

Self-addressed question as a base for the Korean inferential evidentiality

Kyongjoon Kwon
Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul
kyongjoon.kwon@gmail.com

[Goals] This paper deals with the morphosyntactic and semantic issues on the Korean verbal complex (hereafter *po*-complex) like *ca-na po-ta* ‘(he) seems to be sleeping,’ to see how question morphemes (esp. self-addressed ones that are intrinsically related to disjunction) contribute to the dedicated semantics of inferential evidentiality. The complex is composed of (i) a verb stem (*ca-* ‘to sleep’) followed by (ii) an interrogative marker, such as *-na* (ex.1) or *-ka* (ex.2) (iii) the morpheme *-po-* and (iv) a sentence final particle.

[A single base for all] The *na*-variant (2) and *-ka po-ta* in (1) are allomorphs; *-ka* when preceded by a syllable coda *-n*, and otherwise, *-na*. Such positional relation is not incidental, since *-na* developed through the syncopation of *-nu-n-ka* (> *n(unk)a*, Lee, H. 1982a: 95; 1982b: 157, Um 2005: 32). To this well-received purview of the *po*-complex, I propose to add *-kka* as the second formative based on the suggestion that their production involves the same kind of reasoning process, i.e., abductive reasoning (cf. Andersen 1973). This claim is supported by historical evidence. According to Ko (2010, 148-149), a morpheme *-li* in Middle Korean with future orientation surfaced as *ca-l-kka* (not the expected **ca-li-nka*) when combined with *-n-ka*. Under this assumption, all three morphemes in the second slot share the same origin, i.e., *-n-ka*.

[Self-addressed questions as a base] In Middle Korean, this set of morphemes were typically used as indirect question, i.e., embedded under matrix clause headed by a verb like *neki-* ‘consider’, *sAlangha-* ‘think’ and *cehA-* ‘fear’ (Kim, J.-A. 1985: 283). In (4), a *ka*-question is under the scope of a verb *sipkpu-* ‘seem’, conveying the conjecture or uncertainty semantics. The embedded clause came to appear without any governing verb, leading to the development of self-addressed questions, (5). Such development through main clause ellipsis, known as ‘insubordination’ in the literature (Evans 2007), is attested already from the 15th century (Lee, H. 1982a: 48). Given the diachronic facts, it is highly controversial whether the interrogative ending *-na* originated in the disjunctive connective (cf. Koo and Rhee 2013). However, one cannot deny that polar questions, especially self-addressed ones, are based on the logic of disjunction.

[Self-addressed question and bias] A speaker is not neutral about the proposition when using self-directed interrogatives. Given that the natural purpose of an inquisitive language is to raise and resolve issues (Groenendijk 2009: 80), a speaker fulfils these two roles when addressing a question to herself. That is, she performs inquisitive update of her own – not the interlocutor’s – belief (cf. Isaacs and Rawlins 2009; Hara and Davis 2014). Differently put, while a polar interrogative simply divides the set of worlds into two alternatives (Groenendijk 1999; cf. Hamblin 1973, Karttunen 1977), I argue that self-addressed ones present these two alternatives as asymmetrical with respect to the strength in commitment. Uttering (6), for example, the speaker does not pose a question per se, but rather (i) asks his wife for consent on whether his inference is reasonable, as indicated in translation by a tagged question, or (ii) asks himself a question.

(6) [Context] A baby boy is constantly rubbing his eyes. The boy's dad tells his wife:
Coli-n-ka?
be sleepy-PRS-Q
'I wonder whether he is sleepy.' (= 'He is sleepy, isn't he?')

[References] Andersen, H. (1973) "Abductive and deductive change"; Asher, N. & B. Reese. (2005) "Negative bias in polar questions"; Evans, N. (2007) "Insubordination and its uses"; Groenendijk, J. (2009) "Inquisitive semantics: Two possibilities for disjunction"; Hamblin, C.L. (1973) "Questions in Montague English"; Hara, Y. & C. Davis (2013) "*Darou* as a deictic context shifter"; Karttunen, L. (1977) "Syntax and Semantics of Questions"; Kim, C. (2011) "Korean question particles are pronominals: A transparent case of representing discourse participants in the syntax"; Kim, J.-A. (1985) "Siposeykikwukeuy '-nka'ey tayhaye [On *-nka* in the 15th century Korean]; Ko (2010) *Pyocwun cwungsey kwukemwunpeplon* [The standard grammatical theory of Middle Korean]; Koo, H.J. & S. Rhee (2013) "On the emergence of the speaker's tepidity stance and discourse politeness"; Lee, H. (1982a). *Kwukeuy uymwunpepey tayhan thongsicek yenkwu* [A Diachronical study on Korean Questions]; Lee, H. (1982b) "Kwuke congkyelemiuy palceney tayhan kwankyeon" [A glimpse into the development of Korean sentence final endings]; Sadock, J. M. (1974) *Toward a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts*; Um, J. (2005) *Kwukeey pomwunkwa pomwunca* [Complementation and complementizers in Korean].