1. Introduction

Coordination is a structure in which two or more elements are joined in such a way that each of them could possibly be the head of that structure, and neither dominates the other one. Subordination is a structure in which two elements are joined in such a way that one of them is dominated by the other. This difference in terms of structural symmetry/asymmetry translates into a number of criterial distinctions, for example, the requirement that the conjoined phrases match in category, or the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC), well-known since Ross’s seminal work (1967). However, it has long been noted that a superficially coordinate structure can either have all properties of coordination or all properties of subordination. For example, coordination is known to tolerate category mismatches (Culicover and Jackendoff 1997), cf. (1b), and violations of CSC do not always lead to ungrammaticality (Ross 1967; Schmerling 1975; Goldsmith 1985; Lakoff 1986; Kehler 2002), as shown in (2b).

(1)  
a. John drank another can of beer and we left  
b. Another can of beer and I’m leaving
(2)  
a. What did the chair decide __and the committee vote on ___?  
b. What did the committee meet and the chair decide ___?

Researchers have tried to account for such unexpected phenomena in terms of structural ambiguity (Goodall 1987), mismatches between semantic and syntactic clause linkage types (Culicover and Jackendoff 1997), continuum between coordination and subordination (Foley and Van Valin 1984), or semantically determined selection of coordination vs. subordination (Na and Huck 1992, Kehler 2002). With few exceptions (Yuasa and Sadock 2002; Haspelmath 1995; Cristofaro 2003; Wälchli 2005), most of the work on the distinctions between coordination and subordination has been carried out using data from English or structurally similar languages, where the initial cut between coordination and subordination seems quite straightforward. It is much less clear what happens in a language that does not have such a straightforward contrast, and the goal of this paper is to examine one such language, Korean.

* We would like to thank Grant Goodall, Beth Levin, Barbara Lewandowska, Jakov Testelets, audiences at the 2003 BLS meeting, Stockholm University, and ICLC 9 (Seoul, 2005) for helpful comments on this paper. All errors are our responsibility.

The following abbreviations are used: ACC—accusative, DAT—dative, DECL—declarative, FUT—future, GEN—genitive, NOM—nominative, PAST—past tense, PL—plural, PRS—present, REL—relative marker, TOP—topic.
Korean differs from English in that it has very little true coordination. According to some descriptions of Korean grammar, “[t]he distinction between coordination and subordination is not clear-cut and is a matter of degree” (Sohn 2001: 304). The criteria used to distinguish coordination and subordination seem primarily semantic, an issue to which we will turn below.

Abstracting from semantic criteria for a while and judging by morphosyntactic encoding, the majority of clause linkage is done using a single finite predication, with a number of non-finite clauses that either linearly precede it or appear center embedded in it. Structures of this kind, illustrated in (3), are often referred to as clause chains. In (3), there is a single finite predicate (tyelyewassta ‘brought’, underlined) and connected to its clause, are five apparently non-finite clauses with predicates linked to the rest of the sentence by the element –ko ‘and’ (in boldface below).

(3) (na-nun) yangka-eyse patao-n ket-tul nayngcangko-lang
(I-TOP) two_family-from recieve-REL thing-PL refrigerator-and
kimchi nayngcangko-ey katuk chaywu-ko ppalay tolli-ko naccam ca-ko
Kimchi refrigerator-at fully fill-and laundry run-and nap sleep-and
cemsim mek-ko khemphyuthe com ha-ko Kkomayngi aykyen hothel-eyse
lunch eat-and computer little do-and Kkomayngi pet_dog hotel-from
tyelyewa-ss-ta
bring-PAST-DECL
‘I filled up the regular refrigerator and Kimchi refrigerator with things that I received from my relatives, did laundry, took a nap, had lunch, worked a little bit on the computer, and brought Kkomayngi back from the pet hotel.’ (Internet)

Loosely defined, a clause chain is a sequence of two or more clauses; in that sequence, the predicate of one clause has a distinctive structure that occurs only once in the entire chain, while all the other clauses have predicates of a different structure chaining (Haiman 1985; Longacre 1985). More specifically, one predicate is finite and all the other predicates in the chain seem non-finite, hence dependent on the finite predication for the well-formedness of the entire chain. Clause chaining is very common cross-linguistically, and although it is more prominent in head-final languages, it is also found in English:

(4) Having heard how the great Mr. Brandon was to dine with them upon that day, the simple girl had been showing her respect for him… (Thackeray)

A structure with a single finite verb and a series of non-finite verbs is expected to show properties of subordination. To anticipate our conclusions, we show that clause chains are structurally ambiguous, showing either all properties of coordinate structures or all properties of subordinate structures. Crucially, there are no cases where the behavior of a clause chain is

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1 While some researchers insist on distinguishing clause chains from standard subordination (Longacre 1985; Good 2003), the motivation for such separation is unclear. On the surface, chains seem to instantiate a particular case of subordination, and the only difference between chains and subordination in a more traditional sense seems to be in the number of non-finite clauses attached to the finite predication—hardly a reason for introducing a qualitative distinction.
intermediary between coordination and subordination. Thus, the actual morphosyntactic appearance of the sentence may not be sufficient to identify it as a subordinate structure. We will show that the structural ambiguity of Korean clause chains can be resolved in a principled way.

In what follows we will limit our discussion to clause chains with the complementizer –ko, which can appear on all clauses, with the exception of the finite one.² In the ko-construction, only the finite predicate can bear the polarity marker, which suggests that this construction instantiates subordination, at least from the morphosyntactic standpoint. Ko-constructions are treated as subordinate structures by some researchers (Yi 1997 and references therein; Rudnitskaya 1998); however, Yoon (1994) and Sohn (2001: 203) identify them as coordinate. This difference of opinion already indicates that their status is not immediately obvious.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 introduces general properties of the ko-construction, and sections 3 and 4 show that the construction can behave either as coordinate or as subordinate, respectively. In section 5 we address the issue of this contradictory behavior and argue that the coordinate vs. subordinate behavior of the construction can be predicted on the basis of event structure. Section 6 summarizes the results and discusses outstanding questions.

2. General properties of the ko-construction

Korean is a strictly head-final language with the predominantly SOV word order. Extraposition is extremely rare (Sohn 2001: 267), and under clause linkage, the finite clause either follows all the non-finite clauses, or has them center embedded—in any event, this means that the finite clause always appears last, which provides us with a simple linear means of identifying it. In what follows, we will be distinguishing between the non-final clause (NFC) and final clause (FC).

As mentioned above, tense marking in the NFC of the ko-construction is optional and polarity marking in the NFC is impossible; compare the tense and polarity of the NFC in (5):

   John-NOM book-ACC read-(PAST)-DECL-and Mary-NOM TV-ACC see-PAST-DECL
   ‘John read a book and Mary watched TV.’

At first blush, only the final clause (FC) is finite, while NFC is nonfinite. This structural asymmetry suggests that in the ko-construction, one clause syntactically dominates the others. However, the situation is more complex. As we will show in the next two sections, the ko-construction sometimes behaves as a coordinate structure, and sometimes, as a subordinate one.

² It is generally assumed (often without much discussion) that –ko is some kind of a conjunction. Chung (2005), however, analyzes it as a mood marker.
3. **Ko-construction as a coordinate structure**

Despite the apparent structural asymmetry, the *ko*-construction can behave as a standard coordinate structure. Evidence for its coordination behavior comes from several quarters: permutation without meaning change, backward pronominalization, sensitivity to the CSC, and center embedding.

In standard coordination, permutation does not lead to meaning change (6). Similarly, the *ko*-construction does not show meaning change after permutation shown in (7b)—modulo the requirement that the final clause bear the polarity marker.

(6) a. John likes Jane and loves Mary  
   b. John loves Mary and likes Jane

(7) a. *John*-i Jane-ul cohaha-ko Mary-lul salangha-ess-ta  
       John-NOM Jane-ACC like-and Mary-ACC love-PAST-DECL  
       ‘John likes Jane and loves Mary.’  
   b. John-i Mary-lul salangha-ko Jane-ul choaha-ess-ta  
       John-NOM Mary-ACC love-and Jane-ACC like-PAST-DECL  
       ‘John loves Mary and likes Jane.’

Backward pronominalization is impossible in coordinate structures (8), and possible in subordinate structures only (9), cf. (Culicover and Jackendoff 1997).

(8) *Another picture of himself, has appeared in the newspaper, and Susan thinks John, will definitely go out and get a lawyer.  
(9) If another picture of himself, appears in the newspaper, Susan thinks John, will definitely go out and get a lawyer.

As befits a coordinate structure, the *ko*-construction does not allow backward pronominalization, which is illustrated in (10).

(10) *caki,-ka Sue-lul cohaha-ko Tom,-i John-ul silhehay-ss-ta  
       self-NOM Sue-ACC like-and Tom-NOM John-ACC dislike-PAST-DECL  
       (‘Tom liked Sue and disliked John.’) lit.: ‘He, liked Sue and Tom, disliked John.’

Next, the well-known Coordinate Structure Constraint states that in a coordinate structure, no conjunct may be moved, nor may any element contained in a conjunct be moved out of that conjunct (Ross 1967).

(11) a. Time will bring pain and take my love away  
   b. *What, will Time bring pain and take away ___?*

Topicalization in one clause of the *ko*-construction leads to ungrammaticality, which shows that the CSC is operational. In Korean, topicalization is achieved by using a dedicated topic marker –*(n)un ‘as for, concerning’ (Sohn 2001). Example (12) shows that *ko*-construction shows ungrammaticality after topicalization in one clause, just as in its English equivalent, while sentence (13) is grammatical since topicalization has applied across the board.
Relativization out of a single conjunct also leads to ungrammaticality in a coordinate structure. The ko-construction shows ungrammaticality under relativization:

(14) *John-i Jane-ul cohaha-ko Tom-i__i like-rel Mary

(‘Mary who is such that John likes Jane and Tom likes her’), lit.: ‘Mary, who John likes Jane and Tom likes her.’

In short, the ko-construction seems to obey the CSC.

Next, center embedding is disallowed in coordinate structures but possible under subordination, as shown in the following English examples:

(15)  a. * John, and everyone was talking about center embedding, fell asleep
    b. John, while everyone was talking about center embedding, fell asleep

As in English coordination, the ko-construction does not seem to allow center embedding.


(‘John liked baseball and Mary disliked basketball.’)

Thus far the Korean ko-construction shows all relevant properties of coordination. However, these properties do not seem to be present in all ko-constructions.

4. Ko-construction as a subordinate structure

Thus far we have shown that the ko-construction exhibits properties typically found in coordinate structures. In this section, we examine other instances of the ko-construction and show that they behave as subordinate structures.

In the preceding section, we showed that permutation in the ko-construction does not change meaning, consistent with what normally happens under coordination. However, the following example illustrates an occasion of permutation in the ko-construction leading to meaning change: the meaning of (17a) is different from the meaning of (17b). This shows that the ko-construction sometimes behaves as a subordinate structure—a surprising result given that we have just observed its “coordinate behavior”.

(17) a. Tom-i cip-ey o-ko Mary-ka tochakha-ess-ta
    Tom-NOM home-to come-and Mary-NOM arrive-PAST-DECL
‘After Tom came home, Mary arrived.’ ≠

b. Mary-ka tochakha-ko Tom-i cip-ey o-ass-ta
   Mary-NOM arrive-and Tom-NOM home-to come-PAST-DECL
   ‘After Mary arrived, John got home.’

Contrary to the ban on backward pronominalization, illustrated in (10) above, some instances of the ko-construction allow backward pronominalization as well (18), which again attests to subordinate structure behavior.

(18) caki-ka silswu-lul ha-ko Tom-i na-eykeyhwa-lul nay-ss-ta
    self-NOM error-ACC do-and Tom-NOM I-DAT anger-ACC give-PAST-DECL
    ‘Tom got mad at me after he made an error.’ (lit.: ‘He made a mistake, and Tom got mad at me.’)

Turning now to the CSC, recall that its violation should not result in ungrammaticality in a subordinate structure. Examples (19) and (20) illustrate topicalization and relativization, respectively, in just one clause of the ko-construction. Despite the asymmetrical topicalization and relativization, the sentences are grammatical.

(19) Taycen-ulo-nun, John-i hankwuk-ey ipkwukha-ko(se)
    Taycen-to-TOP, John-NOM Korea-to enter-and,
    Tom-i ___i isaha-ess-ta
    Tom-NOM move-PAST-DECL
    ‘As for Taycen, after John entered Korea, Tom moved (to it).’

(20) [Mina-ka pheynci-lul ssu-ko(se) ___i ka-n] hakkyo
    Mina-NOM letter-ACC write-and go-REL school
    ‘the school that Mina went to after she wrote a letter’ (lit.: ‘the school that Mina wrote a letter and went to’)

Lastly, a subset of ko-constructions allows center embedding, contrary to the data in (16) above but in keeping with standard subordination (van Oirsouw 1987).

    John-NOM school-to go-and Mary-NOM John- GEN room-to sneak
    tule ka-ess-ta
    enter go-PAST-DECL
    ‘John went to school and Mary sneaked into John’s house.’

    Mary-NOM John-NOM school-to go-and John-GEN room-to sneak
    tule ka-ess-ta
    enter go-PAST-DECL
    ‘Mary, after John went to school, sneaked into John’s house.’

All the properties of the Korean ko-construction discussed in this section indicate that it involves subordination. In sum, a strange ambiguity arises: in some cases, the ko-construction behaves as a coordinate structure; in other cases it shows all the properties of a subordinate structure, as shown in table 1 below. Crucially, there are no cases where one and the same instance of this construction shows some properties of a coordinate structure and some properties of a subordinate structure.
Table 1. Coordinate vs. subordinate properties of the ko-construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coordinate structure</th>
<th>Subordinate structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permutation without meaning change</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backward pronomilization</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topicalization in only one clause</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativization out of only one clause</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center embedding</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next section, we attempt to reconcile this contradictory behavior of different instances of the ko-construction.

5 Reconciling parallelism and asymmetry

In the preceding sections we showed that the ko-construction either demonstrates all properties associated with coordinate structures or all properties associated with subordinate structures. It should be noted that the ko-construction does not represent instances of co-subordination, under which coordinate (parallel) and subordinate (asymmetrical) properties co-occur within one and the same sentence (Foley and Van Valin 1984; Haspelmath 1995). On the contrary, the phenomenon observed here is ‘all or nothing’, either all coordination or all subordination. This suggests that the construction may be structurally ambiguous. If so, one should be able find a principled distribution of its coordinate vs. subordinate properties.

5.1 Structural ambiguity

The crucial descriptive generalization with respect to the ko-construction is that all the sentences showing coordinate properties are possible with overtly marked tense on the NFC predicate, while sentences showing subordinate structures do not permit such tense marking.\(^3\) The possibility or impossibility of tense marking on the NFC predicate also correlates with differences in interpretation discussed in section 5.2 below. To illustrate, consider the following example:

(22) a. palam-i pwul-ko pi-ka wa-ss-ta  
    wind-NOM blow-and rain-NOM come-PAST-DECL  
    ‘The wind was blowing and it was raining.’  
    ‘The wind blew and then it rained.’

b. pi-ka [palam-i pwul-ko] wa-ss-ta]  
    rain-NOM wind-NOM blow-and come-PAST-DECL  
    ? ‘The wind was blowing and it was raining.’  
    ‘It rained after the wind blew.’

\(^3\) Of the Korean tenses, past is the clearest one, both in terms of its identification as tense (and not aspect or modality) and in terms of its overt marking. In the examples below, we will be mostly using past tense for expository purposes. See Sohn (2001: 358, 361) for the arguments that the forms identified as present tense (-nun) and future (marked by -(u)l- or –keyss) are actually mood.
In (22a), overt tense marking on the NFC predicate is possible, but in (22b) it leads to ungrammaticality:

(23)  
a. palam-i  pwul-ess-ko  pi-ka  wa-ss-ta  
wind-NOM  blow-PAST-and  rain-NOM  come-PAST-DECL  
‘The wind was blowing and it was raining.’

b. *pi-ka  [palam-i  pwul-ess-ko]  wa-ss-ta  
rain-NOM  wind-NOM  blow-PAST-and  come-PAST-DECL  
(‘The wind blew and it rained.’)

If tense is overtly marked on the predicate of the ko-clause, the whole construction shows all the properties associated with coordination. This suggests that the construction without overt tense marking in the NFC is ambiguous between tensed NFC and non-tensed NFC. The former instantiates a coordinate structure, the latter, a subordinate one. Some additional examples:

(24)  
*[Mina-ka  _i  hapkyekhay-ess-ko]  [emeni-ka  kippum-uy  nwnmwul-ul  
Mina-NOM  pass-PAST-and  mother-NOM  joy-GEN  tear-ACC  
hulli-n]  tayhak  
shed-REL  college  
(‘the college that Mina got into and her mother shed tears of joy’)

(25)  
[sonyen-i  _i  namki-ko  hakkyo-lo  ttena-n  pheyncii  
boy-nom  leave-and  school-to  depart-rel  letter  
‘a letter that the boy left and went to school’

In (24), the extraction of a DP out of the ko-construction with optional tense in the NFC is impossible—this is a true coordinate structure, and the desired relativization clearly violates the CSC. In (25), however, tense marking is impossible, and relativization is legitimate.

Another piece of evidence in support of structural ambiguity comes from scrambling. Although Korean allows cross-clausal scrambling (Sohn 2001:295), scrambling out of some ko-constructions is impossible (26b), while other ko-constructions allow it (26c). The difference again correlates with the availability of overt tense marking—it is possible in (26b) and impossible in (26c), presumably under subordination.

(26)  
Inho-TOP  for a while  TV-ACC  watch-and  Mina-DAT  talk-PAST-DECL  
‘Inho watched TV and talked to Mina for a while.’

Inho-TOP  Mina-DAT  for a while  TV-ACC  watch-PAST-and  talk-PAST-DECL  
‘Inho for a while watched TV and talked to Mina.’

c. Inho-nun  Mina-eykeyi  [olaysstongan  TV-lul  po-ko]  _i  malhay-ss-ta  
Inho-TOP  Mina-DAT  for a while  TV-ACC  watch-and  talk-PAST-DECL  
‘Inho watched TV for a while and then talked to Mina.’
In sum, there is a clear correlation between the availability of overt tense marking and the coordinate interpretation. The *ko*-construction is therefore ambiguous between the interpretation with the NFC tensed and the one with the NFC untensed. The use of a tensed NFC (including those clauses where tense is morphologically null) gives rise to the coordinate structure. The untensed NFC—where tense is impossible in principle, not just unexpressed—represents a syntactic structure with less functional architecture than found in a free-standing clause. Such a structure is embedded under the finite predicate, giving rise to subordination effects.

5.2 Semantic correlates of structural ambiguity

Tense specification in NFC also has discernible semantic correlates. In order to present these correlates, we will need to introduce some terminology here. Assuming that the entire *ko*-construction describes a particular event, the states of affairs expressed by separate clauses in that construction are subevents. For the sake of simplicity, we will limit the discussion here to two subevents, one expressed by the NFC (*ko*-clause), the other expressed by the FC.

In the absence of contextual cues, structurally ambiguous *ko*-construction is also ambiguous semantically, allowing a reading in which the subevents are simultaneous and a reading in which the subevents are sequential:

(27) Mina-ka pap-ul ha-ko Chelswu-ka kwuk-ul kkuly-ess-ta
    Mina-NOM rice-ACC do-and Chelswu-NOM soup-ACC boil-PAST-DECL
    ‘Mina cooked rice and Chelswu cooked soup (at the same time).’
    ‘Mina cooked rice and then Chelswu cooked soup.’

If the NFC has overt tense marking, the whole construction can have a range of interpretations, as long as the respective subevents are not construed as sequential. The sequential reading is avoided. This is particularly apparent in *ko*-constructions with a tensed NFC, where each clause has a different main participant—for such subevents, it is easier to construe each of them as developing in parallel, temporally co-extensive (Givón 1981). Relevant examples are presented in (28) and (29).

    war-NOM happen-and many person-pl-NOM die-PAST-DECL
    ‘The war broke out, and many people died/were dying.’
    *‘The war broke out and then/as a result many people died.’

(29) Yenghi-ka swukcey-lul hay-ss-ko, Mina-ka phiano-lul chy-ess-ta
    Yenghi-NOM homework-ACC do-PAST-and Mina-NOM piano-ACC play-PAST-DECL
    ‘Yenghi did her homework, and Mina was playing the piano.’
    *‘Yenghi did her homework and then Mina played/was playing the piano.’

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4 See Chung 2004, Bhatt 2005 (among others) on the category of the embedded clause (or clauselet, in Chung’s terms). For our purposes, it is crucial that the embedded *ko*-clause is structurally smaller (less complex) than the coordinated *ko*-clause. Nothing hinges on the actual category of the embedded clause, and we leave this issue for future discussion.
The absence of sequential interpretation is also clear from the following examples, where the continuation that presents the two subevents as sequential results in incongruity.

(30) *palam-i pwul-ess-ko pi-ka wa-ss-ta. ??kulentey pi-ka
wind-NOM blow-PAST-and rain-NOM come-PAST-DECL but rain-NOM
mence wa-ss-ta
first come-PAST-DECL
‘The wind was blowing and it was raining. But it rained first.’

As long as the sequential interpretation, associated with subordination, is avoided, the actual interpretation of a particular coordinate sentence may vary, from strict simultaneity of the relevant subevents (30), to their co-extensivity in some general temporal frame reference such as a day (31), to the construal of the subevents as independent of each other (32). All these more specific readings seem to be implicatures stemming from particular event descriptions. As implicatures, they can be canceled.

(31) John-i 2 si-ey hakkyo-eyse nolay-lul ha-*(ess)-ko
John-nom 2 hour-at school-at song-acc do-past-and
Tom-i 4 si-ey cip-eyse siksa-lul ha-ess-ta
Tom-nom 4 hour-at home-at meal-acc do-past-decl
‘John sang a song at 2 at school, and Tom had a meal at 4 at home.’

(32) *Ilun achim chengsopwu-ka kil-lul chengsoha-ko congil
early morning janitor-NOM street-ACC clean-and all day
acwumeni-tul-i hankalo keli-lul kenil-ko tayntityo ai-tul-i
ladies-PL-NOM leisurely street-ACC walk-and sometimes child-PL-NOM
sikkulepkey ttuyeno-n-ta
loudly run_plau-PRS-DECL
‘In the morning, janitors clean the street, all day, ladies stroll around the street, and sometimes, children run around noisily.’

If the subevents within an event involve the same main participant the temporal co-extensivity is not as apparent; after all, one and the same main participant often performs different actions sequentially. With a single main participant involved in both subevents, the construal is that the subevents are independent of each other and do not enter into a cause-effect relation, for example:

(33) *nayil John-i chengso-lul ha-ko wumak-ul tul-ul kes-i-ta.
tomorrow John-nom cleaning-ACC do-and music-acc listen-FUT thing-be-DECL
ama kupakkey talun il-to ha-l kes-i-ta
probably other_than_that different thing-also do-FUT thing-be-DECL
‘Tomorrow, John will clean and (then) listen to music. Probably he will do some other things as well.’

*Ko-constructions that involve embedding and do not allow for an overt tense marking in the NFC are interpreted as sequential. Compare (28) above with (34), where the NFC is center-embedded and cannot have overt tense marking:
many person-PL-NOM war-NOM happen-PAST-and die-PAST-DECL

‘Many people died after/since war broke out.’

The sequential interpretation cannot be canceled, which suggests that it is built into the meaning of the subordinate ko-construction:

(35) a. pi-ka  [palam-i pwul-ko] wa-ss-ta. # kulentey pi-ka
rain-NOM wind-NOM blow-and come-PAST-DECL but rain-NOM
mence wa-ss-ta
first come-PAST-DECL
‘The wind blew and it rained. #But it rained first.’

b. pi-ka  [palam-i pwul-ko] wa-ss-ta. # kulentey pi-ka
rain-NOM wind-NOM blow-and come-PAST-DECL but rain-NOM
palam-i pwu-l-ttay tongsiey wa-ss-ta
wind-NOM blow-REL-time simultaneously come-PAST-DECL
‘The wind was blowing and it was raining. #But it rained at the same time as the wind was blowing.’

The strong sequential interpretation found under subordination in turn gives rise to the cause-effect interpretation (cf. also Rudnitskaya 1998). This can be seen in (34) above, which can be interpreted as a description of the cause (the war) and the effect (people dying), and in the following example:

(36) nwun-i o-ko kil-i mikkulewue-ci-ess-ta
snow-NOM come-and road-NOM slippery-become-PAST-DECL

‘It snowed and then the roads got slippery.’/ ‘The roads got slippery because it had snowed.’

However, the result interpretation can easily be canceled, which suggests that it is an implicature of the asymmetrical ko-construction. Example (34) above is compatible with the following continuation, which cancels the cause-effect relationship between the war and the deaths:

(37) manhun salam-tul-i  cencayng-i theci-ko,
many person-PL-NOM war-NOM break out-and
cwuk-ess-ta. Kulentey cenyempyeng-ulo cwuk-ess-ta
die-PAST-DECL but plague-with die-PAST-DECL
‘Many people died after/since the war broke out. But they died of plague.’

Likewise, in the next example, the sale of the house and the move are sequential but not causally related:

(38) isa-nun Inho-ka  [ku cip-ul pal-ko]
moving-TOP Inho-NOM that house-ACC sell-and
hay-ss-ta. Mina-lul manna-se isa-lul hay-ss-ta
do-PAST-DECL Mina-ACC meet-because moving-ACC do-PAST-DECL
‘Inho moved after he sold the house. He moved because he met Mina.’
In sum, the structural ambiguity of the ko-construction finds correspondence in semantic ambiguity. The main distinction is between the sequential and non-sequential interpretation of the ko-construction. The sequential interpretation correlates with true subordination, while the coordinate ko-construction normally leads to the construal of events as temporally co-extensive, albeit in a very vague way.

The presence of the causal interpretation is often implicated in the loss of coordinate properties (cf. the English example above, (1b), which has a clear cause-effect reading), but as the Korean data show this interpretation is not built into the inherent meaning of the subordinate construction. Rather, it is an implicature that arises due to the sequential reading.

6 Conclusions

This paper examined a particular instance of clause chains in Korean, ones in which the non-final construction is headed by the complementizer ko. We found that these clause chains, which morphologically appear to be subordinate structures, show exactly the same contrast between coordinate and asymmetric clause linkage as the purportedly coordinate structures in English, which sometimes exhibit subordination properties.

Clause chains are thus ambiguous between coordinate structures, where the NFC can have tense (but not mood/polarity), and subordinate structures where the NFC cannot have tense. The contrast between coordination and subordination is therefore due to the independent tense on the combined clauses. To put it somewhat differently, the ko-construction is ambiguous between “masked” coordination and “masked” subordination—since the morphological marking is not always overt, extra work is needed to determine if a particular clause chain exhibits properties associated with coordination or subordination. Crucially, there are no situations when the ko-constructions discussed above have some coordinate and some subordinate properties. While we cannot speak for all other languages that have been claimed to have such “mixed” constructions, we would like to suggest that at least some of the mixed constructions may exhibit structural ambiguity similar to that found in Korean.

The observed structural ambiguity in Korean clause chains also has regular semantic correlates: The coordinate ko-construction favors a temporally co-extensive interpretation of the events represented in the sentence, while the subordinate construction is compatible with the sequential interpretation of events. The sequential interpretation often receives the additional cause-effect reading, which we suggest to be inferential, not built into the meaning of the construction. Further research is needed to determine if this conclusion is on the right track.

Unlike the situation in more familiar languages such as English, tense in Korean is not the defining feature of finiteness. In Korean, tense specification is separate from finiteness—the latter is associated with polarity or mood. In the ko-construction, only the rightward predicate can be marked for polarity:

(39) John-i chayk-ul ilk-(ess)-(ta)-ko, Mary-ka tibi-lul po-ass-ta
     John-NOM book-ACC read-(PAST)-DECL-and Mary-NOM TV-ACC see-PAST-DECL
The idea that finiteness is not defined by tense is not new; it is intriguing however that the more compelling arguments for the dissociation of these categories come from head-final languages (Whitman 1989; Shim 1995; Zanuttini and Portner 2003; Aygen 2004, and others), where tense marking and finiteness marking (expressed by mood or polarity) are often morphologically distinct.

This points to a principled way in which languages may vary. In English, tense and finiteness are hard to separate, which is why clauses that appear to be non-finite are subordinate structures (but finite ones are not always coordinate ones, as illustrated by (1b) and (2b) above). In head-final languages like Korean, where mood/polarity and tense are expressed by distinct morphosyntactic means, the familiar conditions on coordination appear in a very different guise. Thus, English seems to have superficial coordination which masks subordination. Korean on the other hand, has superficial subordination which masks coordination. Hence, the morphosyntactic boundaries between the two phenomena are determined by language-particular constraints, such as the morphosyntactic locus of finiteness. However, the actual contrast between coordination and subordination follows principled rules familiar from more commonly studied languages.
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