Diagnosing Sluicing Constructions in Korean: Sluicing, Cleft, or What?

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ABSTRACT

The Journal of Studies in Language 34.4, 673-687. This paper claims that sluicing constructions in Korean do not involve sluicing contra Takahashi (1993, 1994). It will furthermore be demonstrated that sluicing constructions are not cleft constructions (Nishiyama, Whitman, and Yi 1996, and Park 2001 among others), using the diagnoses by Merchant (2001). It will be demonstrated that the two major arguments of the cleft approach for Korean sluicing constructions, namely, ‘parallels in case’ and ‘optional copula’ cannot be arguments for the cleft approach, which just follows from the present proposal of the non-elliptical wh-question for Korean sluicing constructions. It will also be demonstrated that the present proposal sufficiently deals with postposition stranding in Korean sluicing constructions for which the cleft approach fails. The current proposal has a nontrivial implication on the typology of sluicing constructions across languages: non-elliptical wh-question in addition to sluicing and cleft. (Soonchunhyang University)

Keywords: sluicing, cleft, case, copula, non-elliptical

1. Introduction

Sluicing construction has been a topic of great interest cross-linguistically, including wh-in-situ languages, since it reveals the principles regulating wh-scope taking (Riemsdijk, 1978; Huang, 1982; Hoji 1985; Tsai, 1994; Chung, Ladusaw and McCloskey, 1995; Merchant, 1998, 1999, 2001; Choi 2002; among others).

Sluicing construction refers to the second conjunct as illustrated by the English example below in (1a), where a displaced wh-word occurs alone instead of the expected complete constituent question as in (1b).

(1) a. Somebody just left - guess who.
   b. Somebody just left - guess who just left.
   Ross (1969: 252)

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Identified first by Ross (1969), the sluicing construction is standardly claimed to involve the syntactic operation of sluicing, which involves the process of deleting the remnant IP at PF as licensed by the agreeing head of CP via spec head agreement with the wh-word displaced into its operator position of Spec of CP, as illustrated below in (2) (see Lobeck 1990, 1995, and Saito and Murasugi 1990, among others).

(2) Somebody just left-guess \( [\text{CP} \text{who}] [\text{IP} \text{just left}] \)

Still, within the tradition of syntactic analysis, there emerged a growing body of research as in Pollmann (1975), and van Craenenbroeck (2010), among others that claim the sluicing construction in (1a) is derived from a short cleft construction as shown in (3) without presupposition clause, thus crucially diverging from the mainstream view on sluicing since Ross (1969).

(3) Somebody just left-guess \( [\text{CP} \text{who} [\text{IP} \text{it was just left}]] \).

The sluicing construction in Korean type languages that belong to the typology of wh-in-situ languages has been a topic of great controversy as well, with a constellation of proposals including sluicing and cleft (see Inoue 1976, 1978; Takahashi, 1993, 1994; Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi, 1996; Merchant, 1998, 1999, 2001; Fukaya and Hoji, 1999; Kizu, 2000; Park 2001; Hiraiwa and Ishihara, 2002; Fukaya, 2012; Kim, 2013; Kim and Sells, 2013; Choi, 2012, 2015; among others). Before we further proceed for the analysis of Korean sluicing constructions, it should be noted that there, however, exist nontrivial differences in the clausal architecture of the Korean sluicing construction as below in (4) and the English sluicing construction above in (1a).

(4) John-i nwukwu-lul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun \( [\text{CP} \text{nwukwu-*lul-(i)-nya-ko }] \text{mwulessta}. \) John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP who-ACC-be-QM-COMP asked

‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who.’

One is that unlike English, Korean sluicing construction above in (4), that is, the second conjunct has the question morpheme (QM, henceforth) and the complementizer as well as the wh-word. Besides, it is the standard intuition in the literature (Park, 2001; Kim and Sells, 2013; Choi, 2012, 2015; among others) that structural case on the wh-word including accusative is disallowed in the sluicing construction whereas inherent case is optional. Hence, the sluicing construction above in (4) with the structural accusative case on the wh-word is ungrammatical, whereas the one below in (5) with inherent dative case is grammatical.


‘John gave a book to someone, and Mary asked to whom.’

Lastly, Korean sluicing constructions can have the optional copula i ‘be’ as shown above in (4-5). The organization of
the present paper is as follows: In section 2, I will critically review two competing views on sluicing constructions to lay the ground work for our proposal in the subsequent sections, which are sluicing and cleft approaches. In section 3, I compare sluicing constructions and cleft constructions in Korean to determine whether the Korean sluicing construction is indeed a cleft construction or something else, crucially using the diagnoses as proposed by Merchant (2001), among others. In section 4, I will propose Korean sluicing constructions are non-elliptical wh-questions with the optional copula and will show how the present proposal can deal with the major arguments for cleft approach: parallels in case and optional copula between the sluicing construction and the cleft construction in Korean, along with postposition stranding which is quite a damaging blow to the cleft approach. Section 5 is the conclusion and theoretical implication on the typology of sluicing constructions across languages. Throughout the paper, I will use the term sluicing construction in Korean only as a cover term without committing that the construction in question involves sluicing.

2. Sluicing Construction in Korean: Sluicing, Cleft or What?

2.1 Sluicing

Takahashi (1993, 1994) claims that the sluicing constructions in Korean type languages including Korean and Japanese are derived by the overt wh-movement of the in-situ wh-word into Spec of CP followed by the deletion of IP in a way like the English sluicing construction above in (1a). Applying his analysis to Korean sluicing constructions, the sluicing constructions above in (4-5) will derive from the following non-elliptical wh-questions in (6-7) via sluicing of embedded IP, respectively, with the accusative case and the dative case on the wh-word in the second conjunct.

(6) John-i nwukwu-lul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP nwukwu-i-lul [IP John-i
John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP who-ACC John-NOM
will invite-QM-COMP asked
‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who John will.’

book-ACC gave-QM-COMP asked
‘John gave a book to someone and Mary asked to whom he gave it.’

Now, one of the predictions sluicing approach thus makes is case matching: In other words, as originally observed by Ross (1969), wh-words in sluicing constructions have the same case they would have in the corresponding non-elliptical wh-questions. The prediction does not go through, however. The wh-word in sluicing construction above in (4) disallows accusative case, quite in contrast to the wh-word in the corresponding non-elliptical question in (6). Similarly, dative case on the wh-word in the sluicing construction above in (5) is optional, again quite unlike the wh-word
in the corresponding non-elliptical wh-question in (7), where the case is obligatory.\(^1\)\(^2\)

Moreover, sluicing approach is further undermined by the fact that sluicing constructions as above in (4-5) can have the optional copula *be* as repeated below in (8-9).

(8) \text{John-i nwukwu-lul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP nwukwu-(*)lul-(i)-nya-ko ] mwulessta.}
   \text{John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP who-ACC-be-QM-COMP asked}
   ‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who.’

(9) \text{John-i nwukwu-eykey chayk-ul cwjuss-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP nwukwu-(eykey)-(i)-nya-ko] mwulessta.}
   \text{John-NOM someone-DAT book-ACC gave-and Mary-TOP who-DAT-be-QM-COMP asked}
   ‘John gave a book to someone, and Mary asked to whom.’

Sluicing approach predicts that there should be no predicate whatsoever in the sluicing constructions, since sluicing should necessarily delete the embedded question including the predicate.\(^3\)\(^4\)

### 2.2 Cleft

A growing body of research in Korean literature including Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi (1996) suggests that the sluicing constructions in Korean are actually short cleft constructions (also see Kizu, 2000; Merchant, 2001; Park, 2001; among others). Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi (1996), and Park (2001), among others, claim that sluicing constructions in

\(^1\) One may wonder whether the accusative, the dative on the fronted wh-word in (6-7) can delete as a repair strategy. As shown below in (i), case on the fronted wh-word, be it structural or inherent, cannot delete.

(i) a. \text{Mary-nun [CP nwukwu-(*)lul) John-i ti chotayhalye-nya-ko ] mwulessta.}
   \text{Mary-TOP who-ACC John-NOM will invite-QM-COMP asked}
   ‘Mary asked who John would invite.’

b. \text{Mary-nun [CP nwukwu-(eykey) John-i ti chayk-ul cwjuss]-nya-ko ] mwulessta.}
   \text{Mary-TOP who-DAT John-NOM book-ACC gave-QM-COMP asked}
   ‘Mary asked to whom he gave the book.’

\(^2\) In Japanese, a language typologically akin to Korean, although judgments vary, it seems that accusative and nominative case, but not dative, on the wh-word in the sluicing construction is highly deviant (see Inoue 1976; Hoji 1990; Shimoyama 1995; Kizu, 2000; among others).

\(^3\) The following example in (i) further undermines Takahashi’s (1993, 1994) sluicing approach for the sluicing construction in Korean:

(i) \text{John-i nwukwu-lul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP Sue-nya-ko ] mwulessta.}
   \text{John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP Sue-QM-COMP asked}
   ‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked whether he would be Sue.’

The sluicing construction in (i) does not contain a wh-word, meaning the sluicing construction in Korean is not derived via sluicing, for which spec head agreement is a prerequisite.

\(^4\) One may use a manner adverbial in the embedded question, too, to further argue against sluicing approach. The point is that since manner adverbials are typically attached to VP, once it can appear in the embedded question along with the wh-word, it further undermines sluicing approach.
Korean and Japanese are in fact short cleft constructions without presupposition clause, comprising the focused wh-word and the phonologically unrealized pro in the subject position that corresponds to the expletive it in English as above in (3), given that Korean type languages are null subject languages. According to their claim, the cleft constructions corresponding to the Korean sluicing constructions above in (4-5) can be represented as below in (10-11) with the presupposition clause headed by kes ‘that’ within the parentheses deleted, and pro corresponding to the expletive ‘it’ in English.

COMP-TOP who-ACC-be-QM-COMP asked
‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who it was that John would invite.’

gave-COMP-TOP who-DAT-be-QM-COMP asked
‘John lent a book to someone, and Mary asked to whom it was that he lent a book.’

One may wonder what motivates deletion of presupposition clause above in (10-11). Note that the deletion of the presupposition clause of CP is possible in the cleft construction across languages. English, for example, allows CP deletion as shown below in (12).

(12) A: Who knocked?
    B: It was Alex (who knocked)
    (Merchant 2001: 117)

Now, note that there holds a perfect parallel in case between wh-words in the sluicing constructions above in (4-5) and the corresponding cleft constructions in (10-11), thus clearing one of the two major problems of sluicing approach, namely, case mismatch problem. Moreover, with regard to the other problem of sluicing approach, that is, the optional copula, one can again witness a perfect parallel between the two constructions, where the copula is optional indeed. One may thus feel tempted to believe that the sluicing constructions above in (4-5) are in fact cleft constructions without the presupposition clause, that is, short cleft like English in (3). Below, I will critically investigate whether Korean sluicing construction is a cleft construction. I will show that Korean sluicing constructions are in fact non-elliptical wh-questions, using the diagnoses for sluicing constructions by Merchant (2001).
3. Diagnosing Korean Sluicing Constructions

3.1 Implicit Argument

In some languages, wh-word in sluicing constructions, quite in contrast to cleft constructions need not necessarily have a corresponding expression in the first conjunct, a phenomenon called Sprouting by Chung, Ladusaw and McCloskey (1995). I illustrate what it means by implicit argument in the two constructions with the English examples below in (13), along with their respective grammaticality.

(13) a. They served the guests, but I don’t know what.
    b. *They served the guests, but I don’t know what it was.
    (Merchant 2001: 121)

How about Korean? As it turns out, both the sluicing construction and the cleft construction are grammatical with implicit argument as shown below in (14).

    John-NOM guest-ACC served-and Mary-TOP what-be-QM-COMP asked
    ‘John served the guests, and Mary asked what.’
    John-NOM guest-ACC served-and Mary-TOP it John-NOM guest-DAT treated COMP-TOP what-be-QM-COMP asked
    ‘John served the guests and Mary asked what it was that John served the guests.’

3.2 Aggressively non-D-linked Wh-word

Sluicing and cleft constructions behave differently in many languages with regard to the aggressively non D-linked wh-word (Pesetsky 1987). For example, in English, aggressively non-D-linked wh-word as ‘who the hell’ cannot occur in the sluicing construction, but is perfectly fine in the cleft construction as illustrated below in (15a) and (15b), respectively.

(15) a. *Someone dented my car last night, and I really want to know who the hell!
    b. Someone dented my car last night, and I really want to know who the hell it was!
    (Merchant ,2001: 122)

Both Korean sluicing and cleft constructions allow the aggressively non-D-linked wh-word totaychey mwukwu ‘who the hell’ as shown below in (16).

5) An anonymous reviewer notes that the sentence in (14a) does not sound good, only to be improved with the past tense morpheme ess ‘was’ of the copula i ‘be.’
3.3 ‘Mention-some’ modification

It is a well-known fact that the hearer is required to provide an exhaustive list of all the contextually relevant individuals to replace the wh-word in cleft constructions to constitute a felicitous answer, whereas sluicing constructions do not have such requirement. This means that cleft constructions should be incompatible with an expression like ‘for example’ that signals non-exhaustivity, quite unlike sluicing constructions. The point is again illustrated with the English examples below in (17).

(17) A: You should talk to somebody in the legal department for help with that.

B: a. Who, for example?
   b. *Who is it, for example?

(Merchant, 2001: 122)

As for Korean, as shown below, the sluicing construction in (18a), but not the cleft construction in (18b), is perfectly compatible with the non-exhaustive ‘mention some’ modification yeykentey ‘for example.’

   John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP for example who-be-QM-COMP asked
   ‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who, for example.’

   b. ?*John-i nwukwu-lul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP pro John-i chotayhalyenun kes-un
   John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP it John-NOM will invite COMP-TOP
   yeykentey nwukwu-(i)-nya-ko ] mwulessta.
   for example who-be-QM-COMP asked
   *‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who it was for example that John would invite.’

6) An anonymous reviewer notes that the sentence in (18b) sounds good, which is quite unexpected given the semantics of wh-cleft question with the presupposition of exhaustivity.
3.4 'Mention-all' Modification

Now, quite conversely, ‘mention all’ modification forcing exhaustivity should be fine in cleft constructions, quite unlike ‘mention some’ modification. When it comes to Korean, both the sluicing construction in (19a) and the cleft construction in (19b) allow ‘mention all’ modification cenpwu ‘all.’

   John-NOM guests-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP all who-be-QM-COMP asked
   *‘John will invite guests, and Mary asked who all.’

   b. John-i sonnimtul-ul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP pro John-i chotayhalyenun kes-un
      John-NOM guests-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP it John-NOM will invite COMP-TOP
      cenpwu nwukwu-(i)-nya-ko] mwulessta.
      all who-be-QM-COMP asked
      ‘John will invite guests, and Mary asked who all it was that John would invite.’

3.5 ‘Else’-modification

Just like ‘for example’ we discussed above in section 3.3, the modifier ‘else’ signals non-exhaustivity, the prediction being ‘else’-modification is ungrammatical in the cleft construction but fine in the sluicing construction. The point is again illustrated with the examples in English as below in (20).

(20) a. Harry was there, but I don’t know who else.

   b. *Harry was there, but I don’t know who else it was.
      (Merchant, 2001: 122)

Korean allows ‘else’ modification kuoy ‘else’ in the sluicing construction, whereas the cleft construction disallows it, as shown below in (21).

      John-NOM someone-from met-and Mary-TOP else who-QM-COMP asked
      ‘John was late for the class, and Mary asked who else.’

   b. *John-i swuep-ey nucess-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP pro swuep-ey nucun kes-un kuoy
      John-NOM class-for late-and Mary-TOP it class-for late COMP-TOP else
      nwukwu-nya-ko] mwulessta.
      who-QM-COMP asked
      *‘John was later for the class, and Mary asked who else it was that was late for the class.’
3.6 Languages with Limited or no Cleft Strategy

It is a well-known fact that some languages do not have cleft constructions but still allow sluicing. Hungarian and Romanian are good examples. Korean, as I claim, belongs to the typology of limited cleft strategy in that the manner adjunct elmanna ppalli ‘how fast’ as below in (22) disallows the cleft construction. 7

(22) ?*John-i [CP pro ku mwuncey-lul pwun kes-un ] elmanna ppalli-ni?.
   John-NOM it the problem-ACC solved COMP-TOP how fast-QM
   ‘How fast is it that John solved the problem?’

But still, sluicing construction with the wh-word is possible as shown below in (23).

    John-NOM the problem-ACC solved-and Mary-TOP how fast-be-QM-COMP asked
    ‘John solved the problem, and Mary asked how fast.’

3.7 Postposition Stranding

In many languages, preposition standing is possible in sluicing constructions, especially when it is possible in the non-elliptical wh-questions, known as P-stranding generalization (Merchant 2001: 92). In English, preposition stranding is possible in the sluicing construction as in (24a), since it is a language that typically allows preposition stranding in the non-elliptical wh-questions. However, in the cleft construction, it does not allow preposition stranding as shown below in (24b).

(24) a. John was talking with someone, but I don’t know (with) who
    b. John was talking with someone but I don’t know (*with) who it was.

How about Korean? Although Korean does not allow postposition stranding normally, it can be stranded in the sluicing construction as below in (25a), but not in cleft construction in (25b), an observation as originally made by Kim and Sells (2013).

    John-NOM someone-from valentine-ACC bought-and Mary-TOP who-from-be-QM-COMP asked
    asked

7) An anonymous reviewer points out that the acceptability of the sentence in (22) improves considerably with the past tense morpheme ess ‘was’ of the copula i ‘be’ right before the QM. Note, however, the common intuition in the literature is that tense on the copula does not play a role in the acceptability of the sluicing construction in Korean (Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi 1996, Choi 2012, 2015, among others).
‘John bought a valentine from someone, and Mary asked from whom.’


bought COMP-TOP who-from-be-QM-COMP asked

‘John bought a valentine from someone, and Mary asked from whom it was that John bought it.’

The table below shows the result of the various diagnoses we went over thus far to determine whether the sluicing construction in Korean is indeed a cleft construction.8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit argument</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>OK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressively non D linked wh-word</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mention some’ Modification</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Mention all’ Modification</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Else’ Modification</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages with limited or no cleft strategy</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postposition stranding</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is clear from the table, one can conclude that the sluicing construction in Korean is not a cleft construction. If sluicing constructions in Korean are indeed cleft constructions as cleft approach by Nishiyama, Whitman, and Yi (1996) and Park (2001) claims, the disparity between the two constructions as shown on the above table is quite puzzling. At this point also recall Korean sluicing construction is not a sluicing construction involving sluicing, either, as we already saw in section 2. The obvious question is then: what is the nature of the Korean sluicing constructions? Below in section 4, we will address the question.

4. Proposal: Sluicing Constructions in Korean as Non-elliptical Wh-Questions

4.1 Dealing with Major Arguments for Cleft Approach for Korean Sluicing Constructions

We saw thus far Korean sluicing constructions are not cleft constructions using the diagnoses by Merchant (2001). At this point, recall that the parallels in the optional copula and case between the sluicing construction and the cleft construction were two main arguments for the cleft construction approach by Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi (1996) and Park (2001), among others for Korean sluicing constructions as in (4-5=(8-9)) repeated below as (26-27).

8) An anonymous reviewer notes that the reviewer does not agree with some of the judgments as summarized in the Table 1. The reviewer, for example, notes that cleft construction is ok with ‘else’ modification, whereas sluicing construction is not. The reviewer further goes on to note that mention some modification is ok with the cleft construction as well. However, this does not diminish the main point of the present proposal, since the fact remains that the two constructions in question are different in a non-trivial way despite the individual variation in judgment.
   John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP who-ACC-be-QM-COMP asked
   ‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who.’

   ‘John gave a book to someone, and Mary asked to whom.’

As we already saw in section 2, the cleft constructions above in (10-11), repeated below as (28-29) that correspond to the sluicing constructions above in (26-27) have perfect parallels with regard to the optional copula, and case on the wh-word.

(28) John-i nwukwu-lul chotayhalye-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP pro (John-i chotayhalyenun
   John-NOM someone-ACC will invite-and Mary-TOP it John-NOM will invite
   kes-un ) nwukwu-(istol)-(i)-nya-ko] mwulessta.
   COMP-TOP who-ACC-be-QM-COMP asked
   ‘John will invite someone, and Mary asked who it was that John would invite.’

(29) John-i nwukwu-eykey chayk-ul cwuess-nuntey, Mary-nun [CP pro (John-i chayk-ul
   cwu kes-un ) nwukwu-(eykey)-(i)-nya-ko] mwulessta.
   gave-COMP-TOP who-DAT-be-QM-COMP asked
   ‘John lent a book to someone, and Mary asked to whom it was that he lent a book.’

Below, I will crucially demonstrate the parallels in the optional copula and case do not necessarily support the cleft approach. As an alternative, I suggest sluicing constructions in Korean are non-elliptical wh-questions with the null subject pro, given that Korean is a null subject language. It will be shown that case fact on the wh-word and the optional copula follow in a straightforward way from the property of Korean as a null subject language. The sluicing constructions above in (26-27) will have the following structural representation with pro in the subject position, along with the optional copula i ‘be’ under the present system:

(30) [IP NP-NOM [CP [IP pro wh-word (be)] QM-COMP] V]

Note that the wh-word above in (30) stays in situ. Given that Korean is a wh-in-situ language where the wh-word, being an indefinite in the sense of Lewis (1975), Heim (1982) and Pesetsky (1987), among others, is typically interpreted in situ as a wh-interrogative, nothing is surprising with the in-situ wh-word (see Choi 2002, 2003, 2007, among others). Also, following Choi (2015), I crucially suggest pro is a deep anaphora corresponding to the overt ku kes ‘that’ in the sense of Hankamer and Sag (1976) such that it refers to the property as denoted by the first conjunct in the
sluicing construction. Now, the sentences above in (26-27) will have the following interpretations, respectively, which are precisely what they mean:9)

(31) a. Mary asked who pro was (with pro referring to the property of being the person such that John will invite him)
   b. Mary asked who pro was (with pro referring to the property of being the person such that John gave the book to him)

Then, how can we account for the optional copula i ‘be’ and case fact in the sluicing constructions above in (26-27), given our proposal that they are non-elliptical wh-questions? Consider the optional copula first. In fact, it follows from the fact on the copula in Korean that it can freely delete, especially when the complement ends in a vowel. With the structure above in (30) for the sluicing constructions above in (26-27), note that the wh-words in (26-27) are the complement of the copula and they end in a vowel, hence the copula being deleted freely. The optional copula in Korean sluicing constructions as above in (26-27) thus follows from the general fact on the Korean copula, which means the parallel in the optional copula between the sluicing constructions in (26-27) and the corresponding cleft constructions in (28-29) cannot be an argument for the cleft approach.

How about case fact on the wh-word? Note that it also follows from the property of the copula in Korean: the complement of the copula, that is, the wh-word above in (26), cannot take structural case. In the meantime, inherent case as on the wh-word in (27) is possible, especially when the subject is property denoting (see Chung 1996: 222ff, and Sohn 1999: 79ff for related discussions), which is precisely the case in the Korean sluicing construction where the null subject pro is construed as property denoting under the present system. So, it turns out that the parallel in case on the wh-word between the sluicing constructions in (26-27) and the corresponding cleft constructions in (28-29) cannot be argument for the cleft approach for Korean sluicing constructions, either.

4.2 Postposition Stranding in Korean Sluicing Constructions

It should be noted that as observed by Kim and Sells (2013), among others, the postposition on the wh-word can be stranded in the Korean sluicing construction in (25a) in contrast to the Korean cleft construction in (25b), repeated below as (32a) and (32b) respectively. The parallel between the two constructions thus breaks down, crucially undermining the cleft approach for sluicing constructions in Korean.

9) With the present proposal that Korean sluicing construction is a non-elliptical wh-question, we predict the same empirical facts in non-elliptical wh-questions in other languages. In Fact, we can find the same pattern in English non-elliptical wh-questions regarding the following semantic criteria, among others.

(i) a. Someone dented my car last night. I wish I knew who the hell dented my car! (aggressively non-D-linked wh-word)
   b. A bunch of students were protesting, and the FBI is trying to find out who all was protesting. (‘mention all’ modification)
   c. Harry was there, but I don’t know who else was there. (‘else’ modification)
   d. A: You should talk to somebody in the legal department with help for that. (‘mention some’ modification)
   B: Who should I talk to, for example?
   (van Craenenbroeck 2010: 1721ff)
How can the present system address the postposition stranding above in (32a) in the sluicing construction in Korean, then? Again, given our proposal for the non-elliptical wh-question for the Korean sluicing construction, the sluicing construction above in (32a) will have the following structural representation:

(33) \[ \text{IP NP-NOM} \ [\text{CP} \ [\text{IP pro wh-word (be)}] \text{ QM COMP }] \text{ V} ] \]

According to the structure above in (33), the wh-word is the complement of the copula. Note that another property of the Korean copula i ‘be’ is that in addition to an NP with no structural case, it can take as its complement a PP as well, especially when the subject is property denoting (see Chung 1996: 222ff, and Sohn 1999: 79ff). Recall that \textit{pro} in the context of the sluicing construction under the present system refers to the property as denoted in the first conjunct, yielding the interpretation below in (34) for (32a).

(34) Mary asked who \textit{pro} was (with \textit{pro} referring to the property of being the person such that John bought a valentine from him)

This property of the Korean copula i ‘be’ along with the property denoting subject \textit{pro} accounts for why the sluicing construction in (32a) with the optional postposition on the wh-word is grammatical. In the meantime, note that cleft approach simply predicts that the postposition cannot be deleted in the sluicing construction above in (32a), quite contrary to the fact. It is because the sluicing construction in (32a) is just a cleft construction without the presupposition clause in (32b), according to the cleft approach.

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10) An anonymous reviewer points out that in sprouting construction as below in (i), postposition stranding is impossible. My intuition says that it is good with stress on the wh-word with the postposition stranded.

(i) John-i pinanpatass-nuntey, na-nun [CP \textit{nwukwu-lopwute)-(i)-nci} kwungkwumhata.
John-NOM was criticized-and, I-TOP who-from-be-QM wonder
‘John was criticized, and I wonder from whom.’
5. Conclusion

I claimed that sluicing constructions in Korean are non-elliptical wh-questions. They do not involve sluicing contra Takahashi (1993, 1994). I showed they are not cleft constructions, either, a proposal advanced by Nishiyama, Whitman and Yi (1996), and Park (2001), among others, using the diagnoses by Merchant (2001). I showed that the two major arguments of cleft approach for Korean sluicing constructions, namely, parallels in case and optional copula cannot be arguments for the cleft approach, since the present proposal of the non-elliptical wh-question for Korean sluicing constructions can also address them in a neat way. Besides, I also showed that the present proposal nicely deals with postposition stranding in Korean sluicing constructions for which cleft approach simply fails. The present proposal has a nontrivial implication on the typology of sluicing constructions across languages: non-elliptical wh-question in addition to sluicing and cleft. One may wonder then why Korean sluicing constructions, if they are non-elliptical wh-questions, are similar on the surface to those in English. Several factors collaborate to that effect. Korean is a null subject language. Also, Korean allows optional copula, along with in-situ wh-words. All of them collaborate to yield a structure apparently similar to the sluicing construction in English, although it is non-sluicing, non-cleft, but non-elliptical wh-question.

References

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