

A Historical Corpus-Based Approach to Constraints on Korean Reflexives

This study investigates grammatical constraints of Korean reflexive *caki* through an analysis of historical corpora. We argue that development of *caki* and its relevant reflexives provides evidence untangling factors determining the interpretation of Korean reflexives. *Caki's* status is somewhat controversial in modern Korean linguistics as it can refer to a local antecedent within a sentence, as in example (1), and also to a remote antecedent in a preceding sentence or to a prominent entity in the discourse, as in (2). The former is similar to English reflexives; the latter, to a long-distance pronoun.

Given the domain differences for *caki*, K. Kim (1996) argues that *caki* has ambiguous status as a local variable (anaphor) and as a long-distant pronoun (logophor). In addition, theoretical analyses have leaned toward syntactic conditions since Chomsky's binding theory was introduced (Kang, 1990; Y. Kim, 1996 *inter alia*). While questioning its dual status, we examine the usage of *caki* and some relevant reflexives in diachronic corpora, and clarify nonsyntactic and syntactic conditions associated with various uses of Korean reflexives.

In this study, we use the 3,320,000 word *Sejong* historical corpus and a 33,000 word new-style novel corpus ranging between the 15th and early 20th centuries. As shown in Figure 1 and Table 1, the 15th century corpus shows the honorific reflexive form *cakya*, which is not morphologically connected to *caki*; its nominative form corresponds to *cakyay*, and its genitive form to *cakyas*. The pre-modern form *cakuy*, which corresponds to modern form *caki*, began to appear with *cakya* and *cagyas* in the 18th century. It is interesting that these reflexive forms are preferentially distributed in the Buddhist sutras, translated Bibles, and stories about Christian martyrs, as well as in the newly introduced westernized genre, *shinsoseol* 'new-style novel'. We argue that frequent use of reflexives in these texts is connected to discourse factors, and we elaborate the relevant discourse constraints including logophoricity, contrastiveness, agentivity, discourse prominence, etc.

We also analyze syntactic constraints of reflexives: subject orientedness, c-command, sentence embedding, the grammatical function of reflexives and antecedents, and verb classes. Local binding of *caki* is a relatively new phenomenon in Korean; up to the early 20th C, a reflexive form does not appear with its antecedent in a simplex sentence. In terms of grammatical function, most reflexive forms appeared in the subject position in the 15th C, while the adnominal position was the most frequently used in the 18thC. In the 18th C, *caki* rarely appeared in the object position while its occurrence in the object position visibly increased in the 20th C. Our findings show that diachronic change of Korean reflexives is rooted from the logophoric function that is referentially bound by discourse constraints and that syntactic conditions have been newly added in modern Korean. We also argue that Korean reflexive *caki* does not function as a local anaphor (requiring obligatory binding) and that both syntactic and nonsyntactic conditions contribute to interpretations of reflexive *caki*.

- (1) John_i-i caki_i-lul silheohanta
 John-Nom himself-Acc dislike
 ‘John_i dislikes himself_i.’
- (2) John_i-i Mina_j-ka caki_{i/j/k}-lul shilheohanta-ko malhayssta.
 John-Nom Mina-Nom self-Acc dislike-Comp said
 ‘John_i said that Mina_j dislikes him_{i/k}/her_j.’

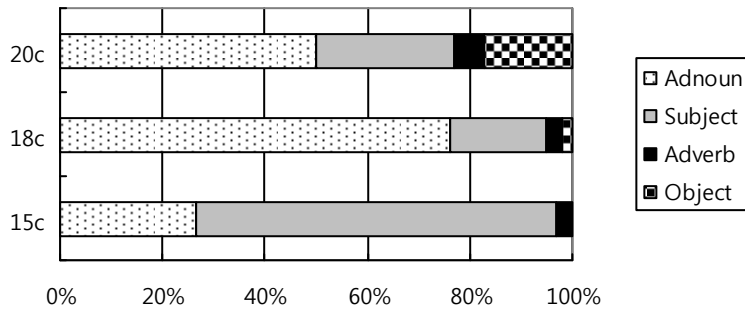


Figure 1. Grammatical Distribution of Korean Reflexives : *cakya*, *cakuy*, *cakyas*, *cakyay*

	15c	18c	20c
Adnoun	27%	76%	50%
Subject	71%	19%	27%
Adverb	3%	3%	6%
Object	0%	2%	17%

Table 1. Grammatical Distribution of Korean Reflexives : *cakya*, *cakuy*, *cakyas*, *cakyay*

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