

Oblique case marking on core arguments in Korean*

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In this paper we present data from Korean in which the core arguments (subject and direct object) of a transitive clause may be suffixed with oblique postpositional markers rather than the usual nominative or accusative case markers. Unlike familiar cases of oblique arguments, such as dative subjects, we argue that the oblique case marking surveyed here does not indicate a particular thematic role, but rather brings out something different: other semantic properties of the argument in one instance, and a special interpretation imparted to the whole clause in the other. We present a description of the data against a background of current theoretical approaches to case marking, and conclude with some consequences for grammatical theory.

1. Introduction

In this paper we discuss some unusual properties of argument marking in Korean and consider the implications of our observations for a more general understanding of the range of functions that case marking can have.

It is important to begin with an understanding of what a case marker is. Moravcsik (2009: 231) provides the following definition:

- (1) A case marker is a formal device associated with a noun phrase that signals the grammatical role of that noun phrase.

Beyond this basic definition, for many languages it is useful to make a distinction between grammatical and semantic cases — those cases which more or less directly encode grammatical function regardless of any specific semantic content, and those cases which are tied to some specific semantic content. For example, Blake (1994: 33) considers nominative, accusative, and genitive as each marking a purely syntactic relation (respectively, subject, object, possessor). His analysis develops a more complete classification as shown in (2):

(2) Classification of Cases (Blake (1994: 35))

		nominative
	core	accusative
grammatical		ergative
		genitive
		dative
		locative
	local*	ablative
		allative
semantic		perlative
		instrumental
		comitative
		etc.

The “core” grammatical cases typically appear on core arguments of predicates — subjects and direct objects. Genitive and dative often mark a given grammatical relation, but not one borne by a core argument. The semantic cases are typically specialized for thematic roles — either one of the “local” roles in the sense of Anderson (1971), or other oblique roles. In this paper we focus on semantic cases like locative and ablative which take over some functions from grammatical cases, but which add some extra meaning as well. Korean has no ergative case, but has a basic set of grammatical cases nominative, accusative, and genitive which “fulfil the most productive grammatical functions” (Sohn 1999: 327).

For canonical arguments of transitive verbs, the primary function of case is presumably to mark the direct grammatical functions of subject and object. However, especially in functionalist or typological perspectives, a wide range of functions for case has been recognised. A very influential approach to those functions can be found in Silverstein (1981: 228–230). In Silverstein’s approach, the morphosyntactic phenomenon of (surface) case marking is taken to be a *DEPENDENT VARIABLE* and the various attested configurations of this variable are assumed to be the results of the interaction of a number of *INDEPENDENT VARIABLES* of referential-and-predicational meaningfulness of ongoing linguistic discourse. Of the four variables which Silverstein lists, the first three are relevant for the present paper:

- (3) I. The inherent referential content of noun phrases, coded ‘locally’ in noun phrase categories, and organized by criteria of both pragmatic and semantic markedness into a feature space of categories of referring;
- II. The case relations — ‘Agent-of’, ‘Patient-of’, ‘Subject-of’, ‘Dative-of’ (A, O, S, D) — that noun phrases bear within schemata of predicate-

argument relationships at the clause level of analysis, however we wish formally to represent these;

- III. The (logical) clause-linkage type connecting two (or more) clause-level structures in a complex or compound sentence, or in sequential discourse, forming a kind of hierarchy of tightness of linkage (probably along several dimensions), evidenced by greater and greater deformation of the full, plain surface structure of at least one, and sometimes of both, of the linked clauses;
- IV. The reference-maintenance relations of arguments of predicates (as expressed by noun phrases in non-linked clausal structures) across discourse-level structures, so-called anaphoric ‘coreference’ and ‘switch reference’ being names for specific types of formal-functional systems for indicating this.

Silverstein continues (1981:231): “The number of such variables is, of course, not the point, but rather the principles of interaction of the relevant variables that specifically constrain and predict the occurring (surface) case marking distinctions, at the proper level of abstraction. Such principles of interaction form the actual theory of case marking in any modern grammatical tradition.”

Our discussion in this paper concerns case marking that sheds further light on what the independent variables of types I–III might include. While canonical grammatical case is typically thought of as expressing a relation between a predicate and an argument, more marked case marking patterns may express properties of an event or other information about the clause. Indeed, Spencer (2003) presents some instances of case marking which he argues are defined within the clause but which may not be reducible directly to properties of some specific item within that clause, or which may not be associated with an identifiable thematic role such as Patient or Goal. This suggests a ‘constructional’ approach to case, and we believe that the evidence we present here supports such an approach.

Within the specific framework of Construction Grammar, the various functions of case marking have been recognized in the work of Croft (2001) and Barðdal (2001), among others. In this analytic tradition, Fried (2004) argues that there are different patterns of case marking in Czech which represent different event types — in other words, the case marking expresses information about the clause, in particular about the type of event. Specifically, sensation predicates in Czech may appear with the experiencer marked by either accusative or dative case. Fried argues that this alternation is the manifestation of two different constructions, and that for any given example, the interpretation of one construction or the other “represents an integration of the inherent meaning of the head predicate with an experiential overlay provided by the construction in which it occurs” (2004: 107).¹

A property common to non-derivational syntactic frameworks including Construction Grammar (Fried and Östman 2004a), Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG; Sag et al. 2003), and Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG; Bresnan 2001) is that they provide mechanisms to express complex interactions between surface case, syntactic valence, and thematic properties of arguments (see for example the LFG-based proposals in Butt and King 2004 and Butt 2006). In her survey of case marking, Butt (2006) identifies ‘semantic’ case markers as those which (i) involve semantic predictability and (ii) are subject to syntactic restrictions (such as being limited to certain grammatical functions). She writes “the information associated with case morphology is assumed to interact with information specified in other parts of the grammar at several levels of representation” (2006: 149).

In this paper we discuss examples from Korean in which case marking systematically indicates meanings which go beyond thematic properties into larger aspects of clausal meaning, and which bring out the limitations of current views of the expressive potential of case. Section 2 provides some background on Korean. Sections 3 and 4 are devoted to oblique markers which supplant the usual case markers on Korean subjects and non-subjects, respectively. We assume that the grammatical functions of subject and object are independently determined for a given use of a given predicate. We further show that case marking is independent in the sense that being nominative is not a necessary property for subjecthood, and accusative is not necessary for objecthood. We conclude the paper with a discussion of the theoretical consequences of our factual observations.

2. Case Marking in Korean

2.1 Grammatical Functions and Grammatical Cases

Korean is a relatively rigid head-final language, with a canonical clause order of SOV, head-finality in all main phrase types, and almost exclusively suffixal morphology. It has no agreement between subject and predicate in terms of person, number, and gender, yet it allows null expression of arguments (“pro-drop”) of all core grammatical functions, under familiar conditions of recoverability in discourse.

The grammatical functions of subject and object are important features of Korean syntax, distinguished by a variety of preferences and tests. Unmarked constituent order is SOV, as just noted, though of course Korean is well-known as a ‘scrambling’ language. Subjects are canonically nominative and objects are canonically accusative, but there are deviations from these associations (the most unusual

of which are the focus of our paper). In Section 3 of the paper we primarily use two tests for subjecthood. The first is the possibility for an NP to host the honorific marker *kkeyse*. This is a strong test, as *kkeyse* can only mark subjects (Sells 1995, Yoon 2005). The second test is honorific agreement between a predicate and its subject, which again is only possible with subjects. This is a highly robust and salient phenomenon of Korean grammar. Another grammatical diagnostic that we use involves “floated quantifiers”, which are explained in more detail in Section 2.3, and which distinguish the direct grammatical functions of subject and object from oblique grammatical functions. Our argumentation mainly involves establishing that the apparent oblique markers under discussion are in fact marking direct functions.

The pattern of case-marking in the language centers around a standard nominative-accusative pattern for canonical transitive verbs. Some basic examples are shown in (4):²

- (4) a. cheli-ka kongwen-eyse kong-ul cha-ss-ta
 Cheli-NOM park-LOC ball-ACC kick-PST-DECL
 ‘Cheli kicked the ball in the park.’
 b. nay-ka kukcang-eyse chinkwu-tul-ul manna-ss-ta
 Isg-NOM theatre-LOC friend-PL-ACC meet-PST-DECL
 ‘I met my friends at the theatre.’

Dative case has a fairly standard range of uses for marking goals and directional arguments, such as (5a) (a survey of the uses of dative can be found in Sohn 1999: 333–337). There are also familiar, but less canonical uses of dative to mark subjects and dative (direct) objects as in (5b) and (5c). These are usually treated as semantic or ‘inherent’ cases, associated by the verb with a particular argument position that has a particular semantics associated with it (e.g., being a ‘goal’ of some kind in as in (5c)):

- (5) a. cheli-ka chinkwu-eykey phyenci-lul ssu-ess-ta
 Cheli-NOM friend-DAT letter-ACC write-PST-DECL
 ‘Cheli wrote (his) friend a letter.’
 b. cheli-eykey ton-i iss-ta
 Cheli-DAT money-NOM exist-DECL
 ‘Cheli has money.’
 c. cheli-ka aki-eykey khisu-hay-ss-ta
 Cheli-NOM baby-DAT kiss-do-PST-DECL
 ‘Cheli kissed the baby.’

Even the core cases of nominative and accusative in Korean are not purely grammatical markers. Accusative case marks the direct object of an agentive predicate

as in (6a), but not the direct object of a stative predicate (cf. Kim 1990) as in (6b). This property will become important later in the paper.

- (6) a. cheli-ka kong-ul cha-ss-ta
 Cheli-NOM ball-ACC kick-PST-DECL
 ‘Cheli kicked the ball.’
 b. cheli-ka mina-ka /*-lul coh-ta
 Cheli-NOM Mina-NOM /*-ACC like-DECL
 ‘Cheli is fond of Mina.’

Nominative case also does not stand in a simple one-to-one relation with subjects. Korean, just like Japanese, is a language which allows multiple nominatives, a phenomenon brought to attention for Japanese in Kuno (1973).

- (7) a. John-i chinkwu-ka apeci-ka ton-i manh-ta
 John-NOM friend-NOM father-NOM money-NOM be.much-DECL
 ‘It is John’s friend’s father who has lots of money.’
 b. Ken-ga imooto-ga se-ga taka-i (Japanese)
 Ken-NOM sister-NOM height-NOM tall-PRS
 ‘It is Ken whose sister (whose height) is tall.’

A leading idea about the analysis of a sequence of multiple nominatives is that the nominative on the nonfinal phrase(s) marks the ‘subject-of-predication’ (Heycock 1991, Heycock and Lee 1990), a ‘Major Subject’ (Kuroda 1986, Yoon 2004), or a ‘broad subject’ (Doron and Heycock 1999) whereas the final nominative phrase is the Grammatical Subject. The Major Subject, unlike the final nominative Grammatical Subject, is not a direct argument of the predicate but participates in the multiple nominative construction in a recursive subject-predicate relationship. One semantic instantiation of this is the extended possessive relationships evident in the interpretations of the multiple nominative examples in (7).

2.2 Oblique Markers

Above we mentioned the existence of dative subjects in Korean. Such dative subjects appear with verbs of location, possession, and experience, among others (as in (8); see e.g., Yoon 2004), and the phenomenon of dative subjects is found across many of the world’s languages. Beyond such examples, Korean also allows other apparently oblique and non-nominative subjects as exemplified by the following:

- (8) cheli-eykey ton-i philyoha-ta
 Cheli-DAT money-NOM need-DECL
 ‘Cheli needs money.’

Descriptively, the various markers of case or oblique relations each fall into one of two distinct morphological slots, following the hosting noun. The language is agglutinating and, in principle, suffixal markers may stack up. A chart illustrating the forms relevant for this paper is given in (9).³ Roughly speaking, the first slot is for postpositional markers, and the second for grammatical case markers or the topic marker (see e.g., Cho and Sells 1995):

(9) Korean postpositional markers:

Postpositions		Case/Topic	
<i>eyse</i>	'at'	<i>i/ka</i>	NOM
<i>ey</i>	'at'/'to'	<i>(l)ul</i>	ACC
<i>(u)lo</i>	'with'	<i>(n)un</i>	TOP
<i>pwuthe</i>	'from'	<i>uy</i>	GEN
<i>eykey</i>	DAT		
<i>hanthey</i>	DAT		
<i>kkey</i>	HON.DAT		
<i>kkeyse</i>	HON.SUBJ		

There is considerable debate in the Korean linguistics literature as to how accurately the first slot can be characterised as 'Postpositions' and the second slot as more strictly grammaticised kinds of marker. All of the clear oblique markers in the present-day language do appear in the first slot, but so do other markers like the lower four elements in the first column in (9), which much less obviously mark an oblique relation. For ease of exposition, in what follows we will refer to these two positions as 'slots', with the first one being the 'postpositional slot', without supposing any further details of the precise morphological analysis — it does not matter for our purposes here if some or all of the elements in (9) are postpositions, or case markers, nor in fact if some or all are clitics expressing separate syntactic elements in a complex nominal syntactic structure, or whether some or all are morphological suffixes.⁴

Korean syntax provides a very strong argument for distinguishing grammatical function from case marking; the language has canonically nominative subjects, but also allows nominative objects for stative verbs (see e.g., (6b), (8)). Moreover, not all subjects need be marked nominative, nor all objects accusative; in fact, this is one main point of our paper. Consider the different case markings on the subject 'students' in the following examples:

- (10) a. *haksayng-tul-i chayk-i manh-ta*
 student-PL-NOM book-NOM be.many-DECL
 'The students (Focus) have many books.'

- b. haksayng-tul-eykey chayk-i manh-ta
 student-PL-DAT book-NOM be.many-DECL
 ‘The students have many books.’
- c. haksayng-tul-eykey-ka chayk-i manh-ta
 student-PL-DAT-NOM book-NOM be.many-DECL
 ‘The students (Focus) have many books.’

As given here, dative-marking is possible due to the semantics of the predicate and nominative-marking is possible as these are subjects. Neither is obligatory, and due to the slots in (9), both may co-occur.⁵ The phenomenon seen in (10c) where both morphological slots are filled is known as “case-stacking” (see e.g. Schütze 2001, Yoon 2004). (As shown below in (11b), the marker in the second slot can be accusative on a non-subject argument.) A predicate such as ‘be many’ in Korean naturally takes a dative-marked argument — marking a sort of location — but this dative is not obligatory. As can be seen in (10a) and (10c), when the argument is marked with nominative, the argument receives a somewhat focused interpretation. Perhaps due to this, stacking examples are sometimes more natural if a marker like *man* (‘only’) is interpolated between the two case markers:

- (11) a. cheli-eykey-man-i ton-i philyoha-ta
 Cheli-DAT-only-NOM money-NOM need-DECL
 ‘Only Cheli needs money.’
- b. mina-ka cheli-eykey-man-ul ton-ul cwu-ess-ta
 Mina-NOM Cheli-DAT-only-ACC money-ACC give-PST-DECL
 ‘Mina gave money only to Cheli.’

Even the locative postposition *eyse* or the source postposition *pwuthe* can be followed by the nominative case marker:

- (12) a. i mwulkoki-nun minmwul-eyse-man-i sal swu iss-ta
 this fish-TOP freshwater-LOC-only-NOM live ability exist-DECL
 ‘This fish can live only in freshwater.’
- b. mwuncey-nun yeki-pwuthe-man-i ani-ta
 problem-TOP here-from-only-NOM not.be-DECL
 ‘The problem is not only from here.’

In the following main sections of the paper, we will discuss these three markers *kkeyse*, *eyse*, and *pwuthe*, in uses marking core arguments such as subject and object.⁶ The forms of interest to us are *eyse* and *pwuthe*, as they show the kinds of consequences for case theory that we alluded to in the introduction, and have not received much attention in previous literature. The specific properties of *eyse* are made much clearer in contrast to those of *kkeyse*, which have been well-studied.

2.3 Background on floated quantifiers in Korean

Korean has a variety of constructions for expression quantification, with quantifiers either as parts of NP constituents along with the modified noun, or “floated”, syntactically separate from the nouns that they relate to semantically (for a concise overview, see Sohn 1999: 352–353).⁷ The quantifiers in the language are either numerals or numerals suffixed with a classifier. Importantly, when they are floated, they may be case marked, where the case marking indicates the grammatical function of the NP which is semantically quantified.

The examples in (13) illustrate NP-internal quantifiers, to contrast with the later “floated” examples in the remainder of this section. In (13) the quantifier precedes the head noun and is linked by a genitive marker. In (13b) the order is reversed: the head noun ‘student’ is not case-marked itself, and the case marker is hosted morphologically by the quantifier.

- (13) a. *twu-myeng-uy haksayng-i yek-ey o-ass-ta*
 2-person-GEN student-NOM station-DAT come-PST-DECL
 ‘Two students came to the station.’
 b. [*haksayng twu-myeng*]-i yek-ey o-ass-ta
 [student 2-person]-NOM station-DAT come-PST-DECL
 ‘Two students came to the station.’

Moving now to examples with floated quantifiers, the head noun and the quantifier both bear a case marker, and these two elements may be linearly separated. Subjects float nominative quantifiers and objects float accusative quantifiers, as illustrated in the examples in (14). Only these two case markers may appear on floated quantifiers (Gerdt 1985, Urushibara 1991, Sohn 1999: 353). To illustrate the relation between the floated quantifier and the noun that it quantifies, we put the notation ^Q on both elements in the gloss of each example.

- (14) a. *haksayng-i yek-ey twu-myeng-i o-ass-ta*
 student^Q-NOM station-DAT 2^Q-person-NOM come-PST-DECL
 ‘Two students came to the station.’
 b. *kyoswu-ka chayk-ul seys-ul ssu-ess-ta*
 professor-NOM book^Q-ACC 3^Q-ACC write-PST-DECL
 ‘The professor wrote three books.’

However, a dative argument cannot license a floated quantifier, while the accusative-marked argument with the same semantic role can:⁸

- (15) a. **nay-ka haksayng-tul-eykey yenge-lul seys-eykey kaluchi-ess-ta*
 I-NOM student^Q-PL-DAT English-ACC 3^Q-DAT teach-PST-DECL
 ‘I taught English to three students.’

- b. nay-ka haksayng-tul-ul yenge-lul seys-ul kaluchi-ess-ta
 I-NOM student^Q-PL-ACC English-ACC 3^Q-DAT teach-PST-DECL
 'I taught three students English.'

Floated quantifiers provide useful evidence for the existence of syntactic roles. For instance, in the Korean causative, the causee can be marked accusative or dative, as in (16a–b); yet a floated quantifier marked with nominative can appear, related to the causee:⁹

- (16) a. nay-ka haksayng-eykey seys-i ttena-key hay-ss-ta
 I-NOM student^Q-DAT 3^Q-NOM leave-COMP cause-PST-DECL
 'I made three students leave.'
 b. nay-ka haksayng-ul seys-i ttena-key hay-ss-ta
 I-NOM student^Q-ACC 3^Q-NOM leave-COMP cause-PST-DECL
 'I made three students leave.'
 c. nay-ka haksayng_i-eykey/-ul [\emptyset _i seys-i ttena-key] hay-ss-ta
 I-NOM student_i-DAT/-ACC [\emptyset _i^Q 3^Q-NOM leave-COMP] cause-PST-DECL

This pattern of data in (16a–b) can be analysed by assuming that there is an embedded subject of the caused verb ('leave' in this case), indicated by \emptyset in (16c). This unexpressed argument is understood as coreferential with the causee. What the structure in (16c) shows is that there is an unexpressed subject of the embedded clause, the bracketed part. As Gerds (1985) shows, this idea extends from the causative to other constructions, such as the raising to object construction in (17):

- (17) a. John-i haksayng-ul seys-ul [\emptyset chencay-la-ko] mit-ess-ta
 John-NOM student_i^Q-ACC 3^Q-ACC [\emptyset _i genius-COP-COMP] believe-PST-DECL
 'John believed three students to be geniuses.'
 b. John-i haksayng_i-ul [\emptyset _i seys-i chencay-la-ko] mit-ess-ta
 John-NOM student_i-ACC [\emptyset _i^Q 3^Q-NOM genius-COP-COMP] believe-PST-DECL
 'John believed three students to be geniuses.'

A raised object is accusative, and it can be related to a floated quantifier which is either accusative, or nominative. In the former case as given in (17a), the syntactic analysis would be that the floated quantifier is a constituent of the matrix clause, relating to the object; in the latter case as shown in (17b), the nominative floated quantifier would be a constituent of the embedded clause, relating to the unexpressed subject.

3. Non-canonically marked Korean subjects

In this section and the next we discuss, in turn, the markers *kkeyse*, *eyse*, and then *pwuthe* on subjects. As their grammatical analysis is at issue, in the example glosses, we simply cite the form in italics.

3.1 *kkeyse* Subjects

We begin with the honorific subject marker *kkeyse*, which falls in the ‘postpositions’ slot, and which provides a useful point of reference for the subsequent discussion.

Korean nouns referring to individuals of superior social status may be marked with the honorific suffix *nim*. With such a noun as subject, a verb will normally take the subject-honorific suffix (*u*)*si*, as illustrated in (18a) and (18b):¹⁰

- (18) a. haksayng-tul-i o-ass-ta /#o-si-ess-ta
 student-PL-NOM COME-PST-DECL/COME-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The students came.’
 b. sensayng-nim-i #o-ass-ta /o-si-ess-ta
 student-HON-NOM COME-PST-DECL/COME-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The teacher came.’

The same phenomenon is observed if the subject bears the honorific marker *kkeyse* (see e.g., Lee and Ramsey 2000, Sohn 1999, Yoon 2005, Kim and Sells 2007). All of these sources cite *kkeyse* as an honorific marker on subjects. From our discussion below, we conclude that it is also a marker of nominative.

- (19) sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse #o-ass-ta /o-si-ess-ta
 teacher-HON-PL-*kkeyse* #COME-PST-DECL/COME-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The teachers came.’

As illustrated in this example, it is a strong regularity of Korean that a *kkeyse* marker on the subject will co-occur with an honorific marker on the verb, implying that *kkeyse* is a pure subject and further nominative marker.

The honorific marking is the closest that Korean comes to having subject-predicate agreement, and importantly, *kkeyse* only marks subjects (see Sells 1995, Sohn 1999, Yoon 2005). For example, the nominative complement to a stative transitive verb like *toy-ta* (‘become’) as in (20a) cannot be substituted with *kkeyse*-marking as in (20b):

- (20) a. kim-kyoswu-nim-i/kkeyse chongcang-nim-i
 Kim-professor-HON-NOM/kkeyse president-HON-NOM
 toy-si-ess-ta
 become-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Professor Kim became the (university) president.’
- b. *kim-kyoswu-nim-i/kkeyse chongcang-nim-kkeyse
 Kim-professor-HON-NOM/kkeyse president-HON-kkeyse
 toy-si-ess-ta
 become-HON-PST-DECL

Only subjects may be *kkeyse*-marked, and they in fact allow case-stacking with *i/ka* under the right circumstances. Case-stacking is illustrated again in (21), where both subjects have a marker which is in the postposition slot, but also a grammatical case marker of nominative:¹¹

- (21) a. cheli-eykey-ka ton-i manh-ta (cf. (6))
 Cheli-DAT-NOM money-NOM be.much-DECL
 ‘Cheli has much money.’
- b. sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse-man-i o-si-ess-ta (cf. (18b))
 teacher-HON-PL-kkeyse-only-NOM come-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Only the teachers came.’

Examples like (21b) are analysed in Sells (1995) as having multiple exponence of the grammatical property of nominative case: both *kkeyse* and *i* express it. As both are nominative markers, they do not provide conflicting information.

We now look at other types of evidence that *kkeyse*-marked phrases are subjects. There are not many reliable tests for subjecthood in Korean, but we now investigate the ones that there are. First, as noted above, Korean has a ‘multiple subject’ construction in which successive nominative NPs stand in a possessive relation:

- (22) a. John-i son-i khu-ta
 John-NOM hand-NOM big-DECL
 ‘John’s hand is big.’
- b. John-i emeni-ka chincelha-si-ta.
 John-NOM mother-NOM kind-HON-DECL
 ‘It is John whose mother is kind.’

A *kkeyse*-marked phrase can correspond to one or both of the nominative NPs in such a construction:¹²

- (23) a. cheli-ka ape-nim-i/kkeyse pwuca-i-#(si)-ta
 cheli-NOM father-HON-NOM/kkeyse rich-COP-#(HON)-DECL
 ‘It is Cheli whose father is rich.’

- b. kim sensayng-nim-kkeyse twulccay atu-nim-i/kkeyse
 Kim professor-HON-kkeyse second son-NOM/HON-kkeyse
 chencay-i-si-ta
 genius-COP-HON-DECL
 ‘Professor Kim’s second son is a genius.’

The honorific suffix *si* in (23a) is obligatory, and this indicates that it is the second nominative NP, *ape-nim*, which controls honorific marking on the predicate, in this example. The first NP *Cheli* does not refer to a socially superior individual, and therefore cannot participate in any honorific marking. In (23b), both NPs can be marked with *kkeyse*, because (i) both are subjects and (ii) both refer to socially superior individuals.

Additionally, evidence from control constructions indicates that a *kkeyse*-marked phrase functions as the subject (see Youn 1989). In the examples below, the unexpressed subject of a predicate like *try* in (24a), as well as that of the adjunct *myense(to)* (‘while/although’) clause, must be coreferential with the matrix subject. This indicates that these are standard subject-control constructions.

- (24) a. haksayng-tul-i [chinkwu-lul manna-lyeko] nolyekhay-ss-ta
 student-PL-NOM [friend-ACC meet-COMP] try-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The students tried to meet (their) friends.’
 b. [pappu-myenseto] cheli-ka [pwumonim-ul manna-lyeko]
 [busy-although] Cheli-NOM [parents-ACC meet-COMP]
 nolyekhay-ss-ta
 try-PST-DECL
 ‘Although Cheli was busy, he tried to meet his parents.’

The subject in each example controls the missing subject(s) of the parts marked in square brackets. A phrase with a *kkeyse* marker controls the unexpressed subjects of the embedded infinitival and adverbial clause in exactly the same fashion:

- (25) a. sensayng-nim-kkeyse [haksayng-ul manna-lyeko] nolyekha-si-ess-ta
 teacher-HON-kkeyse [student-ACC meet-COMP] try-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The teacher tried to meet the students.’
 b. [pappu-si-myenseto] sensayng-nim-kkeyse [haksayng-ul manna-lyeko]
 [busy-HON-although] teacher-HON-kkeyse [student-NOM meet-COMP]
 nolyekha-si-ess-ta
 try-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Although the teacher was busy, he tried to meet the students.’

Finally, raising constructions also indicate that the *kkeyse*-phrase is the subject. With certain predicates, such as ‘believe’, the nominative subject of the embedded clause can alternate as the object of the matrix verb ‘believe’ (cf. (17) above):

- (26) a. na-nun [haksayng-tul-i hyenmyengha-ta-ko] mit-nun-ta
 I-TOP [students-NOM wise-DECL-COMP] believe-PROC-DECL
 'I believe that the students are wise.'
- b. na-nun haksayng-tul-ul [hyenmyengha-ta-ko] mit-nun-ta
 I-TOP student-PL-ACC [wise-DECL-COMP] believe-PROC-DECL
 'I believe the students to be wise.'

The same possibility holds for the *kkeyse* marked phrase of the embedded clause. In (27b), the phrase raised to the object position is the notional subject of the lower clause, marked with *kkeyse* in the unraised version in (27a). The *kkeyse*-marking disappears in (27b) as the argument in question is not a surface subject.

- (27) a. na-nun [sensayng-nim-kkeyse hyenmyengha-si-ta-ko] mit-nun-ta
 I-TOP [teacher-HON-*kkeyse* wise-HON-DECL-COMP] believe-PROC-DECL
 'I believe that the teacher is wise.'
- b. na-nun sensayng-nim-ul [hyenmyengha-si-ta-ko] mit-nun-ta
 I-TOP teacher-HON-ACC [wise do-HON-DECL-COMP] believe-PROC-DECL
 'I believe the teacher to be wise.'

Yoon (2005) uses a variety of tests such as these to show that *kkeyse* is a subject marker. However, in terms of case, he proposes that *kkeyse* is grammatically oblique — that although it is a subject marker, it is not a marker of nominative case. His arguments for this position are based on two observations.

The first is that case-stacking with an outer nominative is possible with clearly oblique non-nominative subjects, as we have already seen in (21a). However, there is no reason to assume that case-stacking must necessarily involve an oblique case stacked with a grammatical case; rather, it must involve one element from each column in (9), as all the stacking examples necessarily do. As we will show below, there is evidence that *kkeyse* actually is a nominative marker, which just happens to fall in the 'postpositions' column in (9).

The second argument that Yoon gives for the view that *kkeyse* is ablative is based on the fact that a *kkeyse*-marked NP does not have the distribution of any nominative-marked NP, but the restricted distribution of a subject. The examples in (28) illustrate one kind of restriction (see also (20)). Verbs like 'become' and 'need' in Korean take two nominative arguments, but only the subject can bear either the nominative or the honorific marker *kkeyse*. *kkeyse* cannot appear in the non-subject argument, showing that its distribution is narrower than that of the regular nominative marker.

- (28) a. kim-kyoswu-nim-i/kkeyse chongcang-nim-i
 kim-professor-HON-NOM/kkeyse president-HON-NOM
 toy-si-ess-ta
 become-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Professor Kim became president.’
- b. kim-kyoswu-nim-i/kkeyse chongcang-nim-i/#kkeyse
 kim-professor-HON-NOM/kkeyse president-HON-NOM/kkeyse
 philyoha-si-ta
 need-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Professor Kim needs the president.’

The relation between a floated quantifier and the NP it quantifies also provides a useful diagnostic, as discussed in Section 2.3. In (29), for example, the floated quantifier *sey myeng* (‘three persons’) is separated from the NP *pemin* (‘criminal’), yet it specifies the number of criminals. This example is grammatical only if the floated quantifier has nominative case, like its antecedent. In other words, there is a match of case marking between the floated quantifier and its antecedent NP.

- (29) *pemin-i cengmal sey myeng-i/*-ul te iss-ta*
 criminal^Q-NOM really 3^Q persons-NOM/*-ACC more exist-DECL
 ‘There are three more criminals.’

Now we turn to examples with the *kkeyse*-marked phrase, which show something very interesting. The quantifier *twu pwun* in (30) is floated away from its antecedent and can bear the regular nominative marker (as in (30a)) but not the honorific marker *kkeyse* (as in (30b)). The notations under example (30a) indicate the broad grammatical function of each part of the clause. The pattern of data in (30) suggests two things: that the floated quantifier is agreeing in case with its antecedent — that case being nominative even when the antecedent is marked with *kkeyse*; and that the floated quantifier itself is not a subject, which explains why it cannot be marked with *kkeyse* as in (30b).

- (30) a. *sensayng-nim-tul-i/kkeyse ecey twu-pwun-i*
 teacher^Q-HON-PL-NOM/kkeyse yesterday 2^Q-person(HON)-NOM
 Subject Adv Float Q
 o-si-ess-ta
 come-HON-PST-DECL
 Predicate
 ‘Two teachers came yesterday.’

- b. ??sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse ecey twu-pwun-kkeyse
 teacher^Q-HON-PL-*kkeyse* yesterday 2^Q-person(HON)-*kkeyse*
 o-si-ess-ta
 come-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Two teachers came yesterday.’

Note that if the case marked by *kkeyse* were in fact some sort of oblique, rather than nominative, the case on the floated quantifier *twu-pwun* in (30a) would be a mystery. The observations we have made in this subsection clearly indicate that *kkeyse* marks any honorific NP functioning as subject and is also a manifestation of nominative case.

3.2 *eyse* Subjects

Now we turn to examples whose subjects are marked with *eyse*, which canonically picks out the location of an activity (‘at’) (see examples (4) above).

3.2.1 *eyse*-Marked Phrases as Subjects

eyse-marked subjects are noted in Sohn (1999:336), who considers *eyse* to have a “[SOURCE]” meaning component, and then proposes that “due to its [SOURCE] component, it is also used as the subject when the subject denotes a non-human collective agent”. Examples (31)–(34) below, from Martin (1992:504), Ihm et al. (1988) and Yoon (2005), illustrate the construction:¹³

- (31) a. hoysa-eyse na-hanthey phosangkum-ul cwu-ess-ta
 company-*eyse* 1sg-DAT award-ACC give-PST-DECL
 ‘The company gave me an award.’
 b. wuli kyohoy-eyse umak yeypay-lul ha-nunthey kkok o-sey-yo
 1pl church-*eyse* music service-ACC do-because surely come-HON-POL
 ‘Our church is having a musical service, please come.’
- (32) a. sicheng-eyse ku hayngsa-lul cwuchoyhay-ss-ta
 city.hall-*eyse* that event-ACC host-PST-DECL
 ‘City hall hosted that event.’
 b. lotte paykhwacem-eyse ku hayngsa-lul cwuchoyhay-ss-ta
 Lotte dept.store-*eyse* that event-ACC host-PST-DECL
 ‘Lotte department store hosted that event.’

All the examples given here would also allow the regular nominative marker on the subject, but they do not allow the stacked sequence **eyse-ka*. In other words *eyse* and *i/ka* represent options that the speaker must choose between. In addition, these examples all involve subjects which denote institutions or locations which

can be conceived of as engaging in intentional action. Below we will generalize over these ‘agentivity’ properties with the term ‘located institution’, for an institution at a definite location, capable of having organizational or agentive abilities. One important observation about the meaning of the case marking is that the host NP must inherently or independently refer to an institution or location — *eyse* cannot itself impose this meaning on an NP that does not otherwise have this kind of referent.

The subjecthood tests we have applied with *kkeyse* also largely apply to an *eyse*-marked phrase. The test involving raising to object cannot be applied because that construction is most natural with stative predicates in the complement clause, but the *eyse*-marked subjects only occur with action or agentive predicates.

The examples (33) show that the *eyse*-marked phrase controls honorific marking on the verb in that it refers to a socially superior entity:

- (33) a. *nop-un kos-eyse i il-ul cisiha-si-ess-ta*
 high-ADNOM place-*eyse* this work-ACC instruct-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The high place instructed (us to do) this work.’
 b. *kim sensayng-nim tayk-eyse wuli-lul chotayha-si-ess-ta*
 Kim superior-HON residence-*eyse* 1pl-ACC invite-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘The Kims have invited us.’

The *eyse*-marked phrases in (34) are coreferential with the unexpressed subjects of the complement of the control predicate ‘attempt’ or the adverbial *myense* clause.¹⁴

- (34) a. *ape-nim-ccok-eyse [ka-si-lyeko] sito-ha-si-ess-ta*
 father-HON-side-*eyse* [go-HON-PUR] attempt-HON-PST-DECL
 ‘Father attempted to go.’
 b. [*pinan-ul pat-umyenseto*] *cengpwu-eyse ku pepan-ul*
 [criticism-ACC receive-although] government-*eyse* the bill-ACC
kongphohay-ss-ta
 proclaim-PST-DECL
 ‘Although it was criticized, the government proclaimed the bill.’

These examples are also instructive in that they quite clearly argue against an alternative analysis of the general pattern here, which would not posit the *eyse*-marked phrase as the subject, but rather, would analyse the example as involving an initial *eyse*-marked locative adverbial phrase, with a null (nominative) subject. That is, a possible analysis of an example like (31a) could be as shown in (31a’), where *pro* indicates the null subject:

- (31) a’. *hoysa-eyse pro na-hanthey phosangkum-ul cwu-ess-ta*
 company-*eyse pro* 1sg-DAT award-ACC give-PST-DECL
 literally: ‘At the company, (someone) gave me an award.’

Such an approach would always treat *eyse*-phrases as locative adverbials, and due to this fact, would fail to account for examples such as those in (34), which clearly show that the *eyse*-phrases are the grammatical subjects of their clauses. Under the adverbial-only analysis of *eyse*-phrases, the examples in (34) would have to mean ‘On father’s side, someone attempted to go’ and ‘Although he_i was criticized, in the government, someone_i proclaimed the bill’, but they do not, but rather have the interpretations shown in (34), where the referents of the *eyse*-phrases are direct participants in the actions described.

The data that we survey here are also inconsistent with an analysis in which the *eyse*-phrase is a modifier within a larger subject NP with a null pronominal head. This would be analogous to proposing an analysis of the subject in (35a) is as shown in (35b):

- (35) a. Only the strong will survive.
 b. [Only the strong (ones)] will survive.

The account suggested in (35b) could well be plausible for English, but not for Korean. Taking example (31a) again, it could not have the syntactic analysis, nor the literal English translation, shown in (31a''):

- (31) a''. [hoysa-eyse *pro*] na-hanthey phosangkum-ul cwu-ess-ta
 [company-eyse *pro*] 1sg-DAT award-ACC give-PST-DECL
 literally: ‘[(Someone) in the company] gave me an award.’

There are several reasons why this could not illustrate a possible approach to the data presented above. First, while Korean allows null arguments, it does not allow headless NPs of the kind (31a'') (see An 2009). Korean has no direct counterpart of English *one*, overt or covert. Second, if (31a'') were the right analysis, the clause would have a nominative subject (the *pro* would be formally nominative), but as we will see, *eyse*-marked phrases show no evidence of being nominative. Third, it is not obvious how the general structure illustrated by (31a''), namely [oblique modifier and null head], could be limited to only those oblique modifiers which refer to institutions or locations.

3.2.2 *Floated quantifiers*

Now, in contrast to what we saw above with *kkeyse* in (30a), an *eyse*-marked subject cannot be picked out by a floated quantifier marked with nominative case. First of all, note the following examples where the floated nominative quantifiers are related to nominative subjects: once again, the notations under the examples indicate the key parts.¹⁵

- (36) a. esicang-i yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul phal-ko iss-ta
 fishmarket-NOM many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
 Subject Float Q
 ‘Many fish markets are selling octopus.’
- b. esicang-i han-kwuntey-man-i mwune-lul phal-ko iss-ta
 fishmarket-NOM 1-place-only-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
 Subject Float Q
 ‘Only one fish market is selling octopus.’

The argument that *eyse*-phrases are subjects but are not nominative is somewhat subtle. The issue is whether the first NP (‘fishmarket’ in (36)) is a referential subject, with the following nominative-marked quantifier, or whether both NPs are actually referential, with the second NP functioning as the subject, preceded by the NP ‘fishmarket’ with some other status.

Now, the examples in (36) have a floated quantifier interpretation for the second nominative NP. (36a), for instance, means ‘many fish markets’ (many places which are fish markets), and not ‘many places in the fish market’. This interpretational difference is important for diagnosing the syntactic construction.

The next step is to replace the first NP in (36) by an *eyse*-marked phrase, and see what happens:

- (37) esicang-eyse yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul phal-ko iss-ta
 fishmarket-*eyse* many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
 Locative Subject
 *Subject FloatQ
 ‘In the fish market, many places are selling octopus.’

What happens here is that the *eyse*-phrase is not interpreted as the subject, but rather as a clause-initial locative adjunct. This is possible because the second NP in the example is marked nominative and can itself be interpreted as the subject. The notations below the examples indicate the possible and impossible grammatical analyses of this string of words. The contrast between (36) and (37) shows that *eyse*-subjects do not float a nominative quantifier: they are not themselves nominative subjects. Due to the presence of the nominative phrase *yele-kwuntey-ka* in (37), the *eyse*-phrase is interpreted as a locative adjunct with the nominative phrase as the actual subject.

Having found different grammatical statuses for the NPs in (36) and (37), the next variation we might try is to mark the first two phrases in (37) with *eyse*, as in (38). In this example, the natural interpretation is that both *eyse*-phrases are locative adjuncts, with the subject being an unexpressed argument.

- (38) esicang-eyse(-nun) yele-kwuntey-eyse mwune-lul phal-ko iss-ta
 fishmarket-eyse(-TOP) many-place-eyse octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
 Locative Locative
 ‘In the fish market, in many places, someone is selling octopus.’

The example in (39) is structurally similar to (38), but in this case the interpretation is one where the second *eyse*-marked phrase is an *eyse*-subject, preceded by a locative. The impossible and possible grammatical analyses, with their respective translations, are shown below the example.¹⁶

- (39) hoysa-eyse twu-kwuntey-eyse ku hayngsa-lul cwuchoyhay-ss-ta
 company-eyse 2-place-eyse that event-ACC host-PST-DECL
 *Subject Float Q
 Locative Subject
 *‘Two companies hosted that event.’
 ‘At the company, two places (i.e., some parts of the company) hosted that event.’

The data here also suggest that floated quantifiers do not relate to their antecedents purely by grammatical function — that is, it is not the case that a nominative quantifier takes a subject as its antecedent, and an accusative quantifier takes an object as its antecedent. Such an account could not explain why *kkeyse*-subjects can be associated with a floated nominative quantifier, but *eyse*-subjects cannot. Rather, a floated quantifier takes the same case as its antecedent, but this is limited to the grammatical cases of nominative and accusative.

The diagnosis of (37) is confirmed by the contrast in the examples in (40), using the proper name ‘Noryangjin’ (a fish market). The initial *eyse*-phrase in (40a) is a locational adjunct. (40b) is strange, as the first NP, now marked nominative, cannot provide a locational context for the second NP, which is the grammatical subject of the clause.

- (40) a. nolyangcin-sicang-eyse yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul phal-ko
 Noryangjin-market-eyse many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP
 iss-ta
 PROG-DECL
 ‘In Noryangjin market, many places are selling octopus.’
 b. ?? nolyangcin-sicang-i yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul phal-ko
 Noryangjin-market-NOM many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP
 iss-ta
 PROG-DECL

In fact, (40b) does have a marginal interpretation as a multiple subject construction in which the first NP is interpreted as a focus phrase, characterized by the

rest of the clause. The first NP stands in a possessive relationship to the second NP ‘many places.’ (40b) would be a suitable answer to the question ‘At which market do many places sell octopus?’ and would mean ‘It is Noryangjin market where many places sell octopus.’

With this in mind, we note that it is also possible to have an example like (41). Using the terminology introduced above in Section 2, the first phrase in a multiple subject construction is the ‘Major Subject’, and the second is the ‘(Grammatical) Subject’. In (41) we see a multiple subject construction even though the subject is not nominative, but is marked with *eyse*:

- (41) *nolyangcin-sicang-i yele-kwuntey-eyse mwune-lul phal-ko iss-ta*
 Noryangjin-market-NOM many-place-*eyse* octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
 Major Subject Subject
 ‘It is Noryangjin market where many places are selling octopus.’

As indicated, this example has the structure in which *nolyangcin-sicang-i* is a Major Subject and *yele-kwuntey-eyse* is the Grammatical Subject inside the clause.

In summary, *eyse* can mark an NP as being subject, with oblique case, but only if the NP refers to a located institution.

3.3 The nature of ‘Agentivity’

The possibility for these oblique subjects with *eyse* might raise questions about the nature of verb meaning in Korean, in particular the characterization of the agent or Actor argument (cf. the notion ‘Agent-of’ in (3II) above). How can verbs with agentive subjects take ‘located institution’ subjects marked with *eyse* as we have seen in the previous section? Are these verbs with ‘located institution’ subjects somehow different in meaning from their counterparts with the canonical nominative?

We can find no evidence that there are any differing properties in the verbs in the relevant examples. Those which are transitive take accusative objects, and the ‘agentivity’ of the subject can be seen in the examples in (32) above: it is not possible to host an event — in the sense of planning and organizing it — without intentionality and agentivity. In (42), the *eyes*-marked subject can be the subject of ‘decide’ in a positive or a negative use:

- (42) a. *lotte paykhwacem-eyse ku hayngsa-lul cwuchoyha-ki-lo*
 Lotte dept.store-*eyse* that event-ACC host-NOMIN-COMP
kyelcenghay-ss-ta
 decide-PST-DECL
 ‘Lotte department store decided to host that event.’

- b. lotte paykhwacem-eyse ku hayngsa-lul cwuchoyha-ci
 Lotte dept.store-*eyse* that event-ACC host-COMP
 anh-ki-lo kyelcenghay-ss-ta
 NEG-NOMIN-COMP decide-PST-DECL
 ‘Lotte department store decided not to host that event.’

We can also show the necessity of the agentive properties for the *eyse*-construction through the contrast in the examples in (43). Example (43a) is a canonical *eyse*-subject example. (43b) has the same subject in terms of linguistic content, but refers to the building itself, not the organization ‘the church’, and does not have any sort of agentive interpretation of the predicate. In contrast to (43a), (43b) cannot allow an *eyse*-marked subject:

- (43) a. saylo tule sse-n kyohoy-eyse ipen cwumal-ey casen umakhoy-lul
 newly go.up-ADNOM church-*eyse* this weekend-at charity concert-ACC
 cwuchoyha-n-ta
 host-PROC-DECL
 ‘The newly built church is hosting a charity concert this weekend.’
 b. saylo tule sse-n kyohoy-ka/**eyse* nay pang hayspich-ul
 newly go.up-ADNOM church-NOM/**eyse* 1sg.GEN room sunshine-ACC
 mak-ko iss-ta
 block-COMP PROG-DECL
 ‘The newly built church is blocking the sunshine to my room.’

A useful way to think about the class of verbs which allow *eyse*-marked subjects is that they take subjects which have some ability for directed action or intention, but which are not restricted to the prototypical semantic role of Agent. In fact, the class of verbs which take truly agentive subjects is rather small, as observed by Van Valin and Wilkins (1996). Van Valin and Wilkins note that there is a topicality hierarchy, which goes from groups at the low-topicality end of the scale, through individuals to the speaker, the most topical referent. In their view, the idea that the first argument of a predicate involves an entity which can be conceived of as agent, effector, or instrument actually involves notions like being capable of independent action, or in this case, being capable of being associated with some collective action or collective decision. They argue that one factor influencing how strongly a subject will be interpreted as an ‘agent’ is its relative position on this scale.

They also argue that many predicates have an argument structure in which one argument is a causer or a doer in the most general sense, with any implication of agency coming from the referential properties of the subject argument itself, not the predicate. For instance, they suggest that the verb itself has exactly the same meaning in each example in (44), while the implication from the first example of

agency and intentionality on Larry's part is simply due to what we know about the different behavioral properties of humans and of explosions:

- (44) a. Larry killed the deer.
 b. The explosion killed the deer.

Here, the verb *kill* expresses a relationship involving a causal chain between what Van Valin and Wilkins call in the most general sense an 'effector', something which causes an outcome, and a patient.

With this background, let us take one of the examples above and contrast it with a more canonical example, and let us also try a version with a nominative case subject:

- (45) a. hoysa-eyse na-hanthey sikyey-lul cwu-ess-ta
 company-eyse 1sg-DAT watch-ACC give-PST-DECL
 'The company gave me a watch.'
 b. [?]hoysa-ka na-hanthey sikyey-lul cwu-ess-ta
 company-NOM 1sg-DAT watch-ACC give-PST-DECL
 'The company gave me a watch.'
 c. nay chinkwu-ka na-hanthey sikyey-lul cwu-ess-ta
 1sg friend-NOM 1sg-DAT watch-ACC give-PST-DECL
 'My friend gave me a watch.'

Some speakers find example (45b) with nominative on the located institution subject to be a little marked, though certainly grammatical. However, there is no other observable difference in the meaning of the predicate in each example. Rather, what we see is that nominative is used to mark a canonical subject, a human agent in the case of 'giving a watch', while *eyse* is used to mark a non-canonical subject, such as one that is a located institution by nature. If *eyse* and regular nominative on a subject have slightly different meanings regarding the nature of the subject, as these examples suggest, then there might be a reason why case-stacking *eyse-ka* is not possible with any of the examples in this section: the contributions of each case marker would be different.

4. Non-canonically marked Korean non-subjects

In this section we focus on the Korean suffix *pwuthe* ('from'), on non-subjects. Before getting to the full discussion, we note that *pwuthe* can be used in some circumstances on subjects, indicating the 'first agent' of a distributed action — it indicates that someone or a group should perform an action before someone else. (46a) is cited from Martin (1992: 690); speakers that we have consulted consider it

to be somewhat awkward, with the variant in (46b) being fully acceptable, as are the examples in (47):¹⁷

- (46) a. [?]kak kaceng-mata-pwuthe kyoyuk-ey kwansim-ul kacye-ya
 each household-each-*pwuthe* education-DAT interest-ACC hold-COMP
 ha-n-ta
 must-PROC-DECL
 ‘Each household must take an interest in education.’
- b. kak kaceng-eyse-pwuthe kyoyuk-ey kwansim-ul kacye-ya
 each household-*eyse-pwuthe* education-DAT interest-ACC hold-COMP
 ha-n-ta
 must-PROC-DECL
 ‘Each household should be the first to take an interest in education.’
- (47) a. ne-pwuthe tule ka-la
 2sg-*pwuthe* go:in-IMP
 ‘You go in first!’ (‘Starting with you ...’)
- b. haksayng-tul-pwuthe nolay-lul pwulu-ess-ta
 student-PL-*pwuthe* song-ACC sing-PST-DECL
 ‘Students sang songs first.’ (‘Before other people did ...’)

This use of *pwuthe* on subjects seems to show a subset of the properties that we describe in detail below for *pwuthe* on non-subjects.¹⁸

4.1 Case Marking and *pwuthe*-Marked Objects

More central to our concerns — to show the range of meanings that case-marking can have — is the fact that Korean allows *pwuthe*-marked objects; the examples below are from or based on Ihm et al. (1988: 179) and Martin (1992: 761–2). The construction indicates that the whole event of the clause containing the object is salient as the first event in some sequence:

- (48) a. son-pwuthe (twu pen-ul) ssis-ko capswu-sey-yo
 hand-*pwuthe* (two time-ACC) wash-COMP eat-HON-POL
 ‘Wash your hands (two times) first before you eat.’
- b. etten siktang-un ton-pwuthe nay-yo
 some restaurant-TOP money-*pwuthe* give-POL
 ‘In some restaurants you pay first (before you eat).’
- c. achim-ey il-e nase tampay-pwuthe phiwu-nun
 morning-at get.up-COMP after cigarette-*pwuthe* smoke-ADNOM
 salam-i iss-eyo
 person-NOM exist-POL
 ‘There are people who have a cigarette first, after they get up.’

- (49) a. cemsim-pwuthe mek-ca
 lunch-*pwuthe* eat-PROPOS
 ‘Let’s have lunch first.’
- b. swukcey-pwuthe-tul hay-la
 homework-*pwuthe*-PL do-IMP
 ‘(You (pl.)) do your homework first.’
- c. swukcey-pwuthe(-lul) ha-y noh-ko TV-lul po-ala!
 homework-*pwuthe*(-ACC) do-COMP put-COMP TV-ACC watch-IMP
 ‘Do the homework first and (then) watch TV!’
- (50) mina-nun swukcey-pwuthe(-lul) ha-ci anh-ko, TV-pwuthe
 Mina-TOP homework-*pwuthe*(-ACC) do-COMP NEG-COMP TV-*pwuthe*
 po-ass-ta
 watch-PST-DECL
 ‘Mina did not do the homework first, but watched TV first.’

This construction has the meaning that the speaker is presenting the clause containing *pwuthe* as describing some salient first event in the discourse. This example shows that *pwuthe* does not simply mean “the event described by my clause precedes some other event”: if it did, (50) would be a kind of contradiction, because each clause would then carry the meaning that it preceded the other. Rather, the meaning is that there is some salient first event in the context, and that the clause in question characterizes it (or not); this meaning is as indicated in (51a), not (51b):

- (51) a. “Doing homework was not the first salient event, but watching TV was the first salient event.”
- b. * “Not doing homework was the first salient event, but watching TV was the first salient event.”

That is, negation is interpreted as being about the descriptive applicability of the clause, and is not part of the propositional content which is used to characterize the salient first event. It should also be noted that there is only one salient first event even though there are two occurrences of *pwuthe*. This suggests that the contribution of *pwuthe* cannot be strictly compositional, but rather is constructional in some way.

Now a *pwuthe*-marked object can be the antecedent for a floated quantifier which appears in the accusative case, as shown in (52):

- (52) kaylon-chayk-pwuthe twu-kwen-ul ilk-ko na.se nonmwun-ul
 introduction-book-*pwuthe* two-volume-ACC read-after paper-ACC
 Object Float Q
 ssu-tolok hay
 write-COMP do
 ‘After you first read two introductory books, try to write a paper.’

A *pwuthe*-phrase can also function as an object in the control construction in (53):

- (53) na-nun haksayng-tul-pwuthe ttena-tolok seltukhay-ss-ta
 I-TOP student-PL-*pwuthe* leave-COMP persuade-PST-DECL
 ‘First, I persuaded the students to leave.’

This example has at least two interpretations, as control is not fully obligatory with the matrix predicate *seltukha-ta* (see Choe 2006). If ‘students’ is taken as the object of the matrix predicate, controlling the subject of the embedded predicate, the interpretation is as shown, and *pwuthe* allows the interpretation of ‘the first salient event’. Another interpretation of (53) is one in which some unmentioned arbitrary persons were persuaded that the students should leave. Under this interpretation, ‘students’ is only the subject of the embedded predicate, and then the example means ‘I persuaded (someone) [that first the students should leave] (and then others should leave)’. This contrast in interpretations aligns with the idea that the *pwuthe*-marked phrase is the object in (52) and also in the primary reading of (53). Along with the floated quantifier evidence in (52), there is reasonably strong evidence that the *pwuthe*-marked phrases above are objects.

4.2 Oblique internal arguments

pwuthe-marking as such can in fact appear on any constituent, indicating what we will call ‘narrow’ scope (meaning ‘starting with ...’); this is also the interpretation of *pwuthe*-marked subjects which we mentioned briefly in Section 4.1, shown again here in (54):

- (54) ne-pwuthe tul-e ka-la (= (47a))
 2sg-*pwuthe* go.in-IMP
 ‘You go in first!’ (narrow: ‘starting with you, then others go in’)

The *pwuthe* phrase can also take ‘wide’ scope from any non-subject argument, in which case it means ‘the first thing is (what is denoted by the VP)’. We refer to any non-subject argument as an ‘internal’ argument (after e.g. Williams 1994). The examples in (55a–b) show that *pwuthe*-marking on an internal argument can have the wide scope interpretation:

- (55) a. seoul-ey-pwuthe ka-se ...
 Seoul-to-*pwuthe* go-CONJ
 'First, go to Seoul ...' (wide: 'the first thing you do, then you do something else')
- b. taykay yeca.ay-tul-un namca.ay-tul-i ttayli-kena cangnan-ul chi-myen
 usually girl-PL-TOP boy-PL-NOM hit-or play.around.with-if
 sensayng-nim-kkey-pwuthe ka-se ilu-n-ta
 teacher-HON-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* go-CONJ tell-PROC-DECL
 'If boys hit or play around with them, the first thing that girls usually do is go to the teacher and tell tales.' (wide: 'the first thing that girls do ...')

As noted here, *pwuthe* is most natural on a canonical direct object with the wide-scope interpretation, certain dative and oblique *pwuthe* arguments also allows the wide-scope reading. The examples in (56) also show the wide-scope interpretation:

- (56) a. sensayng-nim-kkey-pwuthe i chayk-ul poye tuli-ko
 teacher-HON-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* this book-ACC show give-CONJ
 hakkyo-ey ka-la
 school-DAT go-IMP
 'First show this book to the teacher, then go to school.'
- b. sensayng-nim-tul-kkey-pwuthe insa tuli-ko nase anc-ala
 teacher-HON-PL-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* greet give-COMP after sit-IMP
 'First greet the teacher and then sit down.'
- c. senmwul tul-e o-n ttek-un halmeni-kkey-pwuthe
 present come in-ADNOM ricecake-TOP grandmother-HON.DAT-*pwuthe*
 poye tuli-ko (nase) nanwu-e mek-tolok ha-ela!
 show.COMP give-COMP (after) divide-COMP eat-COMP do-IMP
 'The rice cake (that somebody sent as a present), show it to the grandmother first and then share it among yourselves!'

The wide-scope meaning of *pwuthe* projects from an internal argument, but not a subject, rather like focus projection in English or Korean (cf. Chung et al. 2007).

In the context of (9), this use of *pwuthe* functions morphologically like the suffix (*n*)*un*, supplanting the grammatical case markers from the second slot, but following postpositional oblique markers such as *eykey*, *ey* or *kkey*, as shown in (57):

- (57) a. ai-tul-eykey-pwuthe kwaca-lul cwu-ela
 child-PL-DAT-*pwuthe* cookie-ACC give-IMP
 'Give cookies to the children (first).'
- b. i san-ey-pwuthe olla ka-se ...
 this mountain-LOC-*pwuthe* ascend go-CONJ ...
 'Go up this mountain first and then ...'

This is also consistent with the idea that *pwuthe* is a kind of focus marker in this use, for such markers take the final position in their morphological word in Korean (see Sohn 1999: 346–7). The fact that these occurrences of *pwuthe* follow postpositional particles also indicates that *pwuthe* has been reanalysed into the second slot in (9), in addition to having its core postpositional use as an ablative marker. Korean has a class of suffixes known in the Korean linguistics literature as ‘delimiters’ (see e.g., Yang 1972, Cho and Sells 1995, Sohn 1999) with meanings of focus, contrast and emphasis that are somewhat mobile in their ordering relative to other fixed suffixes, depending on the precise semantic scope of their application.

In summary, *pwuthe* appears on any argument, and can mark it as being the first in a series, or, on any internal argument, it can mark the clause containing it as describing a salient first event.

5. Conclusions and consequences

The overall conclusion from the observations that we have made is that nominative and accusative marking on arguments may be ‘supplanted’ by the oblique case markers cited, which mark semantic and pragmatic information, possibly peculiar to a given construction. Specifically, through the Korean data, we have shown that the oblique markers *kkeyse*, *eyes*, and *pwuthe* have different properties when marking core arguments, as summarized in (58):

- (58) a. *kkeyse* marks a subject as nominative, with the meaning of honorification;
 b. *eyse* marks a subject with non-nominative oblique case, with the meaning that the subject refers to a location with organizational or agentive properties;
 c. *pwuthe* may appear on an internal argument marking the wide scope ‘salient first event’ interpretation; in this use it appears in the second slot in (9), following any postpositional markers but suppressing the grammatical case marker for accusative.

These observations about specific forms in Korean lead to several more general conclusions.

The first conclusion is that case has a meaning, anywhere from the level of argument structure to propositional semantics to pragmatics, as presaged in the work of Silverstein quoted above in (3). Case is more than a surface reflex of a grammatical relation, and plays a non-trivial role in interpretation.

Second, as an extension of the first conclusion, the examples show that having a grammatical function is not equivalent to being in a position where grammatical

case is checked or assigned (for these cases may not be assigned); nominative and accusative do not necessarily have to be assigned by a transitive verb, or assigned by other heads in a clause containing a transitive verb. This stands in contrast to the view of the mainstream of syntactic research in the generative tradition of the past 25 years or more, where case marking has typically been considered to be the surface licensing relation between a head and an NP, either as the notion of ‘government’ in Government-Binding theory (Chomsky 1981) or ‘checking’ in the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995).

In other words, subject and object must be defined independently of any particular marker that NPs in these functions may host, or particular syntactic position that they may occupy — they are autonomous grammatical functions which cannot be reduced to surface coding properties. As noted in the introduction, grammatical functions are directly encoded in Lexical-Functional Grammar, and the valence lists in Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar or their equivalents in Construction Grammar have the same function. The specific contributions of the case markers that we have discussed here need to make direct reference to these grammatical function properties, and then add overlays of semantic and pragmatic meaning.¹⁹ The very brief summaries in (58) encapsulate what is required — in the case of *eyse*, that the case marking directly reflects referential properties of the subject, as opposed to thematic properties determined by the predicate; and in the case of *pwuthe*, that the entire event denoted by the clause containing *pwuthe* is presented as a ‘salient first event’ occurring prior to some implicit or explicit following event. This last property seems to widen the scope of what case marking can represent even further than that envisioned by Silverstein, summarized in (3).

The third conclusion is that a transitive verb does not have a different meaning, or change its meaning, when it combines with an oblique argument — a transitive verb does not take a ‘location’ or ‘institution’ argument, and certainly not a ‘salient first event’, yet these meanings can be provided by oblique arguments, as we discussed in detail in Section 3. Hence the case marking overlays additional components of meaning, and is not driven by the predicate’s semantics. Such additional properties are similar in kind to those noted by Fried (2004) with regard to Czech accusative/dative marking, as mentioned in our introduction. In the case of Korean, it must be the oblique form, or the construction which involves it, that provides these extra components of meaning. As observed in Section 2, while the more familiar examples of oblique case on core arguments typically represent thematic properties (e.g. dative subjects as Experiencers or Locations), we have shown that oblique case in Korean at least signals semantic and pragmatic properties of the larger clausal structure.²⁰ Grammatical theory has to provide the means to account for this.

Notes

* We gratefully acknowledge the comments of three *Studies in Language* reviewers which led to significant improvements in this paper. We also would like to thank Shin-Sook Kim for continuing discussion of our main points, and for assistance with regard to the Korean data; James Yoon for inspiring some of our research, and for comments on the results; and Miriam Butt for discussion of the semantic contributions that case markers may make. Parts of this work have been presented at the Linguistic Society of Korea international meetings of July 2004 and July 2006, the University of Leipzig in December 2005, the University of Konstanz in May 2008, and Kobe University in October 2008. This work was supported by Kyung Hee University Research Funding in 2009. The authors' names are listed alphabetically.

1. See also Fried (2005) for a similar approach to a different data set, that of "swarm"-type verbs in Czech.
2. The form of the nominative in Korean has two variants, *-i* or *-ka*, determined by whether the noun host is consonant- or vowel-final, respectively. The accusative is correspondingly *-ul* or *-lul*. (Orthographic *y* counts as a vowel for these determinations.)
All examples are from Korean except where noted. Grammatical abbreviations used are as follows: ACC: Accusative; ADNOM: Adnominal; COMP: Complementizer; COND: Conditional; DAT: Dative; DECL: Declarative; GEN: Genitive; HON: Honorific; HON.DAT: Honorific Dative; IMP: Imperative; NEG: Negative; NOM: Nominative; PST: Past; POL: Polite; PL: Plural; PRS: Present; PROC: Processive; PROPOS: Propositive; PST: Past; TOP: Topic.
3. *eyse* is used to mark the location of an activity, while the separate form *ey* is used to mark the location of a state (Sohn 1999:214). *ey* could not be used in place of *eyse* in the examples in (4), for instance. *ey* also can express Goal (see (14a)).
4. The morphophonological evidence favors the analysis of all the markers in (9) as suffixes; see Cho and Sells (1995).
5. There are slight interpretational differences depending on the choice of case marking.
6. An anonymous reviewer raised the question of whether the postposition *ey*, which marks inanimate locations or goals, also shows any unusual morpho-syntactic properties. We are not aware of any, and Yoon (2004) suggests that *ey*-marked phrases are never subjects (and they are definitely never objects).
7. The closest English equivalent is seen in examples like *The students have {all/both} gone home*, where *all* or *both* is a kind of floated quantifier.
8. The Goal argument can be marked either accusative or dative.
9. Korean has a variety of non-finite endings for verbs in complex predicate constructions (such as *key* in (16)), or endings on verbs in subordination constructions. Following Cho and Sells (1995) we label any of these endings as 'COMP'; the endings themselves do not interact with case marking in any way.
10. Many of the honorific nouns in the examples in this section bear the honorific marker *nim*, meaning 'honorable person'. This marker functions as an extension of the noun stem and is not part of the case system.

Strictly speaking, the examples with a mismatch between the honorific status of the subject and the marking on the predicate are not ungrammatical, but rather pragmatically or contextually unacceptable (see Kim and Sells 2007 for extensive discussion). For instance, the second option in (18a) is honoring 'students,' which is not normally possible within the context of Korean society. Hence we use # to mark this pragmatically unacceptable status.

11. It is not possible to stack a structural nominative directly after *kkeyse* (**kkeyse-ka* is ungrammatical). (21b) is possible as a stacked nominative and also has a focus-related use (see Schütze 2001, Yoon 2004), which the addition of the suffix *man* ('only') facilitates, as discussed above.
12. The # notation before the parenthesis means that the element in parentheses is effectively obligatory, as its absence gives a pragmatically unacceptable form.
13. Yoon, citing Martin (1992), refers to this as the 'Ablative subject construction'.
14. (34a) illustrates a use of this *eyse* construction where an individual-referring noun such as *ape-nim* ('father') is compounded with the noun *ccok* ('side'), which then provides the 'locational' meaning that the construction requires.
15. As we are considering different grammatical analyses of a given string in this subsection, we do not use the 'Q' notation used above.
16. To be more accurate, if speakers accept (39) at all, the only possible interpretation is the second one, with *twu-kwuntey* as an *eyse*-subject, not a floated quantifier.
17. The grammatical tests of honorification and control, discussed above, would clearly show that the *pwuthe*-marked phrases here are subjects.
18. Considering this particular use of *pwuthe* in detail is beyond the scope of this paper.
19. Formal representations of the contributions of the case markers presented within Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar can be found in Sells (2004, 2006).
20. Japanese has constructions which are quite similar to those discussed here for Korean, with the postpositions *de* 'from, at' and *kara* 'from'. See Inoue (2000) and Sells (2004, 2006).

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