

Manipulated Hypotheticality in Conditionals A Journey in Search of Strength and Diversity

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Markers of conditionals have undergone rises and falls in the history of the Korean language (Koo 1999). Of particular interest is the emergence of conditional markers *-tamyen*, *-lamyen*, *-camyen* and *-nyamyen*, all derived from the monomorphemic conditional marker *-myen* ‘if’ in combination with sentential endings. Despite that the emergence of this paradigm of new conditionals presents many intriguing implications in grammaticalization theory and in the studies of language in general, this phenomenon has not received attention to date and this paper intends to fill this gap.

The new set of conditional markers forms a layer functionally competing with the conventional form *-myen*. These new conditionals denote, among others, higher levels of hypotheticality than the older, simpler, counterpart *-myen*, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) a. ku-ka o-myen il-i pokcaphay-ci-n-ta
 he-Nom come-if matter-Nom be.complex-become-Pres-Dec
 ‘If he comes, the situation will become complicated.’
 ‘When he comes, the situation becomes complicated.’
- b. ku-ka o-n-tamyen il-i pokcaphay-ci-n-ta
 he-Nom come-Pres-if matter-Nom be.complex-become-Pres-Dec
 ‘If he would ever come, the situation would become complicated.’

A historical data analysis shows a gradual expansion of the use of the conditional *-myen*, from non-finite verbs to finite verbs and further to clauses. In this process, this conditional marker gradually replaced the formerly predominant conditional marker. Interestingly, this change of gradual expansion in the functional domain led other *-myen*-related forms to similar cooccurrence patterns. This state of affairs suggests that the grammaticalization of this new conditional paradigm was triggered by the development of complementizers that grammaticalized in the 18th century, thus suggesting structural analogy as a mechanism. The motivation behind this chaining development seems to be the need to express higher level of hypotheticality based on iconicity.

Furthermore, unlike most instances reported in grammaticalization studies, which are largely changes involving individual forms, this type of grammaticalization suggests a paradigm-based grammaticalization, where one form spearheads the change and others follow the trodden path by virtue of structural similarities. This change seems to be directly linked to the grammaticalization of complementizers as reported in Rhee (2007). Complementizers recruited as their source element one sentential ending per sentence type, which exactly coincides with the pattern involved in the grammaticalization of these innovative conditional markers.

The consequence of the relationship with the complementizers is that due to the trace of report function of the complementizers, these markers have a highly interactive function, as if the protasis were a report of someone else’s utterance, as shown in (2), where such a reportive nuance is carried by the hortative-based conditional *-camyen* (which cannot be replaced by the conventional conditional *-myen*).

- (2) i kikyey-lul mantul-camyen olay kelli-n-ta.
 this machine-Acc make-if long.time take-Pres-Dec
 'It would take a long time to make this machine.'
 (Originally: 'If (you) say "Let's make this machine," it would take long.')

By tracing the historical path of the development of these innovative conditional markers, this paper tries to show the dynamic nature of grammar as a result of the language users' creative cognitive mechanisms that constantly shape and modify the grammar.

References

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