

## 1. Introduction

- ▶ The presence of a negative marker in Korean sentences with *since*-clauses such as (1) has been claimed to be irrelevant to the calculation of the truth conditions of the sentence.

(1) *Nay-ka syawe-lul (an) ha-nci cham olay*  
I-NOM shower-ACC (NEG) do-since very long.time  
*toyessta.*  
became  
'It has been a long time since I took a shower.'

- ▶ Sentences like (1) might be viewed as cases of **expletive negation**, i.e. a negative marker with an apparent lack of meaning (Espinal 1992, 2000; van der Wouden 1994).
- ▶ We show that the negative marker in the *since*-clause does contribute to the sentence meaning as it expresses negation.

## 2. Negative Concord Account (?)

- ▶ According to J. Yoon (1994), the negative marker *an* does not contribute to the sentence meaning in virtue of being part of a double negation construction. The other negative element would be *olay* 'a long time', which the author describes as having a relativized negative meaning.
- ▶ We agree that *olay* is, in one sense, relative in that it is interpreted in relation to the eventuality expressed in the subordinated clause (e.g. 'a long time' between two occurrences of taking a shower can be understood as 'one week', whereas 'a long time' between two occurrences of, say, taking a breath can be understood as 'one minute').
- ▶ However, while *olay* is a temporal expression conveying a timespan, it is not a semantically negative element. For instance, it cannot license an NPI. Therefore, there is no double negation in the sentence and *an* must be contributing a negative meaning.

(2) *Ciwu-ka amwuto \*(an) manna-nci olay toyessta.*  
Jiwoo-NOM anyone (NEG) meet-since long.time became  
'It has been a long time since Jiwoo met anyone.'

## 3. Desirability Scale Account (?)

- ▶ S. Yoon (2011) proposes that the presence of **an** a desirability scale and marks undesirability. Accordingly, in sentence (1), there is a scale according to which 'taking a shower' is desirable and 'not taking a shower' is undesirable.
- ▶ However, the desirability readings rather come from world knowledge, not from *an* itself.
- ▶ Sentence (2) below implies that smoking is undesirable for health, and adding *an* in (2) does not trigger the opposite value in the desirability scale. Moreover, it in fact requires the presence of *an* to make sense, which undermines the argument that the negative marker is not relevant to the sentence meaning.

(3) *Minho-ka kenkang-ul wihay tampay-lul #(an)*  
Minho-NOM health-ACC for tobacco-ACC (NEG)  
*phiwu-nci olay toyessta.*  
smoke-since long.time became  
'It has been a long time since Minho did not smoke/#smoked for health.'

## 4. Our Account

We claim that the presence of the negative marker in Korean *since*-clauses does indicate negation in the assertion and, in doing so, triggers a different aspectual interpretation. A sentence like (1) or (2) without negation asserts that the eventuality *p* in the *since*-clause held at some point a while ago. The temporal expression *olay* measures the time interval between the point when *p* held and the moment of enunciation (MoE). The interpretation that not *p* held during this interval is an implicature (i.e., it can be cancelled). In contrast, when the sentence contains a negative marker in the *since*-clause (such as *an*), it triggers the presupposition that *p* was habitual until some point a while ago, and the sentence asserts that *p* did not hold at that point. The different assertions (i.e., *p* vs. not *p* at the beginning of the interval) explain the contrast in sentence (2): '#he smoked for health' vs. 'he did not smoke for health'.

## 5. Different truth conditions

- ▶ The diagrams (3a) and (3b) illustrate the interpretation of the sentence with and without *an*, respectively.

(4) *nay-ka yenge kongpwu-lul ha-nci olay*  
I-NOM English-ACC study-ACC do-since long.time  
*toyessta.*  
became  
'It has been a long time since I studied English.'

## 6. Further Evidence

- ▶ The *since*-clause in a sentence like (1) without negation may contain modifiers such as 'for the last time'. This is so because *p* is the starting point of the time interval measured by *olay* and it is possible for *p* to have a new occurrence at some point in such interval. In contrast, when the sentence contains a negative marker in the *since*-clause, the presence of said modifiers generates ungrammaticality. This suggests that not *p* holds true for the whole interval.

(5) *Minho-ka macimakulo tampay-lul \*(an)*  
Minho-NOM for.the.last.time tobacco-ACC (NEG)  
*phiwu-nci olay toyessta.*  
smoke-since long.time became  
'It has been a long time since he smoked for the last time.'

- ▶ An eventuality such as 'he died' cannot appear cooccurring with the negative marker in the *since*-clause. The temporal expression (*olay* in our examples) measures the time interval in which a new occurrence of *p* is anticipated to hold. As 'he died' is conceptualized as a non-habitual eventuality, it cannot be expected to have another occurrence, which explains the ungrammaticality.

(6) *Ku-ka \*(an) cwuku-nci olay toyessta.*  
he-NOM (NEG) die-since long.time became  
'It has been a long time since he died.'