

On the Semantic Structure of the Korean Auxiliary Verb [-e/ko pota]

This study aims to suggest a new criterion for the analysis of the Korean auxiliary verb [-a/e pota]([-e pota] below) and [-ko pota]. Although a large number of studies have been made on [-e/ko pota], it is still not clear what kind of semantic structure it has and what causes the vagueness between the two.

In past studies of the Korean language, [-e pota] has been traditionally considered to have the meaning of **trial or experience**, while [-ko pota] contains the meaning of **strong tendency toward completion of the action preceded**. Although we still need to figure out what kind of process is going on to acquire the meanings mentioned above, it seems the meaning of the auxiliary verbs in question are rather clearly categorized in sentence endings. However, we often notice that it is not easy to draw a clear distinction between [-e/ko pota] when they appear in complex sentences.

Examples below show the vagueness between [-e/ko pota] most notably.

- e.g. (1) a. chagmwun-ul {yel-ko/yel-e} po-ni nwun-i o-ko iss-essta
(I opened the window, **【I aware(realize) [+as a result】** it was snowing.)
- (2) a. pap-ul {mek-ko/mek-e} po-ni mas-i kwaynchanh-assta.
(I ate rice, **【I aware (realize) [+as a result】** it was tasty.)
- b. pap-ul {mek-ko/*mek-e} poni, ai-ka poi-ci-l anh-assta.
(I ate rice, **【I aware (realize) [-as a result】** the kid was disappeared.)

In this paper, I would like to reconsider this matter in the perspectives of the interaction between one of the polysemic meanings of the Korean visual verb [pota] and the Korean conjunction [-e/ko].

I assert that: **【1】** [-e/ko pota] is semantically related to the lexical verb [pota] , and the meaning of ‘awareness’ which is one of the polysemic meanings of [pota] contributes to form the meaning of [-e/ko pota] mentioned above. **【2】** In the [E1 e/ko pota-CONJ E2] construction, presented in e.g. (1) and (2), [-e/ko pota] seem to have some similarities and differences in their semantical acceptability in complex sentences. To give a clearer vision to this problem, I point out that the main elements to control the acceptability of [-e/ko pota] are the fundamental differences in the way of connecting two events by the Korean conjunctive forms [-e/ko] and the meaning of ‘awareness’ of [pota]. In other words, the semantic structure of [-e/ko pota] relies on (the) reinterpretation led by the interaction between the traditional function of [-e/ko] and the polysemic meaning of [pota] and the differences in acceptability in complex sentences of [-e/ko pota] based on the semantic correspondence between E1 and E2 motivated by [-e/ko pota].

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