Title: Notes on word order variation in Korean

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Abstract

This article aims to develop an analysis of scrambling or word order variation in Korean from a pragmatic/cognitive perspective. Although extensive research has been carried out on this issue, most extant research attempts to provide analyses of the phenomenon by identifying grammatical features posited for syntactic operations. Unlike the previous research, we demonstrate that word order variation needs to be understood with respect to its communicative function; it is motivated by the speaker's intention to convey information more effectively. It is emphasized that understanding the association between information structure and word order variation should be an essential task for the analysis of the latter phenomenon. We further discuss five conversational strategies that motivate non-canonical word orders, which include juxtaposition, backmasking, right dislocation, add-on, and floated quantifier strategies.

1. Introduction

Korean exhibits the canonical SOV word order, as shown in (1). Sentence (1) presupposes that the addressee is familiar with *Chelswu,* and an apple or the event of *Chelswu*'s eating an apple is interpreted as new information.[1]

(1) Chelswu-nun ecey   sakwa-lul   mek-ess-ta.
     C-TOP   yesterday   apple-ACC   eat-PST-DCL
     'Chelswu ate an apple yesterday.'

The word order presented in (1), however, may be reconfigured in different speech contexts, as illustrated in (2a–c).

(2) a. Chelswu-nun sakwa-lul   ecey   mek-ess-ta.
        C-TOP   apple-ACC   yesterday   eat-PST-DCL
     b. sakwa-lul   ecey   mek-ess-ta,   Chelswu-nun.
        apple-ACC   yesterday   eat-PST-DCL   C-TOP
     c. ecey   sakwa-lul   mek-ess-ta,   Chelswu-nun.
        yesterday   apple-ACC   eat-PST-DCL   C-TOP
     For all examples, roughly: 'Chelswu ate an apple yesterday.'

This article aims to identify the motivation behind word order variation in Korean from a pragmatic and cognitive linguistics perspective.[2] We argue that the word order variation arises due to the rearrangement of the Information Structure (IS) components for communicative purposes. For example, focus elements tend to appear preverbally in Korean. Therefore, the most natural interpretation of (1) is *sakwa* 'apple' as a focus, while *ecey* 'yesterday' gives rise to a focal interpretation in (2a). However, the canonical arrangement of topic-focus may be overridden by the speaker's communicative strategies, which include juxtaposition, backmasking, right dislocation, add-on, and floated quantifiers (FQs). We demonstrate that

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[1] The abbreviations used in the glosses are as follows. ACC: Accusative; ADN: Adnominalizer; ADVZ: Adverbializer; CJT: Conjecture; CL: Classifier; CNTS: Contrastive; CONJ: Conjunction, COP: Copula; DCL: Declarative; END: Sentence Ender; END.POL: Politeness Sentence Ender; GEN: Genitive; KES: the *kes* 'thing' nominal; LOC: Locative; NOM: Nominative; NEG: Negation; PL: Plural, POL: Polite; PST: Past; Q: Question; TOP: Topic.

[2] In particular, we assume Langacker's Cognitive Grammar when we analyze topicality.

sentences like (2b) and (2c) are felicitous, even when *Chelswu* gives rise to a topic; the old information appears at the end of a sentence to highlight the new information while maintaining its topicality. These are cases of backmasking, which will be discussed in Section 5.1.

It has been widely reported that word order variation in Korean is associated with discourse effects, such as topic and focus (see Lee 1993; Kim 1995; Choi 1999; Lee & Cho 2003; Son 2001; Ko 2018, among others). Taking a Minimalist perspective, Ko (2018: 30) states that "[i]t seems reasonable to assume that some sort of discourse force underlies the scrambling operation in syntax." Considering the richness of discussion on the connection between word order variation and IS, our viewpoint is anything but novel. However, much of the research on word order variation (or scrambling) in Korean ultimately attempts to identify formal features that trigger it. In contrast to this approach, the present article identifies cognitive-pragmatic motivations for word order variation. The other vexing issue we observe from the majority of previous research is a lack of context for the data analyzed. While IS can only be properly understood in a discourse context, many researchers deal with independent sentences in an isolated context. There is no denying that language features are typically in relationship with each other and do not occur in a vacuum. In emphasizing the crucial role of context in IS, we point out the methodological problem with many of the previous approaches, in which some crucial examples cited to support a structure-based analysis can be judged differently when another context is given. Let us consider (3), which Ko (2007) uses to support her Cyclic Linearization analysis of Korean scrambling.[3] While we concur with Ko's (2007) judgment for (3), a slightly modified version of (3) becomes fully acceptable without an additional context, as shown in (4).[4]

(3) *haksayng-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   sey-myeng   masi-ess-ta.
    student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three-CL   drink-PST-DCL
    Intended: 'Three students drank beer.'
    (Ko 2007: 50–51)

(4) haksayng-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   sey-myeng-man   masi-ess-ta.
    student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three-CL-only   drink-PST-DCL
    'Only three students drank beer.'

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[3] Cyclic Linearization refers to movements that represent the result of compounding a series of local relations.

[4] Ko (2014) and Ahn & Ko (2021) note the acceptability of (4) as well. They propose that *sey-myeng-man* in (4) needs to be treated as an adverbial floated quantifier, which is merged outside *v*P. Their solution, however, is purely syntax-based without recourse to IS.

Since the sole difference between (3) and (4) is the presence of the focus marker *-man* 'only,' it is natural to assume that *sey-myeng* 'three-person' acquires a focus status, and its status change is associated with the improvement of acceptability. In our analyses, the improved acceptability of (4) is naturally accounted for because we observe that the FQ tends to "float" to a focus position. That is, while (3) sounds awkward out of context here, it can be rescued if a given context forces a focus reading of *sey-myeng* 'three-person.'[5] We discuss the impact of IS on the degree of acceptability in more detail in later sections.

Another group of linguists (Kim 2007; Shin 2007, 2009; Kang 2014, among others), known as the *Kwukehak* scholars, attempts to identify pragmatic motivations for word order variation. These researchers generally provide rich contextual information, making a connection between IS and word order variation more meaningful. They, however, discuss limited types of data and are not interested in proposing a higher level of generalization concerning word order variation in Korean. We hope to fill the gaps in the literature and gain a full picture as to what makes word order variation available in Korean.

This article is outlined as follows: in Sections 2 and 3, we define the topic and focus, which clarifies which definitions we subscribe to in our analyses. Section 4 discusses the juxtaposition strategy, and Section 5 discusses two strategies—backmasking and right dislocation—under the umbrella term *postposed topics*. We discuss the add-on and FQ strategies in Sections 6 and 7, respectively. Section 8 concludes this article by briefly summarizing our findings and the implications.

2. Topic in Korean

It is well-known that researchers often use the notions of topic and focus with different definitions, which leads to unnecessary confusion in the study of IS. Therefore, it is essential to clarify how we use these terms in this article.

2.1. Defining topic[6]

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[5] The view of the preverbal position as a focus position has been supported by Kuno (1978, 1995), Kim (1998), Han (2000), and Shin (2007, 2009).
[6] For a more detailed discussion on topic and focus in Korean, please refer to Park & Yeon (2023).

What we have in mind as our pivotal definition of topicality comes from Erteschik-Shir (2007), as summarized in (5).[7]

(5) a. The topic is what a statement is about. (aboutness)
    b. The topic is used to invoke "knowledge in the possession of an audience."
       (referential givenness)
    c. The statement is assessed as putative information about its topic. (relational givenness)

While Erteschik-Shir (2007) is not specific on the precise distinction between referential and relational givenness, we interpret her definition of givenness as encompassing both. Then, the topic must be defined as in (6).[8]

(6) a. The topic is relationally given in the sense that it is what the sentence/utterance is about.
    b. The topic is referentially given in the sense that it must be familiar to the hearer.

In (6a), relational givenness partitions conceptual representation of a sentence into two, [X Y], where X is what the sentence is about.[9] The relational givenness indicated by this type of partition, however, is independent of referential givenness.

    Another issue we need to clarify is whether every sentence needs a topic. Some scholars, such as Jun (2019) and Choi (2016), argue that a topic is optional at least in Korean, based on common examples like (7).

(7) (hakkyo-ey   way salam-i   epsci?—) onul-pwuthe panghak-iketun.
   school-LOC why people-NOM absent   today-from   break-because
   'Why aren't there people on campus? Because the break starts today.'
   (Y. Choi 2016: 235)

Examples like (7) are widely observed in English as well, as in (8).

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[7] The identifications of aboutness, referential givenness, and relational givenness are our own; Erteschik-Shir's original work does not provide these identifications for (5).

[8] The definition presented in (6) is comparable to Gundel and Fretheim (2004).

[9] This type of partition has been known by different names, such as presupposition-focus (Chomsky 1971; Jackendoff 1972), topic-comment (Gundel 1974), theme-rheme (Vallduví and Engdahl 1996), and topic-predicate (Erteschik-Shir 1997).

(8) (Situation: The speaker has two roommates, John and Kris. After discovering the money on the dresser is gone, the speaker says to her roommate, Kris.) John stole the money!

In both (7) and (8), the utterances do not include overt topics. However, it does not mean that there is no topic; rather, the topics are implicitly expressed as stage topics, which indicate the spatio-temporal parameters of the sentence (see Erteschik-Shir 2007: 16). We adopt Erteschik-Shir's stage topic because our definition is based on Strawson (1964), in which topics are the pivots for assessment; therefore, every sentence needs a topic.

2.2 Reference point

Another concept related to topicality is *reference point*, as proposed by Langacker (1993, 2001, 2008, 2009). Humans have the basic cognitive ability to invoke the conception of one entity in order to make mental contact with another. The readily accessible entity with which the conceptualizer makes initial contact is called a reference point, and the less accessible entity contacted via the reference point is called a target. As a readily accessible entity for the conceptualizer, the reference point tends to be definite and discourse- or hearer-old information. This reference point ability has numerous linguistic manifestations, as shown in (9).

(9) a. the car's headlight (possession)
    b. That book, we should have never bought. (topicalization)
    c. That book, it never disappoints me. (left-dislocation)

The possessor in (9a) and *that book* in (9b–c) must be familiar to the hearer to be felicitous; therefore, they are associated with hearer-old information. It is worth noting that while the topic is a reference point in the sense that it is a familiar entity to the interlocutor, not all reference points are topics. For example, the possessor within the NP in (9a) serves as the reference point with respect to the head nominal, but it cannot be a topic.

The correlation between reference point and topic becomes clearer when we encounter Korean examples, as in (10). Though grammatical encodings differ, all left-most nominals in (10) exhibit topicality in the sense that *Cheli* is given referentially as well as relationally. The

sentences are about *Cheli*, and he is familiar to the hearer. Here, we denote topical entities in italicized bold.

(10) a. ***Cheli-nun***   apeci-ka   pwucaya.
          C-TOP   father-NOM   rich
     b. ***Cheli-ka***   apeci-ka   pwucaya.
          C-NOM   father-NOM   rich
     c. ***Cheli,***   apeci-ka   pwucaya.
          C   father-NOM   rich
     For all examples: 'Cheli, (his) father is rich.'

We argue that the overarching property of *Cheli* in (10a–c) is that it is a reference point; it becomes a prime candidate for a topic. The examples in (10) also demonstrate that different morphological markings can be used to denote a topic. While *Chelswu* is marked with different affixes in (10a) and (10b), it is construed as a topic in both examples.

    As indicated, being a topic is sufficient for being a reference point; likewise, being a reference point is necessary for topicality. Let us now consider a more complicated example in (11). The answer, *ku chayk-ul*, is scrambled to the sentence-initial position. Here, the enclosed portion within a pair of square brackets denotes the focus, and the capital letters indicate that the entity exhibits prosodic prominence.

(11) (Cheli-ka   mwues-ul   ilk-ess-tako?—) [KU CHAYK]-ul, Cheli-ka ___ ilkesse.
      C-NOM   what-ACC   read-PST-Q   that book-ACC   C-NOM   read
      '(What did Cheli read?—) That book, Cheli read.'

As *ku chayk* is the answer to the posed question in (11), it cannot be a topic.[10] However, *ku chayk* cannot be completely new to the hearer either; to make the answer felicitous, *ku chayk* must be hearer-old. Though non-topical, *ku chayk* gains a certain degree of prominence by appearing at the beginning of the sentence, which is generally a property manifested by a topical reference point. The question then is how *ku chayk*, as a non-topical element, is associated with the base clause informationally, and what motivates the scrambling of *ku chayk*. This is a puzzling problem the focalization in (11) presents. We discuss this issue in Section 4.

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[10] As we discuss in Section 3.1, *ku chayk* is an answer focus.

3. Focus in Korean

Büring (2016) identifies three types of foci: contrastive, elaboration, and answer. Among the three, the answer focus is most relevant to the present article. An answer focus holds a relation between a question and the focus value of the answer in the question-answer configuration, as shown in (12). The question in (12) makes multiple alternatives—all seven BTS members— contextually salient, while the answer relates to exactly one alternative.

(12) (Which one of the BTS members is the lead vocalist?—)
                    [JUNGKOOK] is the lead vocalist.

Just like many other languages, Korean marks foci in multiple ways. Some representative examples are illustrated in (13).

(13) a. (London-ey   encey wasse?—)   [ECEY]   oasseyo.
           L-in   when   came   yesterday   came
           '(When did you come to London?—) I came yesterday.'
       b. (nwuka   cip-ul   phalasse?—) [Minhi]-ka   cip-ul   phalasse.
           who   house-ACC   sold   M-NOM   house-ACC   sold
           '(Who sold a house?—) Minhi sold a house.'
       c. (haksayng-tul ta   ku   mwuncey-lul   phwulessney.)
           student-PL   all that problem-ACC   solved
                                     ani, [Cheli]-man ku   mwuncey-lul   phwulesse.
                                     no   C-only   that problem-ACC solved
                                     ung, [Cheli]-to/kkaci/kaccito ku   mwuncey-lul   phwulesse.
                                     yes, C-too/even/even   that problem-ACC   solved
           (All students solved the problem). No, only Cheli solved the problem.
                                               Yes, even Cheli (or Cheli too) solved the problem.
       d. (Cheli-ka   mwuel   cal   hay?—) Cheli-ka [Yenge]-NUN   cal   hay.
           C-NOM   what   well   do   C-NOM   English-CNTS   well do
           '(What does Cheli do well?—) Cheli does English well (but he does not do other
           things/subjects well.)

While the focus exhibits prosodic prominence in (13a), the other three examples mark foci without it. In (13b), the focus is marked with the nominative marker *-ka*, and (13c) demonstrates the foci marked with other markers, often called delimiters. While *-nun/-un* is widely known as the topic marker, it can be used to mark a contrastive focus, as in (13d). Focusing in Korean

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relies not so much on prosodic prominence as on the morphological markings. Examples (13b–d) show some foci that are realized without prosodic prominence.

4. The juxtaposition strategy

While a focus tends to appear immediately before the main verb, it may appear at the beginning of a sentence, as in (15); let us assume that (15) is an answer to the question posed in (14). Examples like (15) are frequently observed in naturally occurring conversations, but they are not random or context-independent.

(14) ku   haksayng-tul-un   ecey   yeki wa-ss-ess-nuntey,
      that student-PL-TOP   yesterday   here come-PST-PST-CONN
      nwukwu-lul Chelswu-ka manna-ss-e?
      who-ACC   C-NOM   meet-PST-Q
      'As for the students who came here yesterday, who did Chelswu meet?'
(15) Yenghuy-lul   Chelswu-ka manna-ss-e.
      Y-ACC   C-NOM   meet-PST-DCL
      '(Among the students,) Chelswu met Yenghuy.'

The speaker of (15) presupposes that the addressee is already familiar with several people *Chelswu* might have met, including *Yenghuy*. The answer in (15) is understood as about the students and is assessed as putative information about the students under the given context. After making the group of people salient, the speaker selects *Yenghuy* as the answer. Put differently, the set of people gives rise to the sentence's topic, and *Yenghuy* acquires a focal interpretation. In this situation, *Chelswu* is in the background, instead of being a topic.

     At first glance, it appears that *Yenghuy* in (15) exhibits a reference point property because the speaker accesses the clause *Chelswu-ka manna-ss-e* 'Chelswu met (someone)' through *Yenghuy*. Then, *Yenghuy* may be construed as a topic. Upon closer examination, though, this analysis is erroneous. What becomes salient in the question-answer pair is a set of people, not just one individual. That is, the set of people serves as a reference point with respect to the inner clause. From this set, the speaker selects one particular individual, which functions as a focus, as illustrated in (16). Let us assume that the students who came here yesterday include *Tongswu*, *Yenghuy*, and *Swuni* in (14).

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(16) ***{Tongswu, [Yenghuy], Swuni}-lul***   Chelswu-ka   manna-ss-e.
      {T, [Y], S}-ACC   C-NOM   meet-PST-DCL
      'As for Tongswu, Yenghuy, Swuni, it is Yenghuy whom Chelswu met.'

A focus appearing within a topical set is nothing unusual. Erteschik-Shir (2007) argues that contrastive elements can function as both topics and foci. For the question in (17), the contextually available set provides a topic, and the member selected from this set gives rise to a focus.

(17)   (Who is the smart one?—)
              {[John], Bill} [is the smart one].
       (Modified from Erteshik-Shir 2007: 49)

Turning back to (15), the accusative-marked answer appears at the beginning of (15), which is the primary candidate for the topic position. At the same time, it is the object of the verb, as indicated by the accusative marking. By preposing the answer focus, the speaker indicates that the accusative-marked nominal is indirectly associated with the topic by being a member of the topic set. It needs to be clarified what we mean by indirect association. As previously indicated, *ku haksayng-tul-un* 'those students' is construed as a topic in (14) and (15); the statements are about the students, neither about *Chelswu* nor about *Yenghuy*. The topic also serves as a reference point in relation to the target proposition in (15), which refers to the clause *Chelswu-ka manna-ss-ta*. Since *Yenghuy* is a focus and is the object of the verb, it corresponds to the landmark in the relationship profiled by the verb.[11] At the same time, *Yenghuy* belongs to the topical set. This is the reason *Yenghuy* appears to exhibit both topical and focal properties in (15). The motivation for focalization in (15) is explained by the function of reference point. As a reference point, the set of students acquires topicality. In the case of (15), a focal entity appears in the prominent position as being part of the topical set. It thus naturally gains a certain degree of prominence, thereby resulting in a "highlighted" focus construction. Furthermore, in (15), the speaker indicates that the accusative-marked nominal is the answer for the question posed in (14) by placing it in the same position as the *wh*-word in (14). Therefore, the juxtaposition strategy, as

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[11] Trajector/landmark alignment is a way of displaying conceptual prominence in CG. While trajector is the most prominent participant in a profiled relationship, landmark is made prominent as a secondary participant. For the purpose of our discussion, we may equate landmark to an object here.

we call it, conveniently performs two tasks; aligning the answer focus with the *wh*-word not only makes the communication effective, but also sorts out what the answer is about and what the new information is.

Thus far, we have discussed complicated examples with a focus nominal belonging to a topical set. But a preposed nominal may be a simple focus without being associated with a topic, as in (18b) when it is uttered as an answer for (18a). The pragmatic function of (18) is rather straightforward. By juxtaposing the focal element with the *wh*-word in the question, the speaker effectively highlights the new information; it appears in the conceptually prominent position in the sentence—the beginning.

(18) a. Chelswu-nun ecey   yongton   pat-ko   paykhwacem ka-ss-nuntey.
     C-TOP   yesterday   allowance receive-COMP   mall   go-PST-EDN
     mwues-ul   Chelswu-ka   sa-ess-e?
     what-ACC   C-NOM   buy-PST-Q
     'Chelswu got an allowance yesterday and went to the mall. What did
      Chelswu buy?'
   b. thokkithel cangkap-ul   Chelswu-ka   sa-ss-e.
     rabbit.fur gloves-ACC   C-NOM   V-PST-DCL
     'It is rabbit-fur gloves that Chelswu bought.'

The speaker tends to put a more accessible entity at the beginning of a sentence as a reference point or a topic. As a focal entity, however, *thokkithel cangkap* 'rabbit-fur gloves' in (18b) does not exhibit a reference point property; hence it is less easily accessible to the hearer than any reference point entity. Using the juxtaposition strategy, the speaker of (18b) makes *thokkithel cangkap* 'rabbit-fur gloves' immediately available for the hearer as an answer to the *wh*-question. The marked word order observed in (18b) is then a characteristic manifestation of a discourse-pragmatic strategy to make a non-topical and non-reference point entity more accessible to the hearer.

5. Postposed topic

5.1 The backmasking strategy

Backmasking refers to a technique in which a sound or message is recorded backward onto a track, which is meant to be played forward.[12] We refer to the phenomenon described in (19) as backmasking because the topical nominal *Chelswu-nun/ka* appears at the end of the sentence. As a topic, *Chelswu-nun/ka* is meant to be "about" the target clause.[13]

(19) (Situation: Chelswu's teachers are talking about him. One teacher was surprised that he is going to an expensive private college. Noticing her reaction, another teacher says the following.)

apeci-ka   pwuca-ya, Chelswu-nun/ka
father-NOM rich-DCL   C-TOP/NOM
'(His) father is rich, as for Chelswu.'

There is no denying that *Chelswu* is the topic in (19); the statement is about *Chelswu*, which invokes knowledge already in possession of the audience, and the statement is assessed as putative information about *Chelswu*. In addition, *Chelswu* is given both referentially and relationally. Nonetheless, *Chelswu* appears after the focus *apeci-ka pwuca-ya* '(someone's) father is rich,' which is non-canonical in Korean and in many other languages.

    The utterance made in (19) is truth-conditionally identical to (20), where *Chelswu* gives rise to a topic. In (20), *Chelswu* serves as the reference point with respect to the inner clause *apeci-ka pwuca-ya*.

(20) Chelswu-nun/ka apeci-ka   pwuca-ya
C-TOP/NOM   father-NOM   rich-DCL
'As for Chelswu, (his) father is rich.'

The reference point status of the first nominal in (20) has been extensively discussed in the literature, and interested readers should refer to the representative research, such as Kumashiro & Langacker (2003) and Kumashiro (2016). These authors assume that the reference point appears in the left-most position, leaving utterances like (19) unexplained. While there is a way to resolve this puzzle using a technical apparatus within the framework these researchers adopt, we propose a simpler solution based on IS.

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[12] Wikipedia definition (accessed Feb 7, 2022).
[13] Non-topical elements may be postposed, too. We discuss this issue in Section 6.

In Korean, a sentence does not require a grammatically encoded topic, particularly when the identification of a topic becomes possible for the addressee through a context. The first portion of the utterance in (19)—before the postposed topic—exemplifies such a case. Notwithstanding, the speaker may still provide a topic after the introduction of a focus to denote the mental address for the focus element. Providing an explicit topic is preferable to inferring it from a context because "guesswork" may not always be successful. For example, the topic of (19) without the postposed topic may not be clear to some people if the speaker utters the sentence looking at someone in the room; the hearer might interpret the sentence as a new episode (discourse) and construe the person the speaker looks at as the topic of this new episode. By providing the topic at the end of the utterance, the hearer is given an opportunity to "correct" her topic identification if it was not successful in her first attempt. If so, the backmasking strategy is an important tactic to make the hearer stay on the same page as the speaker. Note that although *Chelswu* appears at the end of the sentence in (19), its reference point function is maintained, and it is still the topic of the sentence; the IS of the utterance in (19) is simply encoded backward.

5.2 The right dislocation strategy

Most researchers use the term right dislocation to include the phenomenon described in Section 5.1. However, we limit the term to the phenomenon where a resumptive pronoun occurs in the base clause, as in (21).

(21) Chelswu-ka kukes-ul   ecey   mek-ess-e,   sakwa.
      C-NOM   that.thing-ACC yesterday eat-PST-END   apple
      'Chelswu ate it yesterday, an apple.'

There exists a sizable amount of research on the right dislocation construction in Korean. The major concerns of the researchers revolve around how to syntactically associate the (null) pronoun with the extracted nominal, or how to identify the different types of right dislocation constructions, such as gapped vs. gapless (Ko 2014, 2015, 2016; Ahn & Cho 2016; Furuya 2018, among others). We set aside these issues for two reasons. First, the theoretical framework we assume—Cognitive Grammar—does not allow null elements or movements. Second, our main goal is to explicate how the form reflects its function.

We observe that a topical nominal tends to resist the right dislocation operation when the postposed entity is a bare nominal; while (22a–b) are awkward, (22c) is fully acceptable. By contrast, non-topical items, such as foci and adverbials, are much more susceptible to right dislocation, as illustrated in (22d–e).

(22) a. ?? ku pwun-un   apeci-ka   yumyeng-hay, Kim-paksa-nim.
           that person-TOP father-NOM   famous-DCL   K-Dr-HON
           'She has a famous father—Dr. Kim.'
     b. ?? kyay-nun   chayk-ul   ilk-ess-e,   Naomi.
           that.person-TOP   book-ACC   read-PST-END N
           'That person read the book—Naomi.'
     c. ku pwun$_i$-un   apeci-ka   yumyeng-hay,   Kim-paksa-nim$_i$-un/-i.
           that person-TOP father-NOM   famous-DCL   Kim-Dr-HON-TOP/-NOM
           'She has a famous father, as for Dr. Kim.'
     d. Chelswu-nun   kukes$_i$-ul   ecey   sa-ess-e,   say-khemphyuthe$_i$.
           C-TOP   that.thing-ACC   yesterday buy-PST-END   new-computer.
           'Chelswu bought that thing yesterday, a new computer.'
     e. Chelswu-nun ku chayk-ul   kulehkey$_i$ ilk-ess-e,   acwu-ppalli$_i$.
           C-TOP   that book-ACC that.way read-PST-END very-quickly
           'Chelswu read the book in that way, very quickly.'

In (22a), the pronominal *ku pwun* 'that person' is an irrefutable topic and therefore functions as a reference point with respect to the target proposition. It should be stressed that the conceptual content of the reference point, *ku pwun*, is only partially saturated in the base clause because pronominals are characteristically used deictically or anaphorically. The bare nominal, *Kim-paksa-nim* 'Dr. Kim,' may be construed as the reference point by establishing a correspondence relationship with the pronominal, sanctioning the fully saturated conceptual content of the reference point. Put differently, this correspondence relationship fulfills the anaphoric function of the pronominal. If the pronominal is used deictically, the postposed nominal may be construed as an add-on item, which elaborates the conceptual content of *apeci* 'father' in an appositive manner.[14] These two competing strategies make the conceptualization of (22a) difficult for the hearer due to the failure of topic identification. A similar pattern is observed when the object is inanimate, as in (22b). *Naomi* may correspond to the established pronominal reference point or it may be associated with the focal entity, *chayk* 'book'; e.g., *Naomi* may refer to Tanizaki's

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[14] The add-on strategy is introduced in Section 6.

famous novel. The rescue mechanism of (22a) is straightforwardly explained. When the postposed nominal is marked with *-nun* or *-i*, it is unambiguously associated with the pronominal, sanctioning a fully saturated conceptual content of the reference point. When marked with *-nun*, the postposed nominal in (22c) serves as a reference point for the target proposition; this is possible due to the same marker the topical and the postposed nominals adopt, as well as the topical pronominal's partial conceptual content property. Note that (22a) may also be rescued with the nominative-marked postposed nominal because *-i* may also mark a topic, as we discussed earlier. The same rescue mechanism can be applied to (22b).[15]

Example (22d) tells a different story. The conceptual content of the reference point nominal, *Chelswu*, is fully saturated; therefore, the postposed nominal is not permitted to correspond to the reference point. In this example, the postposed nominal does not exhibit a direct association with the topic, and interpreting it as an add-on strategy does not become a viable option. Even if an association is possible between the topic and the postpose nominal, the postposed nominal cannot serve as a topical reference point because it does not access the main proposition. The naturalness of (22d) arises from the focal property of *kukes* 'that thing'; as a focus, it presupposes an alternative set. Tellingly, the set of all individuals that can substitute for *kukes* must be presupposed in (22d). Due to the nature of an alternative set, a postposed focus performs an identification function; the postposed nominal in (22d) helps the addressee successfully identify *kukes* among the members in the presupposed set. The function of the postposition shown in (22e) is similar to that of (22d). Here, the exact manner is identified by the postposed adverbal. Example (22e) exhibits similar properties to the add-on strategy, which is discussed in the next section.

6. The add-on strategy

Many researchers analyze the non-canonical word order patterns of Korean from a pragmatic perspective under the assumption that word order variations, such as left or right dislocation

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[15] (22b) contrasts with the backmasking example shown in (19). In (19), as a relational noun, *apeci* 'father' invokes a reference point that in turn corresponds to a topical reference point for the target clause. Since the putative possessive nominal of *apeci* is not explicitly coded in the target clause, the postposed nominal naturally takes on that role. This is the only available construal for the postposed nominal; hence, the failure of topic identification does not arise even without the help of the topic marker.

constructions, are motivated by the speaker's discourse strategy (see Lee 1996; Chung 1996; Kim 2004; K.-h. Kim 2008; Y.-j. Kim 2008; Kang 2008, 2014, among others). We agree with these authors in that we also argue word order variation cannot be explained by syntactic mechanisms alone. Despite this commonality, the researchers' interest is generally limited to the postposed topics we discussed in Section 5.[16] We identify an additional discourse strategy for the postposition of non-topical elements in this section: add-on.

An example of add-on is introduced in (23b) with its appropriate context from (23a). Example (23b) shows a typical case of an answer focus, where *pananachiph* 'banana chips' is the answer for the posed question in (23a). Some readers might view (23b) as a bi-clausal structure with ellipses involved. We treat it as one complete grammatical unit with additional information, which is expressed post-verbally. Our treatment is based on Ford & Thompson (1996) and Ford, Fox, & Thompson (1996). These scholars argue that lexico-syntactic, prosodic, pragmatic, and bodily-visual behaviors are relevant to the projection and prediction of possible turn completion. Turn transition regularly occurs at possible turn completion points indicated by social action or pragmatics. The answer provided in (23b) forms a turn completion point, which is conditioned pragmatically. Though turn completion points and clauses do not co-occur, treating (23b) as one grammatical unit would not pose any challenge either to syntactic or discourse analyses.

(23) a. Chelswu-ka ecey   mwues-ul   mas   po-ass-e?
          C-NOM   yesterday what-ACC   taste try-PST-DCL
          'What did Chelswu taste yesterday?'
      b. Chelswu-ka ecey   tutie   pananachiph-ul   mas   po-ass-e,
          C-NOM   yesterday finally banana.chips-ACC taste try-PST-DCL
          ku   masiss-nun   kes-ul.
          that tasty-ADN   KES-ACC
          'Chelswu finally tasted the banana chips, those tasty things.'

The postposed element, *ku masiss-nun kes* 'those tasty things,' may be "reconstructed" as the focus nominal, *pananachiph* 'banana chips,' with its modifying phrase. We refer to all these types of postposed modifying elements as add-on, a term borrowed from Schegloff (1996) and Kim (2004). While these researchers use the term broadly to include the topical postpositions

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[16] Unlike other researchers, Kang (2014) describes non-topical postposed elements.

discussed in Section 5, we limit its use to non-topical postposed elements. The reason is straightforward: the add-on in (23b) does not give rise to a topic. Rather, it exhibits a typical property of modifiers.

As we discussed, a topic serves as a reference point with respect to the target clause. The same property is not observed in the postposed element in (23b); it is a component structure that contains a salient substructure elaborated by the head noun, *pananachiph*. The term we adopt here—*elaboration*—is a concept used in Cognitive Grammar: when A is schematic for B, B elaborates A. The modifier in (23b), *ku masiss-nun* 'those tasty,' is schematic for the head nominal *pananachiph,* which is reconstructed from *kes*; therefore the head nominal *pananachiph* elaborates the substructure of the modifying phrase. We see, then, that while a postposed topic establishes a reference point relationship between the topic and its target clause, the add-on item illustrated in (23b) demonstrates a case of delayed elaboration process. Unlike a canonical ordering of modification, the elaboration of the modifying element occurs at the highest level of organization.

Another issue that calls for our attention concerns the use of the *thing*-nominal, *kes*, in (23b). Though a modifying entity may appear without its head nominal in casual speech, the accusative-marked *kes* replaces the head nominal. As a result, the grammatical encoding of the add-on portion becomes parallel to that of the focus element. The speaker's strategy involved in the add-on construction is to delay the introduction of a non-essential portion of a focus component until a later, or the latest, stage of composition. In this manner, the speaker conveys the essential information first, followed by additional information related to it.

There are other types of add-on examples, several of which are provided in (24). Example (24a) shows that a relative clause, which is an optional component, may appear at the end of the sentence. Examples (24b–c) demonstrate that case-marked nominals may appear post-verbally with their modifiers. Even a complex relative clause may appear as an add-on item, which is illustrated in (24d).

(24) a. cip-ul   swuli-ha-ess-e,   olaystongan   nam-eykey   sey noh-un.
          house-ACC fix-do-PST-END for.a.long.time other.person-to   rent put-ADN
          '(I) fixed the house, (which I) rented to someone for a long time.'
          (Lee 1996: 4)
      b. kuttay tongsiey   tomangca-lanun   yenghwa-lul
          then   same.time   fugitive-called   movie-ACC

kaypong-hay-ss-eyo,　　　　ku　　toklip　　　yenghwa-lul.
release-do-PST-END.POL　　that　independent　movie-ACC
'Then, (a movie theater) at the same time, released the movie called The Fugitive, the
 independent film.'

c. kuliko,　　nakksistay-ka　　　　　ttwuk　　pwulecyeyo, ku　khun nakksistay-ka.
and,　　　fishing.pole-NOM　　suddenly broken,　　　that big　fishing.pole-NOM
'… and the fishing pole was suddenly broken, that big fishing pole.'
(Kang 2014: 25)

d. salang-un　hanswunkan-uy　maswul　kathun kel-kka.
love-TOP a.moment-GEN　magic　like　　thing-Q
aniya, mayak-il-keya,　　hanpen mas-po-myen heyena-ci　　　mos-ha-ko
no　　drugs-COP-CJT　once　taste-try-if　escape-CONN　NEG-do-CONJ
yengwenhi kuliwum-kwa　aycung-ulo　　　kasumul halkhwi-nun　mayak.
forever　　missing-CONJ love.hate-with　heart　　　scratch-ADN　drugs
'Is love like a moment's magic? No, it must be drugs, the drugs that you cannot escape
from and that scratch your heart with love-hate and yearning once (you) taste.
(C. Park 2007: 217)

While the types of add-on items are diverse, their function is relatively uniform; they generally
function as modifiers and convey less essential information by elaborating an essential
component at a higher-level of organization.

7. Floated quantifiers

This section explores floated quantifiers (FQs) in Korean with emphasis on the question of why
quantifiers float. We first provide an overview of the challenges concerning FQs.

7.1 Issues with FQs

Numerical classifiers in Korean occur in at least three different environments, as described in
(25).

(25)　a. Genitive-Case (GC) Type
　　　Chelswu-ka [sey-kwen-uy　　　chayk-ul]　　ilk-ess-ta.
　　　C-NOM　　three-CL-GEN　　book-ACC　read-PST-DCL
　　b. Noun Initial (NI) Type
　　　Chelswu-ka [chayk　sey-kwen-ul]　　ilk-ess-ta.
　　　C-NOM　　　book　three-CL-ACC　read-PST-DCL
　　c. Floated Quantifier (FQ) Type

Chelswu-ka [chayk-ul]   [sey-kwen]   ilk-ess-ta.
C-NOM   book-ACC   three-CL   read-PST-DCL
For all three examples: 'Chelswu read three books.'

The floated quantifier type in which we are interested has been richly examined from a variety of theoretical perspectives. Broadly speaking, scholars are divided into two camps. The first view, often dubbed the stranding view, attempts to capture the similarities among the three types by deriving the FQ type from either the NI or the GC type. This view is supported by Miyagawa (1989), Park & Sohn (1993), Choi (2001), Kim (2005), Ko (2007), and Miyagawa & Arikawa (2007), among others. The second view, known as the VP-modifier view, does not assume this type of movement. Rather, the numeral classifier directly combines with a verbal predicate in syntax in the form of a head-modifier structure and semantically modifies the event structure of the predicate. This view is supported by Gunji & Hasida (1989), Fukushima (1991), Kang (2002), and Kim & Yang (2007), among others.

Though the evaluation of each approach is beyond the scope of this article, we would like to briefly discuss some weaknesses of the existing proposals, citing Kim (2013). He provides an accurate assessment, as quoted below:

> However, when we consider more data, one thing is clear that syntax alone is not enough to capture wider distributional possibilities of the FQ as well as speakers' variations in the judgments of FQ data. The most serious challenge to both of these syntax-based views is the question of why the FQ "floats." (Kim 2013: 201)

To overcome this challenge, Kim (2013) puts forward a third type of approach, which has a pragmatic orientation with an emphasis on IS. He argues that the floated quantifier functions as a focus marker and signals the partitioning of the thematic structure of the given sentence into theme and rheme. Kim (2013) uses these terms in the sense of Halliday & Matthiessen (2004). For these scholars, the theme is the starting point of the message chosen by the speaker/writer, while the rheme is the remaining part that develops the theme, a participant, circumstance, or process. Note that the theme-rheme division does not always go hand-in-hand with the topic-comment division, though there are some overarching similarities. The gist of Kim's proposal is

given in (26), which can be rephrased as: quantifiers float to set off the rheme in the thematic structure.[17]

(26) Thematic constraint for the FQ in Korean:
      A floated numeric classifier in Korean introduces new information and, as a default,
      sets off rheme in the thematic structure.
      (Kim 2013: 205)

Kim (2013) is a rare attempt to provide a functionalistic analysis of FQs in Korean. But since we are exploring this issue without relying on additional notions, such as theme and rheme, we need to find a different type of solution for the posed challenge. More importantly, Kim (2013) does not explore the relationship between the notion of focus and the givenness-related concepts, such as "in-focus" and "activation," which we adopt in our analysis in the next section.

7.2 Why do quantifiers float?

Let us first answer the question of why quantifiers float. We argue that quantifiers float to elevate an element currently not in focus to the in-focus state. One piece of evidence for our claim comes from examples in (27). While (27a) is not fully felicitous, the variations provided in (27b) and (27e) show significantly improved acceptability. In (27b), the FQ is accompanied by the focus particle, -man 'only'. Example (27c) illustrates a case of intervention effect that FQs induce. The FQ in (27c) cannot intervene between the Negative Polarity Item (NPI), *ku chayk-pakkey* 'that book-only' and its licensor, *ahn-ass-ta* 'NEG-PST-DCL'. The same intervention effect is observed with a *wh*-expression which leads to an answer focus, as shown in (27d). The last example, (27e), demonstrates that (27a) may be rescued by placing prosodic prominence on the FQ, which is commonly observed in the realization of a focal entity in Korean. The examples in (27) therefore strongly signal that the FQ phenomenon is associated with the focus status of FQs; sentences with FQs are much more natural when the FQs exhibit focal properties in one way or another.

(27) a. ?? haksayng-tul-i   chayk-ul   sey-myeng ilk-ess-ta.
             student-PL-NOM   book-ACC   three-CL   read-PST-DCL

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[17] For criticism of Kim (2013), see Park & Yeon (2022)

Intended: 'Three students read the book.'
  b. haksayng-tul-i   chayk-ul   sey-myeng-man   ilk-ess-ta.
      studnet-PL-NOM   book-ACC three-CL-only   read-PST-DCL
      Only three students read the book.
  c. *haksayng-tul-i   ku chayk-pakkey   sey-myeng   ilk-ci   ahn-ass-ta.
       student-PL-NOM   that book-only   three-CL   read-CONN NEG-PST-DCL
       Intended: 'Three students read only the book.'
  d. *Elle-pakkey   muwes-ul   ilk-ci   ahn-ass-ni?
       E-only   what-ACC   read-CONN   NEG-PST-Q
       Intended: 'What did only Elle read?'
  e. haksayng-tul-i   chayk-ul   SEY-myeng   ilk-ess-ta
      NP-PL-NOM   book-ACC   three-CL   read-PST-DCL
      Three students read the book.

By severing the quantifier from its host, the quantifier is put in focus in two ways. First, it appears in a typical focus position. Second, it is associated with a typical focus element: the object.

　　Be that as it may, it is well-known that FQs may have subjects as their hosts, as in (28).

(28) haksayng$_i$-tul-i   seys$_i$ maykcwu-lul   masi-ess-ta
      student-PL-NOM   three   beer-ACC   drink-PST-DCL
      'Three students drank beer.'

Shimojo (2004) accounts for the acceptability of (28) with (29), which is defined in the sub-conditions (a) and (b).

(29) Scrambling of FQs is unacceptable if the intervening element is eligible as
       quantifier host [as defined by (a)] AND the intervening element is a preferred host over the
       intended host [as defined by (b)]. (Shimojo 2004: 395)
  a. The quantifier host to be matched with the FQs must be in the focus of
       attention upon the processing of the predicates.
       (Shimojo 2004: 388)
  b. The quantifier host should require a greater activation cost than the other potential
       quantifier host, if any.
       (Shimojo 2004: 388)

According to Shimojo, the quantifier *seys* 'three' in (28) can be scrambled only in the pre-object position. If it floats to the post-object position, the intervening element—the object—becomes not only an eligible host but also the preferred one.

Shimojo's principles predict (30) will be unacceptable, and the prediction is indeed borne out.

(30) *haksayng$_i$-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   seys$_i$ masi-ess-ta
      student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three   drink-PST-DCL
      Intended: 'Three students drank beer.'

It is important to note that Shimojo's principles are applicable only to examples with bare FQs with neither a classifier nor a case marker. In (30), the quantifier is neutral with respect to animacy, and Shimojo's principles work flawlessly because they are not sensitive to the markers that FQs carry.

Now let us consider B's response in (31), which is a slightly revised version of (30); the person-denoting classifier is attached to the floated quantifier with prosodic prominence in (31). We believe the acceptability of B's response improves under the context provided in (31), although the acceptability might be marginal for some speakers. While both *haksayng* and *sey-myeng* are brought into focus in B's response, these constitute previously inactive information. As new information, they require specific cognitive effort to bring them into an activated stage. That is, the activation cost of *haksayng* is greater than that of *maykcwu;* therefore, the natural choice for the host of the quantifier becomes the subject nominal. With the prosodic prominence given to the quantifier in conjunction with its pre-verbal placement, the quantifier gives rise to a primary focus in B's response in (31).

(31) A: nwu-ka   maykcwu-ul   ilehkey   manhi   masi-ess-e?
         who-NOM beer-ACC   this.way a.lot.of   drink-PST-Q
         kwunin-tul yel-myeng-i   masi-ess-na?
         soldier-PL ten-CL-NOM   drink-PST-Q
         'Who drank this much beer? Did ten soldiers do that?'
     B: ?haksayng$_i$-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   [SEY$_i$-MYENG]   masi-ess-ta
         student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three-CL   drink-PST-DCL
         'It was THREE students who drank all the beer.'

With (31), we have demonstrated that B's response should not be judged out of context. In addition, the types of classifiers may affect the judgment regarding FQs.

As pointed out earlier, FQs in Korean may carry case markers. Let us consider (32), which is slightly different from B's response in (31) in that the floated quantifier is marked nominative. Example (32) is fully acceptable with little contextual information because the nominative-marker of the floated quantifier strongly indicates its association with the subject nominal.

(32) haksayng$_i$-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   sey$_i$-myeng-i   masi-ess-ta
      student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three-CL-NOM   drink-PST-DCL
      'It was THREE students who drank all the beer.'

In the Introduction, we discussed Ko's (2007) example identical to B's response in (31): Ko judges B's response as not felicitous at all.[18] While we agree with Ko (2007, 2018) that the degree of acceptability of B's response in (31) is controversial, there is no denying that (33a–b) are either fully acceptable or exhibit a much higher degree of acceptability than B's response in (31). Ko (2014) and Ahn & Ko (2022) deal with examples like (33) with syntactic mechanisms, which we do not endorse in our analysis.[19]

(33) a. haksayng-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   sey-myeng-man   masi-ess-ta.
        student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three-CL-only   drink-PST-DCL
        'It was only three students who drank beer.'
     b. haksayng-tul-i   maykcwu-lul   sey-myeng-pakkey   masi-ci   anh-ass-ta
        student-PL-NOM   beer-ACC   three-CL-only   drink-CONN   NEG-PST-DCL
        'It was no more than three students who drank beer.'

The (improved) acceptability of (33a–b) naturally falls out in our analysis. The FQs in these examples are clearly marked with focus particles. As focus elements, they are previously inactive information, but they are explicitly brought into focus in these examples. With the help of the person-denoting classifier, the association between the quantifier and the subject nominal is established, where the subject nominal is an entity that exhibits a higher cost of activation.

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[18] Ko (2007) indicates that B's response is not acceptable when the FQ is out of focus in (31). However, she does not discuss the rescue method we discuss here; it can be rescued by placing prosodic prominence on the FQ.
[19] In their analyses, the FQs in (33) are base-generated in a different position than that of the FQ in (27a).

One welcome outcome of our analysis concerns the (un)acceptability of the examples, as shown in (34a–b).

(34) a . haksayng-tul-i   swuep-cwung-ey sey-myeng   pwunmyenghi wus-ess-ta
          student-PL-NOM   class-during-at   three-CL   evidently   laugh-PST-DCL
          'Three students evidently laughed during class.'
          (J.-B. Kim 2013: 203)
      b. ??/* ai-tul-i   khu-key   sey-myeng   wus-ess-ta
             kid-PL-NOM loud-ADVZ   three-CL   laugh-PST-DCL
             Intended: 'Three kids laughed loudly.'
             (Kim 2013: 203)

Examples (34a–b) illustrate FQs with different types of adverbs. As seen in (34a), a locative adverb may intervene between the floated quantifier and its host. Kim (2013) states that (34b), where a manner adverb appears between them, is marginally acceptable at best. Kuno & Takami (2003) provide a piece of supporting evidence for (34b) in reporting that manner adverbs are preferable as a focus. Since the manner adverb prefers to be a focus, it tends to have a higher cost of activation; then, (34b) becomes undesirable. It is worth mentioning that (34b) may be acceptable when it gives rise to a conservative reading with contrastiveness: (among five kids) three kids laughed loudly (but the other two didn't).[20] Due to the limited space, we will leave the discussion on that reading for future research.

8. Conclusion

A majority of the research on scrambling or word order variation in Korean has dealt with structural perspectives. While many of these approaches provide attractive systematic analyses, the fundamental question of what motivates word order variation has not yet been answered, let alone discussed in depth. We have attempted to demonstrate that the word order variation we observed is motivated cognitively and pragmatically. For communicative purposes, speakers often choose a non-canonical word order over its canonical counterpart.

We identified the following five strategies: juxtaposition, backmasking, right dislocation, add-on, and FQs. Note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the word order

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[20] For detailed discussion on (non-)conservative readings of FQs, please refer to Ahn & Sauerland (2017) and Ahn & Ko (2022).

variations we encounter. We identified these strategies as illustrative examples since these phenomena are widely discussed in the literature—the overarching theme of these strategies concerns how the interlocutors process new and old information. Sometimes, the speaker puts the topic at the beginning of a sentence because it is more accessible to the addressee than other elements. Other times, it can appear at the end of a sentence because the topic is relatively easily identifiable to the addressee. As for FQs, we argued that their motivation is to sever the quantifier from its host to put it in a more cognitively salient position. Concerning the data of FQs, we demonstrated that many examples found in the previous research might be judged differently under a different context. The key lesson we learned is that word order variation is much more flexible than many researchers have observed. The flexibility can only be correctly understood within a larger context instead of in an isolated syntactic environment. We hope our findings inspire researchers who confine their explorations mainly to the sentence level.

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