Bare Stem V-V Compounding in Korean, with Reference to Japanese
John Whitman, NINJAL.

Martin (1997) points out the existence of an areally unusual pattern of V-V compounding in Korean, where V2 is compounded with the bare stem of V1. This contrasts with V-V compounds in surrounding language groups such as Japanese, Tungusic, Mongolic, and Turkic, where V1 is invariably derived by means of a converbal or infinitival suffix such as Japanese –i. It also contrasts with the productive V-a/e +V pattern in Korean, which has been analyzed both as a serial construction (Lee 1992), and a V-V compound pattern (Jung 2013). Like Japanese –i, infinitival -a/e Korean also derives VP and vP coordination structures.

While V1-a/e is always detachable by predicate clefting, even in allegedly lexical compounds, V1 in bare stem compounds may never be detached from V2. Of greater comparative interest, the bare V1-V2 pattern shows counterexamples to widely attested constraints on transitivity matching in V-V compounds (Kageyama 1993). Martin (1997: 32-40) gives examples of transitive-intransitive compounds which derive intransitive (1) and transitive (2) meanings:

(1) tuwy-ic- ‘get overturned/upset’ (vi) tuwuy- ‘overturn it, upset it’ (vt) + ic- ‘wane, get chipped’ (vi)

(2) kul-talh- ‘boil and decot it, boil it down’ (vt) kulh- ‘boil it’ (vt) + talh- ‘get worn down’ (vi)

(2) contrasts with transitive-intransitive compounds in modern Japanese such as ki-kuzereru ‘wear-get.out.of.shape’ = ‘get worn out of shape (Nishiyama 1997), which are always intransitive.

In this paper I compare the Korean bare V-V pattern to both to the productive V-a/e +V pattern and V-V compounds in Old Japanese, which also allow a broader range of transitivity combinations (Frellesvig et al).

References