The Tense of Resultatives — The Case of Korean  

1 English resultatives of the type in (1a–c) arguably involve a small-clause complementation structure illustrated in (2) (Hoekstra 1988 i.a.). This structure directly explains (a) the predication relationship between the resultative secondary predicate and the postverbal noun phrase; (b) the fact that English-type resultatives are subject to ‘Simpson’s Law’ (Simpson 1983): in (1b) the floor, not Jim, ended up white as a result of the painting event; (c) the fact that the postverbal noun phrase is not the internal argument of the verb: in (1c) the theorem was not proven; and (d) the fact that selectional restrictions normally imposed by a verb on its direct object are suspended in resultatives: Dutch sloeg ‘hit’ desires a sentient direct object, but (1d) is fine with stuk ‘broken’ included because het kopje ‘the cup’ is not the direct object of the verb in the resultative.

2 Korean has counterparts to English (1a) and (1b) (see (3a) and (3b,b’), resp.), but no direct renditions of (1c) or Dutch (1d). In Korean (3a), mok is and must be nominative: (3a’) is ungrammatical. In (3b,b’), patak is either accusative or nominative, but the two versions are not semantically equivalent (pace Hong 2005). Accusative (3b) can only mean that Jim’s paint brush directly targeted the floor; to express that the floor accidentally got covered with white paint as a result of Jim’s clumsily painting the ceiling, Korean resorts to nominative (3b’). This suggests that patak-ul ‘the floor-ACC’ in (3b) is the thematic object of the verb; unlike in English-type languages, a verb in Korean cannot select a resultative small-clausal complement with an accusative ECM-subject. This also accounts for the status of (3c,d) (contrast (1c,d)), and rules out (3a’) as a rendition of (1a): accusative mok-ul can neither serve as the internal argument of V (which is ergative) nor as the ECM-subject of V’s small-clause complement (V cannot take ŠC in Korean resultatives).

3 With the above conclusions in place, this paper seeks answers to the following questions: (a) what is the analysis of Korean resultatives of the type in (3a), (3b) and (3b’)? (b) why does Korean disallow small-clause complementation in resultatives? (c) why does English disallow the structures Korean assigns to its resultatives? Our answers to these questions cluster around the structural proposal in (4): Korean resultative secondary predicates project clausal, TP-level constituents adjoined to some (extended) projection of V. The subject of the adjoined TP may be overt (and nominative, its Case checked against T) or null (pro). The null subject is identified by a local controller, with locality determined in terms of minimal c-command: the subject is the controller if TP is adjoined to vP; the object (which in Korean (OV) minimally raises overtly to the specifier of vP, ‘tucking in’ below the subject’s base position) is the controller if TP is adjoined to VP.

4 Evidence for the difference in structural height of subject-controlled and object-controlled resultatives in Korean comes from VP-topicalization: subject-controlled resultatives can be stranded under VP-topicalization but object-controlled resultatives cannot (cf. e.g. the fact that (5b) only supports a subject-controlled reading, while (5a) is ambiguous). Evidence for a null pronounal subject of the resultative comes from a variety of sources, including the suspension of Simpson’s Law in Korean, selectional restrictions, honorification, and, most strikingly, the unavailability of an idiomatic interpretation for Korean (6b) (contrast English (6a)): ‘Jim’s liver’ is the thematic complement of the matrix verb controlling the null subject of the secondary predicate ‘out of his stomach’; idiom chunks fail as controllers. Finally, evidence for the presence of tense in the extended projection of Korean resultative secondary predicates is derived from the distribution and scope of negation in resultatives (cf. (7)–(8)). Korean allows a negation on the resultative secondary predicate two different scopes vis-à-vis the inchoative marker -ci attached to the resultative: it either scopes directly over the secondary predicate alone (the (i)-readings), or it scopes over aspectual -ci (ii). While (i) may involve constituent negation (‘not-clean’), the (ii)-readings feature a sentential negation. The sentential domain over which negation takes scope in the (ii)-readings is the clausal constituent headed by the resultative secondary predicate. Assuming with Zanuttini (1996) that all sentential negation is dependent on a local T-node, we conclude that the extended projection of the resultative secondary predicate in Korean resultatives includes a T-node. This T licenses nominative subjects, subject to pro-drop whenever they are recoverable from context.

5 The previous sections demonstrate that Korean represents resultative secondary predicates as adjuncts (either to the root-VP or to vP) and provides them with a local T that licenses them within the adjoined TP. These two properties are intimately related, in a way that answers questions (b) and (c) from §3 with an appeal to the role of tense. Korean can license resultative secondary predicates as adjuncts because it provides these predicates with a local T; English-type languages cannot so license resultatives, hence are compelled to project them as complements, thereby enabling incorporation of the resultative into the matrix verb’s T-chain (Guéron & Hoekstra 1995); licensing resultative secondary predicates by a local T is more economical than the formation of a T-chain, whence the fact that small-clause complementation is unavailable in Korean.
a. Jim cried his throat hoarse
b. Jim painted the floor white
c. Jim proved the theorem false
d. Jim sloeg het kopje (stuk)

Jim-i mok-ul
Jim-throat-NOM become.hoarse-KEY cry-PAST-DECL

b'. Jim-i patak-i
Jim-floor-NOM white-KEY paint-PAST-DECL

c. Jim-i ilon-ul
Jim-theorem-NOM wrong-KEY prove-PAST-DECL

* 'Jim proved the theorem wrong'; ✓ 'Jim proved the theorem wrongly (in the wrong way)'

d. Jim-i khep-ul
Jim-cup-ACC break-INCH-KEY hit-PAST-DECL

Guéron & Hoekstra 1995 ‘The temporal interpretation of predication’ (Cardinaletti/Guasti eds, Small clauses) • Hoekstra 1988 ‘Small clause results’ (Lingua) • Hong 2005 Exceptional case-marking and resultative constructions (diss UMD) • Zanuttini 1996 ‘On the relevance of tense for sentential negation’ (Belletti/Rizzi eds, Parameters and functional heads)