

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

Hyun Kyoung Jung (Silla University), Lan Kim (Pennsylvania State University)

**Introduction.** This study investigates the nature of the second verb (V2) in auxiliary verb constructions (Sohn 1999), in which one clause with two verbs denotes a single event. Arguing against the previous analyses that in Korean the V2 is an Asp(ect) head (e.g., Choi 2003, 2005), we argue that the V2 is head-adjoined to the *v* of the first verb (V1) and marks the speaker's commitment (Potts 2005) toward the event described in the sentence.

**V2 is not an Asp(ect) head.** The auxiliary verb construction in (1) is composed of two “serial verbs”. The auxiliary-like V2 can be optionally added to V1, as shown by its acceptability without V2. When added, a V2 like *-nay* (meaning ‘submit, ‘achieve’ as a lexical verb) denotes that the action of V1 is done completely, although with some hardship (Sohn 1999). Thus, a representative approach (Choi 2003, 2005) is that V2 is an Asp head that marks telicity as in (2).

- (1) Jina-ka ku chayk-ul ilk-(e-nay)-ess-ta.  
 Jina-Nom the book-Acc read-(linker-V2)-Past-Decl  
 ‘Jina read the book (completely, although with some hardship).’

However, the adverbial modification test (Dowty 1979) demonstrates that it is the type of V1, not the presence of V2, that determines the aspectual property of the whole predicate. 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 kyenti-(e-nay)-ess-ta.  
 Y-Nom pain-Acc one-year-for/#one-year-in endure-(linker-V2)-Past-Decl  
 ‘Yenghi endured the pain for a year/#in a year (and this was done completely, although with some hardship).’

Likewise, (4) involving the activity V1 *-talli* ‘run’, the sentence with the V2 *-peli* can be modified by an atelic adverbial; *-peli* is another V2 Choi (2005) takes as a telic marker denoting the completion of the event.

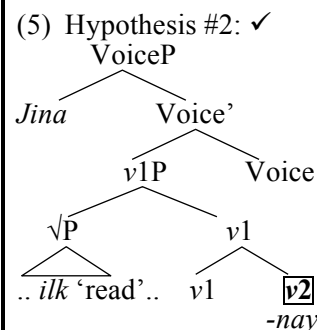
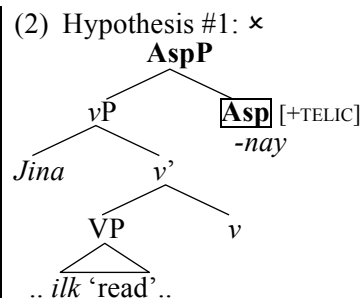
- (4) ku senswu-ka han-sikan-tongan/#han-sikan-maney talli-(e-peli)-ess-ta.  
 that athlete-Nom one-hour-for/#one-hour-in run-(linker-V2)-Past-Decl  
 ‘The athlete ran for one hour/#in one hour (and this was beyond the speaker's expectation).’

The data in (3) and (4) demonstrate that V2 does not affect the aspect of the resulting predicate. That is, it cannot realize an Asp head like (2). Thus, 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*.

**Proposal.** Following Pylkkänen (2002), among others, we assume that a basic verb phrase is composed of an external-argument-introducing Voice, a verbalizing *v*, and a category-neutral root. We argue that V2 like *-nay* occupies a *v* head that is right-adjoined to the *v* which belongs to the main derivational spine. The proposed structure of (1) is represented in (5). In (5), *-nay* realizes the *v2* head that is head-adjoined to *v1*, which verbalizes the lexical root.

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 & 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.

**The suffix *-nay* as an expressive element.** The first piece of evidence that *-nay* is an expressive element comes from its independence property, which it shares with attributive adjectives like *damn*, a typical expressive element (e.g., Potts 2007). Specifically, as shown in (1), we can remove the V2 without affecting its main assertion in which Jina read the book. With the addition of the V2, the sentence implicates that the speaker views the event of Jina reading the book as involving some hardship. Second, consider (6) involving non-human subjects, in which the sentence receives an interpretation that, from the speaker's perspective (rather than the subject's), the dog overcame the event completely, although with some hardship (i.e., speaker-orientedness in Potts 2005, 2007).



- (6) Wuli cib pwultok-i ku himtun swuswul-ul iky-e-nay-ess-ta.  
 Our home bull.dog-Nom that hard surgery-Acc win-linker-V2-Past-Decl  
 ‘Our bulldog survived the surgery, and this was done completely, though with some hardship.’

Further arguments for treating *-nay* as an expressive element are drawn from the *family-of-sentence* tests (e.g., Chierchia & McConnell-Ginet 1990), which illustrates that its meaning does not fall under the scope of various truth-conditional operators such as yes/no questions and the antecedent of conditionals. First, the meaning contributed by *-nay* projects beyond the scope yes/no questions.

- (7) A: Jina-ka ku chayk-ul ilk-e-nay-ss-ni? B: Ani.  
 Jina-Nom that book-Acc read-linker-V2-Past-Q no  
 ‘Did Jina read the book completely, though with some hardship?’ ‘No.’

The sentence (7) asks whether Jina read the book. Answering *ani* ‘no’ cannot mean that Jina read the book, while the speaker does not consider the event as accompanying some hardship. For this meaning to be conveyed, a more elaborate answer needs to be added. Second, the meaning takes scope over conditionals. In (8) with *-nay*, the listener would be given money if Jina read the book; whether or not Jina read the book all the way thoroughly is irrelevant for the condition under which the listener gets money. The same condition applies to (8) without *-nay*.

- (8) Manyakey Jina-ka ku chayk-ul ilk-(e-nay)-myen o.sip-pwul-ul cwu-l-key.  
 If Jina-Nom that book-Acc read-(linker-V2)-if five.ten-dollar-Acc give-Fut-Int  
 ‘If Jina reads the book completely, though with some hardship, I will give you fifty dollars.’

In our paper, we will discuss more examples of “aspectual” verb constructions involving V2s from Choi (2003, 2005), and show that the meaning contributed by V2s under her discussion (e.g., *tayta* ‘supply’ vs. *ssahta* ‘pile’) marks the speaker’s attitude toward the event depicted in the sentence and not aspect.

**The suffix *-nay* as an adjunct *v*.** What about the morpho-syntactic status of *-nay*? Typological considerations provide evidence that syntactically, *-nay* should be classified as a *v*, as shown in (5). The morpheme *-nay* can be used as a lexical verb on its own, in which case it means ‘submit, achieve’. The fact that *-nay* undergoes “semantic bleaching” when used as V2, as shown in (1) and (3), shows that it forms a natural class with other light verbs—little *v*’s—attested cross-linguistically (e.g., Butt 2003).

The morphological make-up of the predicate in (9) provides additional support for the structure in (5).

- (9) Thamceng-i saken-uy cinsang-ul palk-hi-(e-nay)-ess-ta.  
 detective-Nom case-Gen truth-Acc be.bright-LEX.CAUS-(linker-V2)-Past-Decl  
 ‘The detective revealed the truth of the case (completely, although with some hardship).  
 (Lit. ‘The detective brightened the truth of the case (completely, although with some hardship).’)

In a lexical causative construction as in (9), the causative suffix *-hi* is known to realize the verbalizing head of the root (Miyagawa 2010, Harley 2013)—namely, *v*<sub>1</sub> in (5). In (9) we see that *-hi* and *-nay* can co-occur. This means that the two verbal suffixes realize separate syntactic heads, as depicted in (5). Furthermore, the current proposal that *-nay* is an adjunct makes additional correct predictions. As shown in all the examples with *-nay*, the presence of *-nay* is optional as it is an adjunct. 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., *fortunately*, *surprisingly*) and attribute adjectives discussed in Potts. These speaker-oriented elements in Korean may be adjoined as the functional category *v*, resulting in “serial verbs”. **Conclusion.** The various properties of Korean V2s 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 as a syntactic modifier (cf. Baker and Stewart 2002), they indicate the speaker’s commitment. If the current work is on the right track, it lends empirical support to the observation across languages that expressives come in a wide range of shapes in syntax, adjectives like *damn*, epithets, discourse particles (e.g., *ja* in German; e.g., Zimmermann 2008), and some auxiliary verbs in Korean (e.g., Kim and Satoshi, Ms.). **Selected References.** Baker, M. and Stewart O.T. 2002. A serial verb construction without constructions, Rutgers University Ms. Choi, S. 2003. Serial verbs and the empty category. Proceedings of the Workshop on Multi-Verb Constructions. Choi, S. 2005. Multiple verb constructions in Korean. PhD thesis, University of Sussex. Potts, C. 2005. The logic of conventional implicatures. Oxford University Press.