

## Conspiracy in Korean modal verbs in light of *v*

Modality is realized in different syntactic forms from language to language. Many languages have verb forms with special endings to show the different ways of looking upon an activity or state, regarding about whether it is something certain, probable, or possible, or whether it is real, unreal, or something necessary or unnecessary to be realized. Spanish, one of so-called inflectional languages, shows modality in the inflection of the verbs. On the other hand, English developed a different way in signaling such speaker's epistemic attitudes to the worlds, using modal auxiliary as below.

(1)	Spanish <i>hablar</i> 'speak'		English <i>speak</i>	
	Present indicative	Future indicative	Present indicative	Future
1s	<i>hablo</i>	<i>hablaré</i>	<i>speak</i>	<b>will</b> <i>speak</i>
2	<i>hablas</i>	<i>hablarás</i>	<i>speak</i>	//
3	<i>habla</i>	<i>hablará</i>	<i>speaks</i>	//
1pl	<i>hablamos</i>	<i>hablaremos</i>	<i>speak</i>	//
2	<i>hablais</i>	<i>hablaréis</i>	<i>speak</i>	//
3	<i>hablan</i>	<i>hablarán</i>	<i>speak</i>	//

Then, it is a natural step to look into what kind of modality exists in the verbal forms of agglutinative languages like Korean. Korean is well-known for the characteristics of morpheme-stacking on the matrix verb at the sentential end position (in its standard S-O-V word order) for incorporating grammatical functions each at a time.

Korean linguists (Ko 1986, Kim 1992, Nam & Ko 1985, Suh 1996, etc.) have argued that there are two kinds of modality in Korean, based on their distributional positions to the sentence final verb: sentence final mood and non-final mood. The sentence final mood is related to the modality (of sentence styles) involving declarative, imperative, exclamatory, interrogative, optative, propositive, promise, and permission, while the non-final mood is to the modality including presumptive, volitive, and reportive. This paper's aim is to investigate the syntactic constructions using the modal morphemes in non-final mood in Korea verbs. Our study suggests that the modality in Korean is realized in complex predicates which consist of aspectual morphemes and modal morphemes and light verbs (Sung 1979, Jang 1985). The combination of aspect and mood can be merged into a complex predicate by the verbalizing force of little *v*. This is reminiscent of the complex (periphrastic) modals in English.

### (2) Comparison between English modals and Korean modals I

English Simple modals		Korean Complex modals			
Present	Past	Aspect	Modal	Light verb - declarative	(Modal)
can	could	-l /eul	soo	iss - ta	( - ≡ / )
may		∅	- to	toy - ta	( - )
	might	-n/nun	teus	ha - ta	( - ㄴ / )
must	- - - -	∅	ya	ha - ta	( - )
shall	should	∅	lye	ha - ta	( - )
will	would	l/eul	kes	i - ta	( - ≡ )

### (3) Comparison between English modals and Korean modals II

English Simple modals		Periphrastic modals	Korean Complex modals		
Present	Past				
can	could	be able to	-l /eul	soo	iss-ta
may		be allowed to	∅	to	toy-ta
	might	be likely to	-n/nun	teus	ha-ta
must	- - -	have to	∅	ya	ha-ta
shall	should	be supposed to	∅	lye	ha-ta
will	would	be going to	-l/eul	kes	i-ta

Some morphemes labeled as modality (non-final mood) in this paper have been classified as quasi-free nouns or bound nouns in Korean traditional grammar (Ko 1989, Suh 1996). The morphemes labeled as aspect here also have been regarded as relativizer or modifier. Therefore, this paper brings quite a challenge to the traditional approaches to aspect and modality. I will take the example below up as the motivation for why we need to have new insights in modality.

- (4)a. [[[ April-un chodung hakkyo i haknyen i-]<sub>VP</sub> -ess]<sub>TP-ta</sub>]<sub>CP</sub>.  
 April-Top elementary school 2 grader BE -Past -Dec  
 ‘April was second grader of elementary school.’
- b. [[[[[[ April-un chodunghakkyo i haknyen i-]<sub>VP-n</sub>]<sub>REL</sub> teus]<sub>NP</sub> ha]<sub>VP-ess</sub>]<sub>TP-ta</sub>]<sub>CP</sub>.  
 April-Top elementary school 2 grader BE -REL appearance DO-Past-Dec  
 ‘It seemed that April was second grader/ April seemed to be second grader.’

If possible, (4b) can be simplified as ‘NP-did’, out of which it is hard to understand how to grasp any modality affecting on the event interpretation.

Therefore, I argue that it is reasonable to treat the morpheme of -l/-eul, -n/-eun, and -nun as aspectual morpheme corresponding to participle, which can function in pre-modifying level as well as post-modifying one to nouns in English. I also argue that the previously called quasi-free nouns should be treated as modal root morphemes to be combined with a class of light verbs to become a complex modal auxiliary in Korean.

### Selected References

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