

Unified approach to dynamic and epistemic readings of ‘-(u)l swu iss/eps ta’

Introduction. The following sentence with ‘-(u)l swu iss ta’ is ambiguous between ability and possibility reading.

(1) Inho-ka o-l-swu iss-ta.

Inho-Nom come-ADNOM-SWU be-DECL

Reading i) Inho is able to come tomorrow. (dynamic modality)

Reading ii) It is possible that Inho will come tomorrow.(epistemic modality)

The literature is divided into two views on the syntactic representation of the sentence in (1). One view claims that there is one syntactic structure for both readings (Park 1975, shin 2002, Muromatsu 1997, Tsujioka 2002) and the other argues that the two readings correspond to two different syntactic structures (Ha 2007, Chung 2007, Kim 2010, a.o.). In particular, a number of scholars claimed that the dynamic modality reading has control structure while the epistemic modality reading has that of raising construction (Ha 2007, Chung 2007, Kim 2010, Han 2007, among others.) In this paper, we approach the issue from the viewpoint of copy and delete operation for the movement theory of control and attempt to analyze (1) with recent unified structure for control and raising constructions a lá Polinsky 2005, Polinsky 2013, Polinsky and Potsdam 2006. We specifically make two claims: (i) there is one and the same syntactic representation for both dynamic and epistemic readings in (1) and (ii) the different readings correlate to the copy that gets spelled out.

Proposal. The major argument for different syntactic representations for dynamic and epistemic readings containing ‘-(u)l swu iss/eps ta’ sentences is based on some NPI facts (Ha 2007). Ha and Chung observes that negation internal to the modal expression ‘-(u)l swu iss ta’ interacts with negative polarity items in an interesting way.

(2) a. Amwuto pathi-ey an o-l-swu iss-ta

Nobody party-to not come-ADNOM-SWU be-DECL

‘It is possible that no one will come to the party.’ (epistemic reading only)

b. Inho-ka amwuto pathi-ey chotay an ha-l-swu iss-ta

Inho-NOM nobody party-to invite not do-ADNOM-SWU be-DECL

‘Inho is able not to invite anyone to the party.’ (dynamic reading)

‘It is possible that Inho will invite no one to the party.’ (epistemic reading)

With the NPI subject, only epistemic modality reading is allowed hence cancels the ambiguity while NPI object does not have any affect. To explain this fact, the following structures are proposed (Chung 2007 (46) and (47)).

(3) a. Dynamic modality

$[_{VP} DP_i v [_{VP} [_{DP/CP} [_{TP} PRO_i \dots V-(u)l] swu/li] [_v iss/eps]]]$

b. Epistemic Modality

$[_{VP} [_{DP/CP} [_{TP} DP \dots V-(u)l] swu/li] [_v iss/eps]]]$

Both dynamic and epistemic modality constructions have by-clausal structure. However, note that epistemic modality has a raising structure with the NPI subject in the embedded TP, while

dynamic modality has the control structure. Then the clause mate condition on the NPI explains why (2a) lacks the dynamic modality reading.

However, the two constructions seem to share much similarities. It has been argued that in the case of modal external negation constructions ‘-(u)l swu eps ta’ expresses only dynamic reading and epistemic modality is expressed with ‘-(u)l li eps ta’.

(4) a. Amwuto pathi-ey o-l-swu eps-ta
 Nobody party-to come-ADNOM-SWU not.be-DECL
 ‘No one is able to come to the party.’ (dynamic)

b. Amwuto pathi-ey o-l-li eps-ta
 Nobody party-to come-ADNOM-LI not.be-DECL
 ‘It is not possible (there is no chance) that anyone will come to the party.’ (epistemic)

In order to explain (4b) we must assume that the NPI subject raises (i.e., movement) to the matrix clause to be licensed by the negative matrix predicate. When this takes place, the resulting structure is just like the control structure, with the trace of the movement in the embedded clause. Hence, in the spirit of recent proposals that raising and control be treated as same instances of A-movement a lá Polinsky 2005, Polinsky 2013, Polinsky and Potsdam 2006, we propose that both dynamic and epistemic modalities have the same structure in (5):

(5) $[_{TP}[_{VP}[_{NP}[_{CP}[_{TP} \text{Inho-ka } [_{VP} \text{o}]](u)l] \text{ swu/li} \text{ iss/eps-ta}]]]$

The subject moves to the matrix subject position for EPP reason and different modal interpretations arise due to the copy that gets spelled out. Hence in (4), it is the higher copy that gets spelled out for both dynamic and epistemic sentences. The following sentence seems to raised a problem in particular to the different structure for dynamic and epistemic sentences.

(6) Pathi-ey amwuto an o-l-swu eps-ta
 Party-to nobody not come-ADNOM-SWU not.be-DECL
 ‘No one has the ability to not come to the party.’ (dynamic reading)
 ‘There is no possibility that no one will come to the party.’ (epistemic reading)

Contrary to what Ha (2007), Chung (2007) and Kim (2010) would predict, this sentence seems to be ambiguous between dynamic and epistemic reading. Note that this sentence can be followed by ‘motwu o-a-ya hal-ke-ta.’ (Everyone must come.) This can only be said in the context of dynamic interpretation. Furthermore, between the two readings, epistemic reading seems to be stronger, which is completely unexpected if ‘-(u)l swu eps ta’ expresses only dynamic reading with a distinct structure from epistemic sentence. In the unified approach, it could be explained that the dynamic reading is available when the higher copy of *amwuto* is spelled out. The epistemic reading arises when the lower copy gets spelled out. That is, the NPI subject is interpreted in the lower subject position, a backward control/raising case.

Conclusion. The unified approach to dynamic and epistemic modal interpretations of ‘-(u)l swu iss/eps ta’ seems to explain not only their structural similarities but also provide us with an empirical account to some NPI facts that otherwise would be a problem in different structure approach to this issue. What remains however, is why some differences exist and how they can be explain.