

Subjectivity and Blending in Korean Conditional *-taka*

Jisup Hong
U.C. Berkeley

Korean *-taka*, which is considered an “interruptive” or “transferentive” connective (Choi 1961, Lee 1993, Martin & Lee 1969), typically refers to a scenario in which the initial clause event has been discontinued in favor of the main clause event, as in (1). However, the connective also has a predictive conditional use, shown in (2), which is peculiar in requiring that both the protasis and apodosis be deemed undesirable by the speaker (Akatsuka & Sohn 1994). Thus, a predictive conditional with positive affect cannot be expressed with *-taka*.

- (1) chelswu-ka hakkyo-ey ka-taka cip-ey tolawa-ss-ta
Chelswu-NOM school-LOC go-TAKA home-LOC return-PST-DEC
“Chelswu returned home in the middle of going to school.”
- (2) wuntong manhi ha-taka tachi-n-ta / *kenkang hayci-n-ta
exercise a.lot do-TAKA injure-PRES-DEC / healthy become-PRES-DEC
“If you exercise a lot, you’re going to get hurt / *you’re going to become healthy.”

This paper presents a cognitive-functional analysis of *-taka* that accounts for the negative affect requirement on its predictive conditional use, as well as for a range of uses that express aspectual relations, such as temporal succession and temporal inclusion. The framework is a combination of Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2002) and Mental Spaces Theory (Fauconnier 1985), and specifically adopts Sanders et al. (2009)’s Basic Communicative Space Network, which distinguishes between volitional and non-volitional content domains. The conceptual model for *-taka* includes, in addition to aspectual relational constraints, the volitional involvement of an explicit subject of consciousness (SoC). When the main clause subject is agentive, as in (1), the sentence receives a volitional content reading in which an explicit SoC initiates a switch to the other activity. When the main clause subject is non-agentive, as in (3), a non-volitional content reading obtains in which the main clause event happens to the subject in the context of the initial clause event.

- (3) chelswu-ka hakkyo-ey ka-taka nemeci-ess-ta
Chelswu-NOM school go-TAKA fall-PST-DEC
“Chelswu fell while on his way to school.”

When the non-volitional content use of *-taka* occurs in a predictive future context, an alternative future space is constructed, in the same way that predictive contexts can trigger conditional construals for English *and* and *or* constructions (Dancygier & Sweetser 2005). This alternative future space is set up as a volitional content space in which the explicit SoC is blended with the implicit SoC of the speaker. As shown in Figure 1, in the alternative space, the blended agentive subject, with the speaker’s volitionality, chooses to abandon the initial clause activity to engage in something else, thereby averting the occurrence of the main clause event. Consequently, *-taka* cannot be used as a positive affect predictive conditional, because doing so would trigger the building of an alternative space in which the subject, with the speaker’s volitionality, deliberately switches away from the activity that leads to a positive outcome in the non-alternative space.

Figures

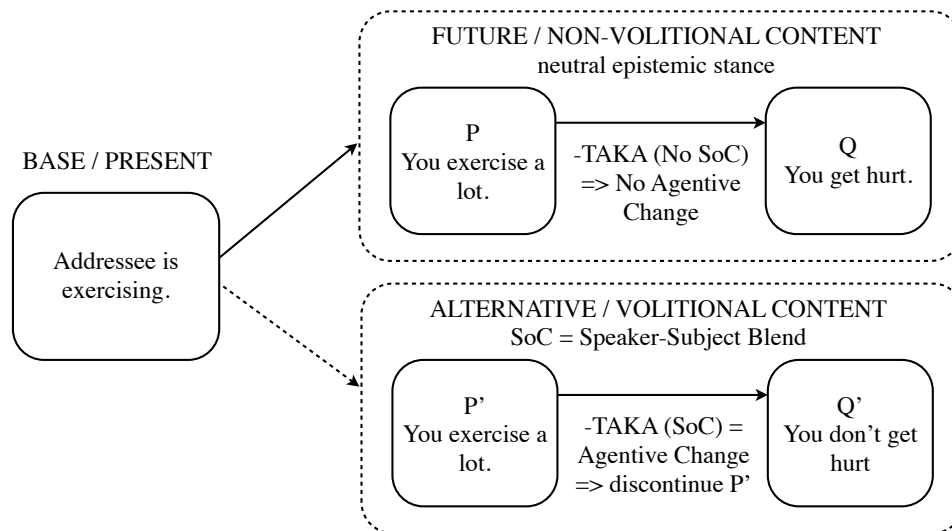


Figure 1: Mental space configuration for (2)

References

- Akatsuka, N. & S. Sohn. 1994. Negative conditionality: The case of Japanese *-tewa* and Korean *-taka*. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 4. 203–220.
- Choi, Hyon-Pai. 1961. *Wuli malpon* [a grammar of our language]. Cengum-sa.
- Dancygier, Barbara & Eve Sweetser. 2005. *Mental spaces in grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fauconnier, Gilles. 1985. *Mental spaces*. MIT Press.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 2002. *Concept, image, and symbol: The cognitive basis of grammar*. Walter de Gruyter 2nd edn.
- Lee, Keedong. 1993. *A Korean grammar on semantic-pragmatic principles*. Hanguk Munhwasa.
- Martin, Samuel E. & Young-Sook Lee. 1969. *Beginning Korean*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sanders, T., J. Sanders & E. Sweetser. 2009. Causality, cognition and communication: A mental space analysis of subjectivity in causal connectives. *Causal Categories in Discourse and Cognition* 19–60.