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Auxiliary Verbs as Head-adjoined Expressives in Korean: Against the Aspectual Approach

Hyun Kyoung Jung
Silla University

Lan Kim
Pennsylvania State University

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Abstract

We examine the nature of the second verb (V2) in auxiliary verb constructions in Korean, in which one clause with two verbs denotes a single event. Arguing against the previous analyses that treat the V2 as an Aspect head, we propose that the V2 is head-adjoined to the v of the first verb (V1) and marks the speaker's commitment toward the event described in the sentence.

Auxiliary Verbs as Head-adjoined Expressives in Korean:

Against the Aspectual Approach

Hyun Kyoung Jung and Lan Kim*

1 Introduction

In this study, we investigate the so-called "auxiliary verb construction (AVC)" (Sohn 1999), a subset of serial verb constructions in Korean. In particular, we deal with a complex verbal structure where one clause with two serial verbs expresses a single event.[1] In the AVC considered in this paper, the second verb (V2) immediately follows the first verb (V1), 'assisting' the main predicate by providing some extra semantic contribution, rather than denoting an event of its own.

An earlier study of this construction by Choi (2003, 2005) analyzes the V2 as an aspectual (Asp) head located above the *v*P formed based upon V1. We argue that the V2 cannot be Asp on account of adverb modification and conditions imposed by verbal roots. Instead, we propose a novel treatment in which (i) the V2 realizes a *v* head and is adjoined to the *v* of V1 and (ii) V2 marks the speaker's commitment toward the event described by V1.

In what follows, we introduce the aspectual approach to the auxiliary verb construction and point out the reasons why the nature of the V2 must be reconsidered (Section 2). In Section 3, we detail out our proposal of V2 as an expressive element and as an adjunct *v*, focusing on the verbal suffix *-nay* in Korean. We motivate the first part of the proposal, namely the semantic status of V2 as an expressive in the sense of Potts (2005, 2007). Specifically, we show that the V2 exhibits the core characteristics of expressives by examining its independence property, speaker-orientedness, and its behavior on the family-of-sentences test (Section 4). The second part of our analysis is supported by various evidence ranging from the typology of light verbs, co-occurrence with lexical causatives, to some adjunct properties of *-nay* (Section 5). Finally, some implications are discussed and conclusions are drawn in Section 6.

2 The Aspectual Approach to Auxiliary Verb Constructions

2.1 Previous Analysis of Auxiliary Verb Constructions in Korean

The auxiliary-like V2 *-nay* (meaning 'achieve', 'submit' as a lexical verb) can be optionally added to V1, as shown by its acceptability without V2.

(1) Jina-ka   ku   chayk-ul   ilk-(e-nay)-ess-ta
    Jina-NOM that   book-ACC   read-(linker-achieve)-PST-DECL
    'Jina read the book (and in terms of the speaker's perspective the subject went through some hardship in the course of the main event).'

Sohn (1999) and Choi (2003, 2005) describe that the V2 *-nay* denotes that the action of V1 is done completely, although with some hardship. Thus, a representative approach (Choi 2003, 2005) treats this completive reading as aspect, and proposes that V2 is an Asp head that marks telicity and that this head determines the aspectual property of the entire predicate as illustrated in (2).

[1]Another type of serial verb constructions in Korean includes a serial V-V construction in which two verbs may express two separate events in a single sentence. A full investigation of these constructions is beyond the scope of this paper (see Choi 1937, Lee 1992, Choi 2003, among many others).

(2) Hypothesis #1: ✗

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              AspP
             /    \
           vP      Asp  [+TELIC]
          /  \      -nay
       Jina   v'
             /  \
           VP    v
          /  \
      .. ilk 'read'..
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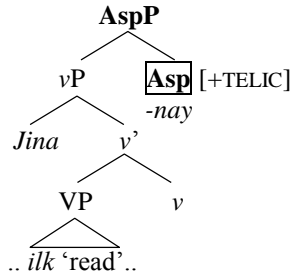
2.2 Evidence against the Aspectual Analysis

In contrast to what the analysis in (2) would predict, the adverbial modification test (Dowty 1979) and the interaction between the V2 and other verbal elements demonstrate that the type of V2 alone does not determine the aspectual property of the whole predicate in the AVCs in Korean.

If it is only the V2 that determines the telicity of the sentence, as Choi (2003, 2005) argues, a sentence containing a putative telic V2 must be compatible with only telic adverbials. In particular, (3) with *-nay* (lexically meaning 'achieve', 'submit'), considered to be telic by Choi (2003, 2005), should only allow for the telic adverbial. This is contrary to the fact, however. With the activity-denoting V1 in (3), the sentence is only compatible with an atelic adverbial, regardless of whether *-nay* follows V1 or not.

(3) Yenghi-ka   kothong-ul   il-nyen-tongan/#il-nyen-maney
     Yenghi-NOM   pain-ACC   one-year-for/#one-year-in
     kyenti-(e-nay)-ess-ta.
     endure-(linker-achieve)-PST-DECL
     'Yenghi endured the pain for a year/#in a year (and this was done despite some hardship).'

Thus, the example in (3) demonstrates that it is not V2 that is solely responsible for the aspect of the resulting predicate. That is, V2 cannot independently realize an Asp head as in (2).

Additionally, it seems unlike Choi (2003, 2005) that V2s like *-nay* do not always involve a completive reading. For example, *-nay* can occur with stative predicates like *al-* 'know,' as in (4). The predicate in (4) provides a change of state reading, not a completive reading.

(4) Chelswu-ka   ku   sasil-ul   al-a-nay-ess-ta
     Chelswu-NOM   that   fact-ACC   know-linker-achieve-PST-DECL
     'Chelswu got to know the fact which he had not known before (and in terms of the speaker's perspective the subject went through some hardship.)'

Finally, the structure in (2) makes a particular prediction with respect to the morphological distribution of a passive suffix. With the *v* being associated with hosting an external argument, the passive counterpart of (2) is expected to hold the passive morpheme below Asp.[2] This would yield a linear order where the passive suffix is attached between V1 and V2. This prediction, however, is not borne out. The sentence (6), the passive variant of (5) requires the passive suffix to follow V2.

(5) Yenghi-ka   kunsahan   yoli-lul   chali-e-nay-ess-ta
     Yenghi-NOM   exquisite   meal-ACC   prepare-linker-achieve-PST-DECL
     'Yenghi prepared an exquisite meal (and this was done despite some hardship).'

(6) kunsahan yoli-ka   chali-e-nay-eci/*eci-e-nay-ess-ta
     exquisite   meal-NOM   prepare-linker-achieve-Pass/*Pass-linker-achieve-PST-DECL
     'An exquisite meal was prepared (and this was done despite some hardship).'

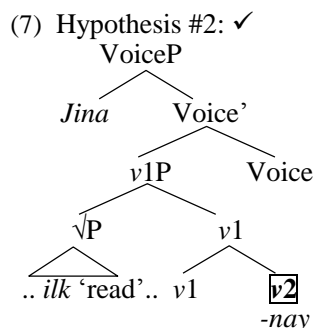[2]We thank Julie Anne Legate for bringing this to our attention.

To sum up, the patterns exhibited in (3) through (6) cannot be accommodated under the analysis that treats *-nay* as an aspectual head. The question still remains as to what roles the V2 plays in the "aspectual" verb constructions. We provide below a novel account of the V2, focusing on the properties of *-nay*.

3 Proposal: Auxiliary Verb as Head-adjoined Expressives

Turning to our proposal, we assume following Pylkkänen (2002) and others that a basic verb phrase is composed of an external-argument-introducing Voice, a verbalizing *v*, and a category-neutral root, as illustrated in (7).

Semantically we propose that the V2 in "serial verbs" serves to deliver an expressive content to the event described in the sentence, a level of meaning that is independent of the main assertion in the sense of Potts (2005, 2007; see also Karttunen 1973, Karttunen and Peters 1979, inter alia). That is, by being attached to V1, *-nay* adds the speaker's attitude that the subject overcame some hardship in the course of the main event, which is depicted by V1 in the sentence.

Next, syntactically we argue that the V2 *-nay* occupies a *v* head that is right-adjoined (Wiltschoko 2008) to the *v* which belongs to the main derivational spine.[3]

(7) Hypothesis #2: ✓
         VoiceP
        /   \
    Jina   Voice'
             /   \
          *v*1P   Voice
         /   \
       √P   *v*1
      / \   /   \
.. *ilk* 'read'.. *v*1   **$v2$**
                        -nay

As shown in (7), *-nay* realizes the *v*2 head that is head-adjoined to *v*1, which verbalizes the lexical root. In Section 4 and Section 5, we provide evidence for these two parts of the proposal.

4 The Suffix *-Nay* as an Expressive Element

In this section, we show that V2s like *-nay* in AVCs in Korean belong to expressive elements that mark the speaker's commitment toward the event described in the sentence. We will demonstrate that the suffix *-nay* meaning 'achieve' or 'submit' as a lexical verb displays three representative characteristics of expressive elements as discussed in the literature (e.g., Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 1990, Potts 2005, 2007).

4.1 Independence Property

The first piece of evidence for our argument that *-nay* belongs to an expressive element comes from its independence property, which it shares with attributive adjectives like English *damn*, a typical expressive element that has been discussed in the literature (e.g., Potts 2005, 2007).

(8) a. Hanky closed the *damn* door.
     b. Hanky closed the door.

That is, as discussed in Potts (2007), expressive contents usually convey the meaning that is sepa-

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[3]As explained in Section 2, the proposal in (7) provides a straightforward explanation for the distribution of the passive morphology in Korean. Under the structure in (7), the Voice head is responsible for holding the passive suffix. Thus, our proposal correctly predicts the passive suffix to follow the V2 in (7), which the aspectual analysis cannot.

rate from descriptive content. In (8), the two sentences convey the same descriptive content that Hanky closed the door. But (8a) involving *damn*, unlike (8b), adds the speaker's attitude to the utterance in which the speaker views the property of door as something negative.

The same is found with the AVC construction in Korean. As shown in (9), we can remove the V2 *-nay* without affecting its main assertion that Jina read the book.

(9) Jina-ka   ku   chayk-ul   ilk-(e-nay)-ess-ta   Repeated from (1)
    Jina-NOM that   book-ACC   read-(linker-achieve)-PST-DECL
    'Jina read the book (and in terms of the speaker's perspective the subject went through some hardship in the course of the main event).'

However, with the addition of the V2, the sentence (9) implicates that the speaker views the event of Jina reading the book as involving some hardship.

4.2 Speaker-orientedness

The second piece of evidence comes from speaker-orientedness (nonpresuppositional). Expressives like *damn* in (10) are usually associated with the speaker's perspective rather than the subject of the sentence (Potts 2005, 2007).

(10) Chris supported the damn baseball team.

In (10), *damn* expresses a negative attitude of the speaker to the property of the baseball team; it cannot express a negative feeling of Chris, the subject of the sentence, toward the baseball team.

The same is also attested with the V2 *-nay* in Korean.

(11) Mina   pwultok-i   ku   himtun swuswul-ul   iky-e-nay-ess-ta
     Mina   bull.dog-NOM   that   hard   surgery-ACC win-linker-achieve-PST-DECL
     'Mina's bulldog survived the surgery, and this was done despite some hardship.'

When the sentence involves a non-human subject as in (11), the sentence reads that from the speaker's point of view, not the subject's, the dog overcame the event despite some hardship.

4.3 Family-of-sentences Tests

Our further argument for treating the V2 *-nay* as an expressive content is drawn from the so-called "family-of-sentences" tests (e.g., Langendoen and Savin 1971, Karttunen 1973, dubbed by Chierchia and McConnell-Ginet 1990). These tests detect whether the meaning of the sentence falls under the scope of various truth-conditional operators such as yes/no questions and conditionals. Expressive contents can take scope over various operators because they express the speaker's comment that is separate from the main content of the utterance. In what follows, we will show that the V2 *-nay* in Korean is not affected by the scope of operators like yes/no question and conditionals.

Specifically, the meaning contributed by *-nay* projects beyond the scope of yes/no questions, as shown in (12).

(12) A: Jina-ka   ku   chayk-ul   ilk-e-nay-ss-ni?   B: ani
       Jina-NOM that   book-ACC   read-linker-achieve-**PST**-Q   no
       'Did Jina read the book, though with some hardship?'   'No.'

The sentence (12) asks whether Jina read the book. Answering *ani* 'no' cannot mean that Jina actually read the book but the speaker does not consider the event as accompanying some hardship. For this meaning to be conveyed, a more complicated answer needs to be followed.

Second, the meaning contributed by *-nay* takes scope over conditionals.

(13)   Manyakey   Jina-ka   ku   chayk-ul   ilk-e-nay-myen
       If   Jina-NOM   that   book-ACC   read-linker-achieve-if
       osip-pwul-ul   cwu-l-key
       fifty-dollar-ACC give-FUT-INT
       'If Jina reads the book, though with some hardship, I will give you fifty dollars.'

In (13) with *-nay*, the listener would be given money if Jina read the book; whether or not Jina read the book through some hardship is irrelevant for the condition under which the listener gets money. The same condition applies to (14), the same sentence as in (13) but without *-nay*.

(14)   manyakey   Jina-ka   ku   chayk-ul   ilku-myen
       if   Jina-NOM   that   book-ACC   read-if
       osip-pwul-ul   cwu-l-key.
       fifty-dollar-ACC give-FUT-INT
       'If Jina reads the book, I will give you fifty dollars.'

Taken all together, we argue that the V2 *-nay* belongs to an expressive content that expresses the speaker's comment to the event described in the sentence.

5 The Suffix -*Nay* as an Adjunct *v*

In this section, we provide various pieces of evidence that supports our conclusion that V2 *-nay* in Korean is a light verb and introduced to the syntactic structure via head-adjunction.

5.1 The Suffix -*Nay* as a Light Verb

Typological considerations (Butt 2003, Folli et al. 2005) provide evidence that syntactically, *-nay* should be classified as a *v*, as depicted in (7). In particular, besides its usage as a V2, the morpheme *-nay* can be used as a lexical verb on its own. In this case, *-nay* means 'submit,' 'achieve,' as the examples in (15) illustrate.

(15)   a. Yuna-ka   sinmwun-ey   kwangko-lul   nay-ess-ta.   [*Korean*]
          Yuna-NOM   newspaper-LOC   advertisement-ACC   submit-PST-DECL
          'Yuna put an ad in the newspaper.'
       b. Pemin-i   pwul-ul   nay-ess-ta.
          criminal-NOM   fire-ACC   set-PST-DECL
          'The criminal set a fire.'

When used as a V2 following a lexical verb, the lexical meaning of *-nay* is "bleached". This so-called semantic bleaching is a typical property of light verbs that are attested cross-linguistically (e.g., Butt 2003, Folli et al. 2005).

(16)   nadya=ne   xat   lıkh-li-ya.   [*Urdu*]
       Nadya.F=ERG   letter.M.NOM   write-take-PERF-M-SG
       'Nadya wrote a letter (completely).'
       (Butt 2003, (2))

(17)   a. Homa   be   gerye   oftâd.   [*Persian*]
          Homa   to   crying   fell
          'Homa started to cry.'
       b. Nima   Homa-ro   be   gerye   andâxt
          Nima   Homa-râto   crying   dropped
          'Nima made Homa (start to) cry.'
          (Megerdoomian 2002)

The semantic content of both *-nay* the light verbs in (16) and (17) is significantly reduced when

used as a suffix to a verbal root. This shows that the V2s in (15) through (17) form a natural class. It follows that -*nay* is an instantiation of little *v* in Korean.

5.2 The Suffix -*Nay* as an Adjunct

The patterns that are exhibited by -*nay* and other *v*s in Korean provide support for the hypothesis that -*nay* is an adjunct when it does not occupy the immediate *v* of the √P (i.e., *v*1 in (7)).

Lexical causatives exhibit various syntactic and morphological properties that classify them as a verbalizing head—such as binding, agent-oriented adjunct modification, idiom formation, and allomorphy (Harley 2008, Miyagawa 2011, Jung 2014). Observe the sentence (18), where -*nay* co-occurs with a lexical causative suffix.

(18)   thamceng-i   saken-uy   cinsang-ul   palk-hi-(e-nay)-ess-ta.
       detective-NOM   case-Gen   truth-ACC   be.bright-LEX.CAUS-(linker-achieve)-PST-DECL
       'The detective revealed the truth of the case (although with some hardship).'
       (Lit. 'The detective brightened the truth of the case (although with some hardship).')

In a lexical causative construction as in (18), the causative suffix -*hi* thus realizes the verbalizing head of the root—namely, *v*1 in (7). Since -*nay* can co-occur with -*hi*, -*nay* cannot be the *v* of the main derivational spine in the AVCs.

Now, as shown in all the examples with -*nay*, the presence of -*nay* is optional, a typical property of an adjunct. This means that it is an addition to an already well-formed syntactic structure, in other words it is adjoined to *v*1.

Furthermore, when -*nay* appears, it modifies the event described by the verb phrase by adding the speaker's attitude toward the event. This behavior is parallel to speaker-oriented adverbs (e.g., f*ortunately*, *surprisingly*) and attribute adjectives discussed in Potts (2005, 2007). Overall, these speaker-oriented elements in Korean are adjoined as the functional category *v*, resulting in "serial verbs."

6 Implications and Conclusions

The various properties of Korean V2s like -*nay* under investigation converge to show that V2s are introduced to the structure via head-adjunction of *v* (see Jung 2014 for another V2 functioning as *v*) and that as a syntactic modifier (cf. Baker and Stewart 2002), V2s indicate the speaker's comment to the content described in the sentence.

If the current work is on the right track, it lends empirical support to the observation across languages that expressives may come in a wide range of shapes in morphosyntax, adjectives like *damn*, epithets, discourse particles (e.g., *mo* in Italian; e.g., Munaro and Poletto 2009, *wohl* in German; e.g., Zimmermann 2008), and some auxiliary verbs in Korean (e.g., Tomioka and Kim, forthcoming). For example, *mo* in imperatives in Venetian is characterized as expressing the confirmation of an order already given, requiring that the action be performed immediately.

(19)   Vien   qua,   mo!   [*Italian, Venetian*]
       Come   here   mo
       'Come here!'
       (Munaro and Poletto 2009, (6))

Having investigated one example of Korean V2s, we leave for future work more investigation into more cases of V2s, thereby offering additional empirical support to the observation on expressives that has been made in the literature.

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Hyun Kyoung Jung
Department of English Language Education
Silla University
Busan, South Korea (617-736)
hkjung@silla.ac.kr

Lan Kim
Department of Asian Studies
202 Old Botany Building
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA, USA (16802)
luk18@psu.edu