The conceptual structure of the verb \textit{nata}

**KYU SUK SHIN**
*Curtin University of Technology*

**ABSTRACT**

Whether language influences its speakers’ thought has been a continuing quest since the proposition of Sapir-Whorf’s linguistic relativity hypothesis. Humans encounter infinite range of experiences but those experiences can only be expressed by linguistic categories of the language that are available to its speaker. The essence of linguistic relativism asserts that while speakers of a particular language use lexical and morpho-syntactic categories that are unique to the language in which they speak for describing their experiences, their perception of the world could inevitably be shaped by those obligatory classifications hence it becomes habitual thought.

This study examines lexical, conceptual and syntactic construction of the verb \textit{nata} in comparison with English in terms of their codability and translatability. In particular, the study analyzes the lexicalization of the verb \textit{nata} in order to identify the common semantic element encoded in the morpheme \textit{na}-. The paper reveals that the path information conflated in the intransitive verb \textit{nata} is the key in the conceptual construction of the verb. The study shows how Koreans regard spontaneous motion events whose path is ‘out’ as the same and use the concept for describing various natural phenomena and human experiences.*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Human thoughts are expressed and communicated through language and whether language influences its speakers’ thought patterns has been a continuing topic for discussion. The proposition of the Sapir-Whorf’s Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis has generated ongoing interest as the implication of establishing such a relationship between language and thought would be paramount; after all, language and thought are what make human beings different from other species.

The Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis is based on three fundamental propositions for the argument that human thought is influenced by language. Firstly, the view is that languages differ in the way they categorize the phenomena of the world and human experiences as Boas observed - “each language has a peculiar tendency to select this or that aspect of the mental image which is conveyed by the expression of the thought (Boas 1966a[1911], 39). Secondly, people’s views of the world are dissected into grammatical patterns which their language prescribed because they have no other choice but use the categories set in their native language. Thirdly, as a consequence, their perception of the world would inevitably be shaped by those obligatory classifications and they become habitual thoughts. Whorf explains this phenomenon

“…users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers, but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world (Whorf 1956a, 221).”

* The Yale Romanisation system is used in this paper.
The implication of the principle is that each speech community is in agreement of this linguistic creed only by speaking the language and no individual can be free from the grammatical constraints of the language (Whorf 1956a, 213-214).

When Korean speakers observe the world and encounter various experiences, they describe experiences using lexical and morpho-syntactic categories that are accessible in the Korean language. For example, most Koreans are not aware of the grammatical distinction between the descriptive verb and processive verb but use them automatically for describing what they observe and experience, not realizing which is for what. When Koreans learn another language, it becomes apparent to them the way the Korean language operate is very different from other languages such as English.

There have been very few studies done on the relationship between the Korean language and thought. Shin (2006) analysed the verb *iss* closely to determine how the concept of ‘possession’ is constructed in Korean and compared it with English. The existential verb *iss* is categorized separately and known for denoting two meanings, ‘existence’ and ‘possession’. However, the analysis of the grammatical and semantic structures of *iss* reveals that the semantic function of *iss* is ‘existence’ only. The conceptual structure of possession is constructed when the theme, reference object and location make thematic relationships; the meaning of ‘alienable possession’ is inferred.

Using Jackendoff’s Thematic Relations Hypothesis (1983) for the semantic analysis of the verb *iss*, Shin shows how the [NP1-eykey NP2-i/ga iss-ta] structure is interpreted as possession with the following example:

(1)  
Y-Location    X
Youngsu-eykey aphathu-ka iss-ta
name-LOC     apartment-NOM exist-END
‘Youngsu has an apartment.’ (Shin 2006, 79 (15))

The conceptual relation between the theme, reference object and location is that Y, *Youngsu* is PEOPLE which implies that PEOPLE can act on and apply physical force to an OBJECT (Schank 1975) and claim an ownership of that object. Consequently Y (NP1) has a possession of X (NP2) thus, the interpretation is that *Youngsu* has an apartment. Shin argues that the Korean possessive *iss* denotes that an entity is already exists in an observable objective state and is located with someone therefore the spatial relationship is alienated from the subject. It is a temporary and alienable ownership of the object by a mortal animate such as a human being. Koreans’ view regarding possessions is different from English speakers as the spatial relationship between people and the object references is constrained by the existential verb *iss*. In order to express any coactive ownership, the transitive verb *kacita* ‘to have’ is used and the spatial relationship between the subject and the object is much closer with a strong sense of ‘keep’ and ‘belong’.

Regarding the differences in children’s language acquisition between English and Korean, Bowerman and Choi (1996) conducted an empirical study on children’s use of spatial verbs. The study reveals that children learning English and Korean acquire spatial words very quickly before the age of two. The English speaking children used path words like up, down, in, out, on and off freely for both spontaneous and caused motions, while the Korean children made a clear distinction between spontaneous and caused motions e.g. *kkenayta* ‘take out of loose container’ and *kkita* ‘fit’ and never violated the distinction between spontaneous and caused motions. In answering the Whorfián question: does learning the spatial categories of their language influence the way children conceptualise space non-linguistically? Bowerman’s answer is that “spatial thought – undeniably one of
our most basic cognitive capacities – bears the language of imprint.” (Bowerman 1996, 170)

In order to examine the relationship between the Korean language and thought, this study examines the semantic, lexical and syntactic construction of the verb *nata* and its compound verbs in comparison with English in terms of their codability and translatability. Whorf suggested a comparative analysis between exotic languages and Standard Average European Languages would provide clues as to whether there is any dramatic cognitive difference (Whorf' 1956a) and this study would be such a case. This paper is particularly focused on the semantic element that is expressed in the verb *nata* for describing various natural phenomena and human experiences. A few examples are listed below to highlight the range of expressions:

(2)  na-nun Seoul-eysa  na-se  cala-ss-ta.  
I-NOM  Seoul-LOC  be born-CONN  grow-PST-DEC  
‘I **was born** and grew up in Seoul.’

(3)  yeki sayssak-i  na-ss-ta  
here new leaves-NOM  come out-PST-DEC  
‘Here new leaves have **sprouted/come out.**’

(4)  tongsayng-i  hwak-ka  na-ss-ta.  
brother-NOM  anger-NOM  come out-PST-DEC  
‘My brother is angry.’

(5)  Victoria cwu-eysa  khu-n  sanpul-i  na-ss-ta.  
Victoria state-LOC  big-ATTR  bush fire-NOM  breakout-PST-DEC  
‘Big bush fires **broke out** in Victoria.’

(6)  cakkwuman  kichim-i  na-n-ta.  
constantly  cough-NOM  come out-PRS-DEC  
‘(I) **cough** constantly.’

(7)  masiss-nun  naymsay-ka  na-n-ta  
delicious-REL  smell-NOM  come out-PRS-DEC  
‘Delicious smell **comes out.**’ = ‘Something **smells** delicious.’

(8)  Ah! cikum sayngkak-i  na-ss-ta  
oh now  thought-NOM  come out-PST-DEC  
‘Oh! I’ve **remembered** now.’

As we can see, these descriptions are translatable into English but English uses different grammatical categories and lexical items (in bold) for the same human experiences. Whorf (1956a, 258) points out that it would be wrong to assume that word has an exact meaning in each language; if so, the verb *nata* would not make sense to the above sentences. The central question concern here is: Why Koreans are compelled to use *nata* for describing very different world phenomena and human experiences? Why these different experiences are not lexicalized separately by creating a new word for each meaning as in English? Why are the above sentences with different experiences described in the same way using the verb *nata*? What is the common semantic element that is encoded in the *nata* verb, which enabled to have such extended meanings and what is the significance of it? The
paper attempts to answer these questions and to find out the concept that underpins an aspect of Koreans’ worldview.

2. LEXICALIZATION AND CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE

In the 1980s and 1990s, lexicon has gained its importance in discussing syntactic theories. In particular, lexical conceptual structure (LCS) (Jakendoff 1983, Rappaport & Levin 1988, Levin 2008) presented theories about how the meaning of verb is vitally important in determining syntactic structure. One of the basic hypotheses behind conceptual semantics is that “all natural languages have a mental representation called conceptual structure” and “conceptual structure is envisioned as a computational form that encodes human understanding of the world” (Jackendoff 1992, 10) which makes the discussion relevant to the linguistic relativity hypothesis.

The central argument of the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis is that languages differ how they encode concepts. Languages do not have a concept for every word nor a word for every concept; rather in each language certain concepts are coined and encoded by one word. This is called lexicalization (Jackendoff 1983, Talmy 1985), which occurs when a concept is frequently used because psychologically and economically it is necessary for speakers to encode concepts in a word for ease of retrieval from the unconscious. Jackendoff uses the verb ‘enter’ as an example to show how a conceptual structure can be carved up into lexical items. The sentence “The dog entered the room.” has the same semantic representation as “The dog went into the room.” The difference is that the verb “enter” itself lexicalizes the path-and place-functions in its meaning (Jackendoff 1983, 183).

The lexical conceptual structure is referred as ‘structured lexical representation of verb meaning’ (Levin 2008, 1) and the term ‘root’ is used for naming the idiosyncratic component of a verb’s meaning in English (Talmy 1985, Pesetsky 1995 cited in Levin 2008). For the same function, Korean has the verb stem, which denotes the meaning of both action and descriptive verbs. The verb stem is the most important component in Korean syntactic structure because the meaning and status of verb stem (i.e. processive or descriptive; intransitive or transitive) determines its association with other grammatical elements in the verb phrase (e.g. tense, aspect, mood etc.) and the rest of the sentence (e.g. object, adverb). Ultimately the verb stem controls argument realization within its syntactic structure, consequently determines the event structure. For example, the verb stem po- in the verb pota ‘to see’ is a processive verb, which describes an event not a state. It is also a transitive verb thus requires two NPs for subject (THEME) and object (REFERENT).

When we observe the world, what we see and experience is either an entity which is moving or located somewhere. That is why motion and location events are basic and all other events should be construed as such events (Jackendoff 1983). The division between two concepts - EVENT and STATE is crucial to understand what is happening around us and to make a sense of the world (Jackendoff 1983, Dowty 1979, Pustejovsky 1992). Comrie’s (1976, 13) defines these important concepts as:

“states are static, i.e. continue as before unless changed, whereas events and processes are dynamic, i.e. require a continual input of energy if they are to come to an end; events are dynamic situations viewed as a complete whole (perfectly), whereas processes are dynamic situations viewed in progress, from within (imperfectly).

The Korean language distinguishes the conceptual distinction between process and state clearly by having verbs divided into ‘Processive verb’ and ‘Descriptive verb’ categories. The ‘Processive verb’ (e.g. kata ‘to go’, mekta ‘to eat’) describes processes and actions,
and the ‘Descriptive verb’ (e.g. *khuta* ‘to be big’ *kipputa* ‘to be pleased’ describes states. The category of Korean verbs can be divided even further into four verb types with the copular *ita* and existential verb *issita* (Seo 1944) to denote different concepts as explained earlier about the concept of ‘possession’.

Jackendoff developed conceptual structures for verbs of spatial location and motion, which describe states and events and said, “A clear linguistics test for the distinction is the possibility of occurring after *What happened/occurred/took place was (that) ...; events happen, while states do not.*” (1983, 170). Jackendoff (1983, 173) presents conceptual structures for Event and State like below:

(9)  
   a. [Event GO ([Thing x], [Path y])]  
   b. [State BE ([Thing x], [Place y])]

For the conceptual structure for Events, there is one basic type of motion event, represented by the primitive predicate GO, which describes motion of the theme along a path. (Jackendoff 1983, 172, 174). We can apply this conceptual structure to the verb *nata* and fill the variable x with the information and y with OUT which is the Path information of *nata* as below.

(10)  
   “*nata*”: [Event GO ([Thing x], [Path OUT])]

The conceptual structure of *nata* will be discussed in detail with various descriptions in section 3.

In studying motion events, Talmy (1985) specifically analysed the verb root to see how lexicalization is taking place and said “lexicalization is involved where a particular meaning component is found to be in regular association with a particular morpheme” (1985, 59). He examined systematic relations between the different semantic elements in a motion event and explained four components:

Motion: Movement or the maintenance of a stationary location  
Figure: A moving or conceptually movable object  
Ground: A reference-point object with respect to the Figure’s Path or site  
Path: The course followed by the Figure respect to the Ground (1985, 61)

He also added Manner and Cause as semantic elements in the motion events. Talmy (1985, 1991) compares motion events in different languages and classified them according to how the notion of Path is encoded into the verb and presented two types: the ‘Verb-framed languages’ encodes Path in the verb root (e.g. Spanish) and ‘Satellite-framed languages’ expresses Path in a satellite (e.g. English). Korean belongs to the ‘Verb-framed languages’ in which Path is conflated in the verb (Choi & Bowerman 1992). For example, a spontaneous motion of water oozing out of the ground is expressed by the verb *nata* which is conflated with the Path ‘out’ and the manner by the verb *sosta* ‘to ooze’ and they are connected by the connective suffix –*a* to form a compound verb *sos-a nata* ‘ooze out’ as in (11). In English the preposition ‘out’ is used for Path separately and the manner is expressed in the verb ‘ooze’.

(11)  
   [Figure] [Ground]  
   ([Manner] [Path] [Motion + Deixis])  
   mul-i ttang wui-lo sos-a na-a-o-ass-ta  
   water-NOM ground-above-to ooze-CONN out-CONN come-PST-DEC  
   ’Water oozed out above the ground’.  

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In the following section, lexicalization of the verb *nata* is examined to determine the common semantic element.

### 3. The Verb *nata* and Its Lexicalised Concept

The verb *nata* is a processive and intransitive verb, which describes an event of “what happened” and expresses a spontaneous motion. As examined above, Korean has the characteristics of verb with Path conflated because Korean does not utilize spatial prepositions such as ‘in’, ‘out’, ‘up’ ‘down’ etc. as in English. In Korean, Path information is incorporated in the verb meaning except for three locative particles, -ey ‘to’ –lo ‘to’ – eyse ‘at’ or ‘in’ (Choi & Bowerman 1992, 88).

A motion described by the verb *nata* denotes that a movement is made from one location to the other and the Path is ‘out’. In Choi & Bowerman’s study they made a complete list of nine Path verbs in Korean (1992, 89). Among them *nata* and *tulta* are translated into “exit” and “enter” instead of “in” and “out” to emphasize that they are verbs not prepositions. However, when these verbs are combined with the main deictic verbs like *kata* ‘to go’ and *ota* ‘to come’ to make compound verbs *nakata* ‘go out’ and *naota* ‘come out’, the semantic element of Path is clearer, which is ‘out’.

When the verb *nata* is used as the main verb, various verbs (V1) can be preceded the main verb (V2) denoting the Manner as shown in the Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Lexicalization of Manner + Nata verb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflation pattern: [Path] – [Motion]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Manner] [Motion + Path ] Compound Verbs (V1+V2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phi-e- ‘bloom’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il-e- ‘rise’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kkay-e- ‘wake’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sayngky-e ‘happen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sos-a- ‘gush out’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of these compound verbs indicates that Choi & Bowerman’s observation that “When Path verbs are used as the main verb, the meaning in which case they express motion in a rather abstract, holistic way.” (Choi & Bowerman 1992, 89) seems to be true.

In the following section, we analyse different descriptions to determine how extended meanings are derived from the common semantic element of the morpheme *na* in *nata*. These are not a complete list of semantic interpretations of the *nata* verb but chosen to illustrate the point.

#### 3.1 Nata with animated subject

The verb *nata* is used for describing *birth* of animated entities such as baby, animals and *sprout* of plants. The main characteristic of intransitive verbs is describing a spontaneous motion and it takes the single argument structure with one NP as a subject.

Using Talmy’s (1985) typology, the description of birth of a baby is analysed and the semantic components of the motion event can be identified: baby is the moving object [Figure] and the [Motion] is described by *nata* with conflated [Path] ‘out’. [Ground] is optional as it can be inferred as *seysang-ey* ‘to the world’ without explicitly mentioning it or it can be stated *wuli cip-ey* ‘in our family’ as in (12).
The verb *nata* is used for describing birth meaning ‘be born’ or ‘come into a being’ but *tayenata* is also uniquely used for birth of human beings and it is conflated with Path and Manner, which is not mentioned in Talmy’s typology but noted in Choi & Bowerman (1992).

The manner implicates the process of conceiving a baby and pregnancy. In describing the birth of a baby, generally the [Source] is not expressed with the verb *nata* in the sentence but it can be easily inferred (Lee 1993). So the semantic interpretation of this motion event is that the baby moved its location from mother’s womb out to the world spontaneously. Normally this is the case; babies are born following the natural labour process, which takes place spontaneously by itself following its own course. It is a baby’s self-initiated motion, where neither mother nor doctor does have much control over bringing the baby out to the world. In English the same event is described by the passive form, which highlights a very different perception of one of the most important human events. In considering Koreans’ calculation of age which includes 10 months of foetal life in mother’s womb (when a baby is born he/she is one year old), the way Koreans describe a baby’ birth makes a perfect sense, which highlights Koreans’ thought and view of human life and birth.

The same event can also be described by the transitive verb; *nayta* is the transitive form of *nata*, which is also Path conflated verb with the meaning ‘out’ thus, “The general meaning of *nayta* as a main verb is that the subject takes something X out of a place Y that is bounded place” (Lee 1993, 216). The transitive clause involves two NPs for subject and object hence it is used for describing a different observation and experience.

However, *nayta* is not the correct form of transitive verb for animate subjects as we can see in (13a). In this case, *nahta* ‘to give birth’, ‘to produce’ is the correct word as in (13b).

(13)  

Name-NOM baby-ACC take out-PST-DEC  
For ‘Younghee gave a birth.’

Name-NOM baby-ACC give birth-PST-DEC  
‘Younghee gave a bith.’

The reason can be explained by the Thematic Relations Hypothesis (TRH), which Jackendoff (1983, 188) uses for providing clues as to how the semantics of motion and location has major implications in the overall of the semantic interpretation. He argues that the overall of semantic fields depends on what sorts of entities may appear as theme and reference objects, and what sort of relations assumes the role played by location in the field of spatial expressions. (13a) is ungrammatical because a mother (Theme) cannot take a baby (Object referent) out of her body herself because the motion is the baby’s spontaneous movement, which cannot be caused.

A wonderful sprouting motion of new leaves is also described by the verb *nata*. The conceptual structure is the same as below.
The subject’s spontaneous motion is described by the change of location from underground to out of the ground denoted by the morpheme \textit{na} which is conflated with Path ‘out’. Again, the source can be easily inferred as the ground or a tree depending on the context, e.g. new sprouts from bare branches in spring or after pruning. Similarly having \textit{swuyem} ‘beard’, \textit{yetulum} ‘pimples’, \textit{twutuleki} ‘rash’ and even \textit{i} ‘tooth’ are also described by the verb \textit{nata}. The spontaneous motions occur with the change of location of these objects coming out from under the skin. However, for beard, pimple, rash and tooth as a subject, the transitive form is ungrammatical due to the Thematic Relations Hypothesis (TRH) in which humans cannot make beard, pimples, rash or tooth appear on the skin as they appear naturally and spontaneously. But humans can sprout new leaves by cutting or planting a seed, hence \textit{say ssak-ul nayta} ‘sprout new leaves’ is grammatical.

3.2 \textit{Nata} with emotion as subject

In describing one’s mental or emotional status, English uses ‘be + adjective’ form as in (17.a) and (17.b):

(17) a. ‘I am pleased/sad/annoyed/happy.’
\textit{na-nun kipputa/sulphuta/encchanha/hayngpokhata}
I-TOP am pleased/sad/annoyed/happy.

b. ‘I am angry/excited/interested/bored.’
\textit{na-nun hwa/sin/caymi/silccung-i/ka na-ss-ta}
I-TOP am angry/excited/interested/bored.

However, in Korean, certain mental/emotional status is expressed by using descriptive verbs as in (17a). Whereas in (17b), the verb \textit{nata} is used for describing feelings such as “I am angry”, “I am excited”, “I am interested” and “I am bored”. Why are these mental states categorised differently from “I am pleased”, “I am sad”, “I am annoyed” and “I am happy”? In linguistic expressions, some feelings and emotions are regarded as concrete objects (Lee 1993, 212). The semantic interpretation from the conceptual structure of the \textit{nata} denotes that emotions such as anger, excitement, interest and boredom are held internally and then ‘coming out’ spontaneously.

(18) ‘\textit{nata}’: [Event GO ([Thing SIN ‘excitement’], [ Path OUT])]
Hence these emotional experiences are lexicalised in the processive verb *nata* with the Path ‘out’. It shows that unlike English, emotions are categorised differently in Korean: some are expressed in states by descriptive verbs and some in motions by intransitive processive verbs.

Descriptive verbs have the same syntactic characteristics as intransitive verbs as both types are not able to take an object. However, descriptive verbs tend to take double subjects to describe non-action status (Seo 1999, 147) as in (4).

(4)  
\[ \text{tongsayng-i hwa-ka na-ss-ta.} \]  
\[ \text{brother-NOM anger-NOM comeout-PST-DEC} \]  
\[ \text{‘My brother is angry.’} \]

As we can see in (19) emotional experiences that are expressed by the verb *nata* can be transformed into transitive sentences by using the transitive verb *nayta* whereas those expressions by descriptive verbs cannot.

(19)  
\[ \text{tongsayng-i hwa/sin/caymi/silccung-ul/lul nay-ss-ta} \]  
\[ \text{brother-NOM anger/excitement/interest/boredom-ACC express-PST-DEC} \]  
\[ \text{‘My brother got angry/excited/interested/bored.’} \]

3.3 *Nata* with symptoms & illnesses as subject

In describing illnesses, Koreans use a number of different ways of expressing their conditions. One of the most commonly used expressions is using the descriptive verb *aphta* ‘be sick’ or ‘be sore’ as in (20).

(20)  
\[ \text{meli/tali/mok/pal-i/ka aphuta} \]  
\[ \text{head/leg/throat/arm-NOM sore} \]  
\[ \text{‘(My) head/leg/throat/arm is sore.’} \]

The *nata* verb is used for describing certain bodily process symptoms such as high temperature, cough, yawn and sneeze as in (21).

(21)  
\[ \text{yel/kichim/hapum/caychayki-i/ka na-n-ta} \]  
\[ \text{high temperature/cough/yawn/sneeze-NOM comeout-PRS-DEC} \]  
\[ \text{‘I’ve got a high fever/cough.’} \]  
\[ \text{‘I yawn/sneeze/cough.’} \]

As the conceptual structure illustrates in (22), these symptoms have a tendency to break out spontaneously without the agent’s initiation or external force and they are classified as the same motion events encoded by the morpheme *na*-. There is no word for the corresponding concept in English: ‘yawning’ and ‘sneezing’ are described by the intransitive verb, but high fever is not and cough/coughing can be expressed in either way.

(22)  
\[ \text{“nata”: [Event GO ([Thing KICHIM ‘cough’], [ Path OUT])]} \]

When the agent takes an action, the action verb *hata* is used:

(23)  
\[ \text{kichim/hapum/caychayki-ul/lul ha-n-ta} \]  
\[ \text{cough/yawn/sneeze-ACC do} \]  
\[ \text{‘I cough/yawn/sneeze.’} \]
However, with a symptom like high fever, the agent has no control over the condition hence, *yel-ul hata* is ungrammatical. Also when we apply *nayta*, the transitive form of *nata*, it is clear that these conditions cannot be expressed in the causative form, as they are spontaneous occurrences.

(24)  

```
*kichim/caychayki/haphum/yel-ul/lul  nay-ss-ta
cough/sneeze/yawn/high fever –ACC  make-PST-DEC

*I made cough/sneeze/yawn/high fever.*'  
```

But when *sori* ‘sound’ is attached after *kichim* ‘cough’, the sentence is grammatical because one can make a coughing sound. Similarly, certain bodily processes such as tears, perspiration, blood and runny nose are also described using the verb *nata* as they are ‘coming out’ from the body spontaneously.

(25)  

```
nwumul/ttam/phi/khosmul-i/ka      na-n-ta
tears/perspiration/blood/runny nose-NOM come out-PRS-DEC.

*I have tears/perspiration/blood/runny nose.*'  
```

When these expressions are transformed into transitives using the transitive verb *nayta*, *khosmul* ‘runny nose’ is ungrammatical because it cannot be caused whereas *nwunmul* ‘tears’, *phi* ‘blood’ and *ttam* ‘perspiration’ are fine as they can be caused by watching a sad movie, a needle and eating hot food or doing exercise respectively.

### 3.4 Nata with senses as subject

When encountering various senses of taste, smell and sound, the verb *nata* is used for describing the experiences. As the conceptual structure of *nata* illustrates in (26), we can smell roses because the scent ‘has come out’ from the roses naturally and spontaneously.

(26)  

```
“nata”: [Event GO ([Thing HYANGKI ‘scent’], [ Path OUT])]]
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(27)  

```
cangmi kko hyangki-ka  na-n-ta.
rose  flower scent-NOM  come out-PRS-DEC

‘The scent of roses comes out’ = ‘I smell the scent of roses.’  
```

After biting an apple the experience is described in (28), as the sour taste of apple also comes from the apple naturally and spontaneously. If an apple is sweet, then the expression would be *’tan-mas-i nanta.* ‘It tastes sweet’.

(28)  

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i sakwa-nun sin mas-i  na-n-ta.
this apple-TOP sour taste-NOM come out-PRS-DEC

‘This apple *tastes* sour.’  
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When hearing the sound of a baby crying, *nata* is also used for describing what happened.

(29)  

```
aki wu-nun soli-ka  na-n-ta.
baby cry-REL sound-NOM come out-PRS-DEC

‘There’s the sound of a baby crying.’ = ‘I hear a baby’s crying.’  
```

Koreans view that senses such as smell, taste, and sound are coming out from somewhere so that they take a notice of them. They are treated as the same kind of spontaneous motion events denoted by the semantic representation of ‘moving out’ by the morpheme ‘*na*’. In English, there is no equivalent verb for describing these different events. Instead,
English uses different sensory verbs such as ‘smell’, ‘taste’ and ‘hear’ for each description. In other words, English speakers do not perceive these events as the same event type.

3.5 Nata with natural disasters as subject

(30) “nata”: [Event GO ([Thing CICIN ‘earthquake’], [ Path OUT])]

The occurrence of natural disasters such as cicin ‘earthquake’, sanpu ‘bush fire’, hongsu ‘flood’ and sako ‘accident’ are all described using the verb nata denoting that spontaneous motions broke out onto the surface to see. In English, these are translated into different types of verbs and lexical items as we can see below (31). Interestingly in English, the word ‘outbreak’ is used for fire and war which indicates similar perception of the events as Korean.

(31) a. samchung-eyse pul-i na-ss-ta.
   3rd floor-LOC fire-NOM break out-PST-DEC
   ‘A fire broke out on the 3rd floor.’

b. kosokto-eyse cha sako-ka na-ss-ta.
   freeway-LOC car accident-NOM occur-PST-DEC
   ‘A car accident occurred on the freeway.’

c. Queensland-eyse hongswu-ka na-ss-ta
   Queensland-LOC flood-NOM occur-PST-DEC
   ‘Queensland had a flood.’

d. ilpon-eyse cicin-i na-ss-ta.
   Japan-LOC earthquake occur-PST-DEC
   ‘Earthquake occurred in Japan.’

When we transform these natural disasters such as a flood and an earthquake into caused motions using the transitive verb nayta, they are not grammatical. This is because these phenomena are not caused, but are natural occurrences which happen without an agent’s initiation, but a bushfire can be caused by arson, hence sanpwul-ul nay-ta is grammatical.

There are many more expressions using the verb nata and its compound verbs for describing various phenomena and experiences providing extended meanings. For example, English expressions such as “I remember.” kiek-i na-n-ta, “There was a rumour.” somwun-i na-ss-ta, “A lot of profits were made.” mahn-un iik-i na-ss-ta, “He is an extraordinary character.” ku-nun na-n salam-i-ta are all expressed by the verb nata. A further study will look into these extended semantic representations expressed by the verb nata as the space is limited here.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have investigated the conceptual significance of the verb nata by analysing its semantic, lexical and syntactic structures.

As shown, various phenomena of the world and human experiences are described using the verb nata in Korean. When compared with corresponding English descriptions, English uses variety of lexical items and grammatical structures to express the same phenomena and experiences. There is no corresponding word or verb equivalent to nata in English with the same semantic representation. Using Talmy’s typology of motion events
and Jackendoff’s conceptual structure for the analysis of the verb nata, the study reveals that the path information conflated in the verb nata which is ‘out’ is the key in identifying the common semantic element. It confirms Talmy’s (1991) point that Path is the ‘core schema’ of motion events. As nata is a processive, intransitive verb, which describes a spontaneous motion, the lexicalised meaning encoded in the morpheme na- is ‘move out spontaneously’. With various entities as a theme, the overall semantic interpretation can be derived from the core common element denoted by na-. As Jackendoff argues thematic structure provides the means to organize a semantic field of events and states coherently and give us the overall interpretation of events (Jackendoff 1985, 209).

The conceptual structure denoted by the morpheme na- is related to spatial understanding and perception, which is fundamental to human cognition. An aspect of Koreans’ reality is expressed by the verb nata in which they regard spontaneous motions whose path is ‘out’ as the same—whether it is birth, illness, senses, natural disasters or fame.

Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Accusative particle</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATTR</td>
<td>Attributive</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONN</td>
<td>Connective suffix</td>
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<td>DEC</td>
<td>Declarative</td>
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<td>LOC</td>
<td>Locative particle</td>
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<td>NOM</td>
<td>Nominative case particle</td>
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<td>PST</td>
<td>Past tense</td>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>Present tense</td>
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<td>REL</td>
<td>Relativizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOP</td>
<td>Topic marker</td>
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</table>

REFERENCES


Levin, Beth. 2008. Lexical conceptual structure.


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Contact:
Dr Kyu Suk Shin, Department of Asian Languages, School of Social Sciences and Asian Languages, Curtin University of Technology Western Australia