# Backgrounded Information Accommodation in Mental Space Theory: the Korean Evidentiality Constructions

*Iksoo Kwon* ([kwoniks@berkeley.edu](mailto:kwoniks@berkeley.edu)),
University of California, Berkeley

Every language can tell you "I saw X happen," "I heard that X happened" – but what is the difference between that and grammaticalized evidentiality? This paper aims to argue that another space elaboration – Backgrounded Information Accommodation (BIA, henceforth) – can provide a helpful treatment of the contrast in Mental Spaces theory (Fauconnier 1997, Fauconnier and Turner 2002). The kind of knowledge that needs elaborating with BIA is found in construal of evidential (EV, henceforth) markers. I particularly look into three EV markers that consist of the Korean EV system (Kwon 2011, cf. Chung 2007; J-M. Song 2007): the firsthand EV *-te-*, the inferential EV *-napo-*, and the reportive/ quotative EV *-ay*.

BIA helps to distinguish EV constructions from periphrastic EV expressions. In (1) with an EV marker, the speaker intends to foreground information of an event that is observed, signaling that the speaker has obtained the information via a certain mode of access prior to the speech act time. In contrast, the speaker foregrounds information of how she has obtained the focal information in a periphrastic EV expression (2):

(1)  *Chelswu-ka    ecey         hakkyo-ey     ka-te-la*
     Chelswu-Nom   yesterday     school-Loc    go-Firsthand.EV-Decl
     '(I directly perceived that) Chelswu was going to school.'

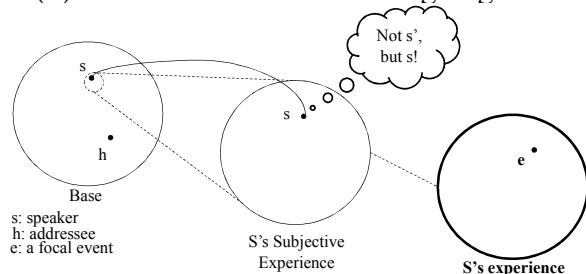(2)  I saw that Chelswu was going to school yesterday.
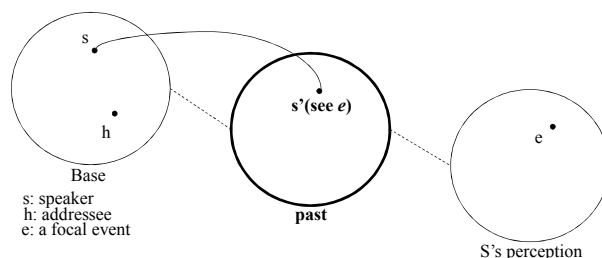


Figure 1. BIA in (1)            Figure 2. Normal Space Evocation in (2)

The proposed representations capture the difference: S's subjective experience space that is backgrounded is represented by a projected space from Base in (1), whereas past space is normally evoked in (2); the event of Chelswu's going to school (*e*) is profiled in (1), whereas the event of the speaker's observing the focal event in the past (S' (see *e*)) is in (2); notation 's' is used for (1) (cf. s' in Figure 2), because the subjective experience still belongs to the speaker in Base. Among various kinds of knowledge in Base, the backgrounded knowledge deserves to be accommodated by an independent space, because it is exclusive to the speaker.

BIA also helps to explain how significantly conceptual distance (Dancygier and Sweetser 2005) affects the construal of the EV constructions. Looking into how the Korean EV markers restrict (non-)first person subject uses with particular types of predicates (activity and experiential), the restrictions fall out of a mental spaces analysis of conceptual distance:

(3)  *Yenghuy(?nay)-ka       hakkyo-ey     ka-n-t-**ay***
     Yenghuy(?I)-Nom        school-Loc     go-Imperf-Decl-**Quot.EV**
     '(I am told by YH that) YH goes to school / ?(I am told by 'I' that) I go to school.'

(4)  *Nay(?Yenghuy)-ka       oylop-**te**-la*
     I(?Yenghuy)-Nom         feel.lonely-**Firsthand.EV**-Decl
     '(I directly experienced that) I (?Yenghuy) was feeling lonely.'

Since the *-ay* construction requires that the information source be other than the speaker

herself, the first person subject is aberrant in (3). In (4) with *-te-*, the subject is not likely to refer to anybody else but the speaker, because the presence of the experiential verb does not normally allow the experiencer to directly access internal states of another person. This seemingly syntactic asymmetry in the EV constructions disappears, however, if they are used in the right context: for instance, (3) with 'I' will be okay, if the speaker converses with herself in her dream; (4) with 'Yenghuy' will, if the speaker is able to fully sympathize with Yenghuy, for instance, who is her best friend or her daughter.

I argue that to fully grasp the EV constructions, it is crucial to understand deep semantics that arises from the conceptual distance created between the speaker and the subject (Distancing Effect; Dancygier and Sweetser 2005), which the BIA helps to clearly represent.

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