

# ON EXISTENTIALS, LOCATIVES, AND THE DEFINITENESS EFFECT IN KOREAN

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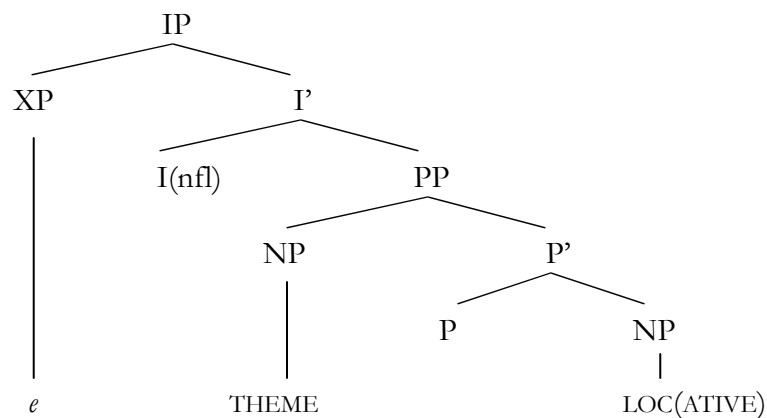
## 1. Introduction

Much research on existentials has focused on the definiteness effect in English, a language where existentials are easily identified by the presence of the expletive subject *there* and where definiteness is overtly marked via articles. Less research has concentrated on languages where one or both of these are not the case. However, Freeze (1992) conducts a cross-linguistic survey of existentials and—besides observing that the English existential is the odd one out among existentials cross-linguistically—comes to the following two conclusions about the predicative locative (e.g., *A book is on the table*), the existential (e.g., *There is a book on the table*), and the possessive (e.g., *Mary has a book*):

- (i) They are all locative in nature, members of a locative paradigm
- (ii) They derive from the same underlying structure in which a preposition heads a predicate phrase

This basic structure for a head-initial language with left-hand specifiers (such as English) is as follows, where *e* represents an empty subject position:

- (1) Structure underlying the locative paradigm (cf. Freeze 1992: 558)

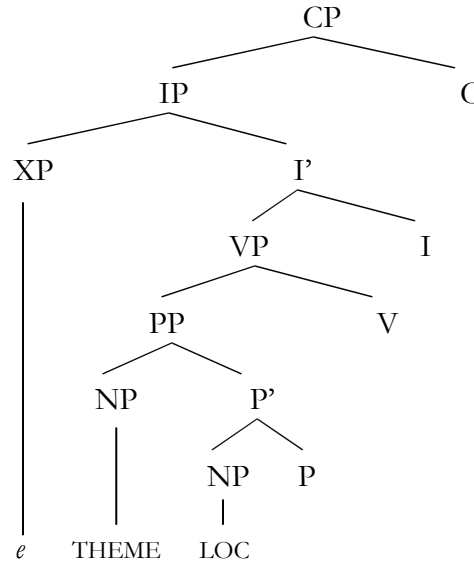


Freeze argues that the members of the locative paradigm differ essentially in which argument—the theme NP or the locative NP—moves up to fill the gap left in subject position, Spec-I. The existential and the possessive are essentially the same in this respect, minimally differing in that the former has a [-human] locative argument, while the latter has a [+human] locative argument. Both have a derived locative subject: P' moves to Spec-I.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the predicate locative has a

<sup>1</sup> Freeze also proposes that the possessive may differ from the existential in allowing the P of the P' constituent to move



- (4) Derivation of (2) ‘There is a tree on the mountain’ and (3) ‘The tree is on the mountain’<sup>4</sup>



UR: [CP [IP e [I' [VP [PP [NP *namu*] [P' *san-ə*]]] *isj*]-Ø]-*da*]

SR (2): [CP [IP [P' *san-ə*]<sub>i</sub> [I' [VP [PP [NP *namu*] t<sub>i</sub>] *isj*]-Ø]-*da*]

SR (3): [CP [IP [NP *namu*]<sub>i</sub> [I' [VP [PP t<sub>i</sub> [P' *san-ə*]]] *isj*]-Ø]-*da*]

The null hypothesis would have the sentence-initial theme argument in (2) in subject position, which is suggested by its being marked with nominative case. It is less clear that the sentence-initial locative argument in (3) lies in subject position, as it is not marked with nominative case.<sup>5</sup> It will be argued below that the locative argument, when it is sentence-initial, lies in subject position as well.

### 3. The Distribution of Particles

As the grammaticality of a Korean sentence is connected to the distribution of particles across constituents, the two particles relevant to subject marking—the topic particle and the nominative particle—are each considered below with respect to how their behavior affects the grammaticality of the existential.

<sup>4</sup> UR = underlying representation, SR = surface representation. Note that VP is absent from Freeze’s structure, but it has been included here to avoid having to place an existential verb and tense inflection in the same head Infl position. Although Korean verbs do not bear tense inflection in the present tense, they do in the past tense.

<sup>5</sup> The grammatical status of locative *-ə* as a bound or independent element is largely orthogonal to the discussion. For the sake of consistency with Freeze (1992), it is analyzed here as an independent prepositional particle heading a PP.

### 3.1. The Topic Particle

Jun (2000) notes a negative restriction on the distribution of particles in the existential—the theme cannot bear the topic particle:

- (5) 책상 위에 어떤 책이/\*책은 있어. (Jun 2000: 273)  
*chaegsang wi-e eotteon chaeg-i/chaeg-eun iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC some book-NOM/book-TOP exist-CONJ  
 ‘There is some book on the desk.’

- (6) 책상 위에 책이/\*책은 있어. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang wi-e chaeg-i/chaeg-eun iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC book-NOM/book-TOP exist-CONJ  
 ‘There is a/the book on the desk.’

As seen in (5) and (6), the existential is grammatical when the theme argument is nominative-marked, but ungrammaticality arises when the theme is topic-marked—a result consistent with Reinhart (2005), who independently observes that sentence topics cannot serve as themes in existentials. Intuitively, this restriction against topic-marking follows from the function of the existential. An existential sentence is not about the theme; rather, it asserts the existence of the theme. Therefore, the theme cannot be a grammatical topic in an existential.

### 3.2. The Nominative Particle

Since it seems that the theme in the existential co-occurs with the nominative particle, it would be worth looking in further detail at the distribution and function of the nominative particle in Korean.<sup>6</sup> Unsurprisingly, it occurs with agentive subjects:

- (7) 내가 그 일을 했습니다. (Ihm et al. 2001: 146)  
*nae-ga geu il-eul hae-ss-seubnida*  
 I-NOM that work-ACC do-PAST-FOR.DECL  
 ‘I did that job.’

In (7) an agentive subject is nominative-marked while a theme is accusative-marked, but the copular clauses in (8) and (9) show that multiple nominative particles may occur in the same sentence:

- (8) 저 분이 김 선생이 아니에요. (ibid.)  
*jeo bun-i Kim seonsaeng-i ani-e-yo*  
 DIST person-NOM Kim teacher-NOM be.not-CONJ-POL  
 ‘That’s not Mr. Kim.’

- (9) 물이 얼음이 되었습니다. (ibid.: 10)  
*mul-i eoreum-i dwe-eoss-seubnida*  
 water-NOM ice-NOM become-PAST-FOR.DECL  
 ‘The water turned to ice.’

In these sentences, a predicate noun phrase is also nominative-marked. Thus, it appears that

<sup>6</sup> The nominative particle has two allomorphs: *-ga* occurs after vowel-final stems, whereas *-i* occurs after consonant-final stems.

nominative may mark both structural subjects (elements in Spec-I) as well as predicational nominals.

The nominative particle may also mark the subject of a predicational phrase attributed of the matrix subject:

- (10) 첼수가 마음이 좋습니다. (ibid.: 146)  
*Cheolsu-ga maeum-i job-seubnida*  
 Cheolsu-NOM heart-NOM be.good-FOR.DECL  
 ‘Cheolsu has a good heart.’
- (11) 존이 동생이 밉다. (Kim 2001: 166, fn. 1)  
*Jon-i dongsaeng-i mib-da*  
 John-NOM brother-NOM be.hateful-DECL  
 ‘John hates his brother.’
- (12) 문수가 책이 필요하다. (Chang, p.c.)  
*Munsu-ga chaeg-i pilyoha-da*  
 Munsu-NOM book-NOM be.necessary-DECL  
 ‘Munsu needs a book.’

In (10)-(12) the second nominative-marked phrase is the subject of a predicate, and the whole predicational phrase is attributed to the matrix subject.<sup>7</sup> Thus, (10), for example, might more literally be translated as ‘For Cheolsu it is the case that his heart is good’.

Consequently, the appearance of multiple nominative markers often has the effect of focusing the first nominal (see Kim 2001 for more details). This is especially the case when nesting of predicational phrases goes through several iterations, as seen in (14) and (15):

- (13) 존이 어머니가 친절하시다. (Kim 2001: 166)  
*Jon-i eomeoni-ga chinjeolha-si-da*  
 John-NOM mother-NOM be.kind-HON-DECL  
 ‘It is John whose mother is kind.’
- (14) 존이 친구가 아버지가 돈이 많다. (ibid.: 167)  
*Jon-i chingu-ga abeoji-ga don-i manb-da*  
 John-NOM friend-NOM father-NOM money-NOM be.much-DECL  
 ‘It is John’s friend’s father who has lots of money.’
- (15) 존이 얼굴이 왼쪽이 아래가 아프다. (ibid.: 177)  
*Jon-i eolgul-i wencok-i arae-ga apeu-da*  
 John-NOM face-NOM left-NOM bottom-NOM hurt-DECL  
 ‘John’s face hurts on the left side at the bottom.’

The fact that the first nominative particle serves in a focus function is clearly seen when the first nominal is indefinite:

<sup>7</sup> In the words of Ihm et al. (2001: 145), “the first noun functions as main subject of the entire sentence, while subsequent nouns function as the subject of a predicate clause.”

- (16) \*어떤 사람이 아버지가 부자입니다. (ibid.: 172)  
*eoiteon saram-i abeoji-ga buja-i-si-da*  
 some person-NOM father-NOM rich-be-HON-DECL  
 ‘It is some person whose father is rich.’

As indefinites cannot normally be focused, when the nominal that would be focused is indefinite as in (16), the sentence becomes ungrammatical.

Note, though, that at least for some speakers, there are restrictions on the use of the nominative particle in this focus function. For example, Kim (2001) claims that the nominative particle as focus marker is able to be stacked onto other case particles. However, the sentence he provides, in which the nominative particle is stacked on an ablative marker, is judged to be ungrammatical by all of the speakers consulted:

- (17) \*/%서울로부터가 그 소문이 퍼졌다. (ibid.)  
*Seoul-robuteo-ga geu somun-i pyeojeo-ss-da*  
 Seoul-ABL-NOM that rumor-NOM spread-PAST-DECL  
 ‘The rumor came out from Seoul.’

Thus, it appears that for at least some dialects, the nominative particle can only focus a phrase that it also serves to mark the case of. It follows, then, that where the nominative particle is disallowed by co-occurrence restrictions (described below), it is not allowed in the sentence at all; in other words, the nominative particle cannot serve solely to mark focus.

Returning to the existential structure posited by Freeze, his model posits that the theme argument lies precisely in the specifier position of a predicational PP. The theme receives structural case from Infl when the locative (P') moves to Spec-I. It appears that Infl ignores the locative argument in Spec-I and assigns its case instead to the theme argument in Spec-P. Presumably, this remapping of case occurs to avoid a violation of the Case Filter: the theme needs case, and the nominal in the locative has inherent case from P already. Note that this dissociation between movement to subject position and structural case assignment can be accommodated within a Minimalist framework if the case and EPP features of Infl are not limited to being checked by the same constituent. In any event, this account is consistent with the distribution of nominative case in predicational phrases in Korean (though it may not be necessary to posit that predicational subjects get their nominative case from Infl if Spec-Pred is associated with its own structural case).

Although the nominative particle can occur several times within the same sentence, it cannot co-occur with other particles on the same noun:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> But, interestingly enough, the honorific nominative particle *-kkeseo* can occur with the topic particle:

- (i) 아버지께서 지금 말씀중입니다. (Ihm et al. 2001: 145)  
*abeo-nim-kkeseo jigeum malsseum-jung-i-si-bnida*  
 father-HON-HON.NOM now speech.HON-middle-be-HON-FOR.DECL  
 ‘Father is in the middle of saying something.’
- (ii) 사장님께서는 외출하셨어요. (ibid.)  
*sajang-nim-kkeseo-neun we-chul-ha-sy-eoss-eo-yo*  
 boss-HON-HON.NOM-TOP out.exit-do-HON-PAST-CONJ-POL  
 ‘The boss has gone out.’
- (iii) 선생님께서는 어디에 사십니까? (ibid.)  
*seonsaeng-nim-kkeseo-neun eodi-e sa-si-bnikka*

- (18) a. 문수가 빵을 먹었어. (Chang, p.c.)  
*Munsu-ga ppang-eul meog-eoss-eo*  
 Munsu-NOM bread-ACC eat-PAST-CONJ  
 ‘Munsu ate bread.’
- b. \*문수가는 빵을 먹었어. (ibid.)  
*Munsu-ga-neun ppang-eul meog-eoss-eo*  
 Munsu-NOM-TOP bread-ACC eat-PAST-CONJ  
 ‘Munsu ate bread.’
- (19) a. 문수는 빵을 먹었어. (ibid.)  
*Munsu-neun ppang-eul meog-eoss-eo*  
 Munsu-TOP bread-ACC eat-PAST-CONJ  
 ‘Munsu ate bread.’
- b. \*문수는이 빵을 먹었어. (ibid.)  
*Munsu-neun-i ppang-eul meog-eoss-eo*  
 Munsu-TOP-NOM bread-ACC eat-PAST-CONJ  
 ‘Munsu ate bread.’
- (20) a. 책상 밑에 어둡다. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang mit-e eodub-da*  
 desk bottom-LOC be.dark-DECL  
 ‘It’s dark under the desk.’
- b. \*책상 밑에가 어둡다. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang mit-e-ga eodub-da*  
 desk bottom-LOC-NOM be.dark-DECL  
 ‘Under the desk is dark.’
- (21) a. 책상 밑이 어둡다. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang mit-i eodub-da*  
 desk bottom-NOM be.dark-DECL  
 ‘The underside of the desk is dark.’
- b. \*책상 밑이에 어둡다. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang mit-i-e eodub-da*  
 desk bottom-NOM-LOC be.dark-DECL  
 ‘Under the desk is dark.’

teacher-HON-HON.NOM-TOP where-LOC live-HON-FOR.QUES  
 ‘In the mornings I’m busy.’

In (i) the particle *-kkeseo* alone marks a nominal in subject position, while in (ii) and (iii) it co-occurs with the topic particle. The reason why this co-occurrence is allowed, while that between it and the regular nominative particle is not, seems to be connected with the pragmatics of honorification. The importance of using the appropriate honorifics to or about people of higher status prevents the speaker from dropping them, since a silent honorific is impossible to hear. In other words, *-kkeseo* is allowed to co-occur with the topic particle because it encodes important additional information (that of honorification) that the regular nominative particle does not.

In (18) and (19) a subject marked with a single nominative or topic particle is grammatical, as seen in the (a) examples; however, co-occurrence of the nominative particle with the topic particle in either order results in ungrammaticality, as seen in the (b) examples. Likewise, in (20) and (21) a locative noun marked with a single locative or nominative particle is grammatical, as seen in the (a) examples, but co-occurrence of the nominative particle with the locative particle in any order results in ungrammaticality, as seen in the (b) examples. Thus, it appears that the nominative particle may mark both structural subjects in Spec-I and nominals in predicational phrases, and that it cannot co-occur with any other particles.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. The Locative Argument in the Locative Paradigm

The locative argument in the existential is uncontroversially locative, as it must bear the same particle used to indicate directed motion:

- (22) 철수가 서울에 왔다. (Jun 2000: 266)  
*Cheolsu-ga Seoul-e w-a-ss-da*  
 Cheolsu-NOM Seoul-LOC come-CONJ-PAST-DECL  
 ‘Cheolsu came to Seoul.’

It is less clear whether the possessor argument in the possessive construction is also locative:

- (23) \*문수에 돈이 있다. (Chang, p.c.)  
*Munsu-e don-i iss-da*  
 Munsu-LOC money-NOM exist-DECL  
 ‘Munsu has (the) money.’

- (24) 문수 {가/는} 돈이 있다. (ibid.)  
*Munsu-{ga/neun} don-i iss-da*  
 Munsu-{NOM/TOP} money-NOM exist-DECL  
 ‘Munsu has (the) money.’

As seen in (23), the possessor argument cannot occur with the locative particle; it normally occurs with the nominative particle or the topic particle as in (24).

However, the possessor argument can also occur with the dative particle:

<sup>9</sup> Of course, the latter generalization does not apply to those speakers whose dialects allow focus-marker nominative particles to co-occur with other particles. In addition, it should be noted that the restriction against the combination of nominative and topic particles seen in (18)-(19) and that against the combination of nominative and locative particles seen in (20)-(21) appear to be distributional facts of the nominative particle specifically. The topic and locative particles can co-occur with other particles:

- (iv) 저는 아침엔 바빠요. (Ihm et al. 2001: 164)  
*jeo-neun achim-e-n bapp-a-yo*  
 I-TOP morning-LOC-TOP busy-CONJ-POL  
 ‘In the mornings I’m busy.’
- (v) 몇 시쯤 집에를 가세요? (ibid: 146)  
*myeoch si-jjeum jib-e-reul ga-s-e-yo*  
 how.many hour-about home-LOC-ACC go-HON-CONJ-POL  
 ‘About what time are (you) going home?’



- (25) 김 선생님에게 예쁜 딸이 있다. (ibid.)  
*Kim seonsaengnim-ege yeppeu-n ttal-i iss-da*  
 Kim teacher-DAT pretty-ATR daughter-NOM exist-DECL  
 ‘Mr. Kim has a beautiful daughter.’

The dative particle in turn can co-occur with the topic particle, but again not with the nominative particle:

- (26) 김 선생님에게는 예쁜 딸이 있다. (Ihm et al. 2001: 13)  
*Kim seonsaengnim-ege-neun yeppeu-n ttal-i iss-da*  
 Kim teacher-DAT-TOP pretty-ATR daughter-NOM exist-DECL  
 ‘Mr. Kim has a beautiful daughter.’

- (27) \*김 선생님께서가 예쁜 딸이 있다. (Chang, p.c.)  
*Kim seonsaengnim-ege-ga yeppeu-n ttal-i iss-da*  
 Kim teacher-DAT-NOM pretty-ATR daughter-NOM exist-DECL  
 ‘Mr. Kim has a beautiful daughter.’

- (28) \*김 선생님이에게 예쁜 딸이 있다. (Chang, p.c.)  
*Kim seonsaengnim-i-ege yeppeu-n ttal-i iss-da*  
 Kim teacher-NOM-DAT pretty-ATR daughter-NOM exist-DECL  
 ‘Mr. Kim has a beautiful daughter.’

It seems that the dative particle might be regarded as locative in nature as well, since it is the dative particle—not the locative—that is used for directed motion to human locations:

- (29) 엄마한테 가라.<sup>10</sup> (Chang, p.c.)  
*eomma-hante ga-ra*  
 mom-DAT go-IMPV  
 ‘Go to (your) mom.’
- (30) \*엄마에 가라. (ibid.)  
*eomma-e ga-ra*  
 mom-LOC go-IMPV  
 ‘Go to (your) mom.’

The ungrammaticality of (23), then, reduces to the ungrammaticality of using the locative particle with [+human] locations. It appears rather that the dative particle must be used with [+human] locations. This is consistent with Ihm et al. (2001), who state that *-ege* is used with humans (as well as animals), while *-e* is used elsewhere. Thus, the possessive in Korean may also be analyzed as a locative along the lines of Freeze.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The dative particle *-hante* is used here, as it is more natural in the kind of low form, colloquial speech exemplified in (29)-(30), but the grammaticality of these examples does not change with the more formal dative particle *-ege*.

<sup>11</sup> Freeze (1992) also discusses examples of possessives in which the possessor is marked as genitive instead of locative (e.g., K’ekchi’), stating that “the genitive marking of a possessor and the P of a P-marked locative subject are equivalent” (589). In the case of Korean, the equivalence of datives with locatives is clear from the contrast in (29)-(30).

## 5. The Definiteness Effect

In his survey of existentials and other locatives, Freeze (1992) observes that “the existential and the ‘have’ structure, both having a derived locative subject, are differentiated from the predicate locative by the definiteness effect” (553), but does not elaborate further on the correlates of the definiteness effect. The question is then: how is the definiteness effect manifested in Korean existentials, which contain neither expletives nor (in)definite articles? It will be seen that in fact there are several ways in which the definiteness effect manifests itself in Korean existentials.

### 5.1. Determiners

Jun (2000) argues that even though Korean lacks articles, the definiteness effect in existentials manifests itself in other ways. One way is in the distribution of other determiners:

- (31) 책상 위에 {그/\*저/\*이} 책이 있어. (Jun 2000: 270)  
*chaegsang wi-e {geu/jeo/i} chaeg-i iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC {that/DIST/this} book-NOM exist-CONJ  
 ‘{That book (I was talking about)/That book over there/This book} is on the desk.’

- (32) 책상 위에 내 책이 있어. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang wi-e nae chaeg-i iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC my book-NOM exist-CONJ  
 ‘There is a book of mine on the desk.’/‘My book is on the desk.’

In (31) it can be seen that demonstratives, which are definite determiners, are generally ungrammatical, though they are allowed under an anaphoric reading. On the other hand, as seen in (32), a possessive is allowed as well, but only under specific conditions—namely, an indefinite reading. If the possessed nominal in (32) is made unambiguously definite via the addition of a definite determiner, then only a predicate locative interpretation is available (although the existential interpretation is available in a specific context, cf. §5.3):

- (33) 책상 위에 나의 그 책이 있어. (Chang, p.c.)  
*chaegsang wi-e na-ui geu chaeg-i iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC me-GEN that book-NOM exist-CONJ  
 ‘That book of mine is on the desk.’ (cf. \*‘There’s that book of mine on the desk.’)

Thus, the definiteness effect is present in the licensing of determiners that are allowed to occur in the existential.

### 5.2. Particle Drop

Particle drop is also highly restricted in existentials:

- (34) 책상 위에 {\*어떤/그/\*저/\*이} 책-Ø 있어. (Jun 2000: 271-2)  
*chaegsang wi-e {eotteon/geu/jeo/i} chaeg-Ø iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC {some/that/DIST/this} book-Ø exist-CONJ  
 ‘There is {some book/that book (I was talking about)/that book over there/this book} on the desk.’

As seen in (34), the nominative particle on the theme argument cannot be dropped with any determiner except for the anaphoric demonstrative. This follows from discourse conditions on

particle drop: a nominal must be hearer-old (hence, typically definite) in order for its nominative or accusative particle to be able to be dropped (cf. Lee 1989).

Jun notes that a particle may also be dropped when there is no co-occurring determiner:

- (35) 책상 위에 책-Ø 있어. (ibid.)  
*chaegsang wi-e chaeg-Ø iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC book-Ø exist-CONJ  
 ‘The book is on the desk.’ (cf. \*‘There is the book on the desk.’)

However, he claims that these are not interpreted as existentials, but as predicate locatives. At first, sentences like (35) may seem to present a problem for Freeze’s analysis, since here the predicate locative is isomorphic with the existential, but Freeze (1992) in fact predicts that due to the three members of the locative paradigm sharing the same underlying structure, there will be languages where they also share the same surface word order (presumably because there is no EPP requirement in those languages driving a constituent to raise out of the predicate PP to Spec-I). He finds such a language in Scots Gaelic, concluding that “the definiteness effect can be suspended” (580). In the case of (35), though, if it is assumed that Korean has left-hand specifiers (cf. (6)), then it is not the case that the arguments in the predicational PP have simply remained in situ. Instead, it appears the locative has raised to Spec-I—a seemingly unmotivated movement that skips over the definite theme which is closer to Infl.

### 5.3. Contextualized Existentials and the Suspension of the Definiteness Effect

Freeze’s conclusion that the definiteness effect in existentials can be suspended is similar to that reached by Jun (2000), who enumerates cases in which the theme argument in the existential is permitted to be definite. In these so-called contextualized existentials, a special context in which the existential encodes meaning beyond existence allows a definite nominal to occur as the theme argument:

- (36) 내 통장에 그 돈이 아직 있어. (ibid.: 268)  
*nae tongjang-e geu don-i ajik iss-eo*  
 my account-LOC that money-NOM still exist-CONJ  
 ‘There’s that money still in my account.’
- (37) 주차장에 문수가 있어. (ibid.)  
*juchajang-e Munsu-ga iss-eo*  
 parking.lot-LOC Munsu-NOM exist-CONJ  
 ‘There’s Munsu in the parking lot.’

The sentence in (36) can occur as answer to the question *I’m short on the rent—could you lend me some money?*, in which case it encodes beyond the existence of the money the speaker’s intention to lend the listener money. The sentence in (37) can occur as answer to the question *Uh-oh, isn’t there anyone around who can give me a hand?*, in which case it encodes beyond Munsu’s existence the speaker’s suggestion of Munsu as a possible helper. The existentials in (36)-(37) may also occur discourse-initially when they serve to re-introduce a referent that is hearer-old, but discourse-new (one previously known to both speaker and listener, but not recently spoken about). The occurrence of anaphoric demonstratives in (31) and (34) would then also fall into this category.

As for what exactly constrains this relaxation of the definiteness effect, this appears to be related to the semantics of these existentials. Namely, they serve to place an individual into some

contextually salient set. In the case of (36), the interlocutor’s plea for financial help provides a context that makes salient the set of things with which the speaker can help him/her, and the speaker’s use of the existential in turn serves to place the entity of money in his bank account into this set. In the case of (37), the interlocutor’s plea for assistance provides a context that makes salient the set of people who can help him/her, and the speaker’s use of the existential serves to place the entity of Munsu into this set. Thus, when the existential functions not to assert the existence of a new individual, but rather to establish set membership for an individual, the definiteness effect is overridden. In fact, it is hard to imagine how it could be otherwise, for to manipulate an entity’s set membership implies a presupposition that the entity exists. Thus, the pivot in these cases is normally definite.

## 6. Existential Ambiguity

As suggested by (2), (32), and (35), sentences of existential form do not necessarily correspond to existential interpretations. This gray area is the biggest challenge to Freeze’s analysis of existentials vs. predicate locatives. In Korean sentences with an initial locative appear to be ambiguous between an existential interpretation and a predicate locative interpretation. In actuality, however, they are consistently unambiguous because of the contribution of phonological focus, realized by a high tone, H, beginning an accentual phrase, AccP (cf. Jun 2000 and Jun 1993 for further details). H is placed on the theme argument only when it occurs in an existential. Two structurally identical sentences can thus be mapped onto an existential or predicate locative interpretation via the presence of H on the theme<sup>12</sup>:

(38) {[책상 위에] [책이 있어]} . (ibid.: 273)  
*chaegsang wi-e chaeg-i iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC book-NOM exist-CONJ  
 ‘There is a book on the desk.’

(39) {[책상 위에] 책이 있어]} . (ibid.)  
*chaegsang wi-e chaeg-i iss-eo*  
 desk top-LOC book-NOM exist-CONJ  
 ‘The book is on the desk.’

In (38) the presence of H on the theme corresponds to an existential interpretation, while in (39) the presence of H on the locative corresponds to a predicate locative interpretation.

The placement of AccP boundaries is governed by the following principle of Jun (1993): a word that receives a high tone begins a new accentual phrase that includes all of the following material up to the next intonational phrase (IntP) boundary. This analysis assumes a specification of underlying prosodic structure in which accentual phrases roughly correspond to constituents and intonational phrases to clauses. Thus, in (38) the placement of H on the theme starts an AccP that includes all material until the next intonational boundary (namely, the end of the clause, which in this case is also the end of the sentence), while the underlying AccP comprising the locative stays intact. On the other hand, in (39) the placement of H on the locative starts an AccP that subsumes the whole sentence.

<sup>12</sup> The constituent receiving H is underlined in the examples below, with brackets marking AccP boundaries and braces marking IntP boundaries.

## 7. Sketch of an OT Analysis

The nature of the alternation in existentials between locative subjects and theme subjects, as well as the semi-complementary distribution of case particles, lends itself to an analysis in terms of conflicting, violable constraints within the framework of Optimality Theory. A brief sketch of what this analysis would look like in Korean is presented below. Following the analysis of Danish in Mikkelsen (2002), the following constraints are proposed for Korean:

(40) Syntactic and semantic constraints on existentials in Korean

- i. \*SU/IND: the constituent in Spec-I is not indefinite.
- ii. \*SU/LOC: the constituent in Spec-I is not a locative PP.
- iii. EPP: Spec-I is filled.
- iv. N-SUBJ: elements in Spec-I are marked with nominative case.
- v. CASE: all nominals are marked with case, and all case assigners assign their case in a unique, one-to-one relationship.
- vi. \*N-CLASH: a nominative particle does not occur next to another particle.

The constraints \*SU/IND and \*SU/LOC are general markedness constraints on what can appear in subject position, while the constraints EPP and N-SUBJ conspire to result in a nominative-marked element in subject position. The CASE constraint is essentially the Case Filter mandating a one-to-one relationship between the case assigned by case-assigning elements and the case received by case-bearing elements. Finally, the constraint \*N-CLASH militates against the co-occurrence of the nominative particle with other particles (cf. §3.2).

With regard to the ranking of these constraints, \*SU/IND appears to dominate \*SU/LOC. This is seen in the fact that locative PPs preferentially move to subject position over indefinite DPs:

(41) Tableau of existential verb with indefinite theme: \*SU/IND » \*SU/LOC<sup>13</sup>

$\langle V_e(x,y), x=DP_{ind,th}, y=DP_{loc-P} \rangle$	*SU/IND	*SU/LOC
a. $\mathcal{E}$ [IP DP <sub>loc-P</sub> -P <sub>i</sub> [I' [VP [PP DP <sub>ind,th</sub> -N t <sub>i</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]		*
b. [IP DP <sub>ind,th</sub> -N <sub>i</sub> [I' [VP [PP t <sub>i</sub> DP <sub>loc-P</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]	*!	

The constraint \*N-CLASH dominates N-SUBJ, which prevents locatives in subject position from taking nominative case particles on top of their prepositional particles:

<sup>13</sup> Abbreviations used: 'def' = definite, 'e' = existential, 'ind' = indefinite, 'th' = theme, 'loc' = locative, N = nominative particle, P = locative preposition/particle, T = topic particle.

(42) Tableau of existential verb with indefinite theme: \*N-CLASH » N-SUBJ

$\langle V_e(x,y), x=DP_{ind,th}, y=DP_{loc-P} \rangle$	*N-CLASH	N-SUBJ
a. $\mathcal{E} [IP DP_{loc-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$		*
b. $[IP DP_{loc-P-N}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$	*!	
c. $[IP DP_{loc-N-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$	*!	

The CASE constraint is unranked with respect to \*SU/LOC and N-SUBJ, but must be ranked below \*SU/IND:

(43) Tableau of existential verb with indefinite theme: \*SU/IND » CASE

$\langle V_e(x,y), x=DP_{ind,th}, y=DP_{loc-P} \rangle$	*SU/IND	*N-CLASH	*SU/LOC	N-SUBJ	CASE
a. $\mathcal{E} [IP DP_{loc-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*	*	*
b. $[IP DP_{ind,th-N}_i [I [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$	*!				
c. $[IP DP_{loc-P-N}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$		*!	*		
d. $[IP DP_{loc-N-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$		*!	*		
e. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*	*	**!*

If the CASE constraint is ranked with or above \*SU/IND and \*N-CLASH, candidate (b) will win because it incurs no violations of \*SU/LOC or N-SUBJ. Thus, in order for candidate (a) to win, CASE must be ranked at or below the level of \*SU/LOC and N-SUBJ.

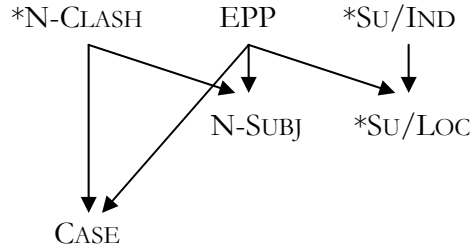
Conversely, the EPP constraint must dominate \*SU/LOC and N-SUBJ:

(44) Tableau of existential verb with indefinite theme: EPP » \*SU/LOC, N-SUBJ, CASE

$\langle V_e(x,y), x=DP_{ind,th}, y=DP_{loc-P} \rangle$	EPP	*SU/IND	*N-CLASH	*SU/LOC	N-SUBJ	CASE
a. $\mathcal{E} [IP DP_{loc-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*
b. $[IP DP_{ind,th-N}_i [I [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$		*!				
c. $[IP DP_{loc-P-N}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*!	*		
d. $[IP DP_{loc-N-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*!	*		
e. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	**!*
f. $[IP [I [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$	*!					

Candidate (f), which does not violate any of \*SU/IND, \*N-CLASH, or CASE is not attested; therefore, it must be ruled out by a higher-ranking EPP constraint. The form of the canonical existential sentence may then be accounted for by the following ranking of constraints:

(45) Composite constraint ranking in Korean



In the full tableau in (44), candidate (b), in which an indefinite theme has raised to subject position, is ruled out by the high-ranked \*SU/IND constraint. Candidate (f), in which neither theme nor locative has raised to subject position, is ruled out by the high-ranked EPP constraint. Among the candidates in which the locative has raised to subject position, candidates (c) and (d), in which the locative bears a nominative case particle in addition to another particle, are ruled by the \*N-CLASH constraint. Candidate (e) is ruled out by the fact that the theme does not bear case, leaving candidate (a) as the optimal candidate.

In the case of a definite theme, the constraint ranking in (45) will select the optimal candidate in the following way:

(46) Tableau of existential verb with definite theme

<V <sub>e</sub> (x,y), x=DP <sub>def,th</sub> , y=DP <sub>loc-P</sub> >	EPP	*SU/IND	*N-CLASH	*SU/LOC	N-SUBJ	CASE
a. [IP DP <sub>loc-P</sub> -P <sub>i</sub> [Γ [VP [PP DP <sub>def,th</sub> -N t <sub>i</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]				*!	*	*
b. $\omega$ [IP DP <sub>def,th</sub> -N <sub>i</sub> [Γ [VP [PP t <sub>i</sub> DP <sub>loc-P</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]						
c. [IP DP <sub>loc-P</sub> -N <sub>i</sub> [Γ [VP [PP DP <sub>def,th</sub> -N t <sub>i</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]			*!	*		
d. [IP DP <sub>loc-P</sub> -N <sub>i</sub> [Γ [VP [PP DP <sub>def,th</sub> -N t <sub>i</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]			*!	*		
e. [IP DP <sub>loc-P</sub> -P <sub>i</sub> [Γ [VP [PP DP <sub>def,th</sub> t <sub>i</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]				*!	*	***
f. [IP [Γ [VP [PP DP <sub>def,th</sub> -N DP <sub>loc-P</sub> ] V <sub>e</sub> ] I]]	*!					

Tableau (46) contains the same candidates as tableau (44) except for the difference in definiteness of the theme. Since candidate (b) incurs no violations of any constraints,<sup>14</sup> it wins over all the other candidates.

Two additional, unranked constraints prevent particle drop and topic-marking on an indefinite theme:

(47) Additional constraints governing form of indefinite theme

- i. \*DROP/IND: particles on indefinite nominals are pronounced.
- ii. \*TOP/IND: a topic-marked constituent is not indefinite.

In the case of an indefinite theme, these constraints serve to rule out candidates (b) and (h) in the tableau below.

<sup>14</sup> Of course, it violates more lowly ranked constraints like \*SUBJECT/DEFINITE (a markedness constraint against definite subjects) that have been omitted in (46).

(48) Tableau of existential verb with indefinite theme, including \*DROP/IND and \*TOP/IND

$\langle V_e(x,y), x=DP_{ind,th}, y=DP_{loc-P} \rangle$	EPP	*SU/IND	*N-CLASH	*SU/LOC	N-SUBJ	CASE	*DROP/IND	*TOP/IND
a. $\text{☞} [IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*		
b. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-\emptyset} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*	*!	
c. $[IP DP_{ind,th-N}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$		*!						
d. $[IP DP_{loc-P-N}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*!	*				
e. $[IP DP_{loc-N-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*!	*				
f. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	**!*		
g. $[IP [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-N} DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$	*!							
h. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{ind,th-T} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*		*!
i. $[IP DP_{ind,th-T}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$		*!						
j. $[IP DP_{ind,th-N-T}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$		*!	*					
k. $[IP DP_{ind,th-T-N}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$		*!	*					

However, when the theme is definite, the constraints will not eliminate a candidate in which the theme is topic-marked, candidate (h):

(49) Tableau of existential verb with definite theme

$\langle V_e(x,y), x=DP_{def,th}, y=DP_{loc-P} \rangle$	EPP	*SU/IND	*N-CLASH	*SU/LOC	N-SUBJ	CASE	*DROP/IND	*TOP/IND
a. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*		
b. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th-\emptyset} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*	*!	
c. $\text{☞} [IP DP_{def,th-N}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$								
d. $[IP DP_{loc-P-N}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*!	*				
e. $[IP DP_{loc-N-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th-N} t_i] V_e] I]]$			*!	*				
f. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	**!*		
g. $[IP [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th-N} DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$	*!							
h. $[IP DP_{loc-P}_i [r [VP [PP DP_{def,th-T} t_i] V_e] I]]$				*	*	*		*!
i. $\text{☞} [IP DP_{def,th-T}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$								
j. $[IP DP_{def,th-N-T}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$			*!					
k. $[IP DP_{def,th-T-N}_i [r [VP [PP t_i DP_{loc-P}] V_e] I]]$			*!					

Thus, both variants of the predicate locative are predicted to exist, and in fact, they do (cf. Ihm et al. 2001: 144-145, 163-164), with discourse constraints governing the alternation between the two.

## 8. Conclusion

The facts surrounding Korean predicate locatives, existentials, and possessives are generally consistent with Freeze's notion of a locative paradigm. Predicate locatives and existentials exhibit a word-order alternation that differentiates otherwise identical sentences. In the predicate locative,



the theme argument appears to lie in subject position, while in the existential, the locative argument appears to lie in subject position despite the fact that it does not bear a nominative particle.

However, it was observed that sentences of existential form in which the locative argument is initial can in fact be interpreted as predicate locatives. This fact cannot be accounted for under Freeze's notion of an underlying locative structure and movement resulting in the surface structures because in this model the existential has the word order that differs from the order in the underlying structure. Under Freeze's model, then, it remains to be explained why a sentence that has gone out of its way to raise a locative argument to subject position can have a non-existential interpretation.

One solution to this puzzle would be to posit that in these sentences, the theme argument is in fact in subject position, but the locative has raised further to a topic position. Certainly, according to Jun (2000), topic-marking an initial locative in an existential does not change the sentence's existential interpretation, which suggests that the locative may sit in a topic position in an existential. Furthermore, constituents such as accusative-marked objects that are topicalized to the beginning of the sentence need not bear the topic particle (cf. Ihm et al. 2001), which suggests that elements in topic positions are not necessarily topic-marked. It follows then that the initial locative in a sentence with an existential constituent order but a predicate locative interpretation may indeed have raised past a theme subject. This possibility, however, can only be suggested at this point and should be an area of future research.

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