

A Pragmatic Approach to Plural Marker Copying in Korean

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It has been considered among Korean linguists that, when the subject of a sentence is plural, the plural marker tul in Korean can be suffixed to any phrase within the predicate such as NP, PP, VP, AdvP or S, as illustrated in (1). This phenomenon is called 'plural marker copying'.

- (1) a. haksayng-tul-i hakkyo-ey-tul ilccik-tul kkasseyo-tul.
student-PL-NM school-to early went
'Students went to school early.'
- b. nehui-tul swul-tul masyessni?
you-PL liquor drank
'Did you(pl) drink liquor?'

Song (1975), Kuh (1986), Hong (1990), and Lee (1991) try to account for the occurrences of the copied plural tul syntactically or semantically. The purpose of this paper is to argue that any syntactic or semantic account cannot predict correctly what allows the copied tul to occur, and to claim that its controller is determined pragmatically with recourse to the speaker's and the hearer's knowledge of the world, the discourse context, and the literal meaning of the sentence. I present counterexamples against syntactic and semantic accounts of the copied tul in sections 1 & 2. Then I formulate the pragmatic restriction on the occurrence of the copied tul in section 3: X controls the copied tul iff the denotation of X is plural in a discourse, X is a subject of a proposition that is

inferable from a sentence containing X, and the copied tul occurs within the VP denoting X's predicate. I use the phrase 'control Y' to mean 'allow Y to occur'.

Following Lee (1992), I use the term 'the pragmatic morpheme tul' here for 'the copied tul'. Lee provides morphological, syntactic, and semantic evidence for the claim that the pragmatic morpheme tul is distinct from the nominal plural marker tul.¹ Thus, the term 'the copied tul' is a misnomer. Just for the sake of convenience, I will use the abbreviation PM tul for the pragmatic morpheme tul.

1. Syntactic Approach

According to this approach, the PM tul can occur at the end of any constituent in a sentence whose subject is plural, as seen in (2a). So, when the subject of a sentence is singular, the occurrence of the PM tul is illegal as seen in (2b).

- (2) a. haksayng-tul-i hakkyo-ey-tul kasseyo.
 student-PL-NM school-to-PM went
 'Students went to school.'
- b*cey-ka hakkyo-ey-tul kasseyo.
 I-NM school-to-PM went
 'I went to school.'

¹ Lee (1992) also describes its pragmatic uses (how the speaker uses it and how the hearer interprets it in a discourse) according to the Gricean Cooperative Principle.

The term 'pragmatic morpheme' is used to refer to bound morphemes that do not make a contribution to the truth-conditional meaning of a sentence containing them, but which affect pragmatic interpretations of the sentence

Kuh (1986) and Lee (1991) look at Plural Marker Copying as a syntactic agreement; the PM tul agrees with its plural controller. Even though their analyses show differences in predictions, they share the assumption that the controller of the PM tul is a syntactic subject.

However, their plural subject account makes wrong predictions for sentences which have three-place predicates such as cwu- 'give' (3a), ponay- 'send' (3b), etc., and lexical causatives such as k^hiwu- 'raise' (3c), meki- 'feed', etc..

- (3)a. nay-ka ai-tul-eykey ton-ul-tul cwuesseyo.
 I-NM children-to money-AC-PM gave
 'I gave money to children.'
- b. nay-ka haksayng-tul-ul kyosil-lo-tul ponayssta.
 I-NM student-PL-AC classroom-to-PM sent
 'I sent students to a classroom.'
- c. Yonghi-ka ai-tul-ul kenkanghakey-tul k^hiwuessta.
 NM children-AC healthily-PM raised
 'Yonghi has raised her children to be healthy.'

All sentences in (3) have a singular subject, but the occurrences of the PM tul are good. The PM tul occurs in (3) on the basis of the plurality of Indirect Object (a), and Direct Object (b & c). If those IO and DOs in (3) are singular, the PM tul is not allowed as seen in (3').

- (3')a. *nay-ka ku ai-eykey ton-ul-tul cwuesseyo.
 I-NM the child-to money-AC-PM gave
 'I gave money to the child.'
- b. *nay-ka i haksayng-ul kyosil-lo-tul ponayssta.
 I-NM this student-AC classroom-to-PM sent
 'I sent this student to a classroom.'

- c. *Yonghi-ka ku ai-ul kenkanghakey-tul kiwuessta.
 NM the child-AC healthily-PM raised
 'Yonghi have raised the child to be healthy.'

Furthermore, the syntactic subject account cannot explain why a plural syntactic subject cannot license the PM tul to occur in an object NP that refers to a unique entity in the world, as seen in (4).

- (4) a. *haksayng-tul-i Suni-tul-ul/lul-tul ttalyesseyo.
 student-PL-NM PM-AC/AC-PM beat
 'Students beat Suni.'
- b. *haksayng-tul-i hay-ul-tul/tul-ul poayo.
 student-PL-NM sun-AC-PM/PM-AC see
 'Students are looking at the sun.'
- c. haksayng-tul-i phwungsen-ul-tul sasseyo.
 student-PL-NM balloon-AC-PM bought
 'Students bought a balloon.'

According to the syntactic subject account, all PM tul's in (4) will be good. However, (a & b) are not. The only difference between (a & b) and (c) is that the PM tul-suffixed NPs, Suni (a) and hay 'the sun' (b), refer to unique entities, while phwungsen 'balloon' (c) does not. The syntactic subject account also cannot explain examples where a grammatically singular subject which refers to more than one individual in a discourse can control the PM tul. In (5a), Haitai does not refer to a professional baseball team in Korea, but to its players. Since Haitai is perceived as plural in the discourse, it can control the PM tul.

(5)a. Haitai-ka sillyek-tul-i cohta.

NM skill-PM-NM is-good

'(Players of) Haitai have good skill.'

b.*Haitai-ka cohun senswu-ul sukawus-haysseyo-tul.

NM good player-AC scout-did-PM

'Haitai scouted promising players.'

However, when its reference is singular in the discourse as in (5b), the occurrence of the PM tul is bad. The syntactic subject 'students' health' in (6) is also grammatically singular, but it refers to each student's health so that it licences the occurrence of the PM tul.

(6) haksayng-tul-uy kenkang-i mopsi-tul nappacyessta.

student-PL-of health-NM terribly-PM got worse

'Students' health got terribly worse.'

Examples like (3-6) are strong evidence against the syntactic subject account for the controller of the PM tul, because its controllers are the plural IO and DOs in (3) and some occurrences of the PM tul are not allowed even by the plural subject (4), and even syntactic subjects which are grammatically singular can control the PM tul as in (5-6).

2. Semantic Approaches

2.1. Semantic Subject Account (Hong 1990)

Hong (1990) presents counterexamples like (3) against syntactic accounts of the PM tul, where the predicate is a lexical causative or a three-place predicate.

In order to explain the IO/DO controller of the PM tul in the examples in (3), she proposes a notion of 'semantic subject' (7), and claims that the PM tul may occur when the syntactic subject or the 'semantic subject' is plural.

- (7) A is a semantic subject of action x at t_1
 iff it is pragmatically associated with x
 that P(A) is true at t_2 ($t_1 < t_2$), where P
 is some property resulting from x.²

² Her definition of 'semantic subject' in (7) has several problems in itself. First, an action doesn't have a subject, but an agent or such.

Second, Hong's definition (7) requires the grammaticality of a sentence to be sensitive to pragmatic information such as the speaker's expectation. By saying 'pragmatically associated', she means that the property P is the speaker's expectation resulting from X rather than an actual result. That is, the speaker's expectation is dealt with as if it is truth-conditional. For instance, in (3b), according to Hong, 'going to a classroom' is expected to result from the sending action and the DO 'children' can be a semantic subject according to (7), because it is true in the speaker's expectation that students went to a classroom. So the DO 'children' can license the PM tul to occur after the phrase 'to a classroom'. However, what if the speaker expected children not to go to a classroom when he uttered (3b)? Hong would argue that the DO 'students' is still a semantic subject because the property 'not going to a classroom' is the speaker's expectation and it will be true according to his expectation that students did not go to a classroom. Actually, the speaker can have any expectation according to a discourse context in which he is engaged. So, anything in the world other than the DO 'children' in (3b) can be a semantic subject. For instance, as a result from the sending-students-to-a-classroom action, the speaker can expect the hearer, a teacher, to go to a classroom to teach students. According to the definition (7), any expression denoting the hearer will be a semantic subject. However, the denotation of the semantic subject is not plural, and it cannot license the PM tul to occur on the phrase 'to a classroom'. Then Hong's analysis should predict that (3b) is ungrammatical. Her analysis makes different predictions on the same sentence (3b) according to what expectation the speaker has in

According to her explanation, 'children' in (3a) is interpreted as the semantic subject of 'receiving the money' which the speaker expected to result from the giving action, 'students' in (3b) is interpreted as the semantic subject of 'going to the classroom' as a result of the sending action, and 'children' in (3c) is interpreted as the semantic subject of 'being healthy' as an expected result of the raising action. Since all the semantic subjects are plural, the occurrences of the PM tul within the properties resulting from the actions in (3) are grammatical.

However, Hong's account cannot explain the occurrences of the PM tul in the examples in (8) which do not have a three-place predicate or a lexical causative, but where the plural object 'friends' licenses the PM tul to occur.

- (8) a. Suni-ka chinkwu-tul-ul acim-ey-tul mannassta.
 NM friend-PL-AC morning-in-PM met
 'Suni met her friends in the morning.'
- b. Suni-ka chinkwu tul-ul tapang-eyse-tul mannassta.
 NM friend-PL-AC tearoom-in-PM met
 'Suni met her friends in a coffee house.'

a discourse. This contradiction results from the fact that Hong defines (7) based on the speaker's expectation which is of pragmatic factors which are not truth-conditional. This is why I treat the occurrence of the PM tul pragmatically in 3.

Third, according to her definition (7), A is a semantic subject of action X as well as of the property P resulting from X. For example, 'children' in (3b) is a subject of both the giving action and the property 'receiving' which results from the giving action. However, 'children' is a semantic subject of 'receiving money', not of 'giving money to children'. Of course I believe that this is not what Hong intended.

The speaker can utter (8a) when he knows that Suni used to meet her friends in the morning every week, or Suni met her friends, individually or several at a time, in the morning. The utterance (8b) can be said when the speaker knows that Suni met her friends in a tearoom every week. According to Hong, when either the syntactic or semantic subject is plural, the PM tu can occur. However, the syntactic subject Suni in (8) is singular, and the plural DO 'friends' cannot be a semantic subject because Hong defines the notion 'semantic subject' for three-place predicates and lexical causatives, yet the verb 'meet' in (8) does not belong to either of these two types of predicates. Even if we extend Hong's definition (7) to cases like (8), her account of (8) will not be consistent. Take (8b) for instance. According to (7), 'friends were in a tearoom' is expected to result from the meeting action and 'friends' can be a semantic subject and allow the PM tu to occur. However, what is expected in reality is that 'friends were in a tearoom' is not a result of the meeting action, but rather its precondition, because the meeting action would not have been completed if friends had not been in a tearoom. Furthermore, it is more likely to be expected that people will leave a tearoom after fulfilling a purpose of meeting somebody than that they will stay there without any purpose. They could stay in a tearoom, but their staying will be for other purposes such as having more tea, waiting for other persons, and so on. So what Hong's definition (7) predicts is contrary to our expectation.

Since Hong's analysis of the PM tu includes the idea of the plural syntactic subject, it faces the same problems as the syntactic account discussed in 2.1 did. That is, her analysis cannot explain cases like (4) where the PM tu cannot appear in an object NP indicating a unique entity even when the subject is plural, and cases like (5-6) where grammatically singular subjects which denotes plurality in the discourse control the PM tu.

2.2. Thematic Roles

Any semantic account relying on thematic roles, for instance, 'An argument with an agent role controls the PM tul' fails to predict the occurrences of the PM tul correctly. An argument in a sentence has only one thematic role. So, according to this approach, we expect an argument with an agent role in a sentence to be able to control the PM tul even if the sentence is transformed, for example passivized, and grammatical relations are changed. However, this prediction is contrary to the facts. For instance, the verb 'arrest' in (9) takes two arguments whose semantic roles are agent and patient. The NP 'detectives' has an agent role and 'the criminal' a patient role, both in the active sentence (9a) and in the passive one (9b).

(9) a. hyengsa-tul-i ku pemin-ul capasseyo-tul.

detective-PL-NM the criminal-AC arrested-PM

'Detectives arrested the criminal.'

b. *ku pemin-i hyengsa-tul-eykey caphiesseyo-tul.

the criminal-NM detective-PL-to was arrested-PM

'The criminal was arrested by detectives.'

If the argument with an agent role controls the PM tul in (9), then both (a) and (b) should be good, but in fact (b) is not possible. The controller of the PM tul is different in (9a) and (9b); it is the plural subject 'detectives' in (a) and the singular subject 'the criminal' in (b). So (9b) is bad. If the passive subject is plural, then it can control the PM tul as in (10). These examples show that any account depending on semantic roles fails to predict the PM tul properly.

(10) ku pemin-tul-i hyengsa-tul-eykey caphiesseyo-tul.

the criminal-PL-NM detective-PL-to was arrested-PM

'The criminals were arrested by detectives.'

3. Pragmatic Approach

In the previous two sections, I presented evidence against syntactic and semantic accounts for the PM tul. In this section I claim that the PM tul has no syntactic or semantic restrictions but only pragmatic restrictions; that is, it occurs freely in the grammar, and its appropriateness is pragmatically determined. For instance, (11a & b) are grammatical, but only (11a) is pragmatically good while (11b) is pragmatically bad.

- (11)a. haksayng-tul-i hakkyo-ey-tul kasseyo.
 student-PL-NM school-to-PM go
 'Students went to school.'
- b. #cey-ka hakkyo-ey-tul kasseyo.
 I-NM school-to-PM went
 'I went to school.'

I propose the following pragmatic restrictions (12) on the occurrence of the PM tul, on the basis of the counterexamples against syntactic and semantic accounts presented in the previous sections.

- (12) X can control the PM tul iff
- a) the referent of X is plural,
 - b) X is a subject of a proposition that is inferable from a sentence containing X, and
 - c) the PM tul occurs within a VP denoting X's predicate.

The first clause in (12) implies that the plurality of the controller of the PM tul is not always grammatically marked; namely, if the intended referent of X is plural in a discourse, it is a possible controller that allows the PM tul to occur. So the plurality of the controller of the PM tul can be grammatically marked by the PL tul like haksayng-tul-i 'students' in (13a) or conversationally inferred in a discourse like players of Haitai and haksayng-tul-uy kenkang-i 'students' health' in (5a & 6) repeated in (13).

- (13)a. Haitai-ka sillyek-tul-i cohta.
 NM skill-PM-NM is-good
 '(Players of) Haitai have good skill.'
- b. haksayng-tul-uy kenkang-i mopsi-tul nappacyessta.
 student-PL-of health-NM terribly-PM got worse
 'Students' health got terribly worse.'

The phrases 'Haitai' and 'students' health' in (13) are grammatically singular, but the speaker intends to refer to the players of Haitai and each student's health. According to (12a), the referents of the phrases can allow the PM tul to appear.

The second clause of (12) says that the controller of the PM tul is a subject of a proposition that is inferable from a sentence containing the controller. This allows an IO or DO as well as a syntactic subject to be a possible controller of the PM tul. Since a proposition is vacuously or trivially inferable from itself, the syntactic subject of a sentence as in (11a & 13) whose denotation in a discourse is plural can be a controller of the PM tul. I will explain how a plural IO or DO can license the PM tul as illustrated in examples in (3) repeated in (14) below.

- (14)a. nay-ka ai-tul-eykey ton-ul-tul cwuesseyo.
 I-NM children-to money-AC-PM gave
 'I gave money to children.'

- b. *nay-ka haksayng-tul-ul kyosil-lo-tul ponayssta.*
 I-NM student-PL-AC classroom-to-PM sent
 'I sent students to a classroom.'
- c. *Yonghi-ka ai-tul-ul kenkanghakey-tul k^hiwuessta.*
 NM children-AC healthily-PM raised
 'Yonghi has raised her children healthily.'

In (14), the IO 'children' (a), the DOs 'students' (b) and 'children' (c) are pragmatic controllers of the PM tul. For (14a), the proposition that children received money is inferable from sentence (14a), and 'children' is a subject of the inferred proposition. So the IO 'children' whose denotation is plural can license the PM tul on the DO 'money' even though the syntactic subject in (14a) is singular. In the case of (14b), if I sent students to a classroom, it is inferable that students went to a classroom, and 'students' is a subject of 'went to a classroom'. Therefore, the plural DO 'students' can control the PM tul on the phrase 'to a classroom'. For (14c), since Yonghi has raised (her) children healthily, it is inferable that the children are healthy. The plural IO 'children' is a subject of the predicate 'be healthy', and it allows the PM tul to occur on the adverb 'healthily'.

Likewise, the occurrences of the PM tul in (15) (=8) are explained according to (12).

- (15)a. *Suni-ka chinkwu-tul-ul acim-ey-tul mannassta.*
 NM friend-PL-AC morning-in-PM met
 'Suni met her friends in the morning.'
- b. *Suni-ka chinkwu-tul-ul tapang-eyse-tul mannassta.*
 NM friend-PL-AC tearoom-in-PM met
 'Suni met her friends in a tearoom.'

If I meet someone, it is presupposed that he should be in the appointed place at the appointed time. If he is waiting in the wrong place or at the wrong time, the meeting event cannot occur. For (15), it is inferable that Suni's friends were in the appointed place in the morning (a), and that Suni's friends were in a tearoom at the appointed time (b). The IO 'friends' is a subject of the propositions which are inferable from the sentences in (15). So the DO 'friends' can allow the PM tul to occur after achim-ey 'in the morning' (a) and tapang-eyse 'in a tearoom' (b).

However, the second clause of (12) does not imply that any proposition is inferable from a sentence. As I pointed out in note 6 as one of the problems Hong (1990) faces, we can infer a great number of propositions from one sentence depending on contexts in which the speaker and the hearer are engaged. Take for instance example (14a) where the PM tul is suffixed to the phrase ton 'money'. The proposition that children received money is not the only one which is inferable from (14a). We can also infer that you do not have to give the children money, that the children are studying now, that their father did not give them money, that their parents will thank me, and many others. However, it is not the case that a subject of any inferred proposition can be a controller of the PM tul. The first clause of (12) says that it is plural. This does not mean that any plural subject of those inferred propositions can be a controller of the PM tul, either. The second clause of the pragmatic restriction (12) requires the controller X of the PM tul to appear as a constituent of sentence (14a). So propositions whose plural subjects are not a constituent of (14a) are excluded. Among the inferred propositions enumerated above, 'children received money' and 'children are studying now' satisfy what the second clause of (12) requires, 'children' is an IO of (14a). Thus 'children' can be a controller of the PM tul in (14a). However, the proposition 'children received money' is the one which is inferable from (14a), but the proposition 'children is studying now' is not, because the third clause of (12) requires that a tul-suffixed phrase is within a VP denoting X's predicate and the VP 'received money' in the first proposition contains the tul-suffixed phrase 'money'.

Summing up, in the second clause of (12), a proposition that is inferable from a sentence is the one whose subject is a constituent of the sentence and which contains a tul-suffixed phrase.

The third clause of the pragmatic restriction in (12) says that the PM tul cannot occur outside the predicate of its controller. So it predicts why the PM tul at the sentence-final position in (16) is inappropriate.

- (16) #Suni-ka chinkwu-tul-ul tapang-eyse mannasse-tul.
 NM friend-PL-AC tearoom-in met-PM
 'Suni met her friends in a tearoom.'

Suni refers to a single person and cannot be a controller of the PM tul in (16). The DO 'friends' can be a subject of a predicate of being in a tearoom at an appointed time which is inferable from the literal meaning of (16). Since it is plural, it can control the PM tul within its predicate 'being in a tearoom' as seen in (15b). However, the PM tul in (16) does not occur within the predicate, and it has no controller. According to (12), its occurrence in (16) is inappropriate. If 'those guys' replaces 'Suni' in (16), the PM tul at the sentence-final position will be good.

The third clause of (12) also predicts why the PM tul on its controller is inappropriate as seen in (17).

- (17) #nay-ka haksayng-tul-ul-tul kyosil-lo ponayssta.
 I-NM student-PL-AC-PM classroom-to sent
 'I sent students to a classroom.'

In (17), the grammatical subject 'I' is singular. Thus it cannot be the controller of the PM tul. Since the proposition that students went to a classroom is inferable from (17), the DO 'students' can be a controller of the PM tul. However, the PM tul appears on 'students' which is not within the VP 'went to a classroom', which

does not satisfy the third clause of (12). This is why (17) is inappropriate. If the grammatical subject of (17) is replaced by 'teachers', the occurrence of the PM tul on the DO will be good, because the plural subject can control it.

Another advantage of the pragmatic account is that it is pragmatically explained why the PM tul cannot occur in an object NP that refers to a unique entity in the world, as seen in (18) (=4a & b).

- (18) a. #haksayng-tul-i Suni-tul-ul/lul-tul ttalyesseyo.
 student-PL-NM PM-AC/AC-PM beat
 'Students beat Suni.'
- b. #haksayng-tul-i hay-ul-tul/tul-ul poayo.
 student-PL-NM sun-AC-PM/PM-AC see
 'Students are looking at the sun.'

Since the PM tul represents information about the plurality relevant to its pragmatic uses, Koreans believe that, even if the PM doesn't have a function of pluralizing its preceding constituent in grammar like the nominal plural marker tul, the uniqueness of existence cannot go with the concept of the plurality.³ So using the PM tul on the object NPs in (31) is bad.

4. Conclusion

I showed that the occurrence of the PM tul is not predicted syntactically or semantically. I proposed a pragmatic restriction on the PM tul: X can control the

³ Generally, the speaker uses the PM tul to indicate (1) that the referent of its controller is involved in more than one event that is represented by his utterance, (2) that he is emphasizing the individuality of the PM tul-controller, (3) that its controller is plural, and so on. For the details of these uses of the PM tul, that is, how its plural information is relevant to its uses, see section 3.3 of Lee (1992).

PM tu iff X is plural, X is a subject of a proposition that is inferable from a sentence containing X, and the PM tu occurs within a VP denoting X's predicate. And I demonstrated that the pragmatic account of the PM tu makes a correct prediction on its occurrences.

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