Expressivity as a Motivation of Grammaticalization: A Case of Source- and Goal-Markers in Korean

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Even a cursory look at synonyms in language reveals that language does not seem to favor an isomorphism of 'one form - one meaning'. This is particularly true with grammatical forms that emerge constantly resulting in creation of multiple layers. The grammatical markers of source (Ablatives) and goal (Allatives) in Korean are excellent exemplification of such states of affairs. For instance, there are about 10 Alatives and more than 20 Allatives in Korean in the form of primary, composite, and complex postpositions, each with different historical depth, synchronically co-existing. These multiple forms have division of labor, as shown in the partial list with their semantic features and grammaticalization sources in (1) and (2).

A diachronic investigation, based on historical corpus data, presents a number of theoretically significant findings. Of particular interest is that when a form grammaticalizes into a marker of source or goal, whereby the original semantic content is substantially bleached (e.g., 'exist at' > 'from' of -*eyse*, or 'place' > 'to' of -*kkey*), a new form arises in the same function, the source meaning of which being much more expressive (e.g., 'from the same place' of Ablative -*hantheyse* or 'edge, boundary' of Allative -*kkaci*). These innovative forms fulfil the speaker's desire for expressivity, but due to this very fact of heavier semantic load they tend to occur at a low frequency specializing in special genres (e.g., colloquial) and carrying emotive illocutionary forces (e.g., emphatic, pejorative, etc.), until they have also undergone semantic bleaching. Sometimes, the semantic bleaching proceeds to the extent of syncretism (e.g., -*hanthey* 'to, from').

Drawing upon the historical data, this paper traces the Ablatives and Allatives in Korean and analyze the patterns of emergence of innovative forms with respect to their motivation, i.e., the desire of expressivity, and the consequences in grammatical paradigms.

(1) Ablatives 'from'

a. *-pwuthe*   [+location]/[+temporal]   << 'adhere'

b. *-eyse*   [-human]   << 'exist at'

c. *-kkeyse*   [+human], [+honorific]   << 'from that place'

d. *-lose*   [-human], [+archaic], [+formal]   << 'exist'

e. *-eykeyse*   [+human], [-honorific]   << 'from the place'

f. *-hanthey*   [+human], [+colloqual]   << 'one place'

g. *-hantheyse*   [+human], [+colloquial]   << 'from one place'

(2) Allatives

a. *-kkaci*   [+terminative], [+mirative]   << 'edge, border'

b. *-ey*   [-animate], [+spatial]   << possibly 'middle'

c. *-eykey*   [+animate], [-honorific]   << 'at the place'

d. *-hanthey*   [+human], [+colloquial]   << 'one place'

e. *-kkey*   [+human], [+honorific]   << 'that place'

f. *-hantheytaka*   [+human], [-honorific]   << 'drawing near one place'

g. *-hantheytayko* [+human], [-honorific], [+pejorative]   << 'touching one place'

h. *-eytaka*   [-animate], [+spatial]   << 'drawing near to'

i. *-tele*   [+human], [+colloquial]   << 'accompanying'

j. *-poko*   [+human], [+colloquial]   << 'seeing'

k. *-eytayko*   [+spatial]   << 'touching'

l. *-eytakatayko*   [-honorific], [+pejorative]   << 'drawing near and touching'