

Conditioned Case Marking on Nominalized Verbs in Korean Negation Constructions

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Korean Negation Constructions

- Korean has two forms of negation: a short form and a long form.

- (1)
- a. Siwu-nun pap-ul *an* mek-ess-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC NEG eat-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'
 - b. Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci *ani* ha-yess-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ NEG do-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'
 - c. Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci *anh*-ass-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ NEG.do-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'

Case Marking in Korean LFNs

- Long-Form Negation (LFN) constructions in Korean may optionally bear Case marking on nominalized verbs.

- (2)
- a. Siwu-nun paykophu-ci anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'
- b. Siwu-nun paykophu-ci-*{ka/lul}* anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'

Case Marking in Korean LFNs

- However, it is not the case that both nominative and accusative Case marking are always available.

- (3)
- a. Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci anh-ass-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ NEG.do-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'
- b. Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci-*{*ka/lul}* anh-ass-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'

Case Marking in Korean LFNs

- Indeed, nominative Case marking seems to be restricted in some instances.
- Hence, the research question: (1) What exactly restricts nominative Case marking? (2) Why does such restriction exist? (work in progress)

Previous studies

- Most of the previous studies have agreed upon the generalization that the availability of nominative Case marking is conditioned by **some property of the verb** in Korean LFN constructions.

H1: Accusative Case Assignability

- Kang (1988) argues that if the verb under negation is **capable of assigning accusative Case**, *ka*-marking will be impossible.

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- b. Siwu-nun paykophu-ci-*{ka/lul}* anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'
- (3) a. Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci anh-ass-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ NEG.do-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'
- b. Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci-*{*ka/lul}* anh-ass-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PST-DECL
'Siwu did not eat rice.'

H1: Accusative Case Assignability

- This generalization also accounts for examples including passives and *toy* ‘become’.

- (20) Siwu-nun pap-ul mek-ci- $\{ *ka/lul \}$ anh-ass-ta.
Siwu-TOP rice-ACC eat-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PST-DECL
‘Siwu did not eat rice.’
- (21) Siwu-nun paykophu-ci- $\{ ka/lul \}$ anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-DECL
‘Siwu isn’t hungry.’
- (22) Chayk-i cal ilk-eci-ci- $\{ ka/lul \}$ anh-nun-ta.
Book-NOM well read-PASS-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PRES-DECL
‘*Lit.* Book is not well read.’ (=‘Book is hard to read.’)
- (23) Mwul-i elum-i toy-ci- $\{ ka/lul \}$ anh-ass-ta.
Water-NOM ice-NOM become-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PST-DECL
‘Water did not become ice.’

H1: Accusative Case Assignability

- However, this hypothesis wrongly predicts Case marking patterns in unaccusative and unergative verbs.
- The discrepancy between the two examples below is unexpected under H1 since they both employ monadic intransitive verbs.

- (24) Kkoch-i phi-ci-*{ka/lul}* anh-nun-ta.
Flower-NOM bloom-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PRES-DECL
'Flower does not bloom.'
- (25) Kangaci-ka cic-ci-*{*ka/lul}* anh-nun-ta.
Puppy-NOM bark-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PRES-DECL
'Puppy does not bark.'

H2: Agentivity

- The other competing hypothesis is to assume that the verb cannot be marked by *ka* if it **has an agentivity feature**, as proposed by Park & Dubinsky (2021).
- This hypothesis straightforwardly explains why unaccusative verbs can be *ka*-marked whereas unergative verbs can't.

- (24) Kkoch-i phi-ci-*{ka/lul}* anh-nun-ta.
Flower-NOM bloom-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PRES-DECL
'Flower does not bloom.'
- (25) Kangaci-ka cic-ci-*{*ka/lul}* anh-nun-ta.
Puppy-NOM bark-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PRES-DECL
'Puppy does not bark.'

H2: Agentivity

- However, H2 does not explain the fact that *ka*-marking is impossible in cases where the subject bears a thematic role other than the agent.

- (26) Siwu-ka paym-ul mwusewe-ha-ci- $\{ *ka/lul \}$ anh-nun-ta.
Siwu-NOM snake-ACC fearful-do-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PRES-DECL
'Siwu is not afraid of snakes.'
- (27) Palam-i namwu-lul ssule-ttuli-ci- $\{ *ka/lul \}$
Wind-NOM tree-ACC collapse-CAUS-NMLZ-NOM/ACC
anh-ass-ta.
NEG.do-PST-DECL
'Wind did not make the tree collapse.'
- (28) Hakkyo-eyse haksayng-ul ppop-ci- $\{ *ka/lul \}$ anh-nun-ta.
School-DAT student-ACC select-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-PST-DECL
'School does not select students.'

H3: The presence of an external argument

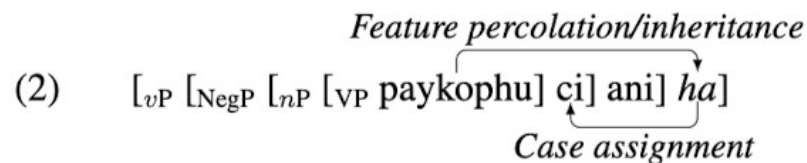
- I argue that the crucial factor to capture this puzzling phenomenon is the presence/absence of an external argument – namely that, the verb under negation may be marked by *ka* only **if it does not introduce an external argument**.
- This proposal resolves the empirical challenges that were faced by H1 and H2.

From observation to theory

- Now that we've come up with the generalization that nominalized verbs can't be *ka*-marked if they introduce an external argument, it's time to ask why such restriction exists in the first place.
- A good starting point would be to ask **who (what) the Case assigner is**.

Previous studies, again

- Both Kang (1988) and Park & Dubinsky (2021) argue that the **light verb** *ha* (or the phonologically contracted form *anh*) assigns Case to the verb under negation.
- They go on to argue that the feature of the verb “is inherited by” or “percolates up” to the light verb *ha*, thus resulting in different Case marking patterns.



Theoretical challenge 1: Case assigner

- The problem of this analysis not only lies on the fact that the notion of “feature inheritance/percolation” is theoretically not well founded.
- Light verb *ha* has been assumed in the literature to be inserted in the PF, a similar operation to the English *do*-support.

Theoretical challenge 2: Case alternation

- Case marking on nominalized verbs under negation is not only “weird” from a typological point of view, but also under the theory of syntax, let alone the fact that nominative and accusative Case may freely alternate in certain instances.
- Nominative and accusative Case are identified as structural Case in Korean, but there seems to be no structural difference between the *ka*-marked and */u/*-marked sentences.

- (2)
- a. Siwu-nun paykophu-ci anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'
- b. Siwu-nun paykophu-ci-{*ka/lul*} anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'

Case or focus?

- Arguments in favor of a focus treatment of Korean Case particles have been proposed and developed in other domains.
- Schütze (2001) argues that *ka* or *lul* stacked on top of dative *eykey* should be understood as **discourse particles that mark focus** and not as true manifestations of Case.

(14) “Case stacking” constructions

- a. Na-eykey-*ka* paym-i mwusep-ta.
I-DAT-NOM snake-NOM fearful-DECL
‘I am afraid of snakes.’ (Yoon 1996: 110)
- b. Swunhi-ka Yenghi-eykey-*lul* chayk-ul cwu-ess-ta.
S-NOM Y-DAT-ACC book-ACC give-PST-DECL
‘Swunhi gave Yenghi the book.’ (Schütze 2001: 207)

ka and *lul* as focus markers

- Sentences like (2b) require a specific prosody to sound felicitous: the *ka/lul*-marked verb must be stressed. Such requirement does not hold for (2a).
- This supposes that there is something special about the discourse status of the nominalized verb in (2b).

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Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'

ka and *lul* as focus markers

- *ka/lul*-marking in Korean LFN constructions is completely optional.
- In general, case alternation in Korean has been understood as indicators of structural difference. For example, in Exceptional Case Marking (ECM) constructions in Korean, a structural difference has been assumed for the nominative NP (16a) vs. accusative NP (16b).

- (16) *ECM constructions in Korean*
- a. Cheli-nun Yenghi-*ka* yenglihay-ss-ta-ko mit-nun-ta.
C-TOP Y-NOM smart-PST-DECL-COMP believe-PRES-DECL
'Cheli believes that Yenghi was smart.'
- b. Cheli-nun Yenghi-*lul* yenglihay-ss-ta-ko mit-nun-ta.
C-TOP Y-ACC smart-PST-DECL-COMP believe-PRES-DECL
'Cheli believes Yenghi to have been smart.' (Yoon 2007: 616)

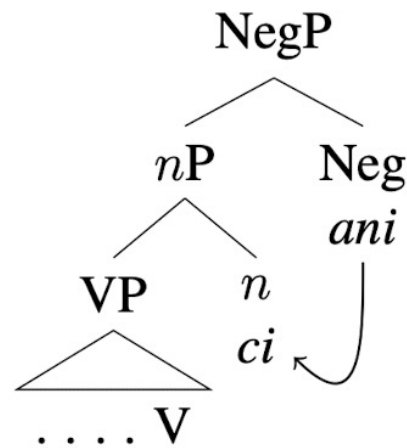
ka and *lul* as focus markers

- It is difficult to assume two different structural positions for the *ka*-marked vs. *lul*-marked nominalized verb due to the mono-clausal nature of Korean LFN constructions.

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- b. Siwu-nun paykophu-ci-*{ka/lul}* anh-ta.
Siwu-TOP hungry-NMLZ-NOM/ACC NEG.do-DECL
'Siwu isn't hungry.'

Focus licensing in Korean LFNs

- I argue that the "conditioned case marking" in LFN constructions is, in fact, an instance of VP focus licensed by the Neg head.
- This conclusion is consistent with claims in the literature that focus features must be licensed by a head (Horvath 1995).



Focus licensing in Korean LFNs

- My proposal is also compatible with the assumption that *ha*-support is a PF phenomenon.
- A Case analysis of *ka* and */u/* has relied on the presence of the light verb *ha* for Case assignment reasons. In a focus analysis, however, the licensing of *ka* and */u/* can be explained even if one were to suppose *ha* to be inserted in the PF.

Conclusion

- I showed that the restriction on *ka*-marking in Korean LFN constructions is best predicted by the presence/absence of an external argument. I argued that *ka* and */u/* marking on nominalized verbs are in fact instances of focus licensed by the Neg head.
- My proposal addresses some of the empirical and theoretical challenges that previous analyses were faced with.
- Collectively, this hints at a correlation between external arguments and the expression of focus in Korean. As this phenomenon most likely seems to be a product of the interaction between syntax, morphonology, and pragmatics, future investigation is needed to thoroughly understand this phenomenon.

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