

1 Introduction to a Systemic Functional Grammar of Korean

1.1 Why This Grammar Book?

This is the first grammar book to describe Korean grammar from a systemic functional linguistic perspective. It grew out of the much-felt need to be able to use grammar to analyse Korean texts for practical purposes such as translation and interpreting, and Korean language teaching and learning.¹ Two of the authors (Kim and Choi) have been professional translators and interpreters, and have also taught translation for over two decades. Both authors found the existing descriptions of Korean limited as a tool for translation due to the focus of these descriptions on form rather than meaning. Shin, another author, has been teaching Korean at Australian universities for over 30 years. He felt there was a need for a description that could explain a wider range of phenomena in the texts, written and spoken, that he was using with his students as models. The bond that united these different concerns was our interest in systemic functional linguistics (SFL), an applicable linguistics (Halliday 2008), which we felt could inform a description of Korean grammar that would better suit our needs – i.e., an applicable grammar that practitioners could use.

This book makes a number of distinctive contributions when compared with other Korean grammar books. First of all, whereas existing grammar books have been largely concerned with relations among elements within a clause (i.e., syntagmatic structure), this book focuses in addition on relations of alternative grammatical elements to each other (i.e., paradigmatic relations) – describing how meaning changes when one choice is made rather than another. In other words, this book is concerned with the way in which Korean grammar is used to make meaning.

Secondly, the grammar description in this book is based on Korean texts that were collected as the foundation for three PhD dissertations (Kim 2007, Choi 2013, Park 2013) and a new spoken corpus used by Shin (2018). The corpora

¹ This practical concern underpins our decision not to use Leipzig glossing for examples; instead we provide word glosses for lexical items and unpack the relevant structure of examples so that the meaning of the grammar is clear.

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are limited in terms of size. But they have been selected to provide a representative sample of Korean texts across a range of registers and genres including recounts, news stories, narratives, reports, descriptions, explanations, arguments and chat.² As such they have allowed us to explore a comprehensive range of Korean grammatical resources across various text types.

Thirdly, this book interprets lexicogrammatical features in a way that is sensitive to both discourse semantics (co-text) and context (register and genre). In other words, it describes Korean grammar in ways that help us see how Korean texts are organised to do what Korean speakers and writers need them to do across a range of communicative tasks. We will outline the ways in which this grammar contributes to this task in Chapter 7, with special reference to the fields of practice we introduced above – namely translation and interpreting, and teaching Korean as a foreign or heritage language.

Alongside these contributions our grammar addresses dimensions of Korean grammar that have not been thoroughly explored before (e.g., the structure of the Korean verbal group) and engages productively with the reasoning SFL deploys to ground paradigmatic relations in syntagmatic ones. This puts us in a stronger position to interpret Korean from a functional perspective.

We have adopted SFL as the informing theory for this grammar of Korean. In doing so we draw specifically on the principles of the linguistic theory that were devised by Halliday and his colleagues in the 1950s and 1960s, as inspired by earlier work by Firth and Hjelmslev in this initial conceptual period (cf. Martin 2016 for a short history of SFL; foundational papers have been republished as Martin and Doran 2015a, b, c, d, e). In the rest of this chapter, we will introduce the theoretical principles of SFL that underpin this grammar book.

1.2 Levels of Language

In SFL, language is regarded as a meaning-making resource modelled at different levels of abstraction or strata: discourse semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology.³ Phonology is concerned with phonemes, syllable structure, rhythm and intonation; lexicogrammar deals with the organisation of clauses, groups and phrases, words and morphemes; and discourse semantics focuses on patterns of coherence in texts. The relation between levels is termed realisation. Figure 1.1 uses cotangential circles to model the way the levels are related. Technically speaking, discourse semantics is realised through lexicogrammar, which is in turn realised through phonology.

² The genre categories used in this book are taken from Martin and Rose (2008) and Eggins and Slade (1997).

³ Or graphology, for written language.

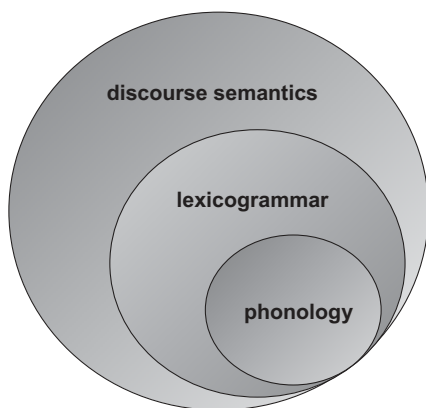


Figure 1.1 Levels of language

In SFL, lexicogrammar is explored from a functional perspective as a meaning-making resource. In Halliday's terms:

One way of thinking of a 'functional' grammar ... is that it is a theory of grammar that is orientated towards the discourse semantics. In other words, if we say we are interpreting the grammar functionally, it means that we are foregrounding its role as a resource for construing meaning (Halliday 1994: 15).

Alongside the three strata represented in Figure 1.1, language is modelled with respect to three simultaneous strands of meaning (Halliday 1994: 35) in SFL. These strands of meaning are referred to as metafunctions and comprise ideational resources for construing our experience of the world, interpersonal resources for enacting our social relations and textual resources for composing ideational and interpersonal meanings as a coherent flow of information in text. The ideational metafunction is split into two sub-components: the experiential (resources for organising configurations of experience) and the logical (resources for chaining configurations of experience in relation to one another).

Seen as an applicable linguistics, one of the most valuable aspects of this tradition is that it looks at grammar as a resource for making different kinds of meaning. In order to see clearly how it does this we need to acknowledge the distinction SFL makes between function and class. This grammar makes use of two types of grammatical labels: names of classes, including terms such as clause, noun, adjective, adverb, verbal group and nominal group; and names of functions, e.g., Actor, Undergoer, Process, Theme and Rheme. Function labels are used to distinguish the role played by a particular unit in a function structure and the class labels are used to categorise the unit playing a role. In SFL class and function are interconnected in a relationship called realisation. For example, in a simple clause

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such as 아기 원숭이가 나무에서 떨어졌다 *agi wonsungi ga namu eseo tteoreoj-eot-da* ‘A baby monkey fell down from a tree’, the Process (i.e., what happened) is realised by a verbal group, 떨어졌다 *tteoreoj-eot-da* ‘fell down’; the Actor (i.e., the entity participating in the Process) is realised by a nominal group, 아기 원숭이가 *agi wonsungi ga* ‘baby monkey’; and the Location (outlining where) is realised by a nominal group, 나무에서 *namu eseo* ‘from a tree’. We will write all function labels (Actor, Location, Process etc.) with an initial upper-case letter to distinguish them clearly from class labels (clause, nominal group, verb etc.); the latter are written in lower case.

1.3 Grammatical Units

When we take a closer look at the lexicogrammar level, we can see it has units of different size. These grammatical units are organised in relation to one another along a constituency hierarchy known as rank in SFL. For Korean this means that a clause is interpreted as consisting of one or more groups and phrases; in turn groups and phrases consist of one or more words; and words consist of one or more morphemes. The scale of ranks we use for Korean grammar is outlined in Figure 1.2.

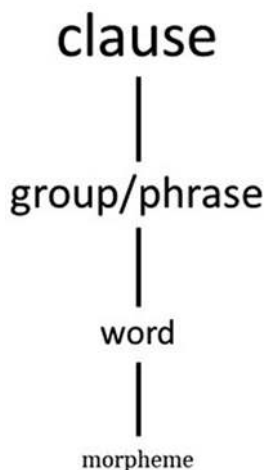


Figure 1.2 Rank scale

We next preview the ranks in Korean grammar, moving down the constituency hierarchy from the clause through groups and phrases to words and morphemes. We will later intersect this perspective on rank with the

perspective on metafunction developed earlier on to provide an overview of the organisation of this grammar as a whole (Table 1.2). Consider (1).

(1)

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 서울에 비가 오고 있나 보다. | | | | | | |
| <i>seoul</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>bi</i> | <i>ga</i> | <i>o-go</i> | <i>in-na</i> | <i>bo-da.</i> |
| Seoul | in | rain | | come | be ...-ing | seems |
| Circumstance | | Participant | | Process | | |
| nominal group | | nominal group | | verbal group | | |
| 'It seems to be raining in Seoul.' | | | | | | |

Example (1) is a clause that consists of two nominal groups and a verbal group. Each of the nominal groups includes two words, 서울 *seoul* ‘Seoul’ and 에 *e* ‘in, at’ and 비 *bi* ‘rain’ and 가 *ga* clitic; and the verbal group has three words, 오고 *o-go* ‘come’, 있나 *in-na* ‘is ...-ing’ and 보다 *bo-da* ‘seems’. As far as the experiential meaning of the clause is concerned, the Process is realised by the verbal group, the Participant by the second nominal group and a Circumstance by the first nominal group. The clitic 에 *e* in the first nominal group indicates that the nominal group is a Circumstance (specifically a Location); the clitic 가 *ga* in the second nominal group indicates that the nominal group is a Participant (functioning in this clause type as an Actor).⁴

The verbal group in (1) consists of three verbs: 오다 *o-da*⁵ (main), 있다 *it-da* (auxiliary) and 보다 *bo-da* (auxiliary). In Korean, a number of verbs can be connected to each other to realise a Process. When they are, the main verb comes at the beginning, indicating the main Event. Auxiliary verbs follow, connected to preceding verbs by a connecting suffix such as 고 *-go* and 나 *-na* in (1) (see Chapter 2 for details). The final verb may come with what we call an Exchange Mark, such as 다 *-da*; this is a suffix indicating MOOD and ADDRESSEE DEFERENCE (see Chapter 3 for details).

The first auxiliary verb in the verbal group in (1), 있나 *in-na*, plays the role of Dimension, indicating the event hasn’t finished; and the second auxiliary verb, 보다 *bo-da*, plays the role of Modal, indicating that the proposition is not certain but probable. The hyphens in 오고 *o-go*, 있나 *in-na* and 보다 *bo-da* indicate that each of these verbs consists of two morphemes – a stem followed by a suffix. The stem realises the Head of the verb; the suffix functions as a

⁴ We will use the term ‘clitic’ to refer to dependent grammatical word classes at group/phrase rank (e.g., 에 *e*, 가 *ga*) and reserve the term particle for dependent grammatical word classes at clause rank (e.g., 요 *yo*); see Chapter 2 for discussion.

⁵ In Korean, when cited as words, verbs and verbalised adjectives are customarily presented in the form of stem plus the suffix 다 *-da*. This is their dictionary entry format, and in this book we follow this tradition when we cite verbs and verbalised adjectives.

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Link for 오고 *o-go* and 있나 *in-na* but as an Exchange Mark for 보다 *bo-da* (see Chapter 2 for details).

The function and class analysis just outlined for the verbal group in (1) is consolidated as in (2).

(2)

| | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------|---------------------|--------|----------------|--------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Hangeul | 오고 있나 보다 | | | | | |
| 2 | Romanisation | <i>o-go</i> | | <i>in-na</i> | | <i>bo-da</i> | |
| 3 | word gloss | come | | be ...-ing | | seem | |
| 4 | clause functions | Process | | | | | |
| 5 | group classes | verbal group | | | | | |
| 6 | group functions | Event | | Dimension | | Modal | |
| 7 | word classes | verb | | auxiliary verb | | auxiliary verb | |
| 8 | word functions | Head | Link | Head | Link | Head | Exchange Mark |
| 9 | morpheme classes | stem | suffix | stem | suffix | stem | suffix |
| 10 | clause gloss | ‘seem to be coming’ | | | | | |

The first row in (2) provides the Korean script (Hangeul), following Korean spelling and spacing conventions; and the second row presents the example in Roman script; we place each unit we treat as a grammatical word in this grammar in a separate cell (clitics are preceded by ‘=’ following the Leipzig conventions). This means that all affixes are included in these cells, with morpheme boundaries marked by a hyphen (‘-’). The third row provides a plausible English gloss for each word.

Note that as far as structure is concerned, our analysis provides information about both the function and class of units. The fourth, sixth and eighth rows provide function labels for the groups/phrases, words and morphemes involved, and the fifth, seventh and ninth rows provide class labels for the units realising each function. In the final row a fairly literal English gloss for the example as a whole is provided; we don’t attempt a fully idiomatic translation (which in any case would depend on a specific co-text and context). As far as the English determiners *a*, *the* and *some* are concerned, in the absence of Korean determiners we will assume that the entity in question is known to the interactants and so use *the* unless the reference is clearly non-specific.

In this book we consider choices for meaning and their structural realisation at clause, group/phrase, word and morpheme rank in Korean. We will be

1.4 Kinds of Meaning in the Clause

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concentrating on clause and group/phrase rank systems and structures – but will bring word and morpheme ranks into the picture in order to specify the realisation of clause and group/phrase rank systems.

With respect to the Romanisation in row 2, for this book we use the Revised Romanisation of Korean (RRK), which was devised by the Korean government in 2000. We do so because it allows the reader an easier access to natural Korean pronunciation⁶ than the other existing systems such as the Yale system. RRK has an official status in the Republic of Korea. And it is useful for learners of Korean who visit Korea, where all the names of streets and places are romanised using this system.

1.4 Kinds of Meaning in the Clause

Adopting SFL as our informing theory allows us to draw on the experience of SFL grammarians' descriptions of different languages around the world; this gives rise to the expectation that at clause rank our grammar will be organised paradigmatically around three bundles of clause classes (Caffarel et al. 2004, Mwinlaaru and Xuan 2016). This has proved to be the case for Korean. In SFL, each of these bundles is modelled as a system of choices; and these systems of choices (i.e., TRANSITIVITY, MOOD and THEME) comprise choices for making different kinds of meaning (we follow the convention of writing the names of systems of choices in small caps in this grammar). For example, the TRANSITIVITY system consists of choices for experiential meaning (i.e., construing our experience of the world), the MOOD system of choices for interpersonal meaning (i.e., enacting social relations) and the THEME system of choices for textual meaning (i.e., composing discourse). One consequence of this is that we will propose a distinctive function structure for each system of choices. These clause rank function structures allow for one tier of analysis for each layer of structure – i.e., one TRANSITIVITY tier, one MOOD tier and one THEME tier.

In SFL distinctive bundles of clause systems are interpreted with respect to the metafunctional organisation of language – the idea that we tend to mean three things at once. In terms of metafunctions, Korean TRANSITIVITY construes experiential meaning, Korean MOOD enacts interpersonal meaning and Korean THEME composes textual meaning. It is in this respect that SFL allows us to interpret Korean grammar as a resource for making different kinds of meaning.

⁶ RRK romanises Korean as it is pronounced. For instance, 집 'house' will be romanised as *jip* when cited in our explanation of examples; but when it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel in examples, such as 안 'inside', the 'p' would be romanised as 'b' (so 집 안 'inside the house' would be romanised as *jib an* not *jip an*). Accordingly, in the example tables in this book, we will romanise taking the morphophonemic environment into account (so *jib an* not *jip an*).

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We now take a further step into our systemic functional grammar of Korean. In this section we focus on single clauses, such as that in (1) (combinations of clauses, i.e., clause complexes, will be addressed in Chapter 6).

We begin with experiential meaning as our way in. In Korean clauses there is a Process, a central element of structure that construes something going on, or alternatively a relationship of some kind. In (1), the Process 오고있나보다 *o-go in-na bo-da* ‘seems to be coming’ construes material activity (something going on in the world). In (3), the Process 보았다 *bo-at-da* ‘saw’ construes mental activity (our perceptions, feelings and thoughts about the world). And in (4), the Process 이다 *i-da* ‘be’ construes a relationship of identity between two entities.

(3)

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 아이가 고양이를 보았다. | | | | |
| <i>ai</i> | <i>ga</i> | <i>goyangi</i> | <i>reul</i> | <i>bo-at-da</i> |
| child | | cat | | saw |
| Participant | | Participant | | Process |
| nominal group | | nominal group | | verbal group |
| ‘The child saw the cat.’ | | | | |

(4)

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------|----------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 저 분이 우리 영어 선생님이. | | | | | | |
| <i>jeo</i> | <i>bun</i> | <i>i</i> | <i>uri</i> | <i>yeongeo</i> | <i>seonsaengnim</i> | <i>i-da</i> |
| that | person | | our | English | teacher | is |
| Participant | | | Participant | | | Process |
| nominal group | | | nominal group | | | verbal group |
| ‘That person is our English teacher.’ | | | | | | |

In each of the examples, the grammatical function Process is realised by the class verbal group, as indicated in the analyses. Note that we consider a group that consists of a single word as a group because it has the potential to be expanded via optional group systems (see Chapter 2 for details).

Exploring further we can note that in (3) and (4) the grammatical function Process is accompanied by two additional units involved with the Process – realised by nominal groups and functioning as Participants in the clause. In this chapter, we won’t introduce the types of Participant involved with different kinds of clause (to be presented in Chapter 4), but will use general terms – Participant 1 (P1), typically for an entity that undertakes an activity or is described or identified; Participant 2 (P2), typically for an entity subjected to an activity; and Participant 3 (P3), typically for an entity that is less centrally involved (as for example the recipient of goods and services or the receiver of information). We reserve the term Participant 0 (P0) for a participant function that lacks a post-positional clitic

explicitly signalling its relation to other elements in its clause (i.e., lacks clitics such as the 가 *ga* and 를 *reul* noted in (3) and 이 *i* in (4)).⁷

Clauses involving a Process and one or more Participants can be further extended by adding Circumstances, as we saw in (1). Circumstances deal with a range of meanings, including how long the Process was going on, where it took place, how it was done and/or why it was done. A Circumstance of Location in time and a Circumstance of Location in space are illustrated in (5).

(5)

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| 아이가 아침에 정원에서 고양이를 보았다. | | | | | | | | |
| <i>ai</i> | <i>ga</i> | <i>achim</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>jeongwon</i> | <i>eseo</i> | <i>goyangi</i> | <i>reul</i> | <i>bo-at-da</i> |
| child | | morning | in | garden | in | cat | | saw |
| P1 | Circumstance | | Circumstance | | P2 | | Process | |
| ng ⁸ | ng | | ng | | ng | | vg | |
| ‘The child saw the cat in the morning in the garden.’ | | | | | | | | |

Korean uses a small set of post-positional clitics (이/가 *i/ga*, 을/를 *eul/leul*, 에게 *ege*, 에 *e*, 에서 *eseo*, 부터 *buteo* etc.)⁹ to help sort out who is doing what to whom or what is related to what, how, when and where etc. In this grammar, as shown in Table 1.1, we will treat 이/가 *i/ga* as marking Participant 1, 을/를 *eul/leul* as marking Participant 2, 에게 *ege*, 한테 *hante* and 에 *e* as marking Participant 3 and 에 *e*, 에서 *eseo*, 부터 *buteo* etc. as marking Circumstances. In addition, as noted above, we will recognise a Participant 0 (P0), which has no marker (mainly in relational clauses).¹⁰ Note that 에게 *ege* and 한테 *hante* are employed when P3 is ‘animate’ and 에 *e* is used for an ‘inanimate’ P3. Note also that 께서 *kkeseo* and 께 *kke* in Table 1.1 are honorific variants of 이/가 *i/ga* and 에게 *ege* respectively (see Chapter 3 for details).

⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.10), a post-positional clitic signalling the relation of the Participant concerned to other elements in the clause can often be elided in colloquial spoken Korean. However, Participant 0 (P0) is not used for a Participant function where the clitic is elided, but rather for a Participant function where deploying a clitic is not possible, e.g., the second Participant in (4).

⁸ The abbreviation ‘ng’ in the examples below stands for nominal group, ‘vg’ for verbal group.

⁹ Clitics given in pairs and separated by a slash (/) are morphophonemically conditioned variants. In our representation, the first one occurs after a consonant, and the second after a vowel. The parenthesised syllables 쉰 *sseo* and 서 *seo* in 으로/로(쉰) *euro/ro(sseo)* and 으로/로(서) *euro/ro(seo)* can be omitted without affecting the experiential meaning.

¹⁰ Part of the inspiration for this P1, P2, P3 convention comes of course from Perlmutter and Postal’s relational grammar (Perlmutter 1983, Perlmutter and Rosen 1984, Postal and Joseph 1990); P1 and P2 can also be related to what in other models are referred to as macro-roles (e.g., van Valin and Lapolla 1997); we were also influenced by Quiroz’s use of these terms in her work on Spanish TRANSITIVITY (Quiroz 2013).

Table 1.1 *Experiential Function Marking*

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Participant 0 | [no marking] |
| Participant 1 | 이/가 <i>i/ga</i> ; 께서 <i>kkeseo</i> (honorific) |
| Participant 2 | 을/를 <i>eul/reul</i> |
| Participant 3 | 에게 <i>ege</i> , 한테 <i>hante</i> ; 께 <i>kke</i> (honorific); 예 <i>e</i> (inanimate) |
| Circumstance | 에 <i>e</i> , 에서 <i>eseo</i> ‘on, at, in’; 에서 <i>eseo</i> , 부터 <i>buteo</i> ‘from’; 으로/로(째) <i>euro/ro (sseo)</i> ‘with’; 으로/로(서) <i>euro/ro(seo)</i> ‘as’ etc. |

As far as the group or phrase function of the classes of post-positional clitics noted in Table 1.1 are concerned, we will use the function label Experiential Function Marking (EFM for short). Example (6) illustrates the way we will present the experiential structure of clauses unless we need to refer more specifically to Participant and Circumstance roles (e.g., Participant:Senser or Circumstance: Location, as outlined in Chapter 4). Note that in Korean the clitics distinguishing P1, P2, P3 and Circumstances come last in the nominal group realising these functions.¹¹

(6)

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|---------------|-------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 할머니가 시장에서 손자에게 과자를 사 주었다. | | | | | | | | |
| <i>halmeoni</i> | <i>ga</i> | <i>sijang</i> | <i>eseo</i> | <i>sonja</i> | <i>ege</i> | <i>gwaja</i> | <i>reul</i> | <i>saju-si-eot-da</i> |
| grandma | | market | in | grandson | to | cookies | | bought |
| P1 | | Circumstance | | P3 | | P2 | | Process |
| ng | | ng | | ng | | ng | | vg |
| ‘Grandma bought cookies for her grandson in the market.’ | | | | | | | | |

The classes of unit realising clause functions (i.e., the nominal, verbal and adverbial groups, co-verbal phrases and embedded clauses realising Process, Participant and Circumstances) will be explored in Chapter 2.

We now move on to two additional perspectives on Korean clauses. The first is interpersonal (the system of MOOD). Alongside construing experience, clauses enact social relations. One important dimension of this is the way they establish a relationship between the speaker and addressee. In Korean this is mainly done at the end of the clause, through suffixes on the final verb in the clause and an optional particle that follows the final verb – all of which position the clause as a dialogic interact. As further explained in Chapter 3, we use the function Negotiator for the part of the structure that does the work of positioning the clause in dialogue (basically its culminative verbal group);

¹¹ Post-positional clitics are also used to distinguish the role of co-verbal phrases and embedded clauses, as outlined in Chapters 2 and 4.