The grammar of logical meaning and its implications for Korean <-> English translator training

Gyung Hee Choi

Abstract

This paper explores the grammar of logical meaning in Korean and English as realised through clause combination, informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and to apply the findings to translator training. The main idea of this paper forms part of an ongoing collaborative project on SFL-based Korean grammar, with the object of publishing a monograph with an envisaged readership that includes translation scholars and students, as well as language teachers [1]. This larger project undertakes to describe a grammar realising four modes of meaning. This paper examines one of these, the grammar that manifests logical meaning, on the basis of and by further developing the findings of my PhD thesis [2]. The paper analyses how clauses are combined in a clause complex that comprises two or more clauses, with the focus on ‘logico-semantic relations’ (e.g. elaboration, addition, cause and effect). With respect to translator training, comparisons are made between Korean clause combination and English clause combination, wherever possible, in an attempt to help inform clause combination-related translation decisions. The result of the analysis shows that, unlike English, Korean tends to realise elaboration and enhancement relations hypothetically, rather than paratactically.

Key words: Systemic Functional Linguistics, logical meaning, clause combinations, translator training, logico-semantic relations

1. Introduction

In translation involving Korean and English one of the questions most frequently asked by student translators concerns the combination of sentences. A considerable number of students in translation courses rightfully wonder whether they are allowed to break a sentence or combine sentences. This occurs particularly when the sentences of the source text (ST) appear to have too much or too little information to be expressed in the sentences of the target text (TT). When faced with this problem, some of the students follow their instinct and attempt to change the ST sentences, by either breaking it up or combining it with another sentence, which
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often results in an unjustifiable ‘translation shift’ (this term following [3]). Thus, it would appear that while student inquiries about sentence combinations may be reasonable, their approach seems to fail to achieve what their intuition suggests.

This failure may be caused by the students’ lack of knowledge concerning how clauses are combined. Clauses are considered to be “the most fundamental message structure in language” when a message is represented and exchanged [4] [5]. Given the significance of the clause in conveying meaning through language, in addition to the importance of accurately preserving the message in translation, understanding how clauses are combined is intrinsic to translator training.

However, there seems to be little research undertaken on clause combinations in relation to translation. Although there are studies addressing conjunctions in translation (e.g. [6]), they employ the connectives only as part of something else not entirely devoted to the subject matter. This deficiency highlights the need for studies specifically focused on clause combinations and their application to translation. For this reason, this paper concentrates on clause combinations and thereby attempts to initiate a conversation on how to render clause combinations in translation between language pairs such as Korean and English.

In aiming to ‘initiate a conversation’, the author hopes to stress that the project presented in this paper is a work in progress, rather than a completed study. Some of the data and examples presented here rely on the author’s experience as a translator and translator trainer, and may not correlate with other translator’s experiences. Likewise, her choices of a ‘better’ translation in some of the examples of translation shifts may be contentious. While recognising these potential controversies, a study focused on clause combinations – especially from a translator trainer’s perspective – is necessary and long overdue.

The theoretical framework for this paper is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which is considered to be “the model of [text] analysis that has had the greatest influence” [7]. Because its overall aim is text analysis, the SFL approach deploys clause combinations in light of a text as a whole [8]. For the purpose of this paper, however, the focus is on grammar and a detailed examination of the semantic level and above needs to be considered later.

2. Clause Combinations and logical meaning

In SFL, the system of meaning is viewed from the perspective of function, and is considered to have three specific ‘meta-functions’. These meta-functions, or meanings, include the interpersonal (interactions between the speaker and the hearer, or between the writer and the
reader), the textual (coherence of a text) and the ideational. The ideational meta-function is further divided into two modes: the experiential (what happened - i.e. who does what as well as how, when and where) and the logical (relations between experiential meanings). Each of the four modes of meaning is encoded in its respective manifestation of grammar.

Grammar (or lexi-co-grammar, because it comprises both vocabulary and grammar) through which logical meaning is conveyed is termed 'clause combination'. It governs the relationships between clauses, groups/phrases and words, and is related to the choice between, for example at the clause level, a simple clause and a combination of clauses. This paper focuses on relations between clauses within a combination of clauses because inter-clausal relations are more widely present and exhibit more diverse types than, for example, groups/phrases or words in a text.

Example 1 and Example 2 below imply the same message, but the former is encoded in one clause, i.e. a clause simplex, and the latter is expressed in two clauses, i.e. a clause complex. They can be considered the same thing in terms of experiential meaning but, in logical meaning, they are different because “the difference between expressing messages in separate simple clauses and in complexes is a meaningful choice” [9]. (The abbreviations used in the examples below, and throughout this paper, are as follows: ACC: accusative; AUX: auxiliary; CIR: Circumstance [which is realised in adverbs and prepositional phrases]; DEC: declarative; GEN: genitive; HON: honorific; IMP: imperative; INP: interpersonal; NOM: nominative; PRS: present; PST: past. In addition, the notation ‘|’ is used to separate clauses in a clause complex).

Example 1
눈이 왔다. 길이 미끄럽다.

snow NOM come.PST.DEC street NOM slippery.be.DEC.

“Snow came”. “The street(s) are slippery”.

Example 2
눈이 왔어서 | 길이 미끄럽다.

snow NOM come.LK (because) || street NOM slippery.be.DEC.

“Because snow came | the street(s) are slippery”.

In addition, clause combination concerns how two or more clauses are connected in a clause
complex with logico-semantic relations such as ‘elaborating’, ‘temporal’ and ‘cause’. In Example 2, the clauses are connected with the relation of ‘cause’ using the suffix -서 see ‘because’. In this paper, such a suffix which realises a connector is referred to as a ‘linker’ [10].

In translation, shifts that entail combination of clauses or separation of a clause complex can occur, but they should not be produced arbitrarily. A fast-paced detective novel characterised by short clause simplexes may hardly be seen as having the same meaning as its translation rendered in long clause complexes across the text. Likewise, an explanatory text comprising long clause complexes should not be translated as a series of short clause simplexes. These changes alter the overall logical meaning of the source texts, which can by no means be justified. If the translation shifts are to take place, the shifts should not be excessive, nor should they arise without a valid reason. In particular, the linkers of combined or separated clauses of the source text should be mended in such a way that the logico-semantic meaning is rendered accurately and naturally in the target text.

Two examples below illustrate issues around whether to divide a sentence or maintain it as is. Example 3 is the first sentence taken from a news report, which is a clause simplex containing another clause embedded in it. The logico-semantic relation between the enclosing and the enclosed clauses is termed elaboration – which makes the meaning of the other clause more specific. The enclosed clause may be separated from the outer clause considering the seemingly too-large amount of information to place in the Subject of the sentence in the target language (TT1). This is particularly the case because, as shown below (*, ** and ***), in a Korean news report, the first constituent of the first sentence does not tend to have a long embedded clause. From this perspective, the unseparated version (TT2) may be possible but does not seem to be typical in practice. The notation for an embedded clause is double square brackets ([ ]).

*결국 이번에도 문성근이 총대를 냈다. 그는 이명박 정부의 국가정보원 블랙리스트에 오른 문화 예술인 82명을 대표해 민·형사 소송을 준비하고 있다.
At last Moon Sung-Keun took the lead this time too. He is preparing for civil and criminal lawsuits on behalf of the 82 artists blacklisted by the former President Lee Myung-bak government's National Intelligence Service. (h21)

**당내 세균이 자폐증의 원인이다? 지난 9월 13일 과학전문지 뉴스는 연구논문 두 편을 공개했다.
Enteric bacteria is the cause of autism? On September 13, the scientific journal *Nature* released two research articles.

***9월24일 실시되는 독일 총선을 앞두고 9월3일 기독민주당(기민당) 메르켈 총리와 마르틴 슐츠 사회민주당 (사민당) 대표 사이 텔레비전 토론이 있었다. 텔레비전 토론은 이번 한 번뿐이다.

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Before the general election on September 24, there was a TV debate between Angella Merkel, the German Chancellor from the Christian Democratic Union and Martin Shultz, leader of the Social Democratic Party. This is their only TV debate. (sisain)

Example 3
ST: The revolution in genetic engineering [[that will make it possible for humans to actively manage our evolutionary process for the first time in our species’ history]] is already under way.

TT1: 유전공학 혁명이 이미 진행 중에 있다. 이에 따라 인류는 상 최초로 인간의 진화 과정에 적극 개입할 수 있게 된다.
BT: The revolution in genetic engineering is already underway. With this, humans will be able to be actively involved in their evolutionary process for the first time in the species’ history.

TT2: [[상 최초로 인간의 진화 과정에 적극 개입할 수 있는]] 유전공학 혁명이 이미 진행 중에 있다.
BT: The revolution in genetic engineering [[where (humans) can be actively involved in their evolutionary process for the first time in the species’ history]] is already under way.

Example 4 is also the first sentence of a news article, but it does not generate motivation to warrant separation of a clause complex for two reasons. First, the information in the English clause complex does not appear to be too compact to break into two sentences in Korean, which is reflected in the clause complex in TT1. Second, even if separated, the inherently ambiguous ‘–ing’ form needs to be remedied with a correct logico-semantic relation, which trainees often fail to find. Unless the relation is rectified correctly, the meaning of the linker in the source text would be at risk.

Example 4.
ST: The forward march of globalisation has paused since the financial crisis, || giving way to a more conditional, interventionist and nationalist model.

TT1: 금융위기 이후 세계화의 진보가 주춤하면서, || 보다 조건부적, 간섭주의적, 국수주의 모델로 대체되고 있다.
BT: As the forward march of globalisation has paused since the financial crisis, || it is being replaced with a more conditional, interventionist, nationalist model.

TT2: 금융위기 이후 세계화의 진보가 주춤했다. 보다 조건부적, 간섭주의적, 국수주의 모델로 대체되고 있다.
BT: The forward march of globalisation has paused. (It) is being replaced with a more conditional, interventionist, nationalist model.

3. Clause nexus
With respect to a clause complex, the concept of a clause nexus is useful to analyse the relation between clauses. A clause nexus refers to a pair of clauses and it involves interdependency: either an equal relation or dependent relation. With an equal relation, the initiating clause (first clause) precedes the continuing clause (second clause) in both Korean and English; the structure is called ‘paratactic (comparable to coordination in traditional grammar cf. [5])’. With a dependent relation, the sequence differs between the two languages. In Korean, the dependent clause always comes before the dominant clause; the structure is termed hypotactic (similar to one type of what traditional grammars referred to as subordination, cf. [5]). In English, however, the dependent clause may come either before or after the dominant clause, although it is prototypically preceded by a dominant clause and thus the opposite is a marked sequence. Sequences of equal and dependent relations in English and Korean are tabulated in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Table 1] First and second in a clause nexus (English) (Halliday and Matthiesen 2004: 376)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>parataxis (equal relation)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hypotaxis (dependent relation)</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Table 2] First and second in a clause nexus (Korean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>parataxis (equal relation)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hypotaxis (dependent relation)</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

The difference in sequence in a clause complex between Korean and English may lead to translation issues. For instance, when translating from English into Korean, the questions may arise 1) how should the marked sequence in an English hypotactic clause complex (the dependent clause preceding the dominant clause) be rendered in Korean where there is no such a choice in sequence?: 2) Should the dependent clause in an English clause complex always be translated as the first clause in Korean because its sequence in the latter is fixed?

With respect to the first question, one way to make a distinction between the unmarked and marked cases would be to use different particles in the target language, as illustrated in Example 5 and Example 6. While the particle - 면 myeon in Example 5 only denotes the experiential meaning ‘if’, the particle - 아 ya in Example 6 adds an extra emphasis to the experiential meaning, resulting in something similar to ‘only if’. The interpersonal meaning in
the Korean translation renders the markedness realised through the English sequence. However, before rendering the sequential markedness as an added stress in Korean, a note of caution must be made. For example, a question should be asked as to whether the markedness is high enough to be explicitly reflected in translation. This is because the sequential difference is not as marked as, for example, a clause having a fronted verb such as ‘Go will I’, which should be translated. As a general guideline until more research is done, therefore, a solution to this translation problem should depend on the context and/or co-text in which the clause complex is placed in order to determine the degree of markedness of the sequential difference.

Example 5

ST: I will go || if you go.
TT: 네가 가면 || 나도 간다.
BT: If you go,|| I will go

Example 6

ST: If you go,|| I will go.
TT: 네가 가면 || 나도 간다.
BT: (Only) if you go,|| I will go.

Conversely, when translating from Korean into English, one of the questions that arise is ‘would it be correct to always translate the dependent clause of a Korean clause complex as the first clause in English, without considering the options available in the target language?’ Often, this question is relevant for translator training settings because trainees are highly likely to be affected with source text interference [11] and transfer the sequence of the ST clause complex into the TT. If the first clauses in the Korean source text (dependent clauses) are all translated as the first clauses in the English target text (prototypically main clauses), however, the overall flow of the target text would not read well and could even be unintelligible because of unjustifiably marked sequence in the clause complexes. Therefore, asking the sequence-related questions is important because the issue is not limited to a sentence or two but can impact the entire text, if accumulated across it.

4. Logico-semantic relations

In addition to the interdependency, a clause nexus involves logico-semantic relations. The relations between clauses can be grouped into general types based on expansion and projection. In expansion, one clause is elaborated (meaning is specified, indicated as =), extended (meaning is added, indicated as +) or enhanced (meaning is qualified, indicated as x) by another. Projection relations involve locution (direct and indirect speech, indicated as ‘) or ideas (direct and indirect thought, indicated as ) [5]. In this paper, focus is on expansion because it is generally more common and thus more pertinent than projection to issues encountered in
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4.1 Expansion

Expansion can be compared to “enriching a building” by elaborating (embellishing) its existing structure, extending it by addition or replacement, or by enhancing its environment [12]. While in English, six relations (two interdependency relations multiplied by three logico-semantic relations) are usable, in Korean four relations are considered in this paper: hypotactic elaboration (e.g. -(으)데 /, (으)데 ‘to be precise’), paratactic extension (e.g. -고, go ‘and’), hypotactic extension (e.g. -(으)데다, -(으)데다 ‘as well as’) and hypotactic enhancement (e.g. -면, myeon ‘if’). Of the four relations, three - hypotactic elaboration, paratactic extension and hypotactic enhancement - are the most common. In Korean, no paratactic elaboration and paratactic enhancement relations are identified. This finding indicates that, in Korean, elaborating and enhancing clause complexes tend to be realised hypotactically rather than paratactically. No single occurrence of paratactic elaboration or paratactic enhancement has been found in the data used in this paper. For this reason, we concentrate on the three main relations.

4.1.1 Hypotactic Elaboration

Hypotactic elaboration allows for one clause to elaborate the other in a clause complex in which two clauses have an unequal status. The hypotactic elaborating linker identified in this paper is - (으)데 / (으)데 ‘to be specific’.

Example 7

해마다 화단에 장미꽃이 피었습니다, || 참 예뻤다.

“Roses bloomed in the flower garden every year, || which was very pretty”.

4.1.2 Paratactic Extension

Corresponding to ’coordination’ in traditional and formal grammars, paratactic extension clause complexes are further divided into the three subcategories of additive (information is
added), adversative (information is contrasted) and replacive (information is substituted). A typical example is shown in Example 8. In the example, the paratactic extending clause complex is the additive subtype, which is not associated with temporal sequence.

Example 8

남식은 국수를 좋아하고 || 상도는 밥을 좋아한다.

namsik eun kuku reul joaha go (and), || sangdo neun bap eul joaha.n.da.

namsik speaking-of noodle like.Lk, || sangdo speaking-of rice like.DEC.

"Namshik likes noodle and || Sangdo likes rice".

Some linkers in Korean have more than one relation, while paratactic extending linkers are used in the most versatile way. They are identified as accounting for a substantial proportion of the linkers used in multiple relations (Table 3 below). In particular, the linker - 고 go has been observed in the data for this paper as having four relations:

1) paratactic extension: additive
2) hypotactic extension: replacive
3) hypotactic enhancement: temporal: same time
4) hypotactic enhancement: temporal: different time

Table 3 presents the logico-semantic relations enabled by - 고 go. It also provides several other linkers and the relations they enable. These linkers are used in more than one relations of expansion.

[Table 3] Linkers used in more than one relation of expansion
The fact that the linker -고, go enables multiple relations may pose a translation problem. In translating the same time relation in the clause nexus in Example 9 (-ing in crying), -고, go and -면서 myeonseo are candidates for the linker because both encode the 'hypotactic enhancement: temporal: same time' relation (see Table 3 above). However, the linker -고, go in Example 9a is considered to be a better option than the linker -면서 myeonseo in Example 9b because the former implies an initial embracing and the continuation of the embracing when they cried, while the latter only focuses on the simultaneity of embracing and crying, as well as the manner of crying (i.e. how the embracing was done). The second translation in 9b does not fully convey the logical meaning of the clause nexus by reason of the lack of duration of action.

Example 9a
They cried joyful tears, || embracing each other.

서로 부둥켜 안고 || 기쁨의 눈물을 흘렸다.

Example 9b
They cried joyful tears, || embracing each other.

서로 부둥켜 안으면서 || 기쁨의 눈물을 흘렸다.

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“They embraced each other || crying joyful tears”.

4.1.2 Hypotactic Enhancement

The category of enhancement has the largest number of different kinds of linkers. In this paper, these linkers in Korean can be broken into three broad subcategories: ‘temporal’, ‘causal-conditional’ and ‘manner’. Temporal can be further classified into ‘same time’ and ‘different time’; causal-conditional can be broken into ‘reason’, ‘purpose’, ‘result’, ‘condition’ and ‘concession’; manner, on the other hand, has only one subcategory: ‘degree’.

Hypotactic enhancing clauses alongside paratactic extending clauses are the two main types of clauses in Korean [13] [14]. Hypotactic enhancement encodes time, place, condition, reason and other circumstantial meanings in a clause nexus in which one clause qualifies the other.

In hypotactic enhancing clause complexes, two types of inter-clausal linkers are identified. One is a suffix attached to the stem of a verbal group of the dependent clause, and the other is the linker attached to the stem of a verbal group which has a complex structure involving a bound noun (c.f. [15] [16]). Example 10 displays linkers signalling the temporal hypotactic enhancement relation, different time (‘after’), employing the two different constructions. Example 10a realises the linker through a suffix -고나서 *gonaseo*, while Example 10b uses the bound noun construction -ㄴ 뒤 *ndwi*.

Example 10a

남식은 상도가 국수를 끓이고나서 || 밥을 했다.

*namsik eun sangdo ga guksu reul ggeul*<sub>gonaseo</sub> (after) || bap eul ha.et.da.

*namsik* speaking-of *sangdo* NOM *noodle* ACC *boil*<sub>Lk</sub> || *rice* ACC do.PST.DEC.

“After Sangdo cooked noodle || Namshik made rice”.

Example 10b

남식은 상도가 국수를 끓인 뒤 || 밥을 했다.

*namsik eun sangdo ga guksu reul ggeul*<sub>n dwi</sub> (after) || bap eul ha.et.da.

*namsik* speaking-of *sangdo* NOM *noodle* ACC *boil*<sub>Lk</sub> || *rice* ACC do.PST.DEC.

“After Sangdo cooked noodle || Namshik made rice”.

In the structure of the latter, the stem of the verbal group attached to an relative suffix (*-|/은* /|/ 은/을* /|/ *dl/ul* 던 *deun*) is followed by the bound noun which carries some lexical meaning mostly related to temporal sequence and manner. The bound noun construction is frequently used for sub-categories of expansion, most commonly in hypotactic enhancement:
temporal: different time.

Treating the bound noun construction as a clause has an advantage for the analysis of translation texts, in particular, with respect to the mode of language. Spoken language is characterised by "intricate constructions of clauses, varying not only in the kind of interdependency (parataxis or hypotaxis) but also in the logical semantic relations involved" [17]. If this is the case, and given that enhancement contributes to the development of "casual conversation in general" [18], treating the bound noun construction as embedded in a clause may lead to insensitivity to the spoken mode of language. In translation, the spoken (e.g. dialogue interpreting) as well as the written (e.g. contracts, IT manuals) and the others in between (e.g. movie subtitling, political speeches) are used as texts, and analysing these requires a method which accommodates the wide spectrum in mode of language. In this sense, treating the bound noun construction as a clause would make a more sophisticated analysis of translation texts.

Furthermore, the bound noun construction also appears regularly in written texts. Of the five types of written texts used in this paper, IT texts are observed to use the highest rate of the bound noun constructions. Of 293 clauses which make up 119 clause complexes (an average of 2.5 clauses per clause complex), 127 clauses are realised in hypotactic enhancement (43%) and 36 clauses are embodied in the bound noun construction (11.8%). In other words, the bound noun construction accounts for 28% of the hypotactic enhancement in the texts. The substantially high proportion of the bound noun construction in the IT texts may explain why technical texts (including IT texts) are "'less literary and [are] even colloquial on occasion': such characteristics make technical texts accessible for readers [19].

The logico-semantic relations which have been identified in this paper are summarised in Table 4.

[Table 4] Basic types of inter-clausal linkers in Korean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expansion</th>
<th>Parataxis</th>
<th>Hypotaxis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elabo-ration</td>
<td>Additive</td>
<td>-nde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension</td>
<td></td>
<td>-go, -myeo, -myeongseo, -lppun(deoreo), -lppunman anira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adversative</td>
<td>-euna, -jiman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replacive</td>
<td>-keona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-go, -(eu)myeo, -myeongseo(do), -a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5. Conclusion

The grammatical resources of logical meaning, clause combination, was examined using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) with a focus on Korean clause complexes, as well as comparing them with English ones with the intention of applying the outcome to translator training. Unlike in English, in Korean clause combination, paratactic extension and hypotactic enhancement were identified as the most common relations while no paratactic elaboration and enhancement relations were observed. The results might be used as rough guides to decisions involving Korean<->English translation shifts in logico-semantic relations. Further research can include analysis of how logico-semantic relations operate to make logical meaning in different text types. Additionally, a sufficient amount of research on logico-semantic relations by text type might lead to creating a typology of translation shifts by identifying the probabilities with a view to comparing subcategories: e.g. paratactic extension vs. hypotactic enhancement. Having these probabilities for Korean and English would be a useful reference for translating between the two languages and for meaningful comparisons to be made of the many translation shifts encountered in the language pair.
References


