



# Two-arguments-crossing phenomena in adjectival constructions

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## ABSTRACT

Although certain crossing relations between two arguments in verbal constructions have been discussed in previous works, few studies have been conducted on adjectival constructions. Based on a large-scale database of adjectives, this study examines the syntactic constructions of adjectival predicates and classifies diverse types of two-arguments-crossing (TAC) relations in the adjectival constructions. This study has a twofold goal. First, it provides a reliable result obtained from the exhaustive examination of 6600 adjectival predicates, instead of reporting typical complement types or crossing relations between arguments based on a limited number of examples. About 17% of Korean adjectives have been revealed licensing TAC relations. Second, the TAC relations, distinguished from other syntactic alternations, are empirically discerned and classified into four subtypes: IS-SYM, IS-CRT, DS-LOC and DS-PSY types. The first three types of the TAC relations are also observed in verbal constructions, whereas the last type seems exclusive to adjectival constructions. On the ground of the current study on adjectives, a full-scale study on verbal constructions licensing crossing relations between two arguments would be conducted in future works and therefore, a theoretical assumption may be elaborated on the basis of a solid linguistic reality.

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## 1. Introduction

Given that argument-taking elements such as verbs or adjectives occur with a range of possible combinations of arguments in various syntactic constructions, they show complex sets of properties in their syntactic behavior. The number and types of arguments are determined by the lexical idiosyncrasy of the predicative elements in most cases (cf. Fillmore, 1971; Gross, 1975; Dowty, 1991; Levin, 1993). In fact, they are hardly predictable by their semantic properties, although the reverse may often be valid. In this regard, an empirical examination of lexical elements is undoubtedly required before elaborating theoretical assumptions on their syntactic constructions and semantic properties.

*Abbreviations:* NOM, Nominative; ACC, Accusative; GEN, Genitive; POS, Postposition roughly equivalent to an English preposition required in indirect complements; E, Empty sequence; W, Any sequences; N1, First occurring Noun phrase; N2, Second occurring Noun phrase; N3, Third occurring Noun phrase; N-EY, Complement in -EY (i.e. -ey or eykey, roughly equivalent to the preposition *to*, *at*, *in* or *for*); N-WA, Complement in -WA (i.e. -wa or kwa, roughly equivalent to the preposition *with* or *to*); N-LO, Complement in -LO (i.e. -lo or ulo, roughly equivalent to the preposition *with* or *of*); ADJ, Adjective; ADV, Adverb; V, Verb; SFX, Suffix; COMP, Complementizer; PRE, Present tense; PAS, Past tense; DET, Determinative; DEC, Declarative; INT, Interrogative.

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While some predicative elements appear without any proper complements, some others require one or two complements in their basic constructions. When more than two arguments occur in a given sentence, a permutation between these arguments is not usually an option to be considered, since the predicate-related semantic restrictions on the arguments are not identical to each other. In addition, even though a permutation is allowed by chance, it does not guarantee that a sentence with two permuted arguments shall have the same meaning as the original sentence. Thus, sentences *Bill sent John away* and *Bill is rude to John* do not express the same meanings as those of *John sent Bill away* and *John is rude to Bill* respectively, which is perfectly confirmed by Korean sentences. Consider the following sentences with the verbal predicate *ponay-* ‘(to) send’ and the adjectival predicate *mwulyeyha-* ‘(to be) rude’<sup>1</sup>:

- (1) a. *Minwu-ka ina-lul melli ponay-ess-ta*  
 Minu-NOM Ina-ACC away send-PAS-DEC  
 ‘Minu sent Ina away’  
 b. ≠ *Ina-ka minwu-lul melli ponay-ess-ta*  
 Ina-NOM Minu-ACC away send-PAS-DEC  
 ‘Ina sent Minu away’
- (2) a. *Minwu-ka ina-eykey mwulyeyha-ta*  
 Minu-NOM Ina-EY rude-DEC  
 ‘Minu is rude to Ina’  
 b. ≠ *Ina-ka minwu-eykey mwulyeyha-ta*  
 Ina-NOM Minu-EY rude-DEC  
 ‘Ina is rude to Minu’

In the above pairs, the subject and the complement cannot be swapped without affecting the logical truth of the sentences. The sentence ‘Minu sent Ina away’ does not imply ‘Ina sent Minu away’, and likewise, even if it is true that ‘Minu is rude to Ina’, this does not say anything about if ‘Ina is rude to Minu’ or not.

However, some predicates do not seem to be restricted to these conventional semantic constraints. Let us consider the following pairs made up of a verbal predicate *pikyoha-* ‘compare’ and an adjectival predicate *pisusha-* ‘similar’ respectively:

- (3) a. *Minwu-ka tohyeng eyi-lul tohyeng pi-wa pikyoha-ess-ta*  
 Minu-NOM Figure A-ACC Figure B-WA compare-PAS-DEC  
 ‘Minu compared Figure A with Figure B’  
 b. = *Minwu-ka tohyeng pi-lul tohyeng eyi-wa pikyoha-ess-ta*  
 Minu-NOM Figure B-ACC Figure A-WA compare-PAS-DEC  
 ‘Minu compared Figure B with Figure A’
- (4) a. *Minwu-ka cino-wa talu-ta*  
 Minu-NOM Gino-WA different-DEC  
 ‘Minu is different from Gino’  
 b. = *Cino-ka minwu-wa talu-ta*  
 Gino-NOM Minu-WA different-DEC  
 ‘Gino is different from Minu’

In the above pairs, if ‘Minu compared Figure A with Figure B’ is true, the sentence ‘Minu compared Figure B with Figure A’ should be also true, and vice versa. The noun phrase in the accusative complement in (3a) appears in the non-accusative one in (3b), while that in the non-accusative complement in (3a) occurs in the accusative one in (3b). In the same way, the truth of ‘Minu is different from Gino’ implies that of ‘Gino is different from Minu’, and vice versa. In fact, they belong to certain particular predicative types, usually termed symmetric verbs and adjectives. These predicates do not impose the same semantic constraints on the arguments as those in (1) and (2). More precisely, they impose another type of semantic constraints; they permit their two arguments to be permuted by each other.

With regard to the permutation of two arguments, a more complex type is observed as follows:

- (5) a. *Minwu-ka ku il-lo Ina-lul mwunchaykha-ess-ta*  
 Minu-NOM the accident-LO Ina-ACC reproach-PAS-DEC  
 ‘Minu reproached Ina **for** the accident’  
 b. = *Minwu-ka Ina-eykey ku il-ul mwunchaykha-ess-ta*  
 Minu-NOM Ina-EY the accident-ACC reproach-PAS-DEC  
 ‘Minu reproached the accident **to** Ina’

In this pair, the accusative complement *Ina-ACC* ‘Ina’ in (5a) appears as a non-accusative one *Ina-EY* ‘to Ina’ in (5b), whereas the non-accusative complement *ku il-LO* ‘for the accident’ in (5a) appears as an accusative one *ku il-ACC* ‘the accident’ in (5b).

<sup>1</sup> In this paper, to be brief, the English translation will be provided, hereafter, without ‘(to)’ or ‘(to be)’ for the corresponding Korean verbs or adjectives.

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