

## Syntax–Semantics Mismatch in the Korean Desiderative –ko siphta Construction

Jae-Young Shim

(Pukyong National University)

**Jae-Young Shim. 2018. Syntax–Semantics Mismatch in the Korean Desiderative –ko siphta Construction. *Language and Linguistics* 79, 177–202.** This paper examines the Nominative/Accusative Case alternation observed in the object of the embedded clause in the Korean desiderative construction, –ko siphta, and proposes two different syntactic structures where the Nominative-marked object is base-generated higher in the structure than its Accusative-marked counterpart. This paper also addresses the issue of why the –ko siphta construction exhibits the proposed two different structures in the first place. Based on diachronic studies on the semantic changes of the –ko siphta construction from its 15th century to its modern form, this paper argues that from the semantic point of view the desiderative predicate siph- has lost its original meaning of ‘to think’ but it retains, from a syntactic point of view, its argument structure taking a single CP complement in addition to its newly acquired argument structure as a psych verb.

Keywords : Case-alternation, desiderative predicate, psych predicate, argument structure, prolepsis, grammaticalization

## 1. Introduction

Case alternation between Nominative (Nom) and Accusative (Acc) is observed on the object of the lower verb in the desiderative *-ko siphtha* ‘to wish/want’ construction in Korean:<sup>1)</sup>

- (1) a. Na-nun banana-ka/lul mek-ko siph-ess-ta  
 I-Top banana-Nom/Acc eat-KO<sup>2)</sup> want-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I wanted to eat bananas.’
- b. Na-nun banana-\*ka/lul mek-ess-ta  
 I-Top banana-\*Nom/Acc eat-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I ate bananas.’
- c. \*Na-nun banana-ka/lul siph-ess-ta  
 I-Top coffee-Nom/Acc want-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I wanted bananas.’

(1a) shows that the object *banana* of the lower verb *mek-* ‘eat’ can bear either Nom or Acc. This Case alternation is peculiar in the sense that neither the verb *mek-* ‘to eat’ nor the predicate<sup>3)</sup> *siph-* ‘to wish/want’ takes a Nom-marked object as shown in (1b) and (1c), respectively. The usual questions that arise then are: how is it possible for the apparent object of a transitive verb such as *banana* in (1a) to bear either Nom or Acc, and why?

1) The abbreviations used in the gloss are: Nom=nominative, Acc=accusative, Asp=aspect, C=complementizer, Cop=copular, Dat=dative, Decl=declarative, Hon=honorific, Ind=indicative, Neg=negation, Pst=past, Q=question particle, SG=singular. We follow the system of Yale romanization to transcribe Korean data.

2) We will gloss the suffix *-ko* as KO until we specify its categorial status in section 3.

3) Although the predicate *siph-* has often been classified as an adjective in traditional Korean linguistics, there has been much debate regarding the existence of adjectives as an independent category in Korean and I think its existence has been quite convincingly challenged by many researchers (see M-J Kim 2002, among others). Throughout the paper, I will therefore use the category-neutral term ‘predicate’ to refer to *siph-*.

Previous research on the Korean desiderative *-ko siphta* construction has centered around two aspects of the construction. One line of research has attempted to provide proper structural analyses of the construction in its modern form, most of which proposes two different syntactic structures to account for the Case alternation phenomenon as illustrated in (1a). Aside from specific differences in the proposed structures, however, there has been little attention, if any, paid to the question of why the *-ko siphta* construction possesses two different structures in the first place.

The other line of research has focused on investigating historical development of the form *-ko siphta* mainly in terms of its morphology and semantics. Based on diachronic corpus data dating back to the 15th C(entury) when the Korean alphabet was created, the research shows that the desiderative meaning of ‘desire’ was originally carried by the complementizer *-ko* but was later transferred to the following predicate *siph-* as the form *-ko siphta* has undergone a process of grammaticalization.

The aim of this paper is two-fold: One is to present, from a minimalist point of view, more principled structural analyses of the Case alternation phenomenon in the *-ko siphta* construction. More specifically, we will argue that the Nom-marked object in (1a) is base-generated as an independent argument of the predicate *siph-*, while its Acc-marked counterpart is base-generated as an object of the lower verb *mek-*. The other purpose of this paper, on which we focus more, is to seek an explanation for the question of why, a question, to our knowledge, none of the existing studies have addressed: that is, why does the *-ko siphta* construction possess two different structures to begin with? We will argue that the reason is because the predicate *siph-* has lost its original meaning of ‘to think’ as it has undergone the process of grammaticalization

but from a syntactic point of view, it still retains the argument structure it used to have.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2, we briefly present the basic properties of the *-ko siphta* construction and discuss two previous structural analyses proposed in Kim and Maling (1998) and Jung (2011). In section 3, we present our alternative structural analyses of the construction and seek an explanation for the question as to why the *-ko siphta* construction has come to possess the proposed two different structures. In so doing, we will overview a diachronic study on the form of *-ko siphta* and briefly examine the notion of ‘proleptic’ object. Finally, section 4 mentions some remaining problems and concludes the paper.

## 2. A Description of the *-ko siphta* Construction and Previous Analyses

### 2.1 Basic Properties of the *-ko siphta* Construction

It is well known that Case alternation takes place on the object of the lower verb in the *-ko siphta* construction:

- (2) a. Na-nun mwul-i/ul<sup>4)</sup> masi-ko siph-ess-ta.  
 I-Top water-Nom/Acc drink-KO want-Pst-Dec  
 ‘I wanted to drink water.’  
 b. Na-nun mwul-\*i/ul masi-ess-ta.  
 I-Top water-\*Nom/Acc drink-Pst-Dec  
 ‘I drank water.’

---

4) The Korean nominative Case marker is realized as *-ka* after a vowel and *-i* after a consonant. The accusative Case marker is realized as *-lul* after a vowel and *-ul* after a consonant.

- c. \*Na-nun mwul-i/ul siph-ess-ta  
 I-Top water-Nom/Acc want-Pst-Dec  
 'I wanted water.'

(2a) shows that Case alternation between Nom and Acc is allowed on the object of the lower verb *masi-* 'to drink' in the *-ko siphta* construction. This Case alternation is peculiar because neither the lower verb *masi-* nor the higher predicate *siph-* takes a Nom-marked object as shown in (2b) and (2c), respectively. And in fact, the predicate *siph-* cannot even form a grammatical sentence without an additional verb suffixed by the complementizer *-ko* (e.g. *masi-ko* as in (2a)). Furthermore, as pointed out by Jung (2011), the object of the lower verb exhibits scope ambiguity depending on the Case it bears:

- (3) a. Na-nun sakwa-man-ul mek-ko siph-ci anh-ass-ta  
 I-Top apple-only-Acc eat-to want-Asp Neg-Pst-Dec  
 'It is not the case that I wanted to eat only apples. (I wanted to eat some oranges and bananas as well.)' [Neg > Want > Only]
- b. Na-nun sakwa-man-i(Nom) mek-ko siph-ci anh-ass-ta  
 'It is only apples that I did not want to eat. (However, I wanted to eat some oranges and bananas.)' [Only > Neg > Want]

(Jung 2011:4)

(3a) and (3b) respectively show that the object *sakwa* 'apple' takes narrow scope with respect to negation when it is marked Acc, while it takes wide scope over negation when marked Nom. This seems to suggest that the Nom-marked object occupies a structurally higher position than its Acc-marked counterpart.

## 2.2 Previous Analysis I: Aspect-based Approach

Kim and Maling (1998; henceforth, K&M) propose the structure in (4b) to account for the Nom-Acc Case alternation observed in the *-ko siphta* construction.<sup>5)</sup>

- (4) a. Na-nun coffee-lul/ka masi-ko siph-ess-ta.  
 I-Top coffee-Acc/Nom drink-Asp want-Pst-Decl  
 'I wanted to drink coffee.'
- b. [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP1</sub> [<sub>AspP</sub> [<sub>VP2</sub> coffee-lul/ka V<sub>2</sub>-masi] Asp-ko] V<sub>1</sub>-siph] T]  
 Asp = [-complete] or [0complete]

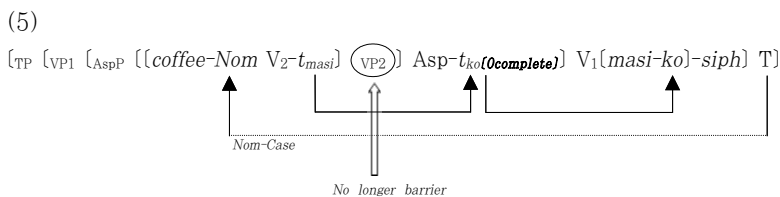
K&M assume that the obligatory morpheme *-ko* on the lower verb *masi-* 'drink' in (4a) is an Aspect marker whose featural specification can be either (specified) [-complete] or (underspecified) [0complete] as illustrated in (4b). When *-ko* with [-complete] is selected for by the predicate *siph-*, it is argued to denote an 'incompleted' event, whereas the same *-ko* is argued to denote an 'unrealized' event if it is marked with the underspecified value (i.e. [0complete]). They further assume that transitive verbs can 'properly discharge' their Case only when they are associated with Aspect with specified value, i.e. with [-complete]. According to this assumption, the transitive verb *masi-* in (4) is licensed to assign its Acc Case to its object *coffee* only when it combines with *-ko* [-complete].<sup>6)</sup> When the predicate *siph-* selects for *-ko* with [0complete], however, the lower verb *masi-* cannot assign Case to

5) For different (syntactic/semantic) approaches to and (historical) studies of the *-ko siphta* construction, see Um (2003), Ahn (2006), Kim (2008), Park (2009), and Lee (2016).

6) They further claim that when the predicate *siph-* selects for *-ko* with [-complete], the construction exhibits the usual properties of a biclausal sentence with respect to Case-marking as the object *coffee* in this case is Case-marked by the lower verb *masi-* independently of the higher predicate *siph-*.

its object *coffee*.

A question that immediately arises at this point regarding their second option (i.e. *-ko(0complete)*) is, how then can the object *coffee* get Case (if it cannot be assigned one by the verb *masi-*)? K&M's solution to this question goes as follows. They first claim that when *-ko* is underspecified with feature value 0, its VP complement (i.e. VP<sub>2</sub> in (4b)) is somehow 'defective' and this defectiveness is remedied by successive head movement of V<sub>2</sub> *masi-* to V<sub>1</sub> *siph-* via *-ko*. Second, they claim that this successive movement of *masi-* to *siph-* 'removes the barrierhood of VP<sub>2</sub>', which enables the matrix T to assign Nom to the object *coffee* as illustrated in (5).



They further argue that the resulting verbal complex [*masi-ko siph*] in (5) behaves like a single complex head as if there is only one predicate. In other words, the *-ko siph*ta construction in this case exhibits a monoclausal-like property and this is argued to account for a scope ambiguity caused by the presence of a durational adverbial like *pamsay* 'all night' in the construction, as illustrated in (6).

- (6) a. Na-nun pamsay swul-ul masi-ko siph-ess-ta.  
 (K&M 1998: 141)  
 I-Top all.night liquor-Acc drink-KO want-Pst-Ind  
 i) To drink all night was my desire.  
 ii) All night long, I had a desire to drink.
- b. Na-nun pamsay swul-i masi-ko siph-ess-ta.  
 I-Top all.night liquor-Nom drink-KO want-Pst-Ind  
 i) All night long, I had a desire to drink.  
 ii) ?\*To drink all night was my desire.

When the object *swul* 'liquor' is marked Acc as in (6a), the sentence is ambiguous in that the duration adverb *pamsay* 'all night' can modify either the event of drinking (6ai) or the time span for which the desire to drink holds (6aii). In other words, the two verbs in (6a) can be independently modified by the adverbial. When the same object bears Nom as in (6b), however, the ambiguity no longer exists so that the adverb is interpreted to modify the two predicates altogether.

K&M's analyses discussed so far are not without problems, however. Consider (7):

- (7) Nay-ka coffee-ka masi-ko siph-ess-ta.  
 I-Nom coffee-Nom drink-KO want-Pst-Decl  
 'It was me who wanted to drink coffee.'<sup>7)</sup>

(7) is minimally different from (4a) in that the subject *Nay* 'I' in (7) is marked with the Nom Case marker *-ka* rather than the Topic marker *-nun* as in (4a). If the matrix T is indeed responsible for the Nom Case on the object *coffee* as K&M claim, it is not clear what can possibly assign a Nom Case to the subject *Nay* in (7). As a matter of fact, it is not even clear where the subject *Nay*,

7) The sentence can also be understood as the entire sentence being focused. In other words, the entire sentence can be interpreted as new information.



Nom-marked or Topic-marked, is (base-)generated in K&M’s system.

### 2.3. Previous Analysis II: Restructure-based Approach

As with K&M (1998) discussed in 2.2, Jung (2011: 3) presents examples in (8) which illustrate scope ambiguity depending on the Case on the nominal in the embedded clause.

- (8) a. Na-nun<sub>i</sub> pro<sub>i</sub> sakwa-man-ul mek-ko siph-ci anh-ass-ta  
 I-Top apple-only-Acc eat-to want-Asp Neg-Pst-Dec  
 [Neg > Want > Only]  
 ‘It is not the case that I wanted to eat only apples.  
 (I wanted to eat some oranges and bananas as well.)’
- b. Na-nun<sub>i</sub> pro<sub>i</sub> sakwa-man-i mek-ko siph-ci anh-ass-ta  
 I-Top apple-only-Nom eat-to want-Asp Neg-Pst-Dec  
 [Only > Neg > Want]  
 ‘It is only apples that I did not want to eat.  
 (However, I wanted to eat some oranges and bananas.)’

When the object *sakwa* ‘apple’ is marked Acc as in (8a), negation takes wide scope over *want* and *only*, whereas the object is marked Nom as in (8b), *only* takes wide scope over both negation and *want*. She argues that this scope ambiguity suggests that the two objects occupy different structural positions and proposes the following two structures in (9).

- (9)  
 a.  
 [<sub>TOPP</sub> na-nun<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP1</sub> [<sub>VP1</sub> pro<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP2</sub> apples-Acc [<sub>VP2</sub> PRO<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP2</sub> t<sub>apples</sub> V2] v2<sub>DO</sub>] V1-  
 ↑ |siph] v1-BE] T]]]

b.

[<sub>TopP</sub> na-nun<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> apples-Nom [<sub>VP1</sub> [<sub>VP1</sub> pro<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP2</sub> t<sub>apples</sub> V2] V1-siph] v1<sub>BE</sub>] T]]

According to Jung, the predicate *siph-* can take either a full-fledged vP complement (i.e. VP2 in (9a)) or a bare VP complement (i.e. VP2 in (9b)). In the former case, the object *apples* is assigned Acc, whereas in the latter it is assigned Nom.

A number of issues arise from Jung's analysis but we shall point out here two of them. Note first that the matrix subject *na-nun* both in (9a) and (9b) is (assumed to be) 'base-generated' in Spec-Top. An immediately arising question is, how can the NP *na-nun* be assigned Case? It cannot be assigned one unless it is assumed (or stipulated), for example, that the head Top is somehow responsible for (Nom) Case assignment, a descriptive possibility which is not mentioned in Jung (2011). The second problem, which is also not addressed (at all) in Jung (2011), concerns the postulation of PRO in (9a). Given the conventional view that PRO occurs within non-finite (embedded) CP clauses (Chomsky 1981, 1995), the presence of PRO in (9a) and its sudden absence in (9b) need to be justified.

In sum, both K&M (1998) and Jung (2011) postulate two different syntactic structures for the desiderative *-ko siphta* construction where they both place the Nom-marked object higher than its Acc-marked counterpart to account for scope ambiguity they each address. What is missing from both analyses, however, is an answer to the question of why the *-ko siphta* construction exhibits two different syntactic structures to begin with. In other words, what may be responsible for the construction having two different structures? We show in the next section that the answer

to these questions may lie in the diachronic changes of the form *-ko siphta-*.

### 3. Proposal: Structure and Syntax–Semantics Mismatch

#### 3.1 Categorical Status of *-ko* and PRO

There has been disagreement over the categorial status of the suffix *-ko* in the *-ko siphta* construction. As discussed in section 2, for example, K&M (1998) consider it as an Aspect marker, while Jung (2011) treats it something corresponding to the English infinitival marker *to*. Based on the distribution of the Korean honorific verbal suffix *-(u)si-*, however, we argue that the suffix *-ko* in the *-ko siphta* construction is a complementizer (C). Consequently, we argue that the *-ko siphta* construction consists of two clauses.

In Korean, the honorific verbal suffix *-(u)si-* is (optionally) used to show the speaker's respect for or deference to the subject of a sentence, commonly referred to as 'subject honorification' in the literature.<sup>8)</sup>

- |         |                              |                  |
|---------|------------------------------|------------------|
| (10) a. | Tongsayng-i                  | o-ass-ta         |
|         | younger.brother-Nom          | come-Pst-Dec     |
|         | '(My) younger brother came.' |                  |
| b.      | Apeci-kkeyse                 | o-si-ess-ta.     |
|         | father-Nom.Hon               | come-Hon-Pst-Dec |
|         | '(My) father came.'          |                  |

---

8) Omission of the suffix *-(u)si-* will not make the sentence ungrammatical but rather make it sound pragmatically inappropriate. In other words, the sentence will sound rude if the suffix is omitted.

Unlike (10a), the subject, *apeci* 'father', in (10b) is the speaker's father and thus the honorific suffix *-si-* is attached to the verb to indicate the speaker's deference to the subject. This agreement between the subject and the predicate with respect to honorification is known as subject honorification and the examples in (11) show that the agreeing subject and the predicate must occur within the same clause.

- (11) a. [<sub>CP</sub> Na-nun [<sub>CP</sub> apeci-kkeyse o-*si*-ess-ta-ko] sayngkakhay-ess-ta  
 I-Top father-Nom.Hon come-Hon-Decl-C think-Pst-Decl  
 'I thought that my father had come.'  
 b. #[<sub>CP</sub> Na-nun [<sub>CP</sub> apeci-kkeyse o-ass-ta-ko] sayngkakha-*si*-ess-ta]  
 I-Top father-Nom.Hon come-Decl-C think-Hon-Pst-Decl  
 'I thought that my father had come.'

Given this clause-bound restriction on the distribution between the honorified subject and the *-(u)si-* marked predicate, the occurrence of the honorific suffix *-(u)si-* can function as an indicator to show whether or not there is a clause boundary in a sentence. Consider now the *-ko siphta* construction in (12).

- (12) a. Apeci-keyse-nun sose-lul ssu-*si*-ko siph-*usi*-ess-ta  
 father-Nom.Hon-Top novel-Acc write-Hon-C want-Hon-Pst-Decl  
 '(My) father wanted to write a novel.'  
 b. [<sub>CP</sub> apeci-keyse-nun [<sub>CP</sub> sose-lul ssu-*si*-ko] siph-*usi*-ess-ta.

In (12a), the honorific suffix *-(u)si-* occurs on both predicates, *ssu-* 'to write' and *siph-* 'to wish/want'. This seems to suggest that there indeed exists a clause boundary in (12a). That is, (12a) consists of two clauses as illustrated in (12b) where the suffix *-ko* functions as a complementizer. In fact, there are various other constructions in Korean where the same suffix *-ko* observed in the

*siphtha* construction is widely considered a complementizer as exemplified in (13).

- (13) a. John-un ku yenghwa-lul imi po-ass-ta-ko malhay-ss-ta  
 J-Top that movie-Acc already see-Pst-Decl-C say-Pst-Dec  
 'John said that he already saw the movie.'
- c. John-un na-eykey secem-i eti-e iss-nya-ko mul-ess-ta  
 J-Top I-Dat bookstore-Nom where-Dat is-Q-C ask-Pst-Decl  
 'John asked me where the book store is.'

Based on these observations, we take the suffix *-ko* in the *-ko siphtha* construction to be a complementizer.

Note, however, that there is a noticeable difference in the embedded clauses between the *say-* or *ask-*type constructions and the *-ko siphtha* construction. Consider (14).

- (14) a. John-un ku [yenghwa-lul (imi) po-\*(ass-ta)-ko] malhay-\*(ss-ta)<sup>9)</sup>  
 J.-Top that movie-Acc already see-(Pst-Decl)-C say-(Pst-Decl)  
*Intended Meaning:* 'John said that he had already seen the movie.'
- b. Na-nun [coffee-lul masi-(*\*ess-ta*)-ko] siph-\*(ess-ta)  
 I-Top coffee-Acc drink-(Pst-Decl)-C want-Past-Dec  
 'I wanted to drink coffee.'

The difference is that in the *say-* or *ask-*type sentences tense and mood must be overtly present in both the embedded and the matrix clause as shown in (14a), but they are required to be specified only

---

9) As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, (14a) can be grammatical with the tense and mood marking absent in the embedded clause:

- (i) John-un ku [yenghwa-lul (imi) po-ko] malhay-ss-ta  
 'John had (already) seen the movie before he said (something).'

Notice that the meaning of (i) is not what (14a) is intended to mean. Syntactically speaking, the embedded clause in (i) above is an adjunct, while in (14a) it is a complement (of the verb *malhay-* 'to said').

in the sentence-final predicate *siph-* in the *siph-ta* construction as illustrated in (14b). This seems to suggest that the TP complement selected for by the complementizer *-ko* in the *-ko siph-ta* construction is not finite but infinitival. An immediate question then arises: is this nonfinite TP in (14b) a *believe*-type ECM TP or a *try*-type control one?<sup>10</sup> Consider (15).

- (15) a. Na-nun [<sub>CP</sub> (\*John-i) maykcwu-lul masi-ko] siph-ess-ta  
 I-Top J.-Nom beer-Acc drink-C want-Pat-ta  
 Intended Meaning: 'I wanted John to drink coffee.'  
 b. Na-nun<sub>i</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> e<sub>i</sub> maykcwu-lul masi-ko] siph-ess-ta  
 c. John-un [<sub>CP</sub> (\*John-i) maykcwu-lul masi-ko] siph-ess-ta  
 d. John-un [<sub>CP</sub> e<sub>i</sub> maykcwu-lul masi-ko] siph-ess-ta

As show in (15a) and (15c), an overt NP may not occur in the subject position of the lower clause in the *-ko siph-ta* construction, which suggests that the TP in the *-ko siph-ta* construction is a *try*-type control TP. We thus propose the following structure in (16) for the *-ko siph-ta* construction where XP in the matrix is coindexed with PRO in the embedded clause.

- (16) [<sub>CP</sub> XP<sub>i</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> PRO<sub>i</sub> ... ]-ko] siph-ta]


In the next section we further specify the structure (16) and propose another structure to account for the Nom-Acc Case alternation in the *-ko siph-ta* construction.

10) This question arises because ECM constructions as below are possible in languages such as Korean and Japanese, where the subject within the *-ko* clause can be marked Acc.

- (i) Minswu-nun [Swumi-lul/ka papo-la-ko] mit-ess-ta  
 M.-Top S.-Acc/Nom fool-Cop-C believe-Pst-Decl  
 'Minswu believed that Swumi was a fool.'

### 3.2 Structures

Now that we have shown that the complement of the predicate *siph-* is a control CP, let us first consider the case where the object of the lower verb in the *-ko siphta* construction is marked Acc.

- (17) a.  $\text{Na}_i\text{-nun}$  [<sub>CP</sub>  $\text{PRO}_i$   $\text{banana-lul}$   $\text{mek-ko}$ ]  $\text{siph-ess-ta}$   
 I-Top                      banana-Acc                      eat-C                      want-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I wanted to eat bananas.’
- b. [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{Na}_i\text{-nun}$  [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{PRO}_i$   $v^*$  [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{banana-ACC}$   $\text{mek}$ ]]]- $\text{ko}$ ]]
- 

Following Chomsky (2000 *et seq.*), we assume that Case-assignment is a reflection of ( $\phi$ -feature) agreement between a nominal phrase and T (for Nom) or  $v^*$  (for Acc). According to this assumption, the Acc marking on *banana* in (17a) is straightforward: as illustrated in (17b), Acc on the object is a result of agreement between  $v^*$  and *banana*.

Let us now consider the following structures in (18) we propose for the case where the object is marked Nom.

- (18) a.  $\text{Na}_i\text{-nun}$   $\text{banana}_j\text{-ka}$  [<sub>CP</sub>  $\text{PRO}_i$   $\text{pro}_j$   $\text{mek-ko}$ ]  $\text{siph-ess-ta}$   
 I-Top     $\text{banana-Acc}$                       eat-C                      want-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I wanted to eat bananas.’
- b. [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{Na}_i\text{-nun}$  [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{banana}_j\text{-Nom}$  [<sub>CP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{PRO}_i$   $v^*$  [<sub>VP</sub>  $\text{pro}_j$   $\text{mek}$ ]]]]- $\text{ko}$ ]  
 $\text{siph-ess-ta}$ ]]

Note the two crucial differences between (18) and (17). One difference is that the object *banana* of the lower verb *mek-* ‘eat’ is base-generated in the matrix VP domain in (18). In other words, the NP *banana* is not base-generated as the object of the lower verb *mek-* ‘eat’ but as an (independent) argument of the matrix predicate

*siph-*. The other difference is that the object position of the lower verb *mek-* ‘eat’, in which *banana* is based-generated in (17), is now occupied by the null pronominal *pro* co-indexed with *banana* in the matrix clause. For these differences, we argue that the relation between the two co-indexed (pro)nominals (i.e. *banana* in the matrix and *pro* in the embedded clause) is analogous to what has traditionally been called ‘prolepsis’. Consider (19).

- (19) Ich glaube von ihm, dass er ein ganz guter Trainer ist  
 I believe.1SG of he.DAT that he a quite good coach is  
 ‘I believe of *him* that *he* is a pretty good coach.’  
 (from Salzmann 2017, emphasis added)

Prolepsis (from the Greek word ‘to anticipate’) refers to a construction where a complement of the matrix verb is semantically related to an element in an embedded clause.<sup>11)</sup> As shown in (19), for example, the pronoun *er* ‘he.DAT’ (and the English *him* as well, for that matter) in the embedded clause is necessarily coreferent with *ihm* ‘he.DAT’ in the matrix.<sup>12)</sup> Although there are some differences between the typical proleptic construction in (19) and (18),<sup>13)</sup> we suspect that (18) is fundamentally not so much different from (19), especially in the sense that in both cases an element in the matrix clause is semantically related to another in an embedded clause.

With the two different structures we propose for the *-ko siphta* construction, i.e. the structures in (17) and (18), we can readily

11) See Koppen *et al.* (2014), Massam (1985), and Takano (2013), among others, for discussion of prolepsis and its equivalents in other languages.

12) The complement *ihm* ‘he.DAT’ is often referred to as a ‘proleptic object’ in the literature.

13) One notable difference is that in the typical proleptic constructions, the proleptic object occurs as the complement of a preposition (e.g. ‘*von ihm*’ in German, ‘*of him*’ in English).



account for the scope ambiguity in (20) Jung (2011) discusses.

- (20=8) a. Na-nun<sub>i</sub> pro<sub>i</sub> sakwa-man-ul mek-ko siph-ci anh-ass-ta  
 I-Top apple-only-Acc eat-to want-Asp Neg-Pst-Decl  
 [Neg > Want > Only]  
 ‘It is not the case that I wanted to eat only apples.  
 (I wanted to eat some oranges and bananas as well.)’
- b. Na-nun<sub>i</sub> pro<sub>i</sub> sakwa-man-i mek-ko siph-ci anh-ass-ta  
 I-Top apple-only-Nom eat-to want-Asp Neg-Pst-Decl  
 [Only > Neg > Want]  
 ‘It is only apples that I did not want to eat.  
 (However, I wanted to eat some oranges and bananas.)’

Differences in the scope of the NP *sakwa* ‘apple’ in (20a) and (20b) suggest that it occupies a structurally higher position when marked Nom, which is precisely what the structures we propose in (17) and (18) show.

In the next section we seek an answer to the question neither K&M (1998) nor Jung (2011) addresses, i.e. the question as to why the *-ko siph*ta construction exhibits the proposed two different syntactic structures in the first place.

### 3.3 Syntax–Semantics Mismatch

The earliest form of the present-day *-ko siph-* found in the corpus data is *-kocye sikpu*<sup>14)</sup> in the 15th C when the Korean alphabet was created. Since then, the form has undergone the following phonological/morphological and semantic changes summarized in (21).

14) For variant forms of *sikpu-*, see Ahn (2005), Lee (2005), and Rhee (2001), among others.

(21)

-*kocye sikpu-* > -*kocye sikpu-/sipu-* > -*kocye/-ko sipu-* > -*ko sipu-* > -*ko siph-*  
 15th C                    16th C                    17-18th C                    19th C                    PDK

The two noticeable phonological/morphological changes from -*kocye sikpu-* in the 15th C to -*ko siph-* in Modern Korean (MDK) are 1) 15th C -*kocye* has reduced to -*ko* in MDK and 2) 15th C *sikpu-* has changed to *siph-* in MDK. What is more relevant to our discussion, however, is the semantic changes as -*kocye sikpu-* has changed to -*ko siph-*. Consider (22) and (23).

- (22) a. na-*kocye*                    *sikpu-nye*                    (*Welinchenkang* 1447, *sang*: 132)<sup>15)</sup>  
 come.out-desirous think.to.oneself-Q  
 'Do you want to come out?'  
 b. na-*ko*                    *siph-unya*                    MDK  
 come.out-KO                    desirous-Q

(23)

[-*kocye\**] [*sikpu-*] > [-*kocye\* sikpu-*] > [-*kocye\* sikpu-\**] > [-*ko sipu-\*/siph-\**]  
 (modified from Kim 2010: \*main semantic carrier of 'desire')

As shown in (22) and (23), the meaning of 'desire' was originally carried, not by *sikpu-* (> *siph-*) as it is in MDK, but by what Kim (2010) calls the 'connective', -*kocye*, and the predicate *sikpu-* only added the meaning of 'to think (to oneself)'. Kim (2010) attempts to account for this semantic change as well as the deletion of *cye* in *kocye* as follows: there were two other desiderative constructions in the 15th C Korean, namely, -*kocye hA-* (*hA-* 'to do') and -*kocye sAlanghA-* (*sAlanghA-* 'to think'), both of which were more

15) In citing examples from Korean historical documents, I follow Kim (2010) where *Welinchenkang* is the title of the cited text, the number 1447 represents the year of publication, *sang* 'the first' refers to the volume number and 132 indicates the page number.

commonly used than *-kocye sikpu-* to convey desiderative meaning. However, *-kocye hA-* underwent a semantic change and was used to denote intention rather than desire, while *-kocye sAlanghA-* has become obsolete with the semantic change of *sAlanghA-* (〈*salangha-*〉) from ‘to think’ to ‘to love’. Consequently, *-kocye sikpu-* began to be used more productively to convey desiderative meaning. At the same time, there emerged two trends: one was that the *-kocye sikpu-* construction became grammaticalized as a desiderative construction as it was frequently used, and the other trend was that the use of the connective *-ko* ‘and’ became prevalent, eventually leading to the reduction from *-kocye sikpu-* to *-ko sikpu-*. Altogether, the *-ko sikpu-* as a whole became recognized as a single desiderative construction.

Of all the diachronic semantic changes Kim (2010) discusses, what is most relevant to our discussion is the semantic change of the predicate *sikpu-* from ‘to think’ to ‘to wish/want’. Translating this semantic change in terms of syntax, we propose that *sikpu-* (〈*siph-*〉) has changed from the single CP-taking predicate to a psych predicate taking an NP/DP and a CP.<sup>16)</sup> Consider (23).

- (23) a. Na-nun [<sub>CP</sub> Minswu-ka maykcwu-lul/\*ka masi-ess-ta-ko] sayngkakhay-ss-ta  
 I-Top M.-Nom beer-Acc/\*Nom drink-Pst-Decl-C think-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I thought that Minswu drank beer.’  
 b. Na-nun paym-i/\*ul mwusep-ta  
 I-Top snake-Nom/Acc fearsome-Decl  
 ‘I am afraid of snakes.’

16) An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the scope of diachronic studies does not overlap with that of synchronic studies. If I understand her/him correctly, what (s)he seems to suggest is that a diachronic account of a synchronic phenomenon can hardly be justified. We doubt, however, that such an independence between diachronicity and synchronicity can hold, given various studies appealing to the former in explaining the latter. See, among others, Anderson (2016) and references therein.

- c. Na-nun Minswu-ka/\*lul coh-ta  
 I-Top M.-Nom/Acc fond-Decl  
 'I am fond of Minswu.'

(23a) shows that the verb *sayngkakhay-* in MDK, which bears the same meaning of 'to think' that the 15th C *sikpu-* did, takes a (single) CP complement. In this case the object *maykcwu* 'beer' of the lower verb *masi-* 'to drink' in the embedded clause may only be marked Acc. (23b) and (23c) illustrate that psych predicates in Korean such as *mwusep-* 'fearsome' and *coh-* 'fond' typically take as their complement a Nom-marked NP/DP.

Based on these observations, we argue that from the semantic point of view the predicate *sikpu-* (*siph-*) has lost its original meaning of 'to think' as it has undergone the process of grammaticalization and came to be used as a psych predicate to mean 'to wish/want'. From a syntactic point of view, however, not only does it retain its original syntactic structure (i.e. taking a single CP complement we propose in (17)), but it has also obtained as a psych predicate a new syntactic structure taking both an NP/DP and a CP as its argument (i.e. the structure in (18) we propose).

#### 4. Remaining Problems and Conclusion

We have examined the Nominative-Accusative Case alternation of the (apparent) object observed in the embedded clause of the Korean desiderative *-ko siph-ta* construction and presented the two structural analyses of it, where the Nom-marked object is base-generated structurally higher than its Acc-marked counterpart to account for scope ambiguity arising from the different

Case-markings on the object. In so doing, we have also examined the categorial status of the verbal suffix *-ko* in the *-ko siphta* construction and argued that it should be analyzed as a complementizer. Finally, we attempted to seek an explanation for the question, to our knowledge, none of the existing research has dealt with, i.e. the question as to why the desiderative *-ko siphta* construction exhibits two different structures. Our answer to the question, which is based on the diachronic changes of the *-ko siphta* form, was that from the semantic point of view the predicate *siph-* has lost its 15th C meaning of ‘to think’ and become a psych predicate to mean ‘to wish/want’, but from a syntactic point of view it not only retains its original argument structure taking a single CP but also acquired a novel syntactic structure taking both an NP/DP and a CP as its argument.

Many other related issues remain to be resolved, of course, but we conclude this study by briefly pointing out one of the issues that we think should be addressed in future research. The issue concerns our claim that the subject of the embedded clause in the *-ko siphta* construction is PRO, regardless of the Case marking on the object in the clause. The structure in (23b), however, seems to suggest otherwise.

- (23) a. John<sub>r</sub>-un [<sub>CP</sub> PRO/\*John-i kapang-ul tul-ko] siph-ess-ta  
 J.-Top J.-Nom bag-Acc carry-C want-Pst-Decl  
 ‘John wanted to carry the bag (\*himself).’
- b. Na<sub>r</sub>-nun [<sub>CP</sub> PRO/nay-ka/ kapang-ul tul-ko] siph-ess-ta  
 I-Top I-Nom bag-Acc carry-C want-Pst-Decl  
 ‘I wanted to carry the bag myself.’

Note that unlike (23a) where the overt NP ‘John’ is not allowed as our analysis predicts, the occurrence of *nay* ‘I’ in (23b) does not

lead to ungrammaticality despite the widely-accepted assumption that PRO is typically in complementary distribution with overt NPs (Chomsky 1981). We hope to address this issue as well as other issues in future research.

## References

- Ahn, J. H. (2005) Diachronical Study on *siphta* Phrases. *The Korean Language and Literature* 90: 73-96.
- Ahn, J. H. (2006) Syntactic Characteristics of ‘siphta’ Phrase and Its Semantic Development in Modern Korean. *Korean Semantics* 20: 371-391.
- Anderson, S. (2016) Synchronic Versus Diachronic Explanation and the Nature of the Language Faculty. *The Annual Review of Linguistics* 2: 11-31.
- Chomsky, N. (1981) *Lectures on Government and Binding*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Chomsky, N. (1995) *The Minimalist Program*. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, N. (2000) Minimalist Inquiries: the Framework. In M. Roger, D. Michaels, and J. Uriagereka (eds.), *Step by Step: Essays on Minimalist Syntax in Honor of Howard Lasnik*, 89-155. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press.
- Jung, H. K. (2011) Nominative/Accusative Case Alternation in the Korean *Siph-ta* Construction. *The Coyote Papers* 18: 1-19. University of Arizona.
- Kim, K.-H. (2008) The Semantic and Syntactic Characteristics of ‘siphta’. *Hangeul* 280: 129-164.
- Kim, M. J. (2002) Does Korean have Adjectives? In T. Ionin, H. Ko and A. Nevins (eds.), *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 43: 71-79.
- Kim, M. J. (2010) The Historical Development of the Korean *siph-* ‘to think’ into Markers of Desire, Inference, and Similarity. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 1000-1016.
- Kim, S. W. and J. Maling. (1998) Case Assignment in the *siphta*

- Construction and Its Implications for Case on Adverbials. In Ross King, (ed.), *Description and Explanation in Korean Linguistics*, 133-168.
- Koppen, M. v., L. Seuren, and M. de Vries. (2014) The Proleptic Accusative as an exceptional Exceptional Case Marking Construction. Ms. University of Gronigen/Utrecht.
- Lee, E.-S. (2016) On the Verifying the Subjectivity of 'NP+i/ka' Preceding the Main Verb in '-ko sipt'ta' Construction. *Eomunhak* 134, 21-51.
- Lee, Y. G. (2005) A Study on Diachronic Changes of *sipda* Construction. *Korean Culture* 35, 1-25.
- Massam, D. (1985) "Case Theory and the Projection Principle." PhD Dissertation, MIT.
- Park, H. K. (2009) Structure and Meaning of Korean 'ship-'. *Korean Journal of Linguistics* 34(1): 53-72.
- Rhee, S. H. (2001) Grammaticalization of Verbs of Desideration. *Discourse and Cognition* 8(2): 139-158.
- Salzmann, M. (2017) Prolepsis. In M. Everaert and H. van Riemsdijk, (eds.), *Companion to Syntax* 2nd edition, 1-41. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Takano, Y. (2013) Nominative Objects in Japanese Complex Predicate Constructions: A Prolepsis Analysis. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 21(4): 779-834.
- Um, J. H. (2003) Case Alternation in '-go siphta' Construction. *Journal of Korean Linguistics* 41: 169-195.



논문접수: 2018년 4월 5일

수정완료: 2018년 5월 23일

게재확정: 2018년 5월 25일

