

## On the Similarities and Differences between Progressive and Stative Constructions

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**1 Introduction:** As is well-known, the *-ko iss-* form in Korean is ambiguous between the progressive reading and the stative reading. For instance, (1) is ambiguous between (2a-b). In fact, in this paper I propose that there are six different types of *-ko iss* constructions, which follows from the fact that (i) *-ko* is ambiguous between a perfective and imperfective marker, (ii) when *iss* denotes ‘hold’, it optionally takes a Theme argument, and (iii) furthermore, ‘hold’-denoting *iss* is optionally selected by a light verb.

- (1) Tom-i moca-lul ssu-ko iss-ø-ta.  
Tom-Nom cap-Acc put on-KO ISS-Pres-Ind
- (2) a. Tom is putting on a cap.  
b. Tom holds the resultative state of putting on a cap (=Tom wears a cap).

**2 Ambiguity of *Ko*:** I propose that *-ko* is an aspectual marker, being interpreted as either [-perfective] or [+perfective]: it has a [ $\alpha$  perfective] feature, and  $\alpha$  can be either ‘+’ or ‘-’. This ambiguity arises from the fact that *-ko*, when it is used as a coordinator, is ambiguous between ‘and then’ and ‘and simultaneously’. For instance, (3) is ambiguous between (4a) and (4b). I claim that the two different usages of the coordinator *-ko* have been grammaticalized as an aspectual marker: the ‘and then’ usage as a perfective marker and the ‘and simultaneously’ one as an imperfective marker. Precisely speaking, the *ko*<sub>[-perfective]</sub>-phrase denotes an in-progress state, whereas the *ko*<sub>[+perfective]</sub>-phrase denotes that it is a complete event in its own but it is a part of a bigger event. So both the perfective *ko*-phrase and the imperfective *ko*-phrase share the property that they denote a part of a bigger event. The only difference between them lies in whether or not they denote a bounded event.

- (3) Tom-i nolay-lul pwulu-ko, Mary-ka chwum-ul chwu-ess-ta  
Tom-Nom song-Acc sing-KO Mary-Nom dance-Acc dance-Past-Ind
- (4) a. Tom sang a song, and then Mary danced. b. While Tom sang a song, Mary danced

**3 Ambiguity of *iss*:** Just like *-ko*, *iss* is ambiguous. The original meaning of *iss* is ‘exist’. In (5), for instance, *iss* denotes ‘exist’ and *iss<sub>exist</sub>* is a two-place predicate, assigning Theme and Locative. *Iss* has many other meanings. It can denote ‘hold’. For example, (6a) is construed as ‘Tom holds the state of being gentle’. Let us refer to this type of *iss* as *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*. *Iss<sub>hold1</sub>* assigns two theta-roles: Theme and state. But it can co-occur with a light verb. If the *iss*-phrase is selected by *v*, as in (7a-b), the subject is assigned a Theme role from *-iss* and then an Agent role from *v*. This is analogous to the fact that English copula can co-occur with *v*. (8a) can be analyzed as (8b), where there is a light verb that assigns Agent.

- (5) Sakwa-ka thakca-wui-ey iss-ø-ta.  
Apple-Nom table-upon-at ISS-Present-Ind ‘Apples are on the table’
- (6) a. Tom-i yamcenhi iss-ø-ta.  
Tom-Nom gently ISS-Present-Ind ‘(lit) Tom holds the state of being gentle’  
b. [CP [TP Tom-i<sub>(Theme)</sub> [VP Tom-i<sub>(Theme)</sub> [v' yamcenhi iss] ø]-ta]
- (7) a. Yamcenhi iss-e!  
Gently ISS-Imp ‘Stay gentle’  
b. [CP [TP pro<sub>(Agent, Theme)</sub> [VP pro<sub>(Agent, Theme)</sub> [pro<sub>(Theme)</sub> yamcenhi iss] v] ø]-e]
- (8) a. Tom is being nice.  
b. [TP Tom<sub>(Agent, Theme)</sub> T [VP Tom<sub>(Agent, Theme)</sub> v [be Tom<sub>(Theme)</sub> nice]]]

Parsons (1990) proposes that progressive event is a kind of state. More precisely, *-ing* denotes an in-progress state of event. According to Parsons, state requires the predicate *Hold* for interpretation, and hence the in-progress state requires the predicate *Hold* as well, as shown in (10a-b).

- (9) a. Tom is happy.  
b. For some s: Happy(s) & Theme(s, Tom) & Hold(s, Now)
- (10) a. Tom is singing.  
b. For some e: Singing(e) & Agent(e, Tom) & Hold(e's In-Progress state, Now)

In English the predicate *Hold* is accommodated at LF, but in Korean there is an overt verb that denotes

‘hold(s)’. I propose that *iss* can denote ‘hold(s)’. Let us refer to this type as *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*. This type of *iss* differs from *iss<sub>hold1</sub>* in that it does not assign a Theme role: that is, it takes state as its sole argument.

**4 Proposal:** We are now in a position to explain why (1) gives the progressive reading. *iss<sub>hold2</sub>* denotes ‘hold(s)’, and the imperfective *ko*-phrase denotes an in-progress state. Thus, (1) is construed as (11).

(11) For some e: Putting on(e) & Agent(e, Tom) & Theme(e, a cap) & Hold(e’s In-Progress state, now)

Let us now turn to the perfective *ko*-construction. As mentioned above, *iss<sub>hold1</sub>* takes state and Theme as its arguments, and in (6a) the state-denoting expression is an AdvP. I propose that it can also take as its complement a state-denoting *ko*-phrase. The perfective *ko*-phrase can denote a resultative state if its complement vP is telic, and hence it can be the complement of *iss<sub>hold1</sub>* if it takes a telic event as its complement. I propose that if the perfective *ko*-phrase is merged with *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*, the stative construction is generated: (1) yields a stative reading if it is represented as (12), where *Tom* is base-generated as the Agent of the putting-on event, and then assigned one more theta-role—the Theme of the resultant state—via raising to SPEC-*iss*. This is based on the assumption that movement into a theta-position is possible (Hornstein 2000). In this approach, the stative reading is permitted when (i) *-ko* is perfective and (ii) the embedded Agent moves to the Theme argument position of the matrix predicate.

(12) [<sub>VP</sub> Tom-i<sub>Theme & Agent</sub> [<sub>ko-P</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> Tom-i<sub>Agent</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> moca-lul ssu] v<sub>(Agent)</sub>] KO<sub>[+perfective]</sub>] *iss*<sub>(Theme)</sub>]

To sum up, the progressive reading is generated if the *ko*<sub>[-perfective]</sub>-phrase is merged with *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*, while the stative reading is produced if the *ko*<sub>[+perfective]</sub>-phrase is merged with *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*.

Let us consider why (13) does not permit the stative reading. The stative reading is possible if the agent of the *ko*-phrase can be the Theme of the resultant state. In (13) *Tom* cannot play a Theme role in the resultant state ‘a letter written’. So the sentence fails to yield a stative reading. Let us turn to (14), where *Tom* does not appear to play a role in the resultant state of ‘the door opened’. But suppose that an elevator door closes automatically unless someone keeps the open button pressed. In this situation *Tom* can play an Agentive role in the resultative state of ‘the door opened’ when *iss<sub>hold2</sub>* co-occurs with a light verb, as shown in (15). So (14) can give a stative reading. In short, the stative reading is permitted if the external argument of the *ko*-phrase can be either Theme or Agent of the resultant state.

(13) Tom-i pyenci-lul ssu-ko iss-ø-ta.  
Tom-Nom letter-Acc write-KO ISS-Pres-Ind  
‘Tom is writing a letter’

(14) Tom-i mwun-ul yel-ko iss-ø-ta.  
Tom-Nom door-Acc open-KO ISS-Pres-Ind  
‘Tom is opening the door’ OR ‘Tom opened the door and keeps it open’

(15) [<sub>VP</sub> Tom-i<sub>Agent & Agent</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>Tom-i</sub><sub>Agent</sub> pyenci-lul ssu]-ko<sub>[+perfective]</sub>] *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*] v]

**5 Six Types of -*Ko Iss*:** *-ko* can be either perfective or imperfective, *iss* can be either *iss<sub>hold1</sub>* or *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*, and v can be either absent or present. If this is so, it is logically possible that there are eight *-ko iss* constructions. I propose that (16a-f) are empirically attested, but (16g-h) are not; *iss<sub>hold1</sub>* does not take a *ko*<sub>[-perfective]</sub>-phrase as its complement. The progressive reading and the stative reading of (1) are represented as (16a-b), respectively, and the stative reading of (14) is represented as (16c). In addition, (17-19) are instances of (16d-f), respectively. To conclude, there are six types of *-ko iss* construction.

(16) a. [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>Sub</sub> ...]-ko<sub>[-perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*]                      b. [<sub>VP</sub> Sub<sub>i</sub> [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ...]-ko<sub>[+perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*]  
c. [<sub>VP</sub> Sub<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ...]-ko<sub>[+perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*] v]                      d. [<sub>VP</sub> Sub<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ...]-ko<sub>[-perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*] v]  
e. [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>Sub</sub> ...]-ko<sub>[+perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold2</sub>*]                      f. [<sub>VP</sub> Sub<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ...]-ko<sub>[+perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*] v]  
g. \* [<sub>VP</sub> Sub<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ...]-ko<sub>[-perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*]]                      h. \* [<sub>VP</sub> Sub<sub>i</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>t<sub>i</sub></sub> ...]-ko<sub>[-perfective]</sub> *iss<sub>hold1</sub>*] v]

(17) I pwun tongan wus-ko iss-e  
Two minutes for smile-KO ISS-Imp  
‘(Lit) Be smiling for two minutes’

(18) Tom-i (cikum kkaci) pyenci-lul yel cang-ul ssu-ko iss-ø-ta.  
Tom-Nom (now until) letter-Acc ten Classifier-Acc write-KO ISS-Pres-Ind  
‘John has written 10 letters, (and expectedly continues to do so)

(19) Moca-lul ssu-ko iss-e!  
Cap-Acc put on-KO ISS-Imp  
‘Maintain the resultative state of putting on a cap!’