On the pragmatic nature of empty nominal *pro* in Korean null object constructions: A Relevance account*

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Cho, Euiyon. 2013. On the pragmatic nature of empty nominal *pro* in Korean null object constructions: A Relevance account. Linguistic Research 30(1), 51-66. In this paper I argue that the empty nominal *pro* used in the Korean null object constructions is semantically indeterminate and its content, being controlled in discourse, is recovered through inferential processes called enrichment. It will be shown within the framework of Relevance Theory which draws a distinction between what is coded and what is inferred. By reanalyzing Ahn and Cho’s (2012a) previous explication analysis of a null object construction whose pair of the construction contains the NPI *amwuto* ‘anybody,’ this paper argues that there is nothing semantically encoded in the *pro* used in the null object constructions. It also gives a Relevance account of how such sloppy-like and strict readings are inferentially derived. (Dongguk University)

Keywords null arguments, *pro*, sloppy-like reading, discourse controlled, explication, inference

1. Introduction

Recent syntactic studies over the nature of the null object category in Korean have been centered on whether it is *pro* or derived as a result of ellipsis. Arguments against an ellipsis analysis have been made by claiming that the sloppy reading that ellipsis proponents have discussed is not in fact a genuine one but a sloppy-like reading. The sloppy-like reading is only possible with a *pro* hypothesis, as Hoji (1998), Ahn and Cho (2012a, b), Park (2012) have argued. As illustrated in (1)

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below, for example, the null object construction (1B) could be interpreted in two ways when it is uttered after (1A).

(1) A: Chelswu-nun caki-uy cha-lul takk-ass-e.
   Top self-Gen car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec
   ‘Chelswu washed his car.’
B: Younghi-to takk-ass-e.
   also wash-Pst-Dec
   (logical meaning) ‘Younghi washed pro, too.’
   ‘Younghi washed his car (Chelswu’s car), too.’
   ‘Younghi washed her car (Younghi’s car), too.’

If the second reading was made via an ellipsis, it should not be cancelled because it assumes the linguistic representation (2) for (1B).

(2) Younghi-to caki-uy cha-lul takk-ass-e.

However, the two readings are cancellable as has been attested by Hoji and Ahn and Cho.¹

(3) A: Chelswu-nun caki-uy cha-lul takk-ass-e.
   Top self-Gen car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec
   ‘John washed his car.’
B: Younghi-to takk-ass-e. kulentey nwukwu cha-inci
   also wash-Pst-Dec but who car-Neg
   molu-kess-e
   not know-Mod-Dec
   ‘Younghi washed pro too. But I don’t know whose car.’

With regard to how the empty category pro in the null object constructions is interpreted, Hoji (1998: 142) has suggested with Japanese examples that “the content of the N head of the null argument is supplied by the context of discourse.” With

¹ The cancellability property of the null object construction has been also observed with regard to constructions whose object contains quantifiers, NPIs, etc. (see Ahn & Cho 2012a, b).
the nature of such sloppy-like readings of the Korean null object construction, along the line of Hoji, Ahn and Cho have argued that it is an implied meaning called explicature within the framework of Relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986, Carston 2002). Though their explicature analysis of the sloppy-like readings seems to be on the right track, their wording or the way they present their explicature analysis of how the pro is interpreted is very likely to cause confusion when seen in detail from the perspective of Relevance theory (see section 2). In this paper the explicature analysis of the empty pronominal pro in the Korean null object constructions will be elaborated and it will shed a light on the discourse context controlled nature of pro. In section 3, in order to argue that the pro under discussion is discourse controlled empty nominal I will show how the empty nominal pro in the null object constructions is interpreted through inferential processes within the framework of Relevance theory.

2. Pro as discourse controlled empty nominal

In discussing their pro analysis of the null object construction in (4B), Ahn and Cho (2012a: 5) say “the null argument is closer to the indefinite pro” by quoting their previous work (Ahn and Cho 2011).

(4) A: na-nun amwuto an manna-ss-e.²
   I-Top anyone neg meet-Pst-Dec
   ‘I did not meet anyone.’

B: na-to an manna-ss-e.
   I-too neg meet-Pst-Dec
   ‘I did not meet anyone, either.’

With the semantic assumption that the negative polarity item amwuto ‘anybody’ in (4B) “can be paraphrased as salam-tul-ul amwuto ‘people-Pl-Acc anybody’,” the interpretation of (4B), they say, “can be semantically similar to ‘I didn’t meet anyone, either’,” arising from “(the) indefinite counterpart of salam-tul-ul ‘people-Pl-Acc’.” What can be induced from the wordings ‘X can be a paraphrase of Y’ and ‘X can be semantically similar to Y’ is their position on the linguistic status

² This is their example (6) in Ahn & Cho (2012a).
of pro in (4B). They seem to take the pro used in (4) as a lexically given indefinite pro, being different from an arbitrary pro as if there exist various types of pros to be used in the Korean null object constructions. In the least, their wordings imbue a semantic status into the indefinite interpretation of pro in (4B). Under their analysis, therefore, the semantic interpretation of (4B) is taken to be as (5) and the explicature of (4B) as (6) which is the result of the pragmatic process of enrichment.

(5) I did not meet people, either.³
(6) I did not meet anyone, either.

In what follows, contrary to Ahn and Cho’s position which takes (5) as a semantic reading for (4B), I will argue that it must be taken as an explicature of (4B) under their analysis if they adopt Relevance theory to explicate the sloppy-like readings of the Korean null object constructions.

Within the framework of Relevance theory, explicature is defined as follows:

An assumption communicated by an utterance U is EXPLICIT [hence an “explicature”] if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded

³ In their paper, (5) and (6) are not explicitly given as they are. But to argue that the meaning (6) is an explicature developed from (5), they present a semantico-pragmatic analysis of a universal quantifier nwukwuna ‘everybody’ in a subject null construction in a pair of the following:

(i) A: nwukwuna Cheli-lul cohaha-y.
   everyone Cheli-Acc like-Dec
   ‘Everyone likes Cheli.’
B: ____ Tongswu-to cohaha-y.
   -also like-Dec
   ‘Everyone likes Tongswu, too.’

They give the following representation for (1B) and present the two readings (A) and (B),

(ii) pro(=salamtul-i) Tongswu-to cohaha-y.(Ahn & Cho’s (10B))
   -also like-Dec
(A) People like Tongswu, too.
(B) Everyone likes Tongswu, too.

saying “the reading (B) is equivalent to the “explicature” of (A)” in the conversational context of (1). Therefore, it is presumed that the two readings (5) and (6) presented for (4B) is what Ahn and Cho presumed for their explicature analysis of the sloppy-like reading for (4B) in their paper.
On the pragmatic nature of empty nominal pro in Korean null object ...  55

by U.  

[Note: in cases of ambiguity, a surface form encodes more than one logical form, hence the use of the indefinite here, “a logical form encoded by U.”]  

(Sperber and Wilson 1986: 182)

Within the modular theory of meanings in Relevance theory, there is a divide between semantics and pragmatics. The logical form encoded by an utterance is a semantic representation in the theory and what is pragmatically developed from the logical form, being enriched freely or obligatorily though inferential processes, gives a birth to explicature, the explicit content of an utterance. Explicature has a combinatorial characteristics of both semantics and pragmatics, that is, code vs. inference in the sense of Ariel (2008).

Since Ahn and Cho explicitly takes the position that the meaning of the existential NPI amwuto ‘anyone’ is semantically equivalent to the nominal complex salam-tul amwuto ‘people-Pl amwuto’ the logical form of (4A), cited below again, would be (7) whose literal meaning is therefore (8) as illustrated below:

(4) A: na-nun amwuto an manna-ss-e.  
I-Top anyone neg meet-Pst-Dec  
‘I did not meet anyone.’
B: na-to an manna-ss-e.  
I-too neg meet-Pst-Dec  
‘I did not meet anyone, either.’

(7) na-nun salam-tul-ul amwuto an manna-ss-e.  
I-Top people-Pl-Acc anyone neg meet-Pst-Dec

(8) I did not meet people, either.

When the null object construction (4B) is uttered after (4A), if the phonetically empty pro is not assigned an appropriate contextual information, there is no propositional content, that is, there is nothing that can be understood as the explicit

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4 Though Relevance theory makes a distinction between semantics and pragmatics, truth conditional meanings or propositional meanings are taken to be context dependent, being pragmatically enriched. For some utterances, pragmatically enriched explicate becomes a propositional meaning. See Carston (1988 and 2002) for this.

5 This is their example (6) in Ahn and Cho (2012a).
content of the utterance (4B) as in the following.

(10) I did not meet pro, either

In other words, I claim, the logical form of the utterance (4B) is the one in (10) if represented in the form of English translation. Since the empty nominal pro in the object argument position is a grammatically selected constituent, it must be obligatorily saturated in the context in which it is uttered. Otherwise, no propositional form will be induced. In this context, ‘samal-tul amwuto’ in (7) which is the logical form of the utterance (4A) under Ahn and Cho’s analysis will serve as an antecedent for the resolution of the pro for the utterance (4B) to be explicitly understood or communicated. Under the assumption that the lexical meaning of amwuto is the same with or similar to the complex nominal salamtul amwuto ‘people-PL anyone,’ as in Ahn & Cho, then, the representation in (11) becomes the explication of (4B) because (11) is what is developed from the logical form (10) of the utterance (4B) through the obligatory enrichment process taken place in the context of (4).

(11) I did not meet people, either.

As said earlier, Ahn and Cho take (11) as the literal meaning of the null object construction (4B). But under Relevance theory which draws a line between logical form and what is explicated, (11) is not the logical/literal meaning of (4B), but an intermediate explicit content enriched through the saturation of the empty nominal pro by an inferential process in the context of (4).6

To recapitulate, the logical form of the utterance (4B) is (10) since the phonetically empty pro has no semantic content other than being a nominal whose “content of the head N of the null argument (pro) is supplied by the context of discourse,” as suggested in Hoji (1998: 142). Therefore, the content of the pro in

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6 My position about how the utterance (4B) gets enriched is different from Ahn and Cho’s. With the assumption that the lexical meaning of amwuto ‘anybody’ is something like salam-tul amwuto ‘people amwuto,’ there is no linguistically motivated reason to develop the explicit content of (4B) ‘I did not meet anyone, too’ through the intermediate step ‘I did not meet people, too’ from the logical form of ‘I did not meet pro, too.’ I suggest that the explicit content of (4B) is directly developed from the logical meaning of the utterance, ‘I did not meet pro, too.’
On the pragmatic nature of empty nominal pro in Korean null object ...

(4B), left unfilled in a discourse context, is pragmatically enriched, being supplied from the preceeding linguistic context, giving rise to the explicature ‘I did not meet anyone, too.’ Within the framework of Relevance theory, the logical form of the null argument in the object null construction is the empty nominal pro itself and its content is pragmatically saturated from the context in which it is used. The resulting explicit content would be interpreted either definite or indefinite depending on the referential property of what is being construed as the content of the pro. It means that there is only one pro to be used in the Korean null object constructions. Since the pro gets its content in the discourse context, it is discourse controlled pro.

3. A Relevance account of discourse controlled pro

In this section we will discuss how the content of the pro in the object null construction gets enriched by contexts in detail and see that the full-fledged interpretation of pro is purely inferential, thus called discourse controlled pro in this paper. What supports the inferential property of the readings is the empirical fact that those meanings assigned to the pro in context are cancellable because semantic meanings should not be cancelled. This paper gives a Relevance account of the purely inferential nature for sloppy-like and strict readings to show that the content of pro is determined in context via inferential processes.

Seen from the perspective of how the content of the pro in the object argument position is supplied and get enriched, listeners are guided to use a pragmatic strategy to recover the content of an anaphoric element intended by the speaker. They search a possible antecedent of an anaphor through a discourse model that includes information from many things never said in the discourse or mutually known between the interlocutors in the speech situation as well as from a preceding linguistic context.

In the following we will see how the strict, sloppy identity, and sloppy-like readings are constructed or comprehended. In Relevance theory, verbally expressed linguistic forms, that is, utterances encode logical forms (conceptual representation) since logical forms are what is linguistically encoded. They might be incomplete if they lack obligatory arguments selected by a predicate. The null object constructions under discussion are such cases whose logical forms are incomplete. For example,
the logical representation of the utterance (12B) is ‘Younghi was washing pro, too’

(12) A: Chelswu-nun caki-(uy) cha-lul takk-ass-e.
   Top self Gen car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec
   ‘Chelswu washed his car.’
B: Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e.
   also wash-Prog-Pst-Dec
   (logical meaning) ‘Younghi was washing pro too.’

The conceptual representation (12B) itself is incomplete to yield a propositional meaning. Since there is no syntactic constraint on the use of the discourse controlled pro, a possible antecedent of the discourse variable varies depending on the context in which it is used.7 What governs the speaker’s appropriate use of the discourse controlled pro is her estimation of the hearer’s mental model. If she believes that the hearer is able to recover the antecedent or get the explicit content of the pro by her estimation of his mental model, the speaker leaves the object argument position verbally unsaid, by filling it with pro whose content is inferred from the context in which it is used.

In other words, the discourse situation which licenses the speaker’s appropriate use of the null object is where Grice’s maxim of Quantity or Horn’s R-principle (Say no more than you must) governs.8 In fact, as argued in Carston (1995), speakers are driven “to derive as great a range of contextual effects as possible for the least expending effort” (231). The speaker leaves the linguistic content of the object argument implicit or unuttered because she believes that the hearer could recover the content of the pro as is intended by her in the communicative context. This is possible because the speaker’s use of pro in the object position creates a presumption of optimal relevance.9 That is, the zero form in the object position used

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7 As has been proposed by many Korean syntacticians (Ahn & Cho 2012a,b, Bae and Kim 2012 to cite a few), the Korean null pro in the object position has the property of being pragmatically controlled for its antecedent, being characterized as a deep anaphora in the sense of Hankamer and Sag (1976).

8 It is also known as the Law of Least Effort dictating the minimization of form.

9 According to Relevance theory, every ostensive stimulus, no matter whether it is verbal or nonverbal, conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance. It is known as communicative principle of relevance. Presumption of optimal relevance consists of two parts as in the following:
by the speaker is ‘the ostensive stimulus’ which is relevant enough to be worth the hearer’s processing effort. As in (12) above, when A hears what B says after him, he expects B’s use of the null object as relevant enough to be worth processing in the speech context.

Suppose that there are two cars each owned by Chelswu and Younghi and A and B are talking about what they did in the afternoon as in (12). Under the situation that Chelswu and Younghi each own a car and with the general knowledge that people wash their cars, the hearer A takes what B said as relevant enough to be worth processing. On the other hand, the null object construction is the most relevant utterance form which the speaker B is ‘willing and able to produce’ to achieve her communicative goal of informing A that Younghi washed her car, too after A’s utterance (12A). With the least effort, the speaker B assumes that the hearer A is able to infer the content of pro in the object argument position as referring to Younghi’s car from his mental model constructed from the speech context and the preceding utterance caki cha ‘self’s car’ that he has made.10 In other words, this reading called sloppy identity reading is preferred in this context because this interpretation is the most compatible one with the speech situation mentioned above and the general world knowledge about washing a car when people own their own vehicle.

This sloppy identity reading is in fact a sloppy-like reading as was argued in Ahn and Cho. This reading is cancellable as shown in the following:11

(13) A: Chelswu-nun caki-(uy) cha-lul takk-ass-e.
       Top self Gen car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec
       ‘Chelswu washed his car.’
B: Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e. kulenday nwukwu cha-inci
       also wash-Prog-Pst-Dec but who car

(a) The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough to be worth the audience’s processing effort.
(b) It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator’s abilities and preferences.

10 The interpretation of the zero form in the null object construction in (12B) is influenced from the preceding form caki cha ‘self’s car’ in a parallel fashion when pro is processed when there are two people involved in washing a car and each person own his or her vehicle.

11 In fact, (13) shows also the strict reading ‘Younghi was also washing Chelswu’s car’ to be implied by the utterance (12B) is also cancelled. The explanation of how the sloppy identity reading is cancelled is also applicable to the cancellation effect of the strict reading in the same way as will be given in the main body of this paper.
The sloppy identity reading appears to be cancelled because the referential interpretation for the pro takes place through inferential processes. According to Hoji, as was introduced earlier in this paper, the pro gets the content of its head from the preceeding linguistic context cha ‘car,’ turning the incomplete logical form into a propositional content ‘Younghi was washing a car, too.’ This propositional content gets further enriched into ‘Younghi was washing her (Younghi’s) car’ in the speech situation in which A and B know that Chelswu and Younghi own their car to be washed by themselves. The reason why the sloppy-like reading is cancellable is due to the fact that the reading is developed from the logical form ‘Younghi was washing pro, too’ to the explicature ‘Younghi was washing her car’ through inferentially enriched processes.

On the other hand, though it is a less preferred reading compared with the sloppy-like reading, the pro in the utterance (12B) is likely to be also interpreted as referring to Chelswu’s car, yielding its strict reading ‘Younghi was washing Chelswu’s car, too’ in (12). The speaker B knows that her use of the null object construction in this speech context could also imply ‘Younghi was washing Chelswu’s car, too.’ But since the sloppy-like reading ‘Younghi was washing her car, too’ is what is most likely to be interpreted by the hearer A in the aforementioned context, she should not leave her use of the null object construction which is pragmatically ambiguous if she intends to achieve her communicative goal of informing A that Younghi was washing Chelswu’s car, too. Therefore, B should add a piece of rectifying information after uttering the null object construction in oder to cancel the unintended pragmatic meaning ‘Younghi was washing her

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12 This is called ‘an obligatory saturation inferential process.’ See Recanati (2004) for the process of saturation.

13 From the perspective of language processing, the way the pro gets its referential meaning in this context would be different. The hearer would search the antecedent of the pro in his mental model in which Younghi’s car exists. With the belief that it is common that each person washes his or her car by himself or herself unless other situations which would erase this belief are markedly given, the hearer would resolve the antecedent of the pro as Younghi’s car in his mental model.
On the pragmatic nature of empty nominal pro in Korean null object ...  61

(Younghi’s) car.’ This is illustrated below:

(14) A: Chelswu-nun caki-(uy) cha-lul takk-ass-e.
   Top self Gen car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec
   ‘John, washed his car.’
B: Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e. kulendey ku cha-nun
   also wash-Prog-Pst-Dec but that car-Top
   Younghi cha-ka ani-ya.
   car-Nom not Dec
   (logical meaning) ‘Mary was washing pro too. But that car was not
   Younghi’s’

This also shows how the sloppy-like reading can be cancelled and at the same time
how the strict reading intended by the speaker B with her use of the pro could be
strengthened.

Now let us move to see how the strict reading arises in a different context and
can be cancelled. Suppose that Younghi does not own a car but Chelswu does.
Younghi is an auto mechanic and she went to his house to help him repair his car.
After finishing repairing his car, she also helped him wash his car. In this situation,
what the speaker B said in (15B) Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e ‘Younghi was washing
pro, too’ could be interpreted to imply ‘Younghi was washing his (Chelswu’s) car’
in this speech situation when uttered after what A said as in the following:

(15) A: Chelswu-nun cha-lul takk-ass-e.
   Top car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec

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14 If what B knows about the world is the state of affairs that Younghi washed Chelswu’s car in the
aforementioned speech context, the utterance (12B) would not be the most relevant form
‘compatible with the speaker B’s linguistic abilities and preferences’ to inform A that Younghi
also washed Chelswu’s car in this context. With her use of the pro in the object argument position
if the speaker B wanted to inform A that Younghi was washing Chelswu’s car, too, the most
relevant utterance form she is able to produce would be the following with the adverb kathi
‘together’ which prevents the null object construction (12B) from inducing pragmatic ambiguity.

(a) Younghi-to kathi takk-koiss-ess-e.
   also together wash-Prog-Pst-Dec
   (logical meaning) ‘Younghi was also washing pro together.’
‘Chelswu washed a car.’
B: Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e.
also wash-Prog-Pst-Dec
(logical meaning) ‘Younghi was washing pro too.’

A’s use of the bare NP cha is the most relevant one compatible with the speaker’s linguistic and pragmatic abilities when A intends to refer to Chelswu’s car in this context since A knows that Korean bare nouns can be used to refer to a definite entity. To put differently, with the least effort, the speaker A believes that the hearer B is able to enrich its meaning to ‘Chelswu’s car’ because A assumes that in the hearer’s discourse model constructed at the speech situation, there exists only one car owned by Chelswu. After hearing what A said, for B as a speaker, it is also in her interest to make her utterance as easy as possible to be understood by the hearer A to achieve her communicative goal of informing him that Younghi washed Chelswu’s car, too. Since Chelswu’s car has become the topic of the conversation and it is in their mental discourse model, with the linguistic pragmatic knowledge that the discourse controlled null pro is used when its full fledged content is recoverable from the discourse context, her use of the null object construction is the most relevant form to be uttered to achieve her communicative goal. If B had not wanted to inform A the propositional content ‘Younghi was washing Chelswu’s car, too,’ for instance, if she had intended to inform A that Younghi was washing someone else’s car, then she should have uttered a different linguistic form because the null object construction Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e ‘Younghi was washing pro, too’ was not considered to be the most relevant one to be produced under the speaker’s linguistic and pragmatic abilities in this speech situation.

With a different contextual assumption such as that Chelswu’s family has many cars including his, if B intended to focus on Younghi’s action of washing a car, after hearing what A said, that is, Chelswu-nun cha-lul takkasse ‘Chelswu washed a car’ as in (15A), she would utter the null object construction (15B). But, since A’s

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15 Uttering a bare noun cha ‘car’ takes less effort than using a longer form such as ‘Chelswu’s car’ in the context that the speaker knows that the bare noun cha can be interpreted to refer to Chelswu’s car.

16 When the speaker intends to emphasize the action by de-emphasizing the object of the action (i.e., the patient argument), the null object construction is used. The following conversation could be easily observed in our daily life:
utterance (15A) implies that the car Chelswu washed would be either his or one of his family member’s in this new speech context, B’s utterance (15B) after (15A) also evokes the same explicature that Younghi washed a car; it might be Chelswu’s or one of his family’s. Suppose that B got the explicature ‘Chelswu washed his (Chelswu’s) car’ from A’s utterance in (14) but did not want her utterance Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e ‘Younghi was washing pro, too’ to be interpreted as implying that Younghi was washing Chelswu’s, too. Then she would not leave her utterance as it is. To emphasize Younghi’s action of washing a car, B could use the null object construction with a focal stress on the predicate takk-koiss-ess-e ‘washing’ as in (15B). But in order to cancel an unintended explicature, the strict reading, to be produced by her use of the null object construction, she will add any rectifying information after her use of the construction. This is illustrated below:

(16) A: Chelswu-nun cha-lul takk-ass-e.  
Top car-Acc wash-Pst-Dec  
‘John washed a car.’

B: Younghi-to takk-koiss-ess-e. kulentyey ku cha-nun Chelswu  
also wash-Prog-Pst-Dec but that car-Top  
cha-nun ani-ya.  

(car-Top not-Dec  
(logical meaning) ‘Younghi was washing pro, too. But that car is not Chelswu’s.

If explained in terms of Hoji’s idea of the structure of pro, the hearer A supplies the content of the pro’s head by the linguistic antecedent uttered by himself. It turns the
incomplete logical form ‘Younghi was washing pro, too’ into a propositional content ‘Younghi was washing a car.’ It is then further enriched to the explication ‘Younghi was washing Chelswu’s car’ as the explicit content of the logical form of the null object construction in the aforementioned speech situation. In this way, the explicit content is a byproduct of combining the logical meaning of the null object construction with the inferred meaning of the pro construed in the speech situation or in the hearer’s discourse mental model. Since any inferred meaning is pragmatic in nature, what is expected is the possibility of cancelling the inferred meaning of the pro in the null object construction of (15B). In fact, (16B) attests that this is true. That is, the strict reading for the pro in (15B) is the result of inference and is cancellable.

4. Concluding remarks

In this paper I have tried to show how the discourse controlled empty nominal pro in the Korean null object constructions gets interpreted though inferential processes within the framework of Relevance theory. Under the theory which draws a demarcation between what is decoded (semantics) and what is inferred (pragmatics), the logical form of the null object construction appears to contain a discourse controlled variable (pro) whose value or content is determined through the hearer’s inferential processes, called obligatory saturation in the speech situation. To be specific, by reanalyzing Ahn and Cho’s explication analysis of the null object constructions, I have argued that there is only one pro to be used in the null object constructions whose explicit content is recovered by the hearer through his inferential processes in the given speech situation. Given that the semantic content of pro is indeterminate, its various interpretations such as strict and sloppy-like readings for the null object constructions have been shown to be discourse controlled, getting enriched in the speech situation. Therefore, whether the pro gets interpreted definite, indefinite or arbitrary is a pragmatic property of the empty nominal derived or inferred from contexts.
On the pragmatic nature of empty nominal pro in Korean null object ...

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