An Analysis of Serialization as a Unique Phenomenon

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Studies of serialization have been plagued by the annoying fact that the meaning relations between serials are apparently so diverse as to defy a unified semantic account of serialization. Thus, in previous studies, the apparent heterogeneity of meaning dependencies has led to 'fragmentation' of serialization into 'coordinating' and 'subordinating' types, and of the subordinating type, in turn, into a variety of lexically governed subtypes.

On the other hand, Jo (1993) argues against such fragmentation and puts forth a unified semantic account of serialization, drawing heavily on the philosophical discussions of event individuation and causation. The purpose of this paper is to show that Jo's semantic analysis of serialization, in conjunction with various general pragmatic principles, provides a very natural account of the diverse meaning dependencies between serials.

I. Introduction.

This paper is an attempt to analyze serialization as a unique phenomenon by providing a unified account of the diverse readings of it. To facilitate the analysis, most examples will be drawn from Korean. What I call 'serialization' in Korean consists of a sequence of VPs or Ss connected by a particle -ese, as illustrated below:¹

¹ Typologically, Korean is an agglutinating SOV language: the 'head' constituent of an NP or VP (i.e. N or V) occurs phrase finally, and various grammatical relations are expressed by postpositional 'particles' which form morphological units with the content words they are attached to.
Before delving into the analysis of this construction, a brief remark for the term `serialization' is in order.

The term `serialization' will be used ambiguously to refer to either the whole construction or the connecting particle -ese.\footnote{The serialization particle -ese has a stylistic variant -e.}

This is to match the conventionalized use of the term `conjunction' for both the coordinate construction and the lexical word `and'. Each of the constituents serialized will be called a `serial', just as each of the constituents coordinated is called a `conjunct'.\footnote{The serialization particle -ese forms a morphological unit with the final word of the preceding serial (which happens to be the head of the preceding VP, due to the head final word order of Korean). In this paper, the semantics of serialization will be ultimately analyzed in terms of a weak sense of causal dependency (i.e. counterfactual dependency) between the events denoted by the serials. As will be noted later, however, causal relations between events can be discussed in terms of the relations between linguistic descriptions of the events. In the following discussion, dependency between serials should always be taken as dependency between the}

The Yale Romanization is used for Korean data throughout the chapter. Grammatical features conveyed by various postpositional `particles' shall not be glossed unless they are relevant to the current discussion. The following abbreviations are used in the gloss:

\begin{itemize}
\item ACC: Accusative,
\item BASE: BASE,
\item CONJ: Conjunction,
\item DEC: Declarative,
\item HON: Honorific,
\item IMP: Imperative,
\item INF: Infinitive,
\item NOM: Nominative,
\item LOC: Locative,
\item PL: Plural,
\item PAST: Past tense,
\item PRESENT: Present tense,
\item Q: Question,
\item REL: Relative Ending,
\item SER: Serialization,
\item TOP: Topic Marker
\end{itemize}
Until recently, serialization has enjoyed little more than passing interest on the part of linguistic students of Korean with only a few exceptions such as Ree (1975, 1978), and Lukoff and Nam (1982).\(^4\) Ree's main interest was to describe, under the 'performative' analysis framework, the semantic and syntactic contrast between the serialization and another construction marked by the conjunctive morpheme \(-ni(kka)\). Ignoring the details, the essence of his claim was that the clause with the conjunction \(-ni(kka)\) modifies the illocutionary force of the following clause, while the clause with the conjunction \(-ese\) modifies the propositional content of the following clause, as illustrated by the following examples:

\[
(2) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Kimun nay atul chinkwu-i-nikka sumwu-sal-ilketa} \\
& \quad \text{Kim my son friend-is-since 20-year-suppose} \\
& \quad \text{"Since Kim was my son's friend, he should be 20.'} \\
\text{b.} & \quad ??\text{Kimun nay atul chinkwu-i-ese sumwu-sal-ilketa} \\
& \quad \text{Kim my son friend-is-SER 20-year-suppose} \\
& \quad \text{"I suppose that Kim's being 20 is because of the fact that he is my son's friend.'}
\end{align*}
\]

Lukoff and Nam (1982) (henceforth L&N) note a similar contrast between the two constructions. They also make quite insightful events described by them, unless indicated otherwise.

\(^4\) In fact, the construction in question has never been characterized as a serialization in previous studies. Some studies (e.g. Sohn 1976, Abasolo 1977, Lee 1978, Yang 1978) only analyzed 'coverbial' examples that would be better analyzed in terms of lexical idiosyncracies or subcategorizations. It is an interesting question how serialization undergoes idiomatization, but this is outside the scope of the present investigation.
observations on various aspects of serialization. They first observe that the construction conveys a puzzling variety of meaning relations such as 'sequence, cause, stativeness, means, manner, purpose and so on,' (p.567) as illustrated in the following examples.

(3) **SEQUENCE**  
ilenanse cehay-ssta  
stand-up-SER bow-PAST  
'He stood up and bowed.'

(4) **CAUSE**  
kakkawa-se keleka-ssta  
close-SER walk-PAST  
'It was close and so I walked to it.'

(5) **STATIVENESS**  
celm-ese no-se  
young-SER play-let's  
'Let's have fun while young.'

(6) **MEANS/PURPOSE**  
kuka cipul phal-ese catongchalul sa-ssta  
he house sell-SER car buy-PAST  
'He sold his house and bought a car with the proceeds.'

(7) **MANNER**  
chintay-wie mwu-ese khwulkhwul ca-ssta.  
bed-on lie-SER soundly sleep-PAST  
'I slept soundly, lying on the bed.'

L&N claim that the serial construction $\alpha$-ese $\beta$ 'essentially expresses a "related sequence," that is, "$\beta$ after $\alpha$ and with some relation to it," and, further, that such a related sequence has the potential for implying that $\alpha$ is the cause of $\beta.' (p.559) What is

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5 Zero anaphora is a prominent feature of Korean. In the translations of Korean data, appropriate pronouns will be provided.