

Chongwon Park (2019). *Reference point and case: A Cognitive Grammar exploration of Korean*. 264 pp. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. ISBN 9789027204295 <https://doi.org/10.1075/hcp.68>

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For a free order language like Korean, case plays key roles in licensing arguments, signaling grammatical functions, marking information structure, and so forth. When interacting with other grammatical levels such as phonological, semantic, pragmatic, and cognitive information, case further displays quite intriguing properties. This is why a proper understanding of the case system in the language has been the locus of its grammar. There have been quite a number of analyses for case phenomena in Korean, but they have left many issues unanswered. This book is a successful attempt to resolve key issues from a Cognitive Grammar (CG) perspective.

The main theme of this book is “metonymy and reference point case phenomena we live by” in languages like Korean. This theme is mirrored in eight key case phenomena in Korean with robust data and cognitive-based arguments. The book, consisting of a total of 10 chapters, opens with an introduction in Chapter 1 that summarizes its key objectives: to show how case phenomena in Korean can be better understood from a cognitive-based view. In particular, the chapter suggests that case markers are meaningful elements, and further that the guiding post for puzzling case phenomena is the notion of reference point in CG, a fundamental component in metonymy and referring in general. The chapter also points out in advance that CG, differing from traditional generative grammar, takes grammatical notions (e.g., subject and object) to be manifestations of how reference point/target alignment and trajector/landmark (in CG) are associated with topicality and focal prominence (Langacker 2008).

Chapter 2 offers a brief and concise introduction of CG. It emphasizes that as the key theoretical foundation, CG, just like CxG (Construction Grammar), takes form-meaning pairings or symbols as the basic unit of grammar. This foundational rationale is followed by a concise discussion of key concepts in CG such as construal, specificity, focusing, prominence (profiling, trajector/landmark), perspective, correspondence, elaboration, profile determinants, grounding, and reference point (a mental path from one concept to another). This book shows that most of these cognitive-based notions play key roles in the proper uses of case in Korean.

Chapter 3 deals with the most puzzling case phenomenon in Korean, Multiple Nominative Constructions (MNCs). It well summarizes key grammatical properties of the main MNC types in Korean, each of which displays different semantic relations between the participating NOM-NPs or varying functions in the sentence:

- (1) a. *Cheli-ka cip-i hakkyo-eyse kakkap-ta* (Topic)
Cheli-NOM home-NOM school-from close-DECL
'As for Cheli, (his) home is close to school.'
- b. *Cheli-ka apeci-ka hakkyo-ey onul o-si-ess-ta* (Focus)
Cheli-NOM father-NOM school-LOC today come-HON-PST-DECL
'It is Cheli whose father came to school today.'
- c. *Cheli-ka ton-i manh-ta* (Possession)
Cheli-NOM money-NOM much-DECL
'Cheli has lots of money.'
- d. *ku catongcha-ka pakkwi-ka say kes-i-ta* (Part-whole)
that car-NOM wheel-NOM new thing-COP-DECL
'That car has new wheels.'
- e. *pihayngki-ka 747-I khu-ta* (Adjunct)
airplane-NOM 747-NOM big-DECL
'The 747 is big.'

It has been quite challenging in generative grammar to figure out the exact grammatical roles of the two NOM-NPs in each of these types. The chapter demonstrates that all these varying realizations are associated with reference points. That is, the outer NP offers a mental address to the propositional statement made by the inner clause including the following NP. The direction could offer a uniform analysis for all the types in (1) and further those with more than two NOM NPs, as illustrated in the following:

- (2) [_{NP₃} *yelum-i* [_{NP₂} *sakwa-ka* [_{NP₁} *mas-i tal-ta*]]]
summer-NOM apple-NOM taste-NOM sweet-DECL
'Apples taste sweet in the summer.'

In the proposed analysis, NP₁ here is subject of the predicate *tal-ta* 'sweet', while the other two NPs are clause-level subjects functioning as reference points. The conceptual structure of the clausal predicate *mas-i tal-ta* evokes the domain highlighting of the NP₂ 'apple' and further the domain of FOOD, yielding a metonymic interpretation. The result also can highlight the domain of VEGETATION when meeting the evoked domain of 'summer' from NP₃. As such, the metonymic nature of the constructions, with the help of reference points and domain highlighting, allows us to have varying semantic/pragmatic relations in MNCs. The chapter well presents this cognitive-based idea within the framework of CG.

Chapter 4 extends this cognitive view to the analysis of Multiple Accusative Constructions (MACs), which also display varying degrees of semantic/pragmatic properties in three major ACC-NP types (e.g., inalienable possession, type-token, and modifier-modified). The basic idea set forth here is that similar to NOM-NPs bearing focus properties, outer ACC-NPs are reference points carrying local topic properties. This idea assigns quite a similar structure to MACs: [ACC-NP₂ [ACC-NP₁ PREDICATE]]. The conceptual domain of ACC-NP₁ evokes ACC-NP₂ as a reference point, leading to a profiling process like [R-NP₁-PRED] (R=reference point). Recursive application of this process then predicts more than two ACC-NPs, as in the following:

- (3) *Chelswu-ka Swuni-lul phal-ul sonmok-ul pithul-ess-ta*
 Chelswu-NOM Swuni-ACC arm-ACC wrist-ACC twist-PST-DECL
 ‘Chelswu twisted Swuni’s arm by her wrist.’

This reference-point-based analysis also, together with the knowledge of conceptual domain, can also account for the aforementioned semantically different types of MACs. For instance, in (3), the conceptual domain of *sonmok-ul* ‘wrist’ evokes elements including *phal-ul* ‘arms’ that can function as reference point to the complex predicate *sonmok-ul pitul-ess-ta*. In this process, the natural path of access (a possessive relation) follows from general to specific. This in turn means that the conceptual relation between the reference point and the active zone evoked by the complex predicate can determine the relationship between the two ACC-NPs. After laying out this key, cognitive-based idea of accounting for the basic properties of MACs, the chapter again shows how this CG view can successfully resolve remaining issues in the previous structure-based analyses.

Chapter 5 explores non-NOM subject constructions, as in (4):

- (4) *sensayng-nim-hanthey ton-I manh-usi-ta*
 teacher-HON-DAT money-NOM many-HON-DECL
 ‘(The) teacher has a lot of money.’

The first argument here is dative, but has substantial subject properties with respect to the honorific agreement with the verb, binding, control, and plural copying. The chapter also provides evidence that this DAT-NP is also a reference point elaborating the trajector together with a higher degree of topicality, and combines with the complex predicate *ton-i manh-usi-ta*. In the proposed cognitive analysis, the non-NOM subject constructions are thus manifestations of coalescing MNCs with the locative scheme when there is a conceptual affinity of an individual’s *existence*. In the conceptual domain, the existing individual is moving toward a target or located in the target, which is grammatically marked by the DAT

case. This direction convincingly places spatial semantics in the guiding post for a proper understanding of non-NOM constructions in Korean.

Chapter 6 provides a CG analysis for case assignment to F/D (frequency/durative) adverbials in Korean. One engaging property of the constructions in question concerns case alternation possibilities, as illustrated in (5):

- (5) a. *John-i chak-ul sey-pen-ul/*i ilk-ess-ta*
 John-NOM book-ACC three-time-ACC/NOM read-PST-DECL
 ‘John read the book three times.’
- b. *John-i hansikan tongan-i/*ul ppal-ass-ta*
 John-NOM one.hour for-NOM/ACC fast-PST-DECL
 ‘John had been (running) fast for an hour.’
- c. *centung-i twu-pen-i/ul kkampak-yess-ta*
 lamp-NOM two-time-NOM/ACC blink-PST-DECL
 ‘(The) lamp blinked twice.’

Building on the previous approaches that attribute such case alternation possibilities to the predicate properties (e.g., stage vs. non-stage-level predicate in Kim and Sells 2010), the chapter well argues that the case assignment to F/D adverbials is contingent with cognitive saliency and construals of an experience. It is suggested that when a given situation, where the subject bears a high degree of topicality, is construed as an imperfective and describes a continuation of an ongoing stable situation, F/D adverbials get NOM. In the meantime, when it is construed as a perfective and evoking an undirected activity, they favor ACC. This analysis thus places the speaker’s construal or cognitive domain in the determining factor for case assignment to F/D adverbials, further successfully leading to expect speakers’ variations. The chapter shows how this cognitive-based idea can be represented in CG in a systematic way.

Chapter 7 examines case in Verbal Noun Constructions (VNC), which can combine with the light verb *ha-ta* in Korean. After briefly reviewing four previous analyses and discussing their possible issues, the chapter points out that the notions of grounding and reference point in CG can predict mixed (nominal and verbal) properties of the constructions. In particular, it is suggested that a VN is fully nominal when grounded as a noun but verbal when grounded by tense. The nominal grounding is assumed to have at least four different methods: reified grounding with a genitive nominal (e.g., *thongsalon-uy yenkwu* ‘syntax-GEN research’ meaning ‘researching syntax/), zero grounding (e.g., *yenkwu-lul can-glye* ‘research-ACC encourage’ meaning ‘encourage research’) when the VN in question is involved in describing a general situation, indirect grounding via an NP-ACC functioning as a reference point (e.g., *John-uy thongsalon-uy yenkwu* ‘John-GEN syntax-GEN research’), and clausal grounding (e.g., *yenkwu-ha-yess-*

ta ‘research-do-PST-DECL) when VNs are construed as predicates and combining with the temporalized light verb to be grounded. The chapter rationalizes the view that the case pattern in VNCs follows from cognitive nature.

Chapter 8 investigates SOR (subject-to-object raising) constructions in Korean with the notion of reference point in CG again. The chapter tries to answer three key issues that have challenged the previous analyses: Is the matrix object raised from the embedded clause headed by a finite verb or base-generated in the clause? Is the construction linked to MNCs? Can the constructional properties be accounted for from a processing point of view? With the detailed discussion of semantic and conceptual properties (while referring to related constructions such as MNCs, Topic Constructions, and Double Relative Clause Constructions), the chapter justifies that the SOR constructions are motivated by the conceptual need to create mental contact between the raised object and the matrix predicate. The chapter demonstrates that this cognitive approach can resolve several weak points of the previous analyses.

Chapter 9 considers the case NOM-NOM stacking phenomena, as in *sensayng-nim-tul- kkeyse-man-i* ‘teacher-HON-PL-HON.NOM-only-NOM.’ The traditional analyses have taken two NOMs in such examples to be an instance of structural and lexical case, respectively. Pointing out that this simple demarcation meets analytic and empirical challenges, the chapter points out that the stacking has to do with an alternative construal of the HON.NOM marked NP as a hyper-honorified entity. Teasing out the morpho-syntactic properties of HON.NOM marked NP, it argues that *-kkeyse* has dual properties of a case marking serving as a reference point trajector and a postpositional marking providing additional content (e.g., space) to the host noun. Within this view, the NOM stacking is thus motivated from the interlocutor’s intention to find a proper alignment between trajector and landmark. This chapter is again a successful implementation of the cognitive view to rather a marked case phenomenon in Korean.

Chapter 10 concludes this book with a brief summary of the key suggestions the author made throughout the book for more compelling analyses of the case phenomena in Korean. It ends with a short but concise discussion of the relationship between metonymy, reference point, and zone activation, which we live by in daily language uses.

This book is quite illuminating and successful in several respects. First, it persuasively offers a positive answer to the question of whether all forms or constructions are associated with semantic/pragmatic functions. As pointed out earlier, one sharing foundation of CG and CxG is that the primitives of the grammar is form-function pairings. These pairings are called symbols in CG and constructions in CxG. One fundamental question that follows is whether all linguistic entities are associated with meaningful functions other than structural ones

(Goldberg 2006; Hilpert 2014). This book robustly establishes the view that even case markings, which have been taken as simply structural requirements in generative grammar, are all meaningful units.

Other substantial contributions are found throughout the book. This book is the first in-depth cognition-based treatment of challenging case phenomena in Korean, some of which are also found in other languages like Bengali, Japanese, Malayalam, Mandarin, Thai, Tibeto- Burman, Urdu, and so forth. The book is also well-balanced in providing a rich set of theoretical as well as empirical data for the case phenomena in Korean. Each chapter provides a comprehensive review of the data discussed in major previous analyses and further augmented by intuitive as well as authentic data. Each chapter also critically reviews most of the previous analyses in a thorough fashion, and can serve as a good reference point to those working in Korean linguistics as well as in case phenomena. The CG approaches that each chapter implements in the analysis of case phenomena, though a bit dense in a few places, are laid out in step-by-step processes that most readers can easily follow.

The cognitive-based analyses developed throughout the book can even give readers a plausible direction to deal with the language's case phenomena not discussed here, possibly because of its scope. For instance, consider case alternations in auxiliary constructions (Kim 2016):

- (6) a. *Mimi-ka sakwa-lul mek-e-lul/*ka po-ass-ta*
 Mimi-NOM apple-ACC eat CONN-ACC/NOM try-PST-DECL
 'Mimi tried to eat the apple.'
- b. *Mimi-ka yeppu-ci-ka/lul anh-ass-ta*
 Mimi-NOM pretty CONN-NOM/ACC not
 'Mimi isn't pretty.'
- c. *Mimi-ka sachang-i toy-ko-ka/*lul siph-ess-ta*
 Mimi-NOM head-NOM become-CONN-NOM/ACC would.like-PST-DECL
 'Mimi would like to be the company head.'

The examples show us that the auxiliary verb *po-* allows the preceding main verb to be marked with ACC, but not with NOM. In contrast, the negative auxiliary verb can assign either NOM or ACC to the preceding main verb, while the auxiliary *siph-* 'would.like' allows only NOM to the main verb. The case markings to the main verb in all these are optional, but their alternations are constrained, as observed here. The book seems to ask prospective readers to try to extend the CG perspective of this book to such a puzzling behavior too. My belief is that the cognitive domain or construal methods including the notion of reference point and grounding also play key roles in such case alternations.

All this being said, this book is definitely a significant contribution to Korean linguistics as well as our understanding of case phenomena. It is a must for those who are interested in case phenomena in Korean and other related languages. It is also highly recommended to the practitioners of CG. Readers can meet the complexity of case phenomena in the language and see how they can be untangled one by one from a cognitive view of language.

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