GRADABLE PREDICATES AND DIRECTED MOTION CONSTRUCTIONS: A VIEW FROM KOREAN AUXILIARY *-ECI*

DONGSIK LIM (CCHS-CSIC)
dongsik.lim@gmail.com

In this presentation I discuss the syntactic and semantic characteristics of Korean aspectual auxiliary *-eci* 'become'. I begin with the cases where *-eci* combines with gradable adjectives (as in 1), and propose that, following Zubizarreta and Oh (2007), *-eci* is a spell-out of the verbal head v of the directed motion construction, which takes a gradable adjective as its path argument. Furthermore, I also propose that when v is spelled-out as *-eci*, this path argument is delimited by a comparative phrase (hereafter CompP). This proposal will be supported by several pieces of evidence, including the similarities and differences between *-eci* deadjectival inchoatives and other directed motion constructions in Korean headed by *ka-/o-* 'go/come', the comparative interpretation of *-eci* inchoatives, their compatibility with measure phrases, and their variable telicity. Next, I discuss the cases where *-eci* can combine with (apparent) non-gradable predicates, such as psychological predicates (where *-eci* combines with double nominative construction, as in 2) and some transitive verbs (where *-eci* behaves like passivizer, as in 3). Here I argue that my initial analysis of *-eci* with gradable adjectives can be extended to these cases. I will support this claim by showing that i) psychological predicates in Korean also show similarities to gradable predicates, and ii) the class of verbs compatible with *-eci* is semantically limited to those whose meaning is related to directed motion. In conclusion, I discuss the theoretical implications of this proposal, especially focusing on the crosslinguistic variations of directed motion constructions.

(1) a. Ku maktayki-ka   kil-ess-ta.
      that stick-Nom   long-Past-Decl
      'That stick was long'
   b. Ku maktayki-ka   kil-*eci*-ess-ta.
      that stick-Nom   long-*eci*-Past-Decl
      'That stick became longer'

(2) a. John-un   saca-ka   mwusep-ess-ta.
      John-Top   lion-Nom   afraid-Past-Decl
      'John was afraid of lions'
   b. John-un   saca-ka   mwusep-*eci*-ess-ta.
      John-Top   lion-Nom   afraid-*eci*-Past-Decl
      (lit.) 'John became afraid of lions'

(3) a. John-i   cip   sey   chay-lul   cis-ess-ta.
      John-Nom   house three   CL-Acc   build-Past-Decl
      'John built three houses'
   b. Cip   sey   chay-ka   cis-*eci*-ess-ta.
      three   house CL-Nom   build-*eci*-Past-Decl
      'Three houses were built'