

## Idioms in Korean and Japanese: phase-based account

Within the Minimalist framework (e.g., Chomsky 2000), where the syntactic computation is interpreted cyclically in phases as the derivation is built up, it is predicted that there should be a strict structural boundary restricting idiomatic interpretations. Voice, which merges external to VP and introduces an agent, is argued to be one such boundary (Harley and Stone, in press). This paper argues that another VP-external head, high applicative head (ApplH) (1) can also restrict the domain of idiomatic interpretation, but a VP-internal head, such as low applicative head (ApplL) (2) cannot, by providing evidence from Korean and Japanese. Theoretically, this paper lends novel empirical support to a cyclic domain of semantic interpretation, i.e., phases, as ApplH, like Voice, constitutes a phasal head (McGinnis 2003).

McGinnis (2003) argues that ApplH and ApplL (Pylkkänen 2008) can be distinguished in terms of phases: ApplH is a phasal head but ApplL is not. I show that this phasal difference between ApplH and ApplL has consequences for idiomatic interpretations. In particular, I argue that (i) the phasal head ApplH, which merges external to VP, can restrict the domain of idiomatic interpretation (1), but (ii) the non-phasal low applicative head (ApplL), which takes a DP complement and merges below VP (2), cannot. Thus, the specifier of ApplH is excluded from idiomatic interpretations, but the specifier of ApplL is not. An additional prediction made by (1) and (2) is that anything below VP, but not above, can belong to an idiomatic expression.



Compelling evidence for ApplH being a structural boundary for idiomatic interpretation (1) comes from the contrast between the Double Object Construction (DOC) and clauses with postpositional datives in Korean. As shown in (3), in the DOC, the verb and the direct object form an idiomatic expression, as in 'give false hope', but the indirect object does not belong to the idiomatic interpretation. Unlike DOCs, postpositional datives (PPs) can belong to the idiomatic interpretation, as in (4). In fact, in contrast to these PPs, in Korean an indirect object in the DOC never belongs to an idiomatic expression (Kim, L. 2012).

(3) Swuni-ka [<sub>ApplHP</sub> ku ai-lul [<sub>VP</sub> palam-ul neh]]-ess-ta  
 Suni-NOM that child-ACC wind-ACC put-PAST-DEC  
 'Suni gave the child false hope.'

(4) Swuni-ka [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> ip-ey] [mothe-lul tal]]-ass-ta.  
 Suni-NOM mouth-P electric.motor-ACC put.on-PAST-DEC  
 'Suni spoke very fast and quickly.'

As the indirect object in DOC merges in the specifier of ApplHP (3) (Kim, L. 2012), the exclusion of the indirect object from the idiomatic expression is precisely what is predicted by (1). By contrast, postpositional datives merge below VP (4) (Park and Whitman 2003), like the specifier of ApplL (2); consequently, the postpositional datives can belong to the idiomatic interpretation, as we would predict from (1) and (2). Other constructions in Korean that involve ApplH further provide support for (1). For example, in adversity passives, the dative DP occurs in the specifier of ApplHP (Kim, K. 2012). As predicted by (1), the dative DP in an adversity clause does not belong to the idiomatic interpretation, as in (5).

- (5) Swuni-ka (caki-uy silswuhan-kes-lul)  
 Suni-NOM (self-GEN mistake-do-NL-ACC)  
 [AppHP Inho-eykey [VP telmi-lul cap]-hi]-ess-ta  
 Inho-DAT neck-ACC catch-PASS-PAST-DEC

'Suni was caught by Inho (regarding the mistake that she had made).'

Evidence for ApplL not being a boundary for idiomatic interpretation (2) comes from Japanese ditransitives. In recent studies (Miyagawa and Tsujioka 2004, Kishimoto 2008), indirect dative (*ni*)-marked DPs in the Japanese DOC have been shown to merge as the specifier of ApplHP, whereas locative postpositional datives merge in the VP, below ApplHP, as in (6). This is similar to Korean ((3) and (4)).

- (6) [AppHP **DP-*ni*** [AppHP' [ApplH [VP **PP** [V' [DP-*o* [V [AppLP **idiomatic DP-*ni*]]]]]]]**

Unlike Korean, however, the dative-marked DP in the DOC can form an idiomatic expression with the verb. Importantly, only idiomatic dative DPs merge below VP, in ApplLP (6) (Kishimoto 2008). When a dative DP is not idiomatic, on the other hand, it merges in the specifier of ApplH (6). Evidence for this comes from nominalization: in (7), the idiomatic DP, *kuti*, has a verbal marking, *-ni*, which is assigned by a c-commanding V. The idiomatic DP disallows the nominal marking *-e no*, as it is not in a local relation with the nominalizer. On the other hand, a non-idiomatic DP, such as *himawari* in (8), has a nominal marking assigned by the nominalizer. That is, this DP merges above VP, in the specifier of AppHP (6); thus, it is not within the c-command domain of V and is unable to have the verbal marking *-ni* (8). Importantly, *-ni* marking on the idiomatic DP in (7) is not a postposition, as it cannot be replaced with the P *-e* (*\*kunit-e* 'mouth-P'), in contrast to PPs in ditransitives (9).

- (7) omotta koto-no [VP [AppLP **kuti-*ni*/\*-*e no*** dasi]-niku-sa  
 thought thing-GEN mouth-DAT/-to-GEN let.out-difficult-NL  
 'The difficulty of saying what is on one's mind.'

- (8) [AppHP **himawari-*e no*/\*-*ni*** [AppHP' [ApplH [VP mizu-no [V atae]]]-niku-sa  
 sunflower-to-GEN/-DAT water-GEN give-difficult-NL  
 'The difficulty of giving water to the sunflowers.'

The contrast between (7) and (8) in markings in nominalization indicates that an idiomatic dative DP must appear below VP, while non-idiomatic one must appear above VP: namely in ApplL and in ApplH respectively (6). Interestingly, this result is precisely the prediction made by the phasal difference between (1) and (2). Moreover, similarly to PPs in postpositional datives in Korean (4), locative PPs in Japanese ditransitives can belong to an idiomatic interpretation (9) as they are below VP, which also supports the additional prediction of (1) and (2).

- (9) [VP [PP kayui tokoro-*ni*/-*e*] te-ga todok]-u  
 itchy place-DAT /-to hand-NOM reach-PRES  
 'give a timely service.'

The current account is favored over idiom formation in Bruening (2010) in which one constituent has to select the other in order for the two constituents to form an idiom. Under this view, the specifier of a functional head, e.g., ApplH, can belong to the idiomatic interpretation, contrary to fact in Korean (3) and Japanese (8), as the specifier is selected by the head.

The proposed analysis provides a unified account of the structural restrictions on idiomatic interpretation in both Korean and Japanese. Moreover, it provides novel support for cyclic domains of semantic interpretation, i.e., phases. Lastly, the proposed analysis lends interesting support to the view that a phrase other than vP can be a phase (e.g., Bobaljik and Wurmbrand 2003, Legate 2003, McGinnis 2003).