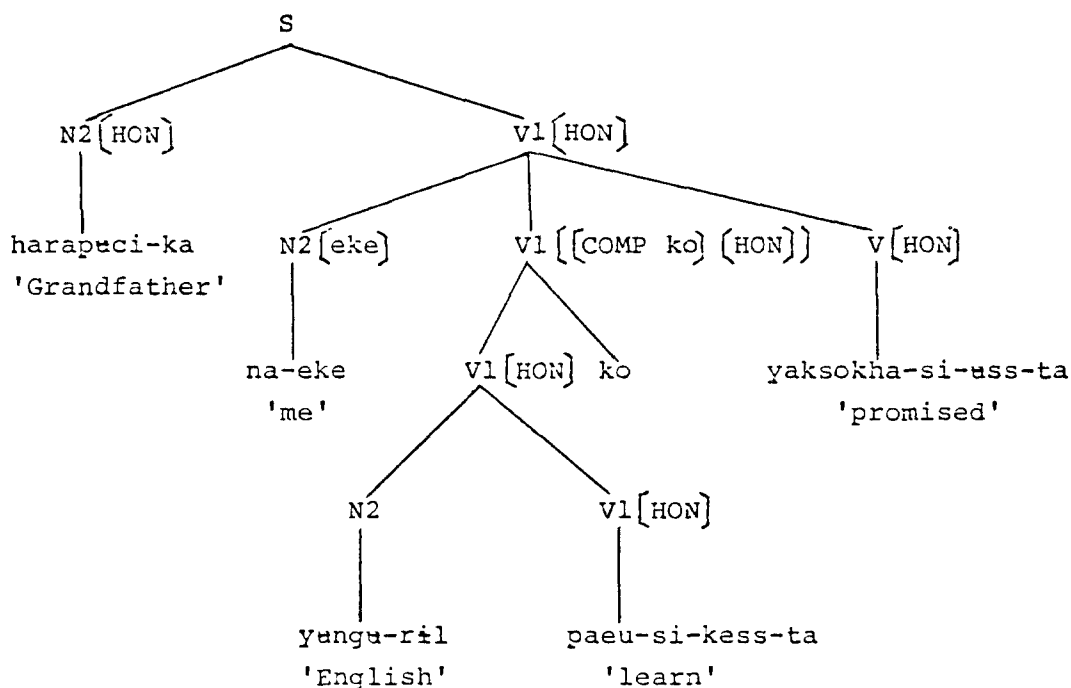
(6) $\langle V1 \longrightarrow N2[\text{eke}], V1[\text{COMP } \underline{\text{ke}}], V; \quad V'(V1')(N2') \rangle$

(7) $\langle V1 \longrightarrow N2[\text{eke}], V1[\text{COMP } \underline{\text{ko}}], V; \quad V'(N2')(V1') \rangle$

(8)



(9)



In (8), the Dative NP harapuci-eke is the c-argument, and so it is the controller of the target $V1[COMP\ ke]$. Hence the CAP requires that the concord feature of the controller, i.e., $[HON]$ agree with the honorific particle -si contained in the target.

The structure (9) exhibits a case in which the target has no controller in a local tree. The subject N2 harapuci-ka 'Grandfather' is the controller as usual (as in sentence (1)), which agrees with the V1 of the main sentence, which in turn agrees with the main verb yaksokhasiusssta 'promised' by the HFC. Then in accordance with the semantic translation given in (7) (i.e., $V'(N2')(V1')$), $V1[COMP\ ko]$ is the target. But this target has no controller in the local tree, and therefore it must agree with its mother $V1[HON]$ in control features.

The Control Agreement Principle as is given by Gazdar et al (1984) works quite well for the Korean sentences of the type we have observed so far.

3. There is a small class of verbs which require agreement between the verb and its complement, direct or indirect object. The honorific verb t̄iri-ta 'give' requires indirect object agreement. (The non-honorific counterpart is cu-ta 'give.')

(10) Suni-ka ikus-īl apuci-eke { (a) *cu-uss-ta.
(b) t̄iri-uss-ta.
(c) *t̄iri-si-uss-ta. }

At first glance, what happens here is simply that the honorific verb may agree with its honorific indirect object. This is not quite correct, however. Consider further examples:

(11) harapuci-ka apuci-eke ikus-īl { (a) *cu-uss-ta.
(b) cu-si-uss-ta.
(c) *t̄i-ri-uss-ta.
(d) *t̄iri-si-uss-ta. }

(12) apuci-ka harapuci-eke ikus-īl { (a) *cu-uss-ta.
(b) *cu-si-uss-ta.
(c) t̄iri-uss-ta.
(d) t̄iri-si-uss-ta. }

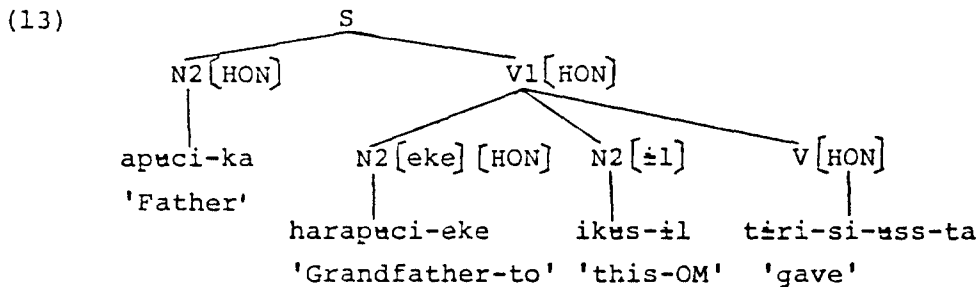
'Father gave this to Grandfather.'

In all cases above, indirect objects are honorific, but that does not guarantee the occurrence of the honorific verb. The honorific verb t̄iri-ta occurs only in (12 c and d). In (11), where the indirect object is honorific, the honorific

verb cannot occur. The unacceptability of (11 c and d) comes from the fact that the indirect object apuci-eke 'Father', even though it is honorific by itself, is lower than the subject harapuci-ka 'Grandfather'. In 12 (c and d), the indirect object is higher than the subject, and therefore the honorific verb may occur. Thus it is clear that the honorific verb tiri-ta 'give' cooccurs with the honorific indirect object just in case it is more honorific than the subject.

This relative cooccurrence restriction cannot be handled by a subcategorization frame of any sort. It is incorrect to say that the honorific verb tiri-ta subcategorizes for an honorific indirect object, since the verb requires a subject which is lower in honorificity than the indirect object.

The CAP can handle this problem rather easily. Recall that the CAP is a feature instantiation principle. Its task is to control the distribution of agreement features once they ever appear on tree nodes, not to dictate the occurrence or non-occurrence of a certain category with a certain feature. Then what the CAP has to do about the verb-IO agreement phenomena will simply be this: if the feature HONORIFIC happens to be assigned to an indirect object for some pragmatic reason (for the reason concerning family hierarchy in the cases of (10-12)), then the CAP will set to work so that the indirect object and the honorific verb may agree with each other. For example, (12d) will have the following interpreted structure:



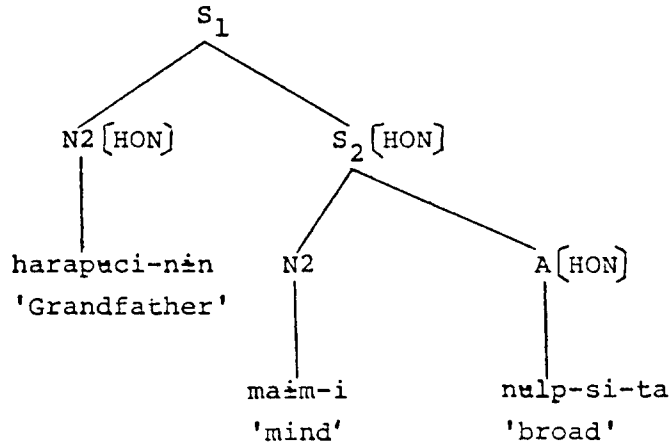
(19) harapuci-n̄n kunkangha-ko ton-i manh-̄si-ta.
 and
 'Grandfather is healthy and rich.'

Following Gazdar et al (1984), we assume that two categories can be conjoined to become a predicate if there is an intersection of the head features of the two categories. This theory of coordination requires that conjoined categories need not be totally identical: it requires only partial identity. For instance, in a sentence like Kim is a sick man and suffering from fever., the conjunction of NP a sick man and VP suffering from fever is legitimate because the two categories share one common head feature PREDICATIVE: the intersection of the head features of the two categories is $\langle \text{PRD } + \rangle$. This is a sufficient condition for a category to be a complement (or a predicate) of the verb be in English. We may be able to treat (19) in a similar manner. Notice, however, that we can do this only if we assume that ton-i manh-̄si-ta has the feature PREDICATIVE. Then both the AP kunkangha-ta 'healthy' and the sentence ton-i manh-̄si-ta have the common feature PREDICATIVE, and therefore they may be conjoined.

Returning to the structure (15), if it is correct syntactically to take S_2 as adjective-like, we may safely assume that it belongs to the class of GENERALIZED PREDICATIVES in the sense of Gazdar et al (1984). They define generalized predicatives as elements of semantic type $\langle N2, N2 \rangle$ or $\langle N2, S \rangle$, functions from N2 type things to N2 type things or S interpretations. Saying that S_2 in (15) is a generalized predicative is tantamount to saying that it is a functor, since it takes N2 harapuci-n̄n and returns the whole sentence S_1 . This means that S_2 is the target and that N2 is the controller. Then the combination of the CAP

and the HFC works quite well for the description of the honorific agreement phenomena observed in (14). For example, (14f) will have the following interpreted structure:

(20)



N2[HON] harapuci-nin agrees with S₂ by the CAP, since the former is the controller and the latter the target, and S₂[HON] agrees with A[HON] by the HFC.

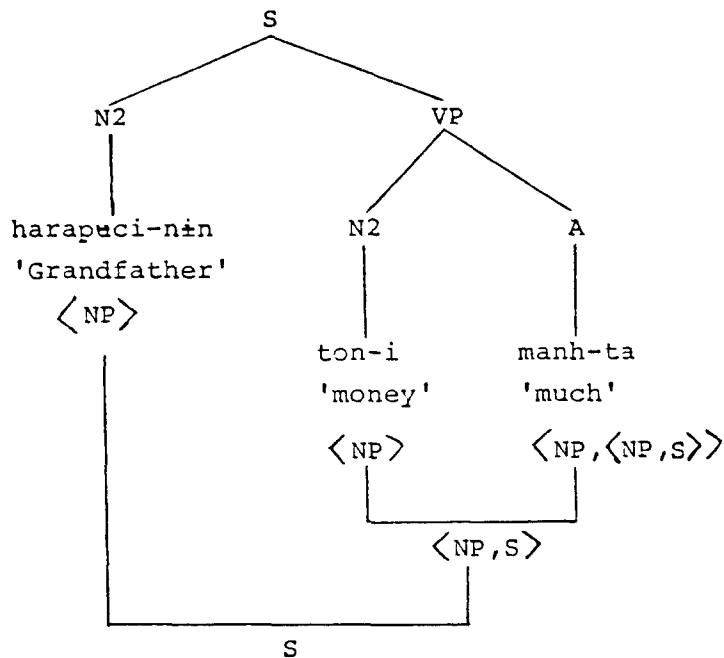
So far so good. Now notice that A[HON] nulp-si-ta 'wide' is also a generalized predicative. Hence it is a target, and N2 maim-i is its controller. By CAP, then, the two should agree with each other. But they do not; N2 maim-i 'mind' is not honorific, and we know that the honorific feature of the adjective agrees with its mother S₂ by the HFC. This is a case in which the HFC overrides the CAP. What accounts for this conflict?

One might speculate that if either one of the two subjects of a double subject construction is honorific it may agree with the honorific adjective and that the remaining subject, not being specified with respect to honorificity, does not affect honorific

This rule says that the second subject is indeed a subject syntactically and constitute a sentence by taking the adjective as its predicate, but semantically it is merely part of the function denoting a property, for instance "being rich" in (14a) and "being highbrow" in (14e). Being merely part of a composite adjective, the second subject ceases to be an argument functionally, and hence it cannot be a controller. Therefore, there is no agreement between the second subject and the adjective.

Alternatively, one might assign the adjective under consideration a semantic type $\langle \text{NP}, \langle \text{NP}, \text{S} \rangle \rangle$, which ordinary transitive verbs would have. Then the analysis tree of (14a) would look like this:

(23)



This structure is essentially what Kuno (1973) would assign to

sentences containing "transitive adjectives." The noun phrase ton-i is no longer a subject and so it is not a controller, and therefore there is no agreement between it and the adjective. However, the structure (23) seems to me to be counterintuitive, and furthermore, I can't go along with Kuno on his claim that the Japanese case marker -ga (=the Japanese counterpart of -i/ka as in ton-i 'money-SM' in (14a)) is an object marker rather than a subject marker.² The structure shown in (23) cannot account for the fact that the phrase ton-i manh-ta 'money is much' is a full sentence on its own. So I reject this alternative. Nevertheless, I mention it here because it seems to have some merit in describing the facts about honorificity in double subject constructions.

5. Equipped with the feature instantiation principles, CAP and HFC, I have shown so far that we are able to successfully describe the facts about honorific agreement in Korean within the GPSG framework. We have seen that one needs not appeal to any transformation mechanisms to deal with complex sentences. We have also seen from the analyses of the honorific agreement phenomena that syntax and semantics interact with each other while each has its own domain strictly defined. The description of the Korean honorific particle given in this paper lends support to the GPSG claim that its Control Agreement Principle is universal.

Notes

- 1) The CAP crucially depends on the notion of control.
"...a category C is controlled by another category C' in a constituent C₀ (i.e., C is the target and C' the controller) if one of the following situations obtains at a semantic level: either C is a functor that applies to C' to yield a C₀, or else there is a control mediator C'' which combines with C and C' in that order to yield a C₀." (Gazdar et al (1984), 5.3.)
Based on the notion of control, the CAP may be given as follows:
"if a potential agreement target C in a local tree has a controller C', then the value of the CONTROL feature of C must be equal to C'; otherwise, if C is a predicative category with no controller, then the value of the CONTROL feature of C must be equal to the value of the CONTROL feature of its mother, C₀."
For more details and formal statements of the CAP, see Chapter 5 of Gazdar et al (1984).

- 2) For further discussion of this view of Kuno's and arguments against it, see my paper, Park (1983).

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