

### The syntax of the Korean *-ese* construction

In Korean, two clauses may be linked using the verbal suffix *-ese*, as in (1). This morpheme establishes a sequential or causal link between the embedded *-ese* marked constituent and the matrix clause thus indicating that the event of the *-ese* construction occurs prior to or causes the event of the matrix clause (H. Lee 1991; H. Kim 1992; Sohn 2009; Hong 2012; Kwon 2012; among others).

- (1) *cihwun<sub>i</sub>-i-nun* [  $\Delta_i$  *tochakha-ese* ] *palpyo-lul* *sicakha-ess-eyo*  
 Jihun-*i*-TOP arrive-*ese* presentation-ACC start-PST-POL  
 ‘Jihun<sub>i</sub> arrived and then he<sub>i</sub> started the presentation.’

The literature has mainly focused on the semantics of the *-ese* construction (Kwon 2012, Y. Park et al. 2021; Yoo 2021; among others). However, my work focuses on determining the syntactic structure of the *-ese* constituent. Firstly: what is the maximum projection of the constituent that *-ese* attaches to? Is it simply a vP/VP with no higher projections – as it appears in (1) with *-ese* directly affixed to the verb stem, is it a full CP, or something in between? I demonstrate that *-ese* may co-occur with tense, aspect, or modal morphology, as in (2). This contrasts with Gerd & Shin (2018)’s claim that that *-ese* cannot combine with TAM morphology. I argue that the occurrence of TAM morphology indicates that the maximal projection within the *-ese* construction can be at least as large as ModP (a modal phrase) – i.e., larger than a TP but smaller than a CP.

- (2) *chinkwu-dul-i* *mence* *twochakha-ess-ess-ese* *anc-ul* *cali-lul* *chac-ass-eyo*  
 friend-PL-NOM first arrive-PERF-PST-*ese* sit-IRR place-ACC find-PST-POL  
 ‘(My) friends, having arrived first (a while ago), found a place to sit.’

My work also investigates the subject of the *-ese* construction. In light of  $\theta$ -theory which posits that each verb predicate requires a DP subject (Chomsky 1981), I assume that there is an implicit subject in the *-ese* construction in (1) (indicated by the theory-neutral symbol  $\Delta$ ). Given that, what is the nature of the implicit subject in (1)? Specifically, is the implicit subject a null PRO like in a canonical control structure (Landau 1994; Green 2019) or a phonologically null pronoun (*pro*) (Sundaresan 2014)? I show that the null subject of the *-ese* construction does not behave like PRO. In contrast to the requirements of PRO (Chomsky 1980; Landau 1994; Green 2019), the antecedent of the null subject is not required to be in a local relationship with  $\Delta$  nor is it required to c-command  $\Delta$ , as in (3). Thus, I argue that the null subject of the *-ese* construction is actually *pro*.

- (3) a. *kyoswunim<sub>k</sub>-i* *tochakha-si-ess-eyo*  
 professor-NOM arrive-HON-PST-POL  
 ‘The professor arrived.’  
 b. *?mwun<sub>i</sub>-un/-i* [  $\Delta_{i^*/k}$  *kyosil-ey* *nemwu* *ppalli* *tuleka-si-ese* ]  
 door-TOP/NOM classroom-LOC very quickly enter-HON-*ese*  
*kocangna-ass-eyo*  
 be.broken-PST-POL  
 ‘The door broke because they (**the professor**) entered the classroom too quickly’

This work provides a novel investigation into the morphological and syntactic structure of the *-ese* construction and provides data showing the morphological complexity of the *-ese* construction that is, to the best of my knowledge, missing from the literature. Lastly, it presents a preliminary investigation into the behaviour of subjects in the *-ese* construction.

## References

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