Positive Remarks on Korean Negation*

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The aim of this paper is twofold: first to show that Yang's (1976) new hypothesis on Korean negation, like many of its predecessors such as (S. P. Kim 1967), (H. Lee 1970, 1972), (C. Oh 1971, 1978), fails to account for data and secondly to examine some factors which might have misled Yang to draw an erroneous conclusion.

Since I first put forward a new hypothesis on Korean negation in Song (1966), more than a dozen publications dealing with the question have appeared. I have devoted a chapter in my dissertation to negation and published four more papers since then, this being my fifth and hopefully the last one.

The central question in Korean negation is the existence of two different types of negative sentences which allegedly correspond to a single affirmative sentence. Two negative sentences and their affirmative correspondent are given below.

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \quad \text{John i cha lul masi -n -ta} \\
& \quad \text{NM tea ACC drink-IND-DCL}^1 \\
& \quad \text{“John drinks tea.”} \\
(2) & \quad \text{John i cha lul ani masi-n-ta} \\
& \quad \text{NEG} \\
& \quad \text{“John doesn’t drink tea.”} \\
(3) & \quad \text{John i cha lul masi ci ani ha- n -ta} \\
& \quad \text{COMP do-IND-DCL} \\
& \quad \text{“John doesn’t drink tea.”}^2
\end{align*}
\]

I rejected the traditional description that relates both negative sentences (2) and (3) to a single affirmative sentence (1) and claimed that only (2) is the negative correspondent of (1). For (3), I showed fairly conclusively that its affirmative correspondent is (4)

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1 The Yale Romanization is adopted for transcribing Korean. The following abbreviations are used to label grammatical morphemes.

\[\text{NM=Nominative Marker ACC=Accusative Marker IND=Indicative Marker MOD=Modal Q=Question PAST=Past Tense IMP=Imperative DAT=Dative DES=Destination INC=Inchoative}\]

2 The English translation provided here is identical to the one given above for sentence (2). I claim that the meanings of (2) and (3) are non-distinct due to neutralization of the scope of negation, rather than that they are completely synonymous. It is possible to provide a different translation such as ‘It is not the case that John drinks tea’.
below.

(4) John is cha lul masi  ki  lul ha-n-ta
    COMP

“It is the case that John drinks tea.”

In relating (4) to its negative counterpart (3), I claimed that the complementizer ki is turned into ci in a negative environment. This statement has been misleading and some misconstrued that I had postulated a palatalization rule of some sort. I would like to restate my position clearly and say that there are two alternant shapes ki and ci for a complementizer which respectively occur in an affirmative and negative sentence of a specifiable type. Another trivial difference between (3) and (4) is the occurrence of an extra accusative marker after the complementizer in (4). Since an addition of the same marker in the same position in (3) is acceptable as well as grammatical, I will assume that an optional deletion of the accusative marker after a complementent sentence is allowed in a negative sentence, whereas this is not the case in an affirmative sentence. In order to show the relatedness between an affirmative sentence and its negative correspondent, I will conflate (1) and (2) and also (4) and (3) below.

(5) John i cha lul (ani) masi-n-ta
(6) John i cha lul masi \{ki \ < ci>\} lul (ani) ha-n-ta\(^3\)

I presented enough in the way of evidence and argumentation over the years to prove the correctness of what seems to me a fairly straightforward and uncontroversial hypothesis. Many Korean linguists rejected my position on the ground of total synonymy of sentences (2) and (3).\(^4\) They have argued with mechanical simplicity that since (2) and (3) are synonymous, they must be derived from an identical underlying structure. I have shown that these attempts, which I will call semantic approaches and have elsewhere referred to as a single underlying structure hypothesis, invariably complicate descriptions of negation and obscure a general principle which underlies the process of negation in Korean. Despite the failures of numerous semantic approaches to the question, Yang (1967) not only repeats the folly of his predecessors but also goes a step further to repudiate my hypothesis in toto. In the past, those who rejected my analysis tacitly acknowledged ki and ci to be variant realizations of the same morpheme. Before examining his new theory on Korean negation, I will briefly discuss his objections against my hypothesis.

Yang raises three questions against my relating sentence (4) as an affirmative counterpart to the negative sentence (3). To summarize his objections:

\(^3\) I have adopted the convention of angled brackets from phonology to show that the choice of one of the enclosed elements depends upon the other. If I adopt somewhat more abstract notation and represent the complementizer with KI, (6) will look like the following.

John i cha lul masi KI lul (ani) ha-n-ta

\(^4\) See References for my own works on Korean negation and numerous other works by various linguists who hold an opposing view.
(i) The surface structure similarity is no guarantee for the deep structure similarity.

(ii) A mere complementary distribution on the surface does not guarantee the deep structure unitariness of *ki* and *ci*.

(iii) An *ad hoc* surface constraint overshadows the advantage of capturing as generalization.

It is true that the surface structure similarity may be totally accidental and it surely does not guarantee the deep structure similarity as Yang claims. But unless there is a sufficient reason to doubt that the beauty of the surface structure similarity is only skin-deep, no linguists would waste all their precious time providing convincing evidence for the deep structure similarity of all the superficially similar structures. Since my claim that (4) is related to (3) is as natural and plausible as the one that (1) is related to (2) as a pair of affirmative and negative sentences, I was convinced that no further convincing evidence which Yang is seeking was necessary. Indeed, if there is any doubt about the discrepancy between the surface and deep structure similarity, the burden of proof is squarely on the shoulders of those linguists who doubt it.

Yang’s second objection may be sustained only if he can demonstrate that the mere complementary distribution on the surface is not an adequate condition for combining the two complementizers *ki* and *ci* into a single morpheme. Until he successfully proves his point, this objection remains an empty rhetoric without substance. I will examine how well Yang succeeds in his attempt to demonstrate the unrelatedness of the two complementizers.

His third objection is complex and requires several steps of logical arguments. My generalization that negation in Korean is effected simply by inserting the negative particle before the verb stands on the assumption that *ha* is as real a verb as *masi* at least with respect to the positioning of the negative particle *ani*. Yang tests my assumption against some questionable data and draws a tangentially wrong conclusion and then declaims that my grammar needs a surface structure constraint of some sort. After setting up such a straw man, which is his own ingenious invention and has nothing to do with my grammar, Yang delivers a totally unwarranted verdict.

Yang produces an ungrammatical string of the following sort:

\[7) \star \text{John i cha lul ani masi} \{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ci} \\ \text{ki} \end{array} \} \text{ ha-n-ta} \]

He then draws a rash conclusion that the grammaticality of (3) and the ungrammaticality of (7) show that there is some difference in verbness between *ha* and *masi* even with respect to positioning of the negative particle *ani*. The ungrammaticality of (7), however, has no bearing whatsoever on the verbness of *ha*. (7) is ungrammatical for two reasons: first, the accusative marker cannot be deleted after the complement sentence if the matrix verb *ha* is not negated, and secondly, the complementizer *ci* cannot be chosen unless the
matrix verb is negated. See the following two grammatical sentences which meet these conditions.

(8) John i cha lul ani masi ki lul ha-n-ta
    "It is the case that John doesn’t drink tea."
(9) John i cha lul ani masi ci (lul) ani ha-n-ta
    "It isn’t the case that John doesn’t drink tea."

Since I do not need an *ad hoc* surface structure constraint that he imagines that my “grammar really needs”, his third objection can be overruled and his vicious but unwarranted attack on my position loses its force.

In Song (1973), I noted disparity between the two types of negation and pointed out the dilemma it poses to a single underlying structure hypothesis. Yang points out that not only these verbs I listed, but other related ones do not allow Type I negation. After a brief discussion of the two types of negation, Yang concludes that the difference in productivity between the two types of negation does not necessarily support Song’s postulation of two different deep structures for them, since they are due, not to any deep structure differences, but to the nature of the verbs being negated. Yang may be right at least partially, but idiosyncracy of lexical items has no bearing on my hypothesis. If it does not support my position, it is at least neutral with regards to other hypothesis. It simply weakens, but does not invalidate my argument and Yang’s conclusion is a *non sequitur.*

Before I proceed any further, I would like to challenge his judgement on grammaticality of some Korean sentences. Yang marks the following strings to be either ungrammatical or odd.

(10) a. *mos a - n - ta
    not know-IND-DCL
    b. *ani iss -ta
    not exist-DCL
    c. ?*Mary nun ani alumptap -ta
    TOP not beautiful-DCL
    "Mary is not beautiful."

It is true that all those given above sound unnatural out of context, but they are fully grammatical nonetheless. Otherwise, Korean grammar would become monstrously complex, in order to generate the following sentences, while ruling out those above.

(11) a. amuto mos al-key swumese sa - n - ta
    someone not know-so that hide-and live-IND-DCL
    "He lives in hiding, so that no one knows (where)."

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5 Various labels have been proposed to differentiate the two types of negation from each other. In this paper, I will simply repeat those used in Yang’s paper. Type I and Type II refer to the kinds of negation exemplified in sentences (2) and (3) given above, respectively.
b. na nun nay nyen ey yeki ani iss-kess -ta
   I TOP next year in here not be-MOD-DCL
   "I won't be here next year."

c. ku hwacangphum ul sse-se ippe ci -n -ta myen
   that cosmetic article ACC use-and pretty INC-IND-DCL if
   ani alumtawu-n salam i et i iss -kess -n -i
   not beautiful IND person NOM where be-MOD-IND-Q
   "If a person becomes pretty by using that cosmetic article,
   who on earth would not be beautiful?"

Yang and many other Korean linguists seem to be confused about the distinction between
ungrammatical and unacceptable sentences. I must point out that many otherwise interesting
discussions on negation were vitiated by the failure to make a clear and systematic distinc-
tion between these two notions, controversial though they may still be.

I also noted in Song (1973) a disparity between the two types of negation with
regard to an affirmative polarity item. The examples I gave there were less than convinc-
ing and I will provide better examples here.

(12) pusang tangha-n swunkyeng i kyewu salana - ss - ta
    wound receive-MOD policeman NM barely recover-PAST-DCL
    "The wounded policeman managed to recover."

(13) *pusang tangha-n swunkyeng i kyewu ani salana-ss-ta
(14) pusang tangha-n swunkyeng i kyewu salana ci ani hay-ss-ta

    "It is not the case that the wounded policeman managed to recover."

Some manner adverbials can not occur in Type I negation but are well-formed in Type II
negation. Consider the following examples.

(15) John i yelsimhi pule lul payw-ess -ta
    NM hard French ACC learn-PAST-DCL
    "John studied French hard."

(16) *John i yelsimhi pule lul ani payw-ess-ta
(17) John i yelsimhi pule lul paywu ci ani hay-ss -ta
    COMP do-PAST

    "It is not the case that John studied French hard."

Yang's objection was that my earlier example was suspicious but once that objection
is overruled, I believe my argument still stands. He brings a negative polarity item and
argues that the two types of negation are equivalent with respect to the occurrence of the

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6 I was convinced at first that this sentence was ungrammatical. It is possible "to do something
enthusiastically" but not "to NOT do something enthusiastically". I was surprised later to find out
that some native speakers protested that (16) is interpretable and is synonymous with (17). I would
like to investigate further the question of the scope of negation but at the moment, I will claim
that at least in one reading, (16) is totally unacceptable. I will, however, allow that it can be
synonymous with (17) in the other reading, even if it is a somewhat strained interpretation.
polarity item, *acik* 'yet'. He then jumps to the conclusion that the polarity item renders no support to my hypothesis. I fail to see how his argument, based on the neg-polarity item, has any bearings on my argument based on the affirmative polarity item and some manner adverbials.

Yang then takes up the semantic question and again challenges the validity of my argument on the ground that disparity between the two types of negation is a matter of idiom vs. non-idiom reading. He may be partially correct but the real question is much deeper than he realizes. The heart of the matter is the scope difference between the two types of negation, which has been treated in Cho (1975) rather inadequately. Since I have already discussed the question of the scope of negation, although summarily, in Song (1976), I will not repeat it here. Yang's argument on this question is again without substance and quite shaky to say the least. It is well known that when adverbs, quantifiers, and delimiters occur in negative sentences, the two types of negation are subject to different semantic interpretations. This fact clearly strengthens my argument for separate underlying structures. Unfortunately, type II negation is ambiguous and one of its readings is synonymous with that of type I negation. If different interpretations for the two types of negation justify the postulation of the two separate underlying structures, so goes Yang's argument, identical readings of the two types of negation justifies the postulation of a single underlying structure for both of them. I have at least shown how this complication can be resolved by the proper ordering of rules as follows.

(18) 1. Syntactic transformation  
2. Intonation contour rule  
3. Neg scope rule

Korean, not unlike Japanese, seems to allow a kind of restructuring on the surface, which is reflected in the intonation contour and pause. As a result, the interpretation of the scope of negation is altered, allowing identical readings for the two different structures. Although Yang's contention may be logically flawless, it will remain empty until he shows that his hypothesis can account for the complication as well as mine or better. All that he does, however, is to suggest that either theory will need some kind of semantic interpretative rule applying to derived structures.

After reviewing three syntactic arguments and two semantic arguments which I have presented, Yang declares that he has found that none of the five arguments really stand. Statistics is also in his favor and Yang is quick to point out that all the generative grammarians, except Song, who have dealt with Korean negation have taken the alternative position of a single underlying structure hypothesis. It is obvious, however, that Yang's arguments, like many of his predecessors', made little dent on my theory of negation. I have responded to criticisms of Lee (1970) and Oh (1971) and also have shown clearly wherein lie the errors of their new theories. Although Yang's new hypothesis is no more
than a variation on the same theme, I will directly proceed to show the difficulty his arguments inevitably run into and the complication of description which results from his mistaken premises.

Yang's new theory or rather new variation on the old theme has three components: motivating Predicate Lowering in conjunction with Ha support à la Do Support in English, discussing the complementizer ci and double negation. Yang's arguments in support of Ha support are tortuously complex, highly elaborate and truly ingenious but totally ad hoc. Time and space do not allow me to go into a technical discussion of his sophisticated but unwarranted analysis here. All he manages to accomplish through the maze of complicated arguments is to obviate the crucial distinction between simplex and complex sentences. This point will become apparent in my discussion of the complementizer below.

Yang first challenges the notion that the complementizer ci is a variant realization of ki and occurs exclusively in a negative environment. He provides the following examples.

(19) pi ka o { *ci } nun ani pala -n -ta
   rain NM come COMP TOP not want-IND-DCL
   "(1) don't want that it rains."

(20) pap ul mek ci mal-ala
   rice ACC eat COMP don't-IMP
   "Don't eat rice!"

The counterexamples have been noted as early as 1967 and they no longer pose any serious problem. It is only when the negated matrix verb is ha that the complementizer ci is chosen. In (19), the negated matrix verb is not ha and naturally the complementizer ki occurs as my theory predicts. On the other hand, I have accounted for the occurrence of ci in (20) even when the matrix verb is not ha by reanalyzing the verb mal as a lexical realization of Neg+ha in an imperative sentence.

Secondly, Yang goes on to deny the identity of ci and ki as variant realization of the same morpheme on other grounds. His infelicitous attempt to distinguish the nominalizer ki and complementizer ki which is based on suspicious data and even stranger interpretation of them can be safely dismissed as irrelevant. Let us consider his examples demonstrating syntactic differences between ki and ci.

(21) a. Ku nun haksayng sicel ey wutungsayng i- ess -ki nun ha-ta
    he TOP student days in honor student be-PAST-COMP be-DCL
    "He was an honor student in his school days, I admit."

   b. *Ku nun haksayng sicel ey wutungsayng i-ess-ci nun ani ha-ta

Yang concludes that the complementizer ki may be preceded by a tense particle but the complementizer ci may not. But he is in error here again. In complex sentences like (21a) and (21b), the more common preterite form is obtained by affixing the past tense morpheme to the matrix verb ha as can be seen below.
I disagree with Yang on grammaticalness of (21b), which I believe would be readily acceptable in an appropriate context such as the following.

(23) wutungsayng i-ess-ci nun ani hay-to chayk un manhi ilk -ess-ta
             although book TOP a lot read-PAST-DCL
     “Although (he) was not an honor student, he read a lot of books I should say.”

Since Yang’s conclusion is based on a questionable data, his argument is at best shaky and unconvincing. I will present here for the first time a truly interesting piece of evidence which demonstrates unequivocally the identity of the complementizers *ci* and *ki*. Consider the following.

(24) a. son ul cap ki to ha ko ip ul machwu ki to hay-ss-ta
             hand ACC hold COMP also do and mouth touch PAST-DCL
     “(He) both held (her) hand and kissed her.”

b. son ul cap ki nun hay-ss-eto ip ul machwu ci nun ani hay-ss-ta
     TOP though not
     “Although (he) held (her) hand, (he) didn’t kiss her.”

c. son ul cap ki nun hay-ss-eto ip ul machwu ki kkaci nun ani hay-ss-ta
     to the extent
     “Although (he) held (her) hand, (he) didn’t go to the extent of kissing her.”

All three sentences above exemplify cases of complex sentences conjoined by the conjunctor *eto* ‘although’. In (24a), both conjuncts are in the affirmative and only the complementizer *ki* occurs as my theory predicts. In (24b), only the second conjunct is in the negative and this fact accounts for the occurrence of *ci* only in the second conjunct. (24c) is an apparent counterexample to all the existing hypotheses on Korean negation that have been put forward in the past thirteen years. This seeming counterexamples provides a crucial piece of evidence for the identity of the complementizers. Most Korean linguists, except Yang, assumed that *ci* is a variant shape of the complementizer *ki* that occurs only in the negative environment with the matrix verb *ha*. This assumption can account for the alternation of *ki* and *ci* in sentence (24b). The new data such as (24c) apparently conflicts with such an assumption. Consider, however, the following examples.

(25) Mary lul manna meet
        ci                  nun to ya
        ki                  kkaci maca cocha
        ani hay-ss-ta
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(He) did not [indeed even etc.] meet Mary

(25) shows that ci and ki can occur in very similar environments. Are they in contrast and therefore two separate morphemes as Yang claims? My answer is no. What is happening here is an example of ki~ci alternation rule being blocked by a phonological factor. When a particle of more than one syllable follows, the rule that converts ki to ci in the negative environment is blocked. Thus we have an indirect but indubitable evidence that ci is derived from ki. My hypothesis is not at all affected by the discovery of this new fact. All that is needed in my grammar is an addition of a constraint that blocks the application of the ci conversion rule.

Yang’s grammar on the other hand, will have to face a serious problem. It must first revise what he calls the complement ci insertion rule. Furthermore, he has to modify the rule for the insertion of the complementizer ki as well, since they are not related in any way, the modification of conditions for ci insertion will have no effect on the occurrence of the complementizer ki. Yang’s grammar which is already agonizingly complex with global rules and what not, must be further overburdened with new and baffling conditions.

One final serious problem with Yang’s description has to do with the notion of complementation. Since he calls ci and ki complementizers, I assume that the occurrence of either of these elements automatically implies a prior complementation process. According to Yang’s new and sophisticated theory, however, the matrix verb ha that requires a complement sentence as an object is a dummy element transformationally introduced to prop up a tense suffix, a bound morpheme. The verb ha, nevertheless, behaves very much like an ordinary verb. The negative particle may precede it directly, and tense and aspect as well as mood morphemes can be suffixed to it in a fixed order. Yang’s hypothesis must prove, in order to be a viable theory of negation, that there is no distinction between simple and complex sentences in Korean and a complex sentence can be generated by transformationally introducing the matrix verb, which leads a parasitic life on a tense morpheme, a bound form at that!

One of many difficulties with Yang’s theory of negation, like those of his fellow semanticists’, will be the question of double negation. Once again there is a disparity between the two types of negation. While Type II negation permits the occurrence of two negative particles, Type I allows only one. I raised the question where the two negative particles come from if the same one can be arbitrarily attached to the verb of a complement sentence as well as to that of the matrix sentence. Consider the following sentences.

(26) a. John i ka-ss-ta

    go

    “John went.”

b. John i ani, ka-ss-ta
“John didn’t go.”
c. John i ka ci ani₁ hay-ss-ta
   COMP
   “It is not the case that John went.”
d. John i ani₁ ka ci ani₂ hay-ss-ta
   “It isn’t the case that John didn’t go.”
e. John i ka ci ani₁ ha ci ani₂ hay-ss-ta
   “It isn’t the case that it isn’t the case that John went.”

If (26b) and (26c) are derived from the same underlying structure, there is no way we can generate sentences like (26d). Yang, nevertheless, is confident that he has found the solution to the question of the double negation and provides the following underlying structure.⁷

⁷ Yang is fully aware of the ad-hoc nature of his monstrously complex tree and a deep structure cooccurrence restriction he places on the tree which he admits to be not well motivated. He confesses that “if such a deep structure constraint cannot be motivated after all, it could cause a serious problem in our approach.” The only justification he presents is his belief that anything goes when “still we are in a darkness [sic] on the auxiliary system of embedded clauses.”
But unfortunately, his unmotivated underlying structure raises more questions than it can resolve, although Yang claims to the contrary. His new theory is so powerful that it can overcome the weaknesses of the earlier theories at the expense of giving up more constrained theories for a totally unconstrained one. Consider, for instance, the arbitrary surface destination of the negative particle in his underlying structure. In (26d), Yang’s Neg which is dominated by $S_3$ ends up in the complement $S$. In (26e), however, the same Neg ends up in the matrix $S$. Now compare (26c) with (26d). I believe these two sentences have identical surface structures except for an extra Neg in the complement $S$ in the latter. When the underlying structure contains only one Neg, it can end up in the matrix $S$ as (26c) illustrates. The same Neg must be assigned to the complement $S$, however, when the underlying structure contains two Negs. But, of course, the lower Neg can be attached to the matrix as (26e) shows, in which case, the higher Neg must move upstairs and consort with the highest $S$. To sum up the chaotic picture of the confusing Neg traffic, regardless of the question of legality, it looks like the following: the same Neg in the underlying structure can have different destinations on the surface and the same Neg in the identical position on the surface is sometimes derived from the different sources in the underlying structure. This may be precisely what Yang has intended to account for synonymy of the two types of negation. But his semantic approach based on synonymy will have to face a truly ominous problem of accounting for synonymy in similar cases.

Now consider the following pairs of sentences.

(27) a. John i Mary eykey ani wul key hay-ss-ta
DAT cry COMP
"John made Mary not cry."

b. John i Mary eykey wul key key ani hay-ss-ta
"John didn’t make Mary cry."

(28) a. John i ani ka ki lo hay-ss-ta
go COMP DES
"John decided not to go."

b. John i ka ki lo ani hay-ss-ta
"John didn’t decide to go."

(27) is an example of periphrastic causative and (28) another example of complex $S$ containing a complement sentence. In these cases, however, the paired sentences have

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8 Sentence (28b) appears to meet the structural description for the $ki$-$ci$ alternation rule to apply. Rachel Costa was the first to call my attention to the structural similarity between (28b) and (3). (28b), however, contains the particle $lo$, not the accusative marker $lu$ after the complementizer $ki$. In modern Korean, we have to treat this particle as a part of a compound form $ki-lo$ or postulate $lo$ as an element in the deep structure. Either way, the presence of $lo$ will block the application of the above mentioned rule and $ki$ remains unaltered even when the matrix verb $ha$ is negated.
different meanings depending on where the Neg is assigned on the surface. Yang’s grammar must make an arbitrary distinction between these and Type II negation despite unmistakable structural similarity precisely because it is merely surface similarity. It turns out, however, that the most natural as well as simple way to account for the scope difference between Type I and Type II is to consider the latter to have a similar structure as those given above. The alleged synonymy of the two types of negation in Korean can be explained away by postulating a semantic interpretative rule that says that the Neg scope rule will have no effect unless constituents like adverbs, quantifiers, delimiters, etc., are contained in a sentence. Yang’s new theory of negation, if pushed to its logical extremity, must provide an identical underlying structure not only for (26d) and (26e) but also for (26a). Yang and his fellow semanticists have been claiming a total and unquestioned synonymy between (26b) and (26c). It seems to me that synonymy between (26a) and (26d–e) is no less true or real. No linguists, however, would ever attempt to derive all these three sentences from a single underlying structure on the ground that they are all synonymous. Yang and his colleagues have been unaware that their theories are no more reasonable than the apparently ludicrous one that insists that all three synonymous sentences must be derived from the same underlying structure.

There are many more questions to be raised as to the validity of Yang’s unwarranted claims, but enough have been shown to prove his new theory to be unreasonable and untenable and no further discussion of technicalities will be necessary. It is truly unfortunate that the undefined and indefinable notion of synonymy has been the Frankenstein for many Korean semanticists who have made gallant and indefatigable attempts one after another, to account for the alleged synonymy of the two types of negation as well as the two types of causatives.

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