The syntactic analysis of Korean serial verb constructions compared to Turkic languages
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We concentrate on “aspectual” serial verb constructions ($V_1 + V_2$) in which $V_2$ is an auxiliary or a semi-auxiliary verb with an aspectual meaning (complete, unitive, inchoative, etative), and $V_1$ has the form of an -a/e converb, and do not consider “sequential/cause-chaining” cases in which $V_1$ and $V_2$ are sequential events. E.g. cenglihay[ha-e] noh- ‘tide up’ (noh- ‘put’ has a completive meaning), nul-e ka-‘continue to increase’ (ka- ‘go’ has a continuingative meaning), etc. [Yeon, Brown 2011: 235-258]. For these constructions, Korean authors agree that they are mono-clausal [Cho 1996; S.-S. Choi 2003]. Both $V_1$ and $V_2$ are verb forms, so there are either two VP-s in ($V_1$-a/e + $V_2$) clauses, or $V_2$ is a functional Asp head (as [S.-S. Cho 2003] proposes). Can ($V_1$-a/e + $V_2$) be a complex verb? That is theoretically possible, taking into account that $V_1$ and $V_2$ in the “auxiliary” ($V_1$-a/e + $V_2$) complex cannot be split (divided by any morphological material), and neither can be extracted. See the tests by S.-Y. Cho and S.-S. Choi; we find [Y.-J. Choi 2005]’s examples with extraction in most cases ungrammatical with respect to our data.

We apply to Korean “auxiliary” ($V_1$-a/e + $V_2$) constructions the long negation test and the morphological causativization test proposed for Turkic languages by [Graschenkov 2015]. The morphological passivization test does not work in Korean because morphological passivization is restricted, so that clauses with an inanimate object as a rule do not get passivized. [Yeon 2015: 126-129].

These tests show that in most of completive constructions (with $V_2$-s nay- ‘show’, noh- ‘put’ twu- ‘put aside’), unitive/ inchoative (with $V_2$-s o- ‘come’ and ka- ‘go’), and benefactive (with cuw- ‘give’) constructions, $V_2$ demonstrates a functional head (i.e. Asp) properties, similar to the auxiliary verb ha- (e.g. in complex predicate formation). The -a/e[$V_2$.NEG] anh-NEG long negation can be only attached to $V_2$ but not to $V_1$, and the morphological causative marker -il-kil-hi… can be attached only to $V_1$. In this case, the clause structure is similar to [S.-S. Choi’s 2003], and ($V_1$ + $V_2$):

(1) [TP [NegP [AspP=V2P [vP [V1P $V_1$]] $V_2$]]].

There are a couple of V2-s: peli- ‘throw’ (completive/ semelfactive); tay- ‘touch’ (iterative/ intensifier), and especially po- ‘see’ (conative) that allow long negation attachment to either $V_1$ or $V_2$, e.g.

(2) a. Ton-ul kaph($V_1$)-a peli($V_2$)-ess-ta
money-ACC give_back-CVB throw-PST-DECL
“(I) gave money back (to him)” [that I had lent]

b. …kaph($V_1$)-ci anh-a
give_back-CVB.NEG NEG-CVB throw-PST-DECL
“(I) did not give money back (to him)”

(2b-c) show that certain “aspectual” $V_2$-s may be only partially grammaticalized as auxiliaries, and those remain a V ($V_2$) projecting a $V_2$P. In (2b), $V_1$ and $V_2$ are divided by -ci anh-a ‘CVB.NEG-CVB’. The clause structure of (2a-c) having two VP-s is (3) [TP [NegP [V2P [vP [V1P $V_1$]]] $V_2$]]. $V_1$P is a lexical projection that is dominated by vP; $V_2$P is a semi-functional projection not dominated by vP. (2a-b) are derived from (3) via a sequence of movement operations. [Graschenkov 2015] shows that in Mishar Tatar, “aspectual” ($V_1$+V2) constructions allow NEG on either $V_1$, or $V_2$, or on both.

We also study interpretation differences between (2b)-like and (2c)-like cases – those are mostly found with the conative $V_2$ po- ‘see’, and can be viewed as arguments for a bi-clausal analysis. (cf. [Y.-J. Choi 2005] examples showing split patterns that are all based on examples with po-).

References:
Choi S.-S. Serial verbs and the empty category // Proceedings of the workshop on Multi-Verb constructions
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