

Serial Verbs in Echoed Predicate Constructions

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the syntactic structures of echoed predicate constructions (henceforth, EPCs), applying them to the serial verb constructions (henceforth, SVCs) in Korean. EPCs feature predicate doubling with a nominalizer *ki* and the topicalization marker *nun* attached to the preceding predicate. The same verb appears with full inflections in the second predicate position, which are optional with the first predicate. Contrary to the simple sentence, EPCs can have an adversative implicature due to the contrastiveness of the first predicate. The verb in the second predicate can be substituted with the dummy *ha* ‘do’ verb with the same meaning (Choi 2002, C. Lee 2013, Jo 2013).

EPCs show some properties. First, the inflections in the first predicate should be included in the second predicate in EPCs. On the contrary, the inflections in the second predicate need not be included in the first one. In addition, there are some limitations for inflections in the first predicates; for example, mode inflections such as ‘te’, ‘li’, ‘keyss’ only appear in the second predicate. Second, objects or low adverbs which occur in the first predicate can be permitted optionally in the second predicate (Choi 2002, Cho & Kim 2002, Park 2018). In this case, the echoed elements in the second predicates must be the same as in the first predicate. Next, VP negation ‘an’ or ‘mos’ in the first predicate must be echoed in the second predicate if it appears in the first predicate.

As for EPCs in Korean, there are two approaches: the head movement approach (Choi 2002, C. Lee 2013) and the phrasal movement approach (Jo 2013, Park 2018, Ishihara 2013). The former argues that the verb head moves cyclically to the higher heads and KI-insertion is arbitrary at any head. Where the nominalizer is inserted determines the range of the first predicate in doubling. This approach, however, cannot support the empirical evidence of the occurrence of the object, low adverbs, and mode inflections in the second predicate. On the contrary, the latter approach successfully accounts for these shortcomings from head-movement accounts.

We will present the way in which serial verbs support the phrasal movement approach of EPCs. One of the common properties of SVCs is sharing arguments (Aikhenvald 2006). According to K. Lee (2020), SVCs fall into two categories: total argument sharing and partial argument sharing. In total argument sharing, all verbs in SVCs are the same type in terms of transitivity, unergativity, and unaccusativity. This homogeneity is not found in partial argument sharing. As a consequence, the two types have different structures: head-head merger for the former and phrase-phrase merger for the latter.

This structural difference is reflected in EPCs. The verb in the second predicate in doubling should include the second verb of SVCs, while the preceding verb is optionally duplicated. Interestingly, when the object in the former type (total argument sharing) of SVCs appears in the second predicate, it requires all the verbs to be doubled with the object. However, this obligation is somewhat weakened in the other type (partial argument sharing) of SVCs when the object belongs only to the second verb. This supports our assumption that the EPCs result from phrasal movement.

References

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