

In Search of Evidence for Verb-placement in Korean and Japanese

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One of the most frequently used arguments for or against verb-raising to INFL for a given language is placement of the verb with respect to a certain type of adverbs or negation (Emmonds 1978, Pollock 1989). However, in a head final language like Korean and Japanese, the string order between the verb and such diagnostic elements is uninformative, as the verb will occur to their right whether it raises or not. We thus need to resort to arguments other than those relying on the string order between the verb and a diagnostic element to settle the matter. In this paper, I will examine such arguments claimed in the literature to demonstrate the verb-placement in Korean and Japanese. We will see that there is no consensus in the extant literature, some arguing that there is no verb-raising and others arguing that verb-raising does occur. I will show that neither the evidence for a raising analysis nor the evidence for an analysis without raising is definitive, and that the data used in the argumentation in the literature has explanations consistent with either analysis. I argue that this conflicting situation in the literature is not an accident, but a reflection of the fact that evidence regarding the verb-placement in a head-final language like Korean and Japanese is truly hard to come by, not only for linguists developing an analysis of verb-placement but also for children acquiring the language. I will consider implications on the grammar regarding this lack of evidence for verb-placement.