

What's imperative about Korean imperatives?

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Korean imperatives

- Every language has an imperative (Sadock and Zwicky 1985).
- Korean imperatives have a special morphological form and seem to form a core part of the system of clause-type marking, and have been studied in much previous research (e.g., Han 2000, Pak 2008, Zanuttini et al. 2012).
- Korean has also been put forward as an example of a language which allows embedded imperatives (e.g., Portner 2007, Kaufmann 2014).
- We present other uses of the Korean imperative form, all involving the imperative in an embedded clause, which do not fall under the previous accounts of Korean. Roughly speaking, the imperative appears in a clause which marks a purpose or an intention as in (1) and (2).

Some examples

- (1) emeni-nun [casik-tul-i cal toy-**la-ko**] mayil achim
 mother-TOP [child-PL-NOM well do-IMP-C] everyday morning
 kito-lul ha-n-ta
 pray-ACC do-PRES-DECL
 'Mother prays every morning for her children to do well.'
 (Lee and Ramsey 2000, 190)
- (2) [mas-i coh-**ula-ko**] kulehkey kkulhi-ess-ta
 [taste-NOM be.good-IMP-C] that.way boil-PAST-DECL
 'I boiled it that way to make it taste good.' (Martin 1992, 852)

Korean also has a special 'negative imperative' form, and this has also received some attention in the literature (Han and Lee 2007, Sells 2004). This form too shows the range of meanings we alluded to above, so we take it that what we are actually investigating is the meaning of the imperative 'category' within Korean grammar.

Outline

- Various background information on the Korean imperative.
- One type of embedded imperative clause, a purpose adjunct clause.
- Another type of embedded imperative clause, modifying a noun head (but it is not straightforwardly a relative clause).
- Some further observations on the meaning of the imperative form.
- Some components of a possible account.

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Imperatives, main clause and embedded

- (3) a. i chayk-ul ilk-**e-la**
 this book-ACC read-IMP
 'Read this book!'
- b. Inho-nun Mina-eykey [i chayk-ul ilk-**u-la**]-ko
 Inho-TOP Mina-DAT this book-ACC read-IMP-C
 malhay-ss-ta
 say-PAST-DECL
 'Inho told Mina to read this book.'

The vowel preceding *la* is diagnostic of whether we have a main clause form or an embedded form of the imperative. The *e/a* alternation is a regular one in Korean verbal morphology, conditioned by the preceding vowel in the verb root; in the context of imperatives, *e* or *a* signals a main clause use.

Pak (2008) – what is the imperative marker?

Pak (2008) argues that the *-e/a* part of the imperative is indeed the direct/plain speech style marker, and cites examples of main clause ‘imperatives’ such as those in (4) in which *-la* directly follows the verb stem, if there is no need for a speech style marker (e.g., in the Ten Commandments), when there is no intended particular addressee at all.

- (4) a. totwukcil-ha-ci mal(*-a)-la
 steal-do NEG-IMP
 ‘Do not steal!’
- b. salin-ha-ci mal(*-a)-la
 kill-do NEG-IMP
 ‘Do not kill!’

Pak continued

- To be fully precise, we follow Pak's proposal that the actual imperative form is $-(u)la$, as it appears in embedded clauses. This reflects the historical source, which is the adnominal form $-(u)l$.
- In main clauses – only main clauses – it is preceded by the speech style marker $-e/a$. Regular rules of Korean phonology would select the $-la$ variant of $-(u)la$ following one of these vowels.

History: the imperative form in Middle Korean

The form $-(o/u)la$ existed in Middle Korean with both a purposive and an imperative meaning (Lee and Ramsey 2011, 220–224). They propose that the purposive form (see (5)), indicating the goal of an action, derived from the prospective prenominal modifier $-(o/u)lq$, modifying an otherwise obsolete locative particle $*a$, which is found in Old Korean.

- (5) pilmek-ula wo-si-ni
 beg-PURPOS come-HON-DECL
 ‘He came in order to beg.’ (1459 *Wŏrin sŏkpo* 1:5b)

This particular meaning – to do something for one’s own purpose – is now expressed in Modern Korean by the purposive verbal ending $-(u)le$, for which the older $-(o/u)la$ may be the historical source (Lee and Ramsey 2011, 72).

Middle Korean continued

In addition, the same form in Middle Korean was already/also an imperative form, as in the examples in (6), from Lee and Ramsey:

- (6) a. nyey^s ptu.t-ul kwothi-la
 old way.of.thinking-ACC restore-IMP
 'Restore the old way of thinking!'
 (1449 *Wōrin ch'ōn'gang chi kok* stanza 29)
- b. il cyemuli hoy^a hemu.l-i eps-ula
 from early morning till night blunder-NOM not.exist-IMP
 ho-kwo
 say-and
 'Let there be no blunders from early morning till night, it says,
 and ...' (1475 *Naehun* 1:84a)
- c. Syalipwulq a al-ala
 Saraputra VOC know-IMP
 'Saraputra, know this!' (1447 *Sōkpo sangjōl* 13:60b)

Negative imperatives

- As noted above, there are also negative imperatives. Instead of the least marked form of negation (*anh-*), a special negative auxiliary verb *mal-* appears, itself taking the imperative inflection:

- (7)
- a. i chayk-ul ilk-ela
 this book-ACC read-IMP
 'Read this book!'
- b. i chayk-ul ilk-ci mal-ala
 this book-ACC read NEG IMP
 'Don't read this book!'

- The important thing for us is that our purpose interpretations etc. are also possible with the negative imperative – so it's not just an accident of the plain/positive imperative.

Canonical Imperatives

The main clause imperative has other typical uses:

- (8) A: yeki kyeylan sey kay-ka iss-ta. icye mwuel hay-ya
 here egg three CL-NOM be-DECL now what.ACC do
 ha-ni?
 should-INT
 'Here are three eggs. What should I do now?'
- B: kukes(-tul)-ul kulus-eyta phwul-ela
 that(-PL)-ACC bowl-in beat-IMP
 'Beat them in a bowl.'
- (9) A: ne nuc-ess-ta-ko pokoha-l ke-ya
 you be.late-PAST-DECL-C report-FUT-EMPH
 'I'm going to report that you were late.'
- B: kwaynchanh-a. pokohay-la
 okay (I don't mind) report-IMP
 'Okay, I don't mind, report me.'

'Canonical' embedded imperatives

Korean has embedded uses of imperatives which have been described in typologies of such constructions (e.g., Kaufmann 2014, Saito 2017). The first issue to be resolved is whether a given example of an embedded imperative is an embedded direct quotation, or whether there are some properties of true embedding (see e.g., Kaufmann 2014.) Examples such as (10) suggest the latter, for there are familiar shifts in pronominal forms:

- (10) Chelswu-ka Mina-eykey [**ne**-uy chayk-ul ilk-ula-ko]
 Chelswu-NOM Mina-DAT you-GEN book-ACC read-IMP-C
 malhay-ss-ta
 say-PAST-DECL
 'Chelswu told Mina to read your (= the hearer's) book.'

More examples

- (11) a. Chelswu-ka na-eykey [**caki**-uy chayk-ul ilk-ula-ko]
 Chelswu-NOM I-DAT self-GEN book-ACC read-IMP-C
 malhay-ss-ta
 say-PAST-DECL
 'Chelswu₁ told me to read his₁ book.' (*self* = *Chelswu*)
- b. Chelswu's order to me:
nay chayk-ul ilk-ela!
 my book-ACC read-IMP
 'Read my book!'

Indexicals do not shift

Indexicals referring to the speaker or hearer of the actual context are perfectly fine. The same is true in Japanese (Fujii 2010: 223).

- (12) Hiroshi-ga Yoko-ni [**kimi**-no ie-o ka-e-to] meizita
 Hiroshi-NOM Yoko-DAT you-GEN house-ACC buy-IMP-C] ordered
 'Hiroshi ordered Yoko to buy your (= the actual hearer's) house.'

(13) is another example showing true embedding:

- (13) Chelswu-ka Mina-eykey [**nay** chayk-ul sa-la-ko] malhay-ss-ta
 Chelswu-NOM Mina-DAT my book-ACC buy-IMP-C say-PAST-DECL
 'Chelswu told Mina to buy my book.' ('my' refers to the speaker, not Chelswu.)

If (13) involves a direct quotation, *nay* 'my' should refer to Chelswu, not to the speaker. Again, the same holds in Japanese – see Saito (2017: 217, (24)).

Further evidence for embedding

Further evidence for true embedding comes from the fact that long-distance scrambling out of an embedded imperative clause is possible. The examples are modelled on Saito's 2017 diagnostics for Japanese embedded imperatives:

- (14) a. Chelswu-ka Mina-eykey [Harry Potter-lul ilk-ula-ko]
 Chelswu-NOM Mina-DAT Harry Potter-ACC read-IMP-C
 malhay-ss-ta
 say-PAST-DECL
 'Chelswu told Mina to read *Harry Potter*.'
- b. Harry Potter-lul₁ Chelswu-ka Mina-eykey [t₁ ilk-ula-ko]
 Harry Potter-ACC Chelswu-NOM Mina-DAT read-IMP-C
 malhay-ss-ta
 say-PAST-DECL
 'Harry Potter₁, Chelswu told Mina to read t₁.'

If (14-a) involves direct quotation, extraction out of the embedded clause should not be possible.

Summary

- Korean main clause imperatives are quite 'canonical'
- The language allows embedded imperatives which are also somewhat in line with what is known from other languages.
- We now turn to two other types of embedding which are perhaps less 'canonical'.

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The imperative as a marker of purpose

The examples below – and like (1) and (2) above – are of a kind typically mentioned in descriptive grammars, usually labelled as “result” (e.g., Martin 1992, 852; Sohn 1995, 48; Lee and Ramsey 2000, 190; Yeon and Brown 2011, 391).

The examples in this section involve the imperative form followed by the usual subordinating complementizer *ko*, and we will refer to the full embedded form as *-la-ko*. It is instructive to compare the *-la-ko* examples with the canonical expression of purpose or ‘so that’ in Korean, which is marked by *-tolok*. Some examples of *-tolok* are given in (15). It is a regular purpose marker and means something like “to bring about the outcome that”. We start with that.

The regular purpose marker *tolok*

- (15) a. palam-i cal thongha-**tolok** changmwun-ul hwalccak
 wind-NOM well pass-so.that window-ACC wide
 yel-ela
 open-IMP
 'Open the window wide so that the air can pass through!'
- b. pangchengkayk-i tul-ul swu iss-**tolok** ilpwule
 audience-NOM hear-MOD can-so.that intentionally
 khu-key malhay-ss-ta
 loud-ADV speak-PAST-DECL
 'I intentionally spoke loudly so that the audience could hear (me).'

The imperative, marking purpose

We gloss **-ko** as C for complementizer; it seems uncontroversial that this is (related to) the regular Korean finite complementizer (More discussion of this point later).

- (16) a. emeni-nun [Mina-ka mek-**ula-ko**] cemsim-ul
 mother-TOP Mina-NOM eat-IMP-C lunch-ACC
 cwunpiha-si-ess-ta
 prepare-HON-PAST-DECL
 'Mother prepared lunch so that/in order that Mina eats it.'
- b. emeni-nun Mina-eykey [cemsim-ttay mek-**ula-ko**]
 mother-TOP Mina-DAT lunch-time eat-IMP-C
 sandwich-lul ssa cwu-si-ess-ta
 sandwich-ACC pack give-HON-PAST-DECL
 'Mother packed and gave Mina a sandwich in order for her
 (= Mina) to eat it for lunch.'

The two forms compared

These examples are more or less interchangeable, even though we might consider (17-a) to involve a complement of 'pray' while (17-b) involves an adjunct purpose clause.

- (17) a. emeni-nun [Mina-ka ppalli hoypokha-**la-ko**]
 mother-TOP Mina-NOM quickly recover-IMP-C
 kitoha-si-ess-ta
 pray-HON-PAST-DECL
 'Mother prayed (so) that Mina recover(s) quickly.'
- b. emeni-nun [Mina-ka ppalli hoypokha-**tolok**]
 mother-TOP Mina-NOM quickly recover-so.that
 kitoha-si-ess-ta
 pray-HON-PAST-DECL
 'Mother prayed so that Mina recover(s) quickly.'
 (The speaker seems to assume that praying could have the effect of making Mina recover.)

Negative imperative

It is also possible to embed a negated imperative, with the interpretation “in order not to/so that ... not”:

- (18) a. Mina-nun [aki-ka tachi-ci mal-**la-ko**] ipwul-ul
 Mina-TOP child-NOM get.hurt NEG-IMP-C futon-ACC
 kkal-ass-ta
 spread.out-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina spread out the futon in order that/so that the child does not get hurt.’ (when s/he falls over, for example)
- b. Mina-nun [aki-ka tachi-ci mal-**tolok**] ipwul-ul
 Mina-TOP child-NOM get.hurt NEG-so.that futon-ACC
 kkal-ass-ta
 spread.out-PAST-DECL

Negative imperative

- (19) Mina-nun [aki-ka tachi-ci mal-**la-ko**] kitohay-ss-ta
 Mina-TOP child-NOM get.hurt NEG-IMP-C pray-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina prayed (so) that the child does not get hurt.’

In (18), on the other hand, it is fine to replace *mal-la-ko* with *mal-tolok*. In (19), though, if we replace *mal-la-ko* with *mal-tolok*, the example seems to implicate that Mina’s praying has the effect that the child does not get hurt. As it is unlikely that one’s praying has that effect, it is marked to use *mal-tolok* in (19).

These are not canonical imperatives

To illustrate that these embedded examples do not need to have any directive-type interpretation, (20-a) involves a predicate which is not easily used in a command (see (20-b)), but which is fully natural in this purpose interpretation:

- (20) a. mas-i coh-**ula-ko** kulehkey kkuhi-ess-ta
 taste-NOM be.good-IMP-C that.way boil-PAST-DECL
 'I boiled it that way to make it taste good.'
- b. ??mas-i coh-**a-la!**
 taste-NOM be.good-IMP
 'Be tasty!'

Not canonical imperatives

In addition, passive, unaccusative, and middle verbs are very unnatural in imperatives but are allowed in the ‘purpose’ clauses:

- (21) Mina-nun [pakhwi-ka cal tol-la-ko] kilum-ul chi-ess-ta
 Mina-TOP wheel-NOM well spin-IMP-C oil-ACC spray-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina sprayed oil so that the wheel can spin well.’
- (22) Mina-nun [mwun-i swipkey yel-li-la-ko] ...
 Mina-TOP door-NOM easily open-PASS-IMP-C ...
 ‘Mina V-ed so that the door opens easily.’

More examples

- (23) Mina-nun [sakwa-ka cal phal-li-la-ko] kakyek-ul
 Mina-TOP apple-NOM well sell-PASS-IMP-C price-ACC
 nayli-ess-ta
 lower-PAST-DECL
 'Mina lowered the price (of the apples) so that the apples can be sold/sell well.'

There are several examples in Martin (1992, 852) to illustrate the wider interpretations of *-la-ko*. The first one does not alternate naturally with *-tolok*, but the other examples do. It is not reasonable to take the *-la-ko*-marked clauses as complement clauses, nor as denoting commands.

Examples from Martin (1992)

- (24) a. ese o-**la-ko** yatan-i na-ss-ta
 at.once come-IMP-C raise.the.roof-PAST-DECL
 'They are really raising the roof for you to come at once.'
 ('Raise the roof' means 'make a lot of noise'.)
- b. *ese o-**tolok** yatan-i na-ss-ta
 at.once come-so.that raise.the.roof-PAST-DECL
- (25) a. mas-i coh-**ula-ko** kulehkey kkulhi-ess-ta
 taste-NOM be.good-IMP-C that.way boil-PAST-DECL
 'I boiled it that way to make it taste good.'
- b. mas-i coh-**tolok** kuleh-key kkulhi-ess-ta
 taste-NOM be.good-so.that that.way boil-PAST-DECL
 'I boiled it that way so that it would taste good.'

Examples from Martin (1992)

- (26) a. mayp-ci mal-**la-ko** kochwu kalwu-lul neh-ci
 be.spicy NEG-IMP-C chilli powder-ACC put
 anh-ass-ta
 NEG-PAST-DECL
 'I left out the chilli powder to keep it from being spicy.'
- b. mayp-ci mal-**tolok** kochwu kalwu-lul neh-ci
 be.spicy NEG-so.that chilli powder-ACC put
 anh-ess-ta
 NEG-PAST-DECL
 'I left out the chilli powder so that it would not get spicy.'

Summary

- There are clear uses of *-la-ko* as an adjunct with a purpose or ‘so that’ meaning. They do not have any of the meanings of main clause uses of the imperative form, nor of embedded directives.
- Some examples have no “canonical imperative” counterpart (e.g., (20)).
- Rather, they are close in meaning to *-tolok*-clauses, though not identical in meaning, as we discuss below.
- The imperative-marked clause may have an overt subject, and even an inanimate subject (e.g., (20)-(23)). We take this as a strong indication that the semantics of the imperative clause should be propositional.

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Adnominal embedded imperatives

Now we turn to a different construction. Here the imperative marker *-la* combines with the adnominal marker *-(nu)n* under a noun. *-(nu)n* represents the regular – and necessary – marking of a finite clause in construction with a head noun, in Korean. Roughly speaking, *-n* marks past tense and *-nun* marks present tense. The relevant examples have been occasionally noted but not considered systematically (e.g., Kim 2011, Saito 2017). Some of our examples below involve relative clauses and some seem to be noun complements. Interestingly, in these embedded examples, a more canonical imperative meaning comes back.

Not imperative relative clauses

(27) and (28) might look like embedded imperatives in relative clauses.

(27) John-un [sa-la-n] chayk-ul sa-ss-ta
 John-TOP buy-IMP-ADN book-ACC buy-PAST-DECL
 'John bought the book that someone told him to buy.'

(28) John-un [nay-ka sa-la-n] chayk-ul sa-ci anh-ass-ta
 John-TOP I-NOM buy-IMP-ADN book-ACC buy NEG-PAST-DECL
 'John did not buy the book that I told him to buy.'

The head noun is relativized out of the imperative-marked clause, through the (implicit) intermediate clause, and this shows that the example definitely does not involve an embedded direct quote. *-(nu)n* is a shortened form of *-ko (mal)ha-(nu)n*; these examples do not involve direct embedding of imperatives in relatives.

There is some intermediate structure

There is clear evidence that the imperative clause is embedded under a 'say'-like predicate, which would have a full structure like this (cf. (28)):

- (29) John-un [nay-ka [sa-la]-ko (mal)ha-n] chayk-ul sa-ci
 John-TOP I-NOM buy-IMP-C say-ADN book-ACC buy
 anh-ass-ta
 NEG-PAST-DECL

In fact, it might be surprising if there were no such covert predicate, because *-(nu)n* is uncontroversially a verbal suffix in Korean, and there would be no precedent in Korean morphotactics for it to be directly attached to a marker such as the imperative *-la*.

Other clause types can be similarly embedded

Additionally, it should be mentioned that other 'clause-type' markers can be embedded in this adnominal construction (e.g., Kim 2011). For instance, the declarative *-ta* appears in *-ta-nun cwucang* 'the claim that ... ', and the interrogative *-nya* in *-nya-nun cilmwun* 'the question whether/*wh*... '. There is also evidence for an implicit 'say' predicate in such examples.

Two layers of structure

Reasoning from (29) and the extra structure proposed for it, we expect that the subject honorific in (30) will lead to ungrammaticality because *-si* would have to go with *John*:

- (30) John-un [sensayngnim-kkeyse sa(*-si)-la-n] chayk-ul sa-ci
 John-TOP teacher-NOM_{hon} buy-HON-IMP-ADN book-ACC buy
 anh-ass-ta
 NEG-PAST-DECL
 'John₁ did not buy the book that the teacher told him₁ to buy.'

Crucially, this example does not mean: John did not buy the book that someone told **the teacher** to buy. In other words, the overt subject 'teacher' is interpreted as the subject of the intermediate verb, not as the subject of 'buy'.

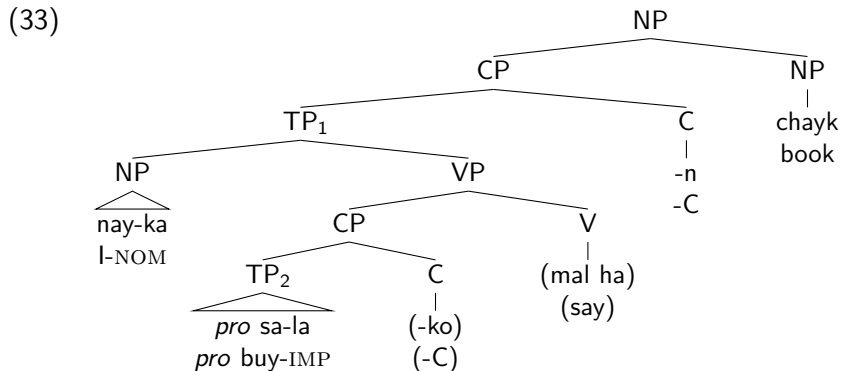
More examples

Consequently, we expect the honorific marker to be acceptable if it occurs above the imperative marker *la*, as in (31), with full form in (32):

- (31) John-un [sensayngnim-kkeyse [sa-la]-si-n] chayk-ul
 John-TOP teacher-NOM_{hon} buy-IMP-HON-ADN book-ACC
 sa-ci anh-ass-ta
 buy NEG-PAST-DECL
 'John₁ did not buy the book that the teacher told him₁ to buy.'
- (32) John-un [sensayngnim-kkeyse [sa-la]-ko ha-si-n]
 John-TOP teacher-NOM_{hon} buy-IMP-C say-HON-ADN
 chayk-ul sa-ci anh-ass-ta
 book-ACC buy NEG-PAST-DECL
 'John₁ did not buy the book that the teacher told him₁ to buy.'

A sample structure

(29) shows the full structure for these examples. TP₁ is the 'intermediate' layer, within which is the imperative-marked clause, TP₂:



'the book that I (said) (that) (someone) should buy'

More examples of the intermediate structure

The next examples involve relativization of a locative from the imperative clause.

- (34) [ka-la-nun] tey-nun an ka-ko way yeki iss-ni?
 go-IMP-ADN place-CONTR not go-and why here be-INT
 'Why are you here instead of going where you are told to go?'
- (35) na-nun [Mina-lul manna-la-nun] kongwen-ey ka-ci
 I-TOP Mina-ACC meet-IMP-ADN park-to go
 mos ha-ess-ta
 cannot-PAST-DECL
 'I could not go to the park where I was told to meet Mina.'

Not *literally* “saying”

We also find examples where a proposition is communicated, but in which there is not literally an act of “saying”. In (36), it would be reasonable to analyze the *-la-nun* clause as the complement of the noun ‘wish’.

- (36) hanunim-kkeyse [[nayil pi-ka o-ci mal-la]-nun] nay
 god-NOM_{hon} tomorrow rain-NOM come NEG-IMP-ADN my
 sowen-ul tul-e cwu-si-ess-ta
 wish-ACC listen give-HON-PAST-DECL
 ‘God listened to my wish (which says) [don’t rain tomorrow].’
- (37) [manci-ci mal-la]-nun phoyci-ka iss-ess-ta
 touch NEG-IMP-ADN sign-NOM be-PAST-DECL
 ‘There was a sign (saying) ‘don’t touch’.’

More examples

- (38) John-un (wuli-eykey) [Mina-ka o-la]-nun phyenci-lul
 John-TOP (we-DAT) Mina-NOM come-IMP-ADN letter-ACC
 ponay-ss-ta
 send-PAST-DECL

‘John sent (us) a letter that Mina should come.’

- (39) ku kongsacang-ey-nun [ai-tul-i ku kos-eyse
 that construction.site-LOC-TOP child-PL-NOM that place-LOC
 nol-ci mal-la]-nun phoyci-ka iss-ess-ta
 play NEG-IMP-ADN sign-NOM be-PAST-DECL

‘At the construction site, there was a sign that children should not play there.’

Summary

- It is possible to have an imperative form within a relative clause or noun complement structure.
- The imperative form is not directly embedded under the noun, but there is an intermediate “performative layer” (the implicit *ha* ‘say’; TP₁ in (33)) which is present with *la-nun* but which is absent with *la-ko*.
- However, these are not literally “speech acts”, but rather some more abstract communication of a proposition (e.g., (37)).
- The subject of the imperative clause can be overt and is not the addressee (if there is any addressee) of the content of the imperative-marked clause.

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More on the imperative as a purpose marker

We now introduce one more kind of variation in the data, which will also provide a diagnostic for the purposive vs. directive interpretations of embedded imperatives. Lee and Ramsey (2000, 190) give the example in (40), with a purpose adjunct clause marked with the adverbial marker *-key*.

- (40) catongcha-ka cinaka-**key** cokum-man
 car-NOM go.by-ADV a.little-only
 pikhye cwu-sey-yo
 move.out.of.the.way-HON-IMP
 'Move out of the way just a little so that the cars can go by.'

An ‘imperative’ under an imperative

(40) has a regular imperative in the matrix clause, but the purpose adjunct within it does not involve the imperative form. It is very awkward to use *-la-ko* in the embedded clause when the matrix clause is imperative:

- (41) a. ?*catongcha-ka cinaka-**la-ko** cokum-man
 car-NOM go.by-IMP-C little-only
 pikhye cwu-sey-yo
 move.out.of.the.way-HON-IMP
 ‘Move out of the way just a little so that the cars can go by.’
- b. ?*palam-i cal thongha-**la-ko** changmwun-ul hwalccak
 wind-NOM well pass-IMP-C window-ACC wide
 yel-ela
 open-IMP
 ‘Open the window wide so that the air can pass through.’

The embedded imperative expresses a desired outcome

If *-la-ko* is replaced by the general purpose marker *-tolok* in the examples above, each is fully acceptable. From that, we take it that the low acceptability is due to the specific meaning of *la-ko*.

Let us assume that *-la-ko* represents a preference of the subject of the higher clause – the subject performs an action in order to bring out a preferred (separate) outcome. For the examples in (41), our hypothesis is that they are unacceptable because the speaker is “ordering” the addressee to have a preference about a situation.

For instance, in (a), the speaker expects the addressee to act as if ‘so that the cars can pass’ is rationally the addressee’s own preference – because the embedded imperative form must express a preference of the subject of the matrix clause, but not a preference of the speaker.

A true imperative under an imperative

Interestingly, this observation now gives us a test for a true embedded imperative, which is fine in the same construction with a directive interpretation (of the *-la-ko* part):

- (42) Mina-eykey cip-ey ka-la-ko malhay-la
 Mina-DAT home-to go-IMP-C say-IMP
 'Tell Mina to go home.'

This example has a canonical 'embedded imperative', where one clause is complement to the other. The example is acceptable because it is the speaker's preference that Mina goes home and the speaker is telling the addressee to bring it about. The preference resides with the speaker, not (purportedly) with the addressee.

The embedded imperative and purpose

Now we vary the examples the other way – taking out the matrix imperative. Such examples are fully acceptable, with the embedded *-la-ko* clause having the purpose interpretation, the purpose of the matrix subject:

- (43) a. Mina-nun [catongcha-ka cinaka-la-ko]
 Mina-TOP [car-NOM go.by-IMP-C]
 pikhye cwu-ess-ta
 move.out.of.the.way-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina moved out of the way so that the cars can go by.’
- b. Mina-nun [palam-i cal thongha-la-ko]
 Mina-TOP [wind-NOM well pass.through-IMP-C]
 changmwun-ul hwalccak yel-ess-ta
 window-ACC wide open-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina opened the window up wide so that the air can pass through.’

What kind of purpose does *la-ko* mean?

Now we try to probe further into the use of *-la-ko* as marker of purpose. The canonical purpose marker *-tolok* seems to presuppose that the action taken is supposed to make that result more likely, while *-la-ko* actually only has a 'wanting p' meaning, but does not guarantee the result. Hence with the continuation indicated, the *-tolok* version is somewhat infelicitous, as in (44). (See also (19) above.)

Comparing *tolok* and *lako*

- (44) a. ??na-nun [mas-i coh-**tolok**] yangnyem-ul neh-ess-nuntey
 I-TOP taste-NOM be.good-so.that spice-ACC put.in-PAST-CONJ
 umsik-un mas-i hanato eps-ess-ta
 food-TOP taste-NOM at.all not.exist-PAST-DECL
 'I put (some) spice in so that it gets tasty, but the food wasn't tasty at all.'
- b. na-nun [mas-i coh-**ula-ko**] yangnyem-ul neh-ess-nuntey
 I-TOP taste-NOM be.good-IMP-C spice-ACC put.in-PAST-CONJ
 umsik-un mas-i hanato eps-ess-ta
 food-TOP taste-NOM at.all not.exist-PAST-DECL
 'I put (some) spice in wanting it to get tasty, but the food wasn't tasty at all.'

More examples

A similar contrast was given above in (24), repeated here as (45), this time with the *lako* example first. That example again reports a desire, and the clause is not used performatively. (45-b) is marked as the main clause action is not one that cannot bring about the outcome.

- (45) a. ese o-**la-ko** yatan-i na-ss-ta
 at.once come-IMP-C raise.the.roof-PAST-DECL
 ‘They are really raising the roof for you to come at once.’
- b. *ese o-**tolok** yatan-i na-ss-ta
 at.once come-so.that raise.the.roof-PAST-DECL

A note on the function of *ko*

Declaratives also seem to be able to have the ‘purpose/intention/reason’ interpretation when combined with *-ko*. The difference between imperative-*ko* and declarative-*ko* is that the subject of a declarative-*ko* clause may be the same as the matrix subject while the subject of an imperative-*ko* clause is always disjoint from the matrix subject.

- (46) a. Mina_i-nun [*pro*_i pelley-lul cap-nun-ta-ko]
 Mina_i-TOP *pro*_i bug-ACC catch-PRES-DECL-C
 salchwungcey-lul ppwuli-ess-ta
 insect.killer-ACC spray-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina sprayed insect killer to catch bugs.’
- b. Mina-nun [halmeni-ka nayil
 Mina-TOP grandmother-NOM tomorrow
 o-si-n-ta-ko] tultte iss-ta
 come-HON-PRES-DECL-C excited be-PAST-DECL
 ‘Mina is excited as grandmother will come tomorrow.’

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The basic meaning of *la*

We propose that the core meaning of *-la* is that it applies to a proposition and orders the interpretation of that proposition with respect to some other proposition(s) in terms of a modal base and an ordering source. This is a familiar approach in the analysis of imperatives.

“Therefore, the constraint that imperatives come with a non-empty ordering source should be strengthened to require that they come with an ordering source related to preferences or goals. Portner (2007) coins the term *prioritizing* for conversational backgrounds of the relevant types (bouletic, teleological, or deontic) and sees them in opposition to dynamic (concerned with abilities) and epistemic ordering sources.”
(Kaufmann 2012, 157)

Wilson and Sperber (1988)

Wilson and Sperber (1988) proposed that imperatives have two core semantic properties: *desirability*, usually referred to as a *preference* in more recent research, and *achievability*. In a core imperative, the speaker's preference is communicated to the hearer, who must be able to achieve the propositional content of the preference. The speaker is not the one who brings about the preference.

(From here on, we use q to indicate the proposition marked with the imperative, to match with the proposal in (47) below from Oikonomou 2016 for the meaning of the imperative.)

Oikonomou (2016)

Oikonomou (2016, 104) also builds her account on Wilson and Sperber (1988), and proposes that there is a doxastic (based on beliefs) modal base and a bouletic (based on desires) ordering source. The meaning of the imperative is that for an individual i in world w at time t , there is a world among the 'best' doxastic alternatives (f in (47)), and according to i 's desires (g in (47)), and that is a world in which q is true:

$$(47) \quad \llbracket \text{Imp} \rrbracket^{w,i,t} = \\ \lambda f \in D_{\langle s,st \rangle} \cdot \lambda g \in D_{\langle s,st \rangle} \cdot \lambda q \in D_{\langle st \rangle} \cdot \exists w' \in \\ \text{Best}_{g(w,i,t)}(f(w,i,t)): q(w',i,t) = 1$$

The modal “on top”

Much of this meaning actually matches the Korean imperative form: and for our embedded examples, roughly speaking, someone believes q to be possible and wants q to happen (or to be avoided). The notion of *Best* might not apply, but as noted above, there is some kind of priority interpretation. Note that there is nothing in (47) which is itself performative.

So then what is needed for a true imperative is the performative part of the meaning – a modal meaning “on top” of something like (47), as familiar from say Kaufmann (2012) and Oikonomou (2016).

The purpose interpretation

In the case of the purpose interpretation, the agent does something p , in order to bring about something else q , having q as an intended outcome. Even if q is not formally a preference, we think it is reasonable to assume that q is scalarly ordered with regard to other q 's, with a teleological ordering source.

In this regard the Korean *-la* is somewhat like a subjunctive in Indo-European languages, always being related to a scalar interpretation relative to a set of contextual alternatives, and being interpreted under the scope of an (implicit) modal (Villalta 2008; Oikonomou 2016).

The purpose interpretation

In the case of the purpose interpretation with the embedded *-la-ko*, there needs to be modalized meaning between the main clause and the embedded imperative clause.

M. Kaufmann (p.c.) suggested to us that *ko* provides the purpose interpretation.

- It would be based on a “should” interpretation for the modal.
- ‘Agent does p and $\text{SHOULD}_{\text{agent-teleological}}(q)$ ’
- What is unusual is who is the source of the imperative modality (not the speaker, not the hearer).

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Conclusion

- Both *la-ko* and *la-nun* may express an embedded imperative, but they are also used with the less canonical imperative meanings we described above.
- The core meaning of *la* is that a proposition is scalarly ordered, and interpreted under the scope of some modal.
- In both types of embedded imperative that we have focussed on, the subject of the imperative clause can be non-agentive, and does not necessarily “do” anything.
- In the purpose interpretation, the one whose purpose is the source of the modal “should” is the matrix subject, not the speaker.

Other languages

- It would be interesting to see if other languages have such non-canonical interpretations of imperative forms.
- Non-command embedded imperatives with an ‘in order to’ interpretation are also found in Old Japanese (Russell and Sells 2015), but this is not found in modern Japanese.

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