

## On the interpretive properties of two nominal coordination constructions in Korean

It is standardly assumed that constituent coordination is base-generated. However, Aoun, Benmamoun, and Sportiche (1994, 1999) argued that in certain Arabic dialects a surface string that looks like a coordination of NPs is not a base-generated coordination of NPs, but derived from conjoined sentences through ellipsis. Yoon and Lee (2005) claim that Korean is similar, since what appears to be a string of conjoined NPs may arise either by base-generation (**Type A** coordination) or by ellipsis from clausal coordination (their **Type B** coordination) (cf. 1). Their argument is based on putative interpretive differences between the two types of coordination (Type B allows only distributive, multi-event reading, expected under an ellipsis account), as well as evidence which shows that Type B coordination does not have NP distribution. Cho (2008) argues that both Type A and Type B are constituent NP coordination, based on factual disagreements about Yoon and Lee's (2005) data. Since the debate hangs on judgments, a controlled experimental study was conducted to evaluate the conflicting claims about possible interpretations of two types of coordination.

Twenty native Korean speakers participated in a picture selection task, where participants were given a sentence followed by two pictures. They were asked to select the picture that they thought best matched the meaning of the sentence. The two pictures depicted a single event involving two individuals acting together or two events of the same type involving a single individual in each event (cf. 2). Since the option of choosing both pictures was excluded, the choice made by participants reflects the preferred interpretation of the sentence, and does not imply that the chosen reading is the only possible interpretation.

There were two independent variables--coordination type (Type A vs. Type B) and four conditions for lexical items. The conditions for lexical items varied as follows: (a) neutral predicates which are compatible with either single event or two event reading (e.g., *make a million won*); (b) plural argument predicates (PAPs) which require plural NP subjects and are only compatible with a single event reading (e.g., *are friends*); (c) neutral predicates modified with *kakkak* ('each'), which should reinforce a two event reading; and (d) neutral predicates with *hamkkey* ('together'), which should reinforce a single event reading. If Type B is not a constituent coordination of NPs as Yoon and Lee (2005) claim, we predict that the two event reading should be chosen for Type B in condition (a) and that conditions (b) and (d) should be incompatible with Type B, while condition (c) should be acceptable.

The speakers in this study preferred the single event reading for Type A coordination (83%) and the two event reading for Type B coordination (72%) in condition (a) (cf. 3). The modifier *kakkak* ('each') reinforced the two event reading for both types of coordination in condition (c). These are expected results under Yoon and Lee's analysis. But we also found that the two event reading was chosen robustly (72%) for Type B in condition (b), while Type A led to 99% choice of single event reading in this condition. The single event reading also emerged as the dominant reading for both types of coordination in condition (d) (with *hamkkey* 'together' as modifier). The last two results do not support the predictions of Yoon and Lee's analysis, but seems to favor a constituent NP analysis of both types of coordination.

However, if Type B is constituent NP coordination, we expect that factors that favor a single event/collective interpretation (such as PAPs in condition (b) and collective modifier in condition (d)) should both lead to the choice of single event reading as the dominant interpretation. This was not the case, since while Type B coordination in condition (d) led to the expected interpretation, it did not in condition (b). In fact, two event reading was chosen as the dominant reading in condition (b).

A way to make sense of this puzzling result is to realize that an apparent collective modifier like *hamkkey* is actually ambiguous between a true collectivizing use and the 'accompaniment' use (Lasersohn 1995), where in the latter, it modifies two events that take place contiguously. In this use, there is no necessity to have a plural subject in each of the events that take place. The elliptical analysis of Type B coordination allows *hamkkey* used in

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the accompaniment sense. The remaining question is how an elliptical analysis can explain the fact that condition (b) was accepted under the two event interpretation. We propose a covert Comitative analysis of Type B coordinations (cf. 4) to account for this fact.

In sum, the ellipsis analysis of Type B coordination is viable, despite apparent evidence to the contrary.

### Appendix

- (1) Cheli-wa Yengcheli-ka paykman-wen-ul moassta (**Type A**)  
 Cheli-conj Yengcheli-nom one.million-won-acc saved

Interpretation (according to Yoon and Lee): **1 > 2**

1. 'Cheli and Yengcheli together saved up a million won.' (single event/collective reading)
2. 'Cheli and Yengcheli each saved up a million won.' (two event/distributive reading)

- Cheli-ka kuliko Yengcheli-ka paykman-wen-ul moassta (**Type B**)  
 Cheli-nom and Yengcheli-nom one.million-won-acc saved

Interpretation (according to Yoon and Lee): **\*1, 2**

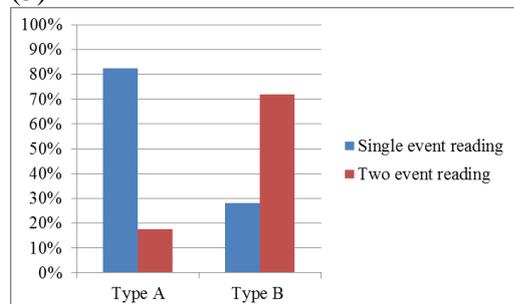
- (2) Picture (a)



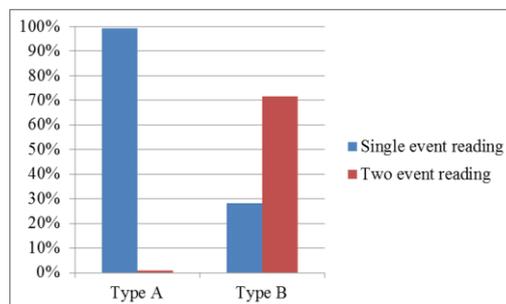
- Picture (b)



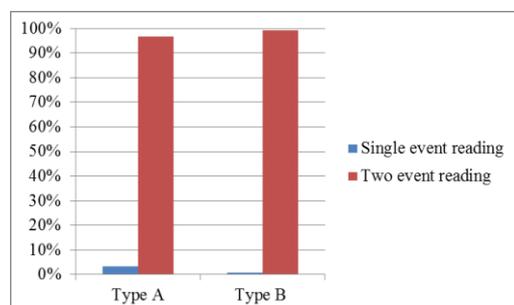
- (3)



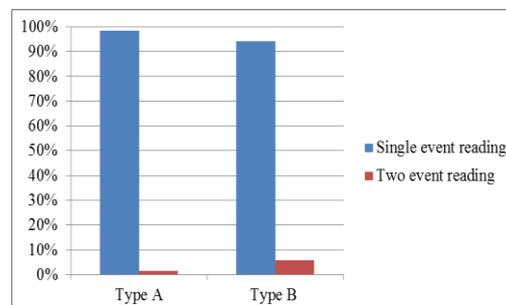
(a) Neutral predicates



(b) Plural argument predicates (PAPs)



(c) Neutral predicates with *kakkak* ('each')



(d) Neutral predicates with *hamkke* ('together')

- (4) Cheli-ka (X-wa) kuliko Yengchi-ka (Y-wa) kyelhonhayss-ta  
 C-nom (X-with) and Y-nom (Y-with) got.married-decl