

# The Degree of Transitivity in Korean: A Functional-Typological Approach

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## 0. Introduction

Transitivity is traditionally understood as the carrying-over or transferring of an effect of the action expressed by the verb from one participant (the ‘agent’) to another (the ‘patient’). Needless to say, this notional definition of transitivity is weak and inadequate, as there are many counterexamples found in various languages. No formal grammar have actually tackled the facts about transitivity in a concrete way (Lyons 1968: 350–1). Transitivity is presupposed as something like a concurred notion and defined only within the specific context of a particular formal theory. Furthermore, it is almost always treated as “a by-product of something else” (Hopper & Thompson 1982: 1). However, the difficulty of definition does not necessarily mean that the notion of transitivity is incoherent or even particularly unclear. The situation here may only be an example of “the standard problem of indefinability that pervades nearly all areas of scientific inquiry. It is simply true in general that empirically significant concepts are inherently incompatible with rigorous definition, i.e. in terms of necessary and sufficient condition” (Sanders 1984: 222).

Nevertheless, there is some prototypical notion of a normal transitive sentence, in which an agent does something to an object. “Objects are, in turn, often characterized as either the undergoer of an action (‘the bread’ in ‘She sliced the bread’), or the thing made in a predication of making (‘a sonnet’ in ‘I wrote a sonnet’), or the thing perceived with a verb of perception (‘an owl’ in ‘He saw an owl’), and so on” (*ibid*).

The concept of transitivity we are going to investigate here is degree of transitivity. The traditional treatment of transitivity including Lyons fall

short of proposing “degree of transitivity” even though it has been noted in a number of individual studies<sup>1</sup> that many phenomena in different languages could be better captured through a notion of continuum, transitivity being a marker of degree.

Hopper & Thompson (1980) proposed that transitivity is a notion that consists of a number of components, only one of which is the presence of an object of the verb. These components involve certain parameters concerning argument NPs and pragmatic parameters of various kinds such as the punctuality and felicity of the verb, the volitional activity of the agent and the referentiality and degree of affectedness of the object etc. These components co-vary with one another for varying degrees of transitivity of a clause as a whole.

In this paper, we are concerned with degrees of transitivity manifested in Korean, which is by and large compatible with the Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) approach. Transitivity features can be manifested either morpho-syntactically or semantically. Thus, we will examine examples of correlations between morphosyntactic features and semantic interpretations.

In Korean grammar, it is generally assumed that transitive verbs can take objects marked with the accusative marker *-ul/-lul*, whereas intransitive verbs cannot. But some intransitive verbs can take object-like complements marked with the accusative marker like:

- (1) a. kil -ul      ket-ta.  
       road-Acc walk-Dec.  
       “to walk the street”  
    b. san-ul        ollaka-ta  
       mountain-Acc climb-Dec.  
       “to climb the mountain”

\* Yale romanization has been adopted for transcribing Korean examples in this paper. The following abbreviations have been used to label grammatical morphemes in the glosses below Korean example sentences:

Acc=Accusative marker, Appl=Applicative, Aux=Auxiliary, Caus=Causative, Comp=Complementizer, Dat=Dative, Dec=Declarative sentence ending, Hon=Honorific suffix, Loc=Locative, Nom=Nominative marker, Past=Past tense, Poss=Possessive marker, Pres=Present tense, Top=Topic marker, Tranf=Transferentive ending.

<sup>1</sup> For these individual studies, refer to Hopper & Thompson (1982).

A problem we face here is whether or not these complements marked with the accusative marker are objects even though they are used with intransitive verbs. On the other hand, the object-like complement can take a nominative marker in sentences like:

- (2) a. *nay-ka kay-ka musep-ta.*  
 I-Nom dog-Nom fear-Dec  
 “I am afraid of dogs.”  
 b. *nay-ka ton-i philyoha-ta.*  
 I-Nom money-Nom need  
 “I need money.”

As the English glosses imply, the complements marked with the nominative marker in (2) seem to be objects at least semantically. Some might argue that sentences in (2) are the so-called “double subject” construction, which have been considered peculiar in Korean syntax. However, the syntactic behaviour of the nominatively marked NP<sub>2</sub> argument is different from the typical subject with respect to the agreement with the honorific suffix. In Korean, the honorific suffix *-si-* agrees and refers to the esteemed subject as in the following example:

- (3) *halapeci ka o-si-ess-ta.*  
 grandfather Nom come-Hon-Past-Dec  
 “Grandfather came. (esteemed)”

Bearing this in mind, consider the followings:

- (4) a. *nay-ka halapeci-ka musep-(\*si)-ta.*  
 I-Nom grandfather-Nom fear-(\*Hon)-Dec  
 “I am afraid of grandfather”.  
 b. *halapeci-ka ton-i philyoha-si-ta.*  
 grandfather Nom money-Nom need-Hon-Dec  
 “Grandfather needs money.” (Grandfather exalted)  
 c. *nay-ka halapeci-ka philyoha-(\*si)-ta.*  
 I Nom grandfather-Nom need-(\*Hon)-Dec  
 “I need a grandfather.”

As seen above, the honorific suffix agrees with the first Nom-NP, not

with the second Nom-NP. It means that the second NP marked with nominative is not a subject. Thus we assume that two argument structures like (2) express transitive situations.

Likewise, we sometimes face situations where it is quite difficult for us to determine the objectness based on the traditional dichotomy of transitivity.

There may be variations in degrees of transitivity. Consider the following clauses:

- (5) a. Yengswu-nun hankwuk salam-ieyyo.  
           Top Korean-person-be  
           “Yongsu is Korean.”
- b. Yengswu-nun chinkwu-ka iss-eyo.  
                   friend-Nom exist-Dec  
           “Yongsu has a friend.”
- c. Yengswu-nun ton-i philyohay-yo.  
                   money-Nom need-Dec  
           “Yongsu needs money.”
- d. Yengswu-nun yenge-lul al-ayo.  
                   English-Acc know-Dec  
           “Yongsu knows English.”
- e. Yengswu-nun sakwa-lul sa-yo.  
                   apple-Acc buy-Dec  
           “Yongsu buys an apple.”
- f. Yengswu-nun sakwa-lul mek-eyo.  
                   apple-Acc eat-Dec  
           “Yongsu eats the apple.”

According to the traditional dichotomic view, the borderline between transitive and intransitive verbs is defined on the basis whether or not a verb can take a direct object. In Korean, the division could thus be drawn between (c) and (d). In English, one can not rely on such surface manifestations as the Korean object maker *-ul/lul* and could, therefore, argue that the division should be between (a) and (b). This shows that a clearcut borderline between transitive and intransitive is difficult to draw and this can be varied with particular languages.

We now turn to examine the sentence of possession ((b)) and sentence of necessity ((c)) in more detail. For possession and necessity, the same

propositional content can be expressed by Dat–Nom pattern as in (5b′) and (5c′).

- (5) b′. Yengswu–eykey chinkwu–ka iss–eyo.  
           Dat friend–Nom exist–Dec  
           “Yongsu has a friend.”
- c′. Yengswu–eykey ton–i philyohay–yo.  
           Dat money–Nom need–Dec  
           “Yongsu needs money.”

As the transitivity of a sentence decreases, the case marking pattern moves from the canonical transitive Nom–Acc pattern to the so-called “dative–subject” construction, namely Dat–Nom pattern like (5b′) and (5c′) or even to the Nom–Nom pattern<sup>2</sup> like (5b) and (5c). The notions of possession and necessity are often expressed by stative predicates. One way to decrease the transitivity of a sentence is to use a stative predicate. There are many examples of so-called dative subject sentences with stative predicates in many languages as in the following examples (data from Shibatani (1982: 106)).

- (6) a. Latin: Puero liber est.  
           boy–Dat book–Nom is  
           “The boy has a book.”
- b. Spanish: Me gusta la cerveza.  
           I–Dat like the beer–Nom  
           “I like beer.”
- c. Russian: Mne nužna kniga.  
           I–Dat necessary book–Nom  
           “I need a book.”

<sup>2</sup> The Nom–Nom deviation pattern appears to be quite rare, but Japanese provides examples used primarily for subjective feelings (See Shibatani 1982, Watanabe 1984).

- (1) Taroo ga Hanako ga sukida  
           Nom Nom like  
           “Taro likes Hanako.”
- (2) Watashi ga ringo ga hoshii  
           I Nom Apple Nom want  
           “I want an apple.”

- d. Kannada: Manage jarman baratte.  
 I-Dat German-Nom can  
 "I can (understand) German."
- e. German: Mir gefallen diese Damen.  
 I-Dat like these ladies-Nom  
 "I like these ladies."
- f. Turkish: Ben-a para lazim.  
 I-Dat money-Nom need  
 "I need money."
- g. Japanese: Taro ni kane ga aru.  
 Dat money-Nom have  
 "Taro has money."

These predicates do not comply with the canonical transitive sentence of Nom-Acc pattern. Following Hopper and Thompson's (1980) transitivity parameters, even though these sentences have two participants in an event, they are non-action, non-volitional, the agent is low in potency, the patient is not affected. All this indicates that sentences with stative predicates are very low in transitivity.

The above examples show that even though a sentence have two participants, the degree of transitivity may vary with semantic parameters. Our assumption is that transitivity is not dichotomous, but is a continuum. Thus, it follows that clauses lacking an overt accusative marker in two-argument constructions must be locatable somewhere on this continuum.

Based on this assumption, we will examine, in the following section, examples of correlations between morphosyntactic features and semantic interpretations with respect to the case-marking alternations for objects.

## 1. Transitivity and Affectedness

### 1.1. Accusative Marking and Affectedness

In some languages a distinction is made in case marking according to whether the patient is wholly or partly affected. The marking for the partly affected patient is either a special partitive case or the genitive. The marking for the wholly affected patient is usually the accusative. This kind

of alternation can be found in Russian, Finnish and other eastern European language.<sup>3</sup>

(7) Russian (Mallinson & Blake 1981: 65)

a. Peredajte mne xleb.  
 Pass me bread–Acc  
 “pass me the bread.”

b. Peredajte mne xleba.  
 pass me bread–gen  
 “Pass me some bread.”

(8) Finnish (Shibatani 1982: 110)

a. Lauri otti rahan.  
 took money–Acc  
 “Lauri took (all) the money.”

b. Lauri otti rahaa.  
 money–Partitive  
 “Lauri took some money.”

Hopper & Thompson’s observation that the more affected the object NP, the higher the transitivity is attested in a wide range of languages. This can be supported by Korean data as well. In Korean, there are cases where we can find alternative case-marking between accusative and locative. Some verbs of motion take a place-NP as their complement which shows alternative case-marking. In this case, taking accusative marker indicates that the motion designated by the verb takes place covering the entire dimension of the NP, and taking locative marker indicates that the motion takes place at some part of place. Consider the following examples:

(9) a. kongwen-ulo ttwi-ess-ta.  
 park to run–Past–Dec  
 ‘ran to the park’

b. kongwen-eyse ttwi-ess-ta.  
 park at run–Past–Dec  
 ‘ran in the park’

<sup>3</sup> Moravcsik (1978) points out that this is an areal feature found in eastern European languages such as Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian.

- c. kongwen-ul      ttwi-ess-ta.  
 park      Acc      run-Past-Dec  
 'ran along (through) the park'

*ulo* 'to' and *eyse* 'at, on' are locative case markers. (9a) indicates the goal point and (9b) the spatial limits within which the action takes place. The interrelationship between the space and the action designated by the predicate is perceived as partial in (9a-b) but in (9c) the place NP marked by accusative marker, is perceived as more total. We can here observe the correlation between an accusative NP and its affectedness which is one of typical characteristics of high transitivity.<sup>4</sup> The following examples further corroborate this point.

- (10) a. tali-    \*lo/\*eyse/lul    kenneta.  
           bridge to    at    Acc    go across  
           'go across the bridge'
- b. sewul-\*lo/\*ey(se)/ul    cina-ass-ta.  
           Seoul to    at      Acc    pass-Past-Dec  
           "passed (went through) Seoul"

*kenne-* 'go across' and *cina-* 'pass, go through' are verbs implicating "completeness" or "thoroughness" of the action of a verb. In a context in which the predicate has the meaning of completion the NP may only be marked by accusative marker as shown in (10a) and (10b).

When the predicate is a motion (movement) verb, the locative NP implies the goal point to which the subject moves, and the accusative NP implies the area where the subject's movement takes place. Consider the following examples (from Jeong (1988)):

- (11) a. John i    san-ey            ka-taka    holangi lul    manna-ass-ta.  
           Nom mountain-Loc go-Tranf    tiger Acc    meet-Past-Dec  
           "On the way to the    mountain, John met a tiger."
- b. John i    san-ul                ka-taka    holangi lul    manna-ass-ta.  
           Nom mountain-Acc go-Tranf    tiger Acc    meet-Past-Dec  
           "While John was walking in the mountain, he met a tiger."

<sup>4</sup> A similar co-relation between accusative marking and affectedness in Japanese is shown in Sugamoto (1982).

The semantic difference is that in (11a), the subject has not reached the mountain yet, while in (11b), the subject was already in the mountain when he met a tiger. This semantic contrast could also be explained based on the affectedness of the object. Although the action of “going” does not affect the object, the locative-marked space in (11a) is not affected (come into contact) by the subject at all, on the contrary, the accusative-marked space in (11b) can be said to be affected (come into contact) by the subject.

The semantic contrast between locative *-ey* and accusative *-ul* is also manifested in the case of time NPs (Jeong 1988). While the locative marker is used with reference to a point in time, the accusative marker cannot be used in such case. Consider the following examples:

- (12) a. 2si-(ey/\*lul)        manna-ca.  
           o'clock-Loc/\*Acc meet-Let's  
           “Let's meet at 2 o'clock.”
- b. 2 sikan-(*\*ey/ul*) John i        kongpwuha-n-ta.  
           hour Loc Acc                Nom        study-Pres-Dec  
           “John studies for two hours.”

As seen above, while the locative marker indicates a point in time, the accusative marker indicates a whole period of duration time.

### 1.2. Total Affectedness of the Object-space vs. Partial Affectedness of Locative-space.

The contrast between total affectedness of the object-space and partial affectedness of locative-space is also found in predicates other than motion verbs<sup>5</sup>:

<sup>5</sup> This contrast is also true of some predicates in Japanese (See Sugamoto 1982: 438):

- a. kabe - ni    nuru  
    wall on    paint  
    ‘paint on the wall’
- b. kabe-o    nuru  
    wall Acc paint  
    ‘paint the wall’

- (13) a. John-i chayk-phyoci-ey kemunsayk-ul chilha-ess-ta.  
 Nom book-cover-Loc black-Acc paint-Past-Dec  
 "John painted black on the book-cover."  
 b. John-i chayk-phyoci-lul kemunsayk-ulo chilha-ess-ta.  
 Nom book-cover-Acc black -Inst paint-Past-Dec.  
 "John painted the book-cover in (with) black."

While (13a) implies that only some space of the bookcover is painted black, (13b) implies that all the bookcover is painted in black. In other words, there could be other colours on the bookcover in case of (a), but there is black colour only in (b). The semantic difference between (a) and (b) correlates with the case marking alternation of space-object.<sup>6</sup> In the following examples, the same kind of correlation between case marking alternation and semantic contrast is found:

- (14) a. Jonh-i pyek-ey sinmunci-lul pwuthi-ess-ta.  
 Nom wall-Loc newspaper-Acc paste-Past-Dec  
 "John pasted newspaper on the wall."  
 b. John-i pyek-ul sinmunci-lo pwuthi-ess-ta.  
 Nom wall-Loc newspaper-with paste-Past-Dec  
 "John pasted the wall with newspaper."  
 (15) a. John-i cengwen-ey sonamu-lul kakkwu-ess-ta.  
 Nom garden-Loc pinetree-Acc plant-Past-Dec  
 "John planted pinetrees in the garden."  
 b. John-i cengwen-ul sonamu-lo kakkwu-ess-ta.  
 Nom garden-Acc pinetree-with plant-Past-Dec  
 "John planted the garden with pinetrees."

Example (15) is one of the well-known cases which show semantic contrast between accusative and locative case marking of the spacial object in various languages. The only kind/type of tree that exists in the garden is pine in (15b), while we can suppose many other trees among which pine is just one kind in the garden in (15a). Here again, we can see that the accusative-marked space-object (i.e., garden-Acc) is totally affected (cultivated) by the material, pinetree, whereas the locative-marked space-object (i.

<sup>6</sup> The semantic difference between the alternative constructions in Korean is briefly mentioned in Hong (1987: 25-8).

e., garden–Loc) is only partially affected (cultivated) by the material.

Some more examples of verbs of this type are the following:

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| (16) palu– (to paste) | cangsikha– (to decorate) |
| teph– (to cover)      | chaywu– (to fill)        |
| meywu– (to fill up)   | cosengha– (to make)      |

According to Moravcsik (1978: 248), “a subset of those verbs in English whose complements are alternatively case–marked for the accusative and some adverbial case constitutes a natural semantic class in that its members all express the notion of filling or providing or that of emptying or depriving”.<sup>7</sup> It is not clear whether or not those verbs in (13)–(16) constitute a natural semantic class in Korean. However, at least, cross–linguistically verb groups such as ‘paint, plant, paste, spray, etc.’ show the semantic contrast depending on case marking alternation between space–object and its complement.

There are further examples for the contrast between total affectedness of object–space and partial affectedness of locative–space in Indo–European languages.

In English, the verbs ‘spray’, ‘plant’ are rather well–known examples<sup>8</sup>:

<sup>7</sup> The following are her examples:

- (1) a. John smeared paint on the wall  
b. John smeared the wall with paint.
- (2) a. John planted trees in the garden.  
b. John planted the garden with trees.
- (3) a. He cleaned the fat out of the pan.  
b. He cleaned the pan of the fat.

<sup>8</sup> There is a semantic difference between the alternative constructions. “The semantic difference can be appreciated through the differential entailments of members of each pair. Thus, for instance, spraying the wall with paint entails that something has been done to the wall: and spraying paint on the wall entails that something has been done with the wall. In the first instance the entailment is that the wall has been “affected”, in the second case there is no such entailment. Furthermore, planting the garden with trees entails that as a result the whole garden had trees in it, whereas planting trees in the garden does not entail this. Thus, in the first instance involvement of the whole location is understood, whereas in the second there is no such understanding. In general the locative complement marked as accusative is asserted to be affected by the event in its full extent, whereas the locative marked as locative adverbial is not asserted to be so affected” (Moravcsik 1978: 248).

- (17) a. John sprayed paint on the wall.  
       b. John sprayed the wall with paint.
- (18) a. John planted trees in the garden.  
       b. John planted the garden with trees.

Some verbs take only one pattern or the other, forming complementary sets, although with some qualitative differences in meaning (Croft 1991: 200):

- (19) John put the blanket over the sofa.  
 (20) John covered the sofa with the blanket.

'Put' is considerably more general than 'cover'. An example of semantically much closer verbs is the well-known pair 'pour' and 'fill'.

Also in German, some examples show the semantic contrast mentioned above (Comrie 1985: 313). For example:

- (21) a. Hans pflanzt Bäume im Garten.  
       "Hans plants trees in the garden."  
       b. Hans be-pflanzt den Garten mit Bäumen.  
       "Hans plants the garden with trees."

As implied from the English translation, these examples show the contrast in meaning. Russian also behaves just like German, for example (Comrie 1985: 314):

- (22) a. Ivan sejet/posejal pshenicu v pole.  
       "Ivan sows/sowed wheat in the field."  
       b. Ivan zaseivajet/zasejal pole pshenicej.  
       "Ivan sows/sowed the field with wheat."

The change in the case marking of the object between (a) and (b) is much as in the English glosses: *pshenicu* 'wheat' is accusative (direct object) in (a) and *v pole* 'in the field' is a prepositional phrase; in (b), *pole* is accusative (direct object), while *pshenicej* 'with wheat' is instrumental. These examples show the same meaning difference, too. In (b), for instance, there is the implication that the whole of the field was sown with wheat; whereas in (a) there is no such implication, and it is quite possible that only a small amount of wheat was sown in a small part of the field.

A similar example can be found also in Hungarian (Moravcsik 1978: 248):

- (23) a. János fákat ültetett a kertbe.  
 John trees–Acc plant the garden–into  
 “John planted trees in the garden.”
- b. János beültetett a kertet fákkal.  
 John Appl–planted the garden–Acc trees–with  
 “John planted the garden with trees.”

As we examined so far, many languages generally show the contrast between total affectedness of object–space and partial affectedness of locative–space. The locative complement marked as accusative is meant to be affected by the event in its full extent, whereas the locative marked as locative adverbial is not meant to be so affected. This phenomenon is one aspect of correlations between morphosyntactic features and semantic interpretations with respect to the case–marking alternations for objects.

### 1.3. Case–marking of the Causee and Affectedness

Now, if we turn to the two kinds of causative construction distinguished by the alternation of case marking of the causee, we have a better understanding of the situation.

In many languages, there is a high correlation between morphological case and semantic roles. In Japanese, for instance, there are two ways of encoding the causee.

- (24) a. Taroo-ga Ziroo-o ikaseta.  
 Nom Acc go–Caus  
 “Taroo forced Ziro to go.”
- b. Taroo-ga Ziroo-ni ikaseta.  
 Nom Dat/Inst go–Caus  
 “Taroo got (persuaded) Ziroo to go.”

In this example, while (a) assigns minimal control to Ziroo, (b) allows that Ziroo may have retained greater control. A similar distinction with the causative of a transitive verb is found in the following examples, which show the semantic contrast of contact vs. distant causation. Consider the

following examples (data from Saksena 1980: 820):

(25) Bolivian Quechua:

- a. nuqa Fan-ta rumi-ta apa-ci-ni.  
 I Juan-Acc rock-Acc carry-Caus-1sg.  
 "I made Juan carry the rock."
- b. nuqa Fan-wan rumi-ta apa-ci-ni.  
 I Juan-Inst rock-Acc carry-Caus-1sg.  
 "I had Juan carry the rock."

(26) Hungarian:

- a. Köhögtettem a gyerek-et.  
 I-caused-to cough the boy-Acc  
 "I made the boy cough."
- b. Köhögtettem a gyerek-ket.  
 I-caused-to cough the boy-Inst  
 "I had the boy cough." (by asking him to do so)

In these examples, while (a) implies that the causee retains little or no control, (b) implies that the causer worked indirectly on the causee to get him to do something, for instance by persuading him without the use of force.

Apparently the distinction between this type of causation and the other non-coercive causation is observed in a number of languages with different case marking of causee paralleling the Korean construction:

- (27) a. John i ai lul ka-key ha-ess-ta.  
 Nom child Acc go-Caus-Past-Dec  
 "John made the child go."
- b. John i ai eykey ka-key ha-ess-ta.  
 Nom child Dat go-Caus-Past-Dec  
 "John let the child to go."

Namely the accusatively marked causative parallels other instances of accusative marking associated with the notion of total affectedness of objects. In the framework of causation, the "total affectedness" is realized in the sense of coercion and direct causation as well as total control over the causee. In causative expressions, the causee marked with accusative case is supposed to be totally affected by the causer, which means the causee has

no control or less control over the action in comparison with the causee marked with dative or instrumental case.

All these examples show that the accusative case is related to the notion of total affectedness of the object which is consistent with Hopper and Thompson’s (1980) transitivity hypothesis.

## 2. Transitivity and Subjective Emotion: Nom–Nom Pattern

Among two–argument verb constructions we may classify the kind of verbs variously called by linguists as “psychological verbs” (Kim 1989), “psych–movement verbs” or “inversion verbs” (Verhaar 1990), “Experiential construction” (Chun & Zubin 1990) “Adjectives of internal feeling” (Sugamoto 1982) “Sense Adjective Verb construction” (Cho 1988); that is, verbs which contain an experiencer and an object of experience. These verbs most typically express thoughts or feelings. Experiencer verbs are found widely across languages of very different typologies (For this see Verhaar 1990: 107ff).<sup>9</sup>

In Korean, the canonical expression of subjective feelings takes a Nom–Nom pattern.

- (28) a. *nay ka paym i musep-ta.*  
           I    Nom snake Nom afraid–Dec  
           “I am afraid of snakes.”
- b. *nay ka kohyang i kulip-ta.*  
           I    Nom hometown Nom miss–Dec  
           “I miss my hometown.”

Even though these sentences contain two arguments and only one of them is the subject, it is grammatically impossible to have the canonical transitive Nom–Acc pattern with these predicates.

- (29) a. \**nay ka paym ul musep-ta.*  
           I    Nom snake Acc afraid–Dec  
           “I am afraid of snakes.”

<sup>9</sup> Although present–day English does not have any more constructions like *me thinks*, Dutch still has *mij dunkt* (me: DAT think: 3: sg), and German has *es gefällt mir nicht* (it please: 3: sg me: DAT not).

- b. \**nay ka kohyang ul kulip-ta.*  
 I Nom hometown Acc miss-Dec  
 "I miss my hometown."

In the present tense, first person subjects in declarative sentences and the second person subjects in interrogative sentences are perfectly acceptable but it sounds odd if they are used with a third person subject:

- (30) a. ?\**John i paym i musep-ta.*  
 Nom snake Nom afraid-Dec  
 "John is afraid of snakes."  
 b. ?\**John i kohyang i kulip-ta.*  
 Nom hometown Nom miss-Dec  
 "John misses his hometown."

This can be explained based on the accessibility of the speaker to the subjective feeling of the experiencer. The speaker can make direct assertions about his/her own feelings, or he/she can make an inquiry into the feelings of the hearer. However, the speaker cannot have direct access to a third person's subjective internal feelings. In other words, one does not know what the other person is feeling because 'feeling' is such a thing that only the one who feels it knows for sure. Generally speaking, we can not assert what other people are feeling unless we have information about it.

Korean grammaticality prohibits reporting a third person's internal condition directly in the present tense. Instead, the language provides other means of reporting a third person's internal feelings.<sup>10</sup> The third person can become the subject of an embedded clause under evidential auxiliaries.

- (31) *John i kohyang i kulip-un kes kath-ta.*  
 Nom hometown Nom miss Comp seem-Dec  
 "It seems that John misses hometown."

*kes kath-* is evidential in Korean indicating that the whole proposition is based on the speaker's inference.

Even though a third person's internal feeling is not revealed to others, as

<sup>10</sup> The situation is similar in Japanese. See for Japanese data Watanabe (1984).

his/her behaviour becomes more apparent to the speaker, a given expression will shift from a Nom-Nom pattern to the canonical transitive Nom-Acc pattern. If the predicate of internal feeling is used with the verbal auxiliary *-e ha-*, which denotes externalization (or manifestation) of internal feeling (or emotion), a third person subject can be used in the Nom-Acc pattern.

- (32) a. John i paym ul musep-e ha-n-ta.  
 Nom snake Acc afraid-Manif-Pres-Dec  
 "John is evincing fear of snakes."  
 b. John i kohyang ul kulip-e ha-n-ta.  
 Nom hometown Acc miss-Manif-Pres-Dec  
 "John is evincing homesickness."

The predicates in (32) are the combination of descriptive verbs referring to subjective emotions with verbal auxiliary *-e ha-*. This combination externalized the emotion and, in grammar, changes the descriptive verb into a processive one. Here is a list of such expressions:

- |                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| (33) Descriptive verbs   | Processive verbs     |
| pulep- 'envious'         | pulep-e ha- 'envy'   |
| coh- 'is good, is liked' | coh-a ha- 'like'     |
| silh- 'is disliked'      | silh-e ha- 'dislike' |
| komap- 'is thankful'     | komap-e ha- 'thank'  |

The externalization of one's subjective, internal feeling seems to be related with transitivity. While predicates of one's subjective and internal feeling are low in transitivity, if these predicates are used in a construction with a verbal auxiliary of manifestation *-e ha-*, these express high transitivity. Namely, objects very low in transitivity are marked as nominative instead of accusative.

A similar example of case marking alternation is found in predicates expressing emotions such as liking and disliking.

- (34) Korean  
 Nay-ka ayki-ka coh-ta.  
 I-Nom baby-Nom like-Dec  
 "I like baby."

## (35) Japanese

Taroo-ga Hanako-ga sukida.

Nom Nom like

“Taro likes Hanako.”

In Korean, the nominative-accusative case marking alternation of objects in “experiential constructions” is determined by externalization of the internal feeling.

In some languages, the differential case marking of objects between nominative and accusative has something to do with the animacy and definiteness of objects. The following Spanish example illustrates this type:

## (36) Spanish (Moravcsik 1978: 273)

a. el chico ve la nieve.

the-Nom boy sees the-Nom snow

“The boy sees the snow.”

b. el chico ve a esa chica.

the-Nom boy sees Acc this girl

“The boy sees this girl.”

In this language, objects that are animate and definite are accusatively marked but objects that are not animate and definite are nominatively marked. This type of case marking, which marks animate and/or definite objects one way and inanimate and/or indefinite ones another way, is somewhat universal found in many languages.<sup>11</sup>

The accusative-nominative case alternation of the object is found in Japanese, as well. In Japanese, there are two types of two-argument sentences—one in which the object NP is case marked by accusative *o* and another in which the NP which appears to be the object is case marked by nominative *ga*.

<sup>11</sup> According to Moravcsik (1978: 275), some Indo-European languages such as Spanish, Rumanian, Albanian, Bengali and Hindi, and some Altaic languages such as Buriat and Mongolian show such case alternations which is related to animacy and definiteness of direct objects.

## (37) Japanese (Sugamoto 1981)

- a. *Watashi wa anata no kimochi ga wakaru.*  
 I topic you of feeling Nom understand  
 “I understand your feeling.”
- b. *Watashi wa anata no kimochi o wakar-oo.*  
 I topic you of feeling Acc understand-intent  
 “I tried to understand your feeling.”

The condition of case marking alternation in Japanese is different from that of Spanish. The verb *wakaru*<sup>12</sup> takes a nominative object in (37a). However, when *wakaru* takes the verbal auxiliary, (y)*oo*, of intent, the object NP is case marked with accusative. The difference in case marking can be correlated with the high volitionality<sup>13</sup> or intentionality.

Let us now turn to the expressions for desire in Korean. Sentences with derived adjectives of desire, /V+ *siph* -/ ‘want to V’ show very interesting phenomena concerning transitivity. This complex desiderative construction allows use of the canonical transitive Nom–Acc pattern as well as the adjective predication of Nom–Nom pattern.

- (38) a. *na nun/ka koki ga mek-ko siph-ta.*  
 I Top/Nom meat Nom eat-Comp want-Dec  
 “I want to eat meat.”
- b. *na nun/ka koki lul mek-ko siph-ta.*  
 I Top/Nom meat Acc eat-Comp want-Dec  
 “I want to eat a meat.”
- (39) a. *na nun/ka emma ga po-ko siph-ta.*  
 I Top/Nom mother Nom see-Comp want-Dec  
 “I want to see mother.”

<sup>12</sup> Although it is usually translated into English as a transitive ‘understand’, it is originally an intransitive verb meaning literally ‘become separate, individuated, distinguishable’ (Sugamoto 1981: 436).

<sup>13</sup> The definition of volitionality is as follows, according to Hopper & Thompson (1980):

Volitionality: The effect on the patient is typically more apparent when the A is presented as acting purposefully; contrast ‘I wrote your name (volitional)’ with ‘I forgot your name (non-volitional)’.

- b. na nun/ka emma lul po-ko siph-ta.  
 I Top/Nom mother Acc see-Comp want-Dec  
 "I want to see mother."

The whole proposition with *siph-* 'want' is not prototypically transitive. Neither the agent nor the patient is high in transitivity: i.e., actually the agent doesn't act and the patient doesn't change. But if the desired object is case-marked by the accusative, then the case marking pattern will be the same as the canonical transitive pattern. This means that a sentence with NP<sub>2</sub>-*ka* (Nom) is less transitive than a sentence with NP<sub>2</sub>-*lul* (Acc). The case marking difference of NP<sub>2</sub> in an embedded clause seems to bring in a semantic contrast, namely the way to emphasize the event.<sup>14</sup>

This construction is also used with first person subjects in the declarative form. It sounds odd if a desiderative construction is used with third person subject. However, like expression for subjective feeling, if the speaker can aware of the third person's internal feeling based on the evidence of the subject's behaviour, a given expression takes the canonical transitive Nom-Acc pattern. Here again, the extralization of one's subjective, internal feeling seems to be related with transitivity. While predicates of one's subjective and internal feeling express low transitivity, if these predicates are used with a verbal auxiliary of externalization of subjective feeling *-e ha-*, these express high transitivity.

(40) Derived verbs of desire:

- a. na-nun koki-lul mek-eyo.  
 I Top meat Acc eat-Dec  
 "I eat meat."  
 b. na-nun koki-ka/lul mek-ko siph-eyo.  
 Nom/Acc eat-Desire

<sup>14</sup> If NP<sub>2</sub> is marked with the accusative, NP<sub>2</sub> is implied to be the object of the embedded verb. If NP<sub>2</sub> is marked with nominative, NP<sub>2</sub> is the object of the matrix verb 'want'. This means that if the emphasis is on subjective feeling, then the Nom-Nom pattern will result, indicating that subjective feeling itself is a state and the agent has no control over the subjective feeling. However if the emphasis is on the object of the embedded predicate, then the Nom-Acc pattern will result, referring to the agent's conscious preference for the object among possible choices (e.g., meat vs. vegetable) (Watanabe 1984: 244-5).

“I want to eat meat.”

- c. \*John-un koki-ka/lul mek-ko siph-eyo.  
 Nom/Acc eat–Desire

“John wants to eat meat.”

- d. John-un koki-\*ka/lul mek-ko siph-e hayyo.  
 Nom/Acc eat–Desire–Aux

“John wants to eat meat.”

In (40a) the predicate is a simple transitive verb; in (b) the simple verb is followed by an adjectival auxiliary of desire, which means ‘desirous’; (c) is not acceptable since we are not able to judge third person’s internal states. We can only infer those states from a person’s behaviour, as in (d) where we have a verb plus the adjectival auxiliary plus the verbal auxiliary of externalization (manifestation) of subjective feeling.

### 3. Transitivity and Body–Parts Objects

The body–part nouns in body–part clauses show interesting facts with respect to case–marking alternation and transitivity. The syntactic behaviour of body–part nouns reflects the real–world fact that body–parts are physically related (contiguous) with their possessors. We will exemplify below the morphosyntactically peculiar behaviour of body–part nouns reflecting the semantic or pragmatic characteristics based on the real–world fact.

The term “Possessor Ascension” has been used to refer to any construction in which the possessor NP is “promoted” to the status of direct object or dative, while the possessed NP is “demoted” to the status of some sort of oblique phrase. Consider such familiar examples from English (Fox 1981: 323):

- (41) a I kicked him in the leg.  
 b. I kissed him on the cheek.

Examples of Possessor Ascension can be found in many languages.<sup>15</sup>

In Korean, the possessor NP can be promoted to the status of direct ob-

<sup>15</sup> For detailed data, see Fox (1981).

ject marked with the accusative, while the possessed NP still remains marked with the accusative. As a result, we can have “double accusative” constructions. Consider the case marking alternations in the following examples:

- (42) a. John i Mary uy son ul ttayli-ess-ta.  
 Nom Poss hand Acc hit-Past-Dec  
 “John hit Mary’s hand.”  
 b. John i Mary lul son ul ttayli-ess-ta.  
 Nom Acc hand Acc hit-Past-Dec  
 “John hit Mary on the hand.”
- (43) a. John i Mary uy tung ul mil-ess-ta.  
 Nom Poss back Acc push-Past-Dec  
 “John pushed Mary’s back.”  
 b. John i Mary lul tung ul mil-ess-ta.  
 Nom Acc back Acc push-Past-dec  
 “John pushed Mary on the back.”

The Possessor Ascension can take place only when the clause includes body-part nouns. Compare the following examples:

- (44) a. John i . Mary uy sakwa lul mek-ess-ta.  
 Nom Poss apple Acc eat-Past-Dec  
 “John ate Mary’s apple”  
 b. \*John i Mary lul sakwa lul mek-ess-ta.  
 Nom Acc apple Acc eat-Past-Dec  
 “John ate Mary’s apple.”
- (45) a. John i Mary uy sensayng ul ttayli-ess-ta.  
 Nom Poss teacher Acc hit-Past-Dec  
 “John hit Mary’s teacher.”  
 b. \*John i Mary lul sensayng ul ttayli-ess-ta.  
 Nom Acc teacher Acc hit-Past-Dec  
 “John hit Mary’s teacher.”

We can thus say that in similar possessive constructions, body-part nouns show different behaviour from non-body part nouns. This difference can be explained as follows: Body parts are physically attached to and contiguous with their possessors, and thus when a body part is affected by an

action, its possessor is necessarily affected by that action as well.

Given that the affectedness of the possessor in the case of body parts allows the possessor to be interpreted as a direct object, when the clause in question contains a non–action verb, i.e., one which has little or no effect on the object, Possessor Ascension is often not permitted.

(46) a. John i Mary uy moksoli lul tul-ess-ta.  
           Nom Poss voice Acc hear–Past–Dec

“John heard Mary’s voice.”

b. \*John i Mary lul moksoli lul tul-ess-ta.  
           Nom Acc voice Acc hear–Past–Dec

“John heard Mary’s voice.”

(47) a. John i Mary uy tali lul po-ass-ta.  
           Nom Poss leg Acc see–Past–Dec

“John saw Mary’s leg.”

b. ?John i Mary lul tali lul po-ass-ta.  
           Nom Acc leg Acc see–Past–Dec

“John saw Mary’s leg.”

(46b) is unacceptable because the possessor is not physically affected at all by the action of hearing. In comparison with the action of hearing, (47b) is not totally unacceptable but sounds awkward because the action of seeing also hardly affect the object.

The following sentences from Dutch and English (Fox 1981: 327) also exhibit similar situations:

(48) Dutch

a. Ik schudde hem de hand

I shook him the hand

“I shook his hand.”

b. \*Ik zag hem de hand

I saw him the hand

“I saw his hand.”

(49) a. I hit her on the leg.

b. \*I saw her on the leg.

Possessor Ascension may also be affected by the nature of the possessor, that is, whether it is animate or inanimate. Since the possessor–possession

relationship in inanimate entity is not as contiguous as animate entity, inanimate possessors are regarded by humans as not as affectable as animate possessors. Thus we expect that Possessor ascension would not occur as frequently with inanimate possessors as with their animate counterparts. Consider the following examples (Fox 1981: 328):

- (50) ? I hit the tree on the branch.  
 (51) \*I painted the house on the door.

In some languages, however, this is permitted even with inanimate possessors. This is the case in Korean:

- (52) a. John i namu uy kaci lul calu-ass-ta.  
           Nom tree Poss branch Acc cut-Past-Dec  
           “John cut the tree’s branch.”  
       b. John i namu lul kaci lul calu-ass-ta.  
           Nom tree Acc branch Acc cut-Past-Dec  
           “John cut the tree on/by the branch.”
- (53) a. John i cip uy pyek ul hemul-ess-ta.  
           Nom house Poss wall Acc demolish-Past-Dec  
           “John demolished the house’s wall.”  
       b. John i cip ul pyek ul hemul-ess-ta.  
           Nom house Acc wall Acc demolish-Past-Dec  
           “John demolished the house’s wall.”

Possessor Ascension is a device to promote a participant from the status of a possessor to that of affected object. We would therefore expect clauses that allow Possessor Ascension to be high in the degree of transitivity, since a highly affected object means high transitivity. As seen earlier, Possessor Ascension clauses often contain highly transitive verbs such as ‘hit’, ‘grasp’, ‘cut’ and ‘break’, while only rarely do they allow such low transitive verbs like ‘look’ or ‘listen’. They also prefer animate nouns as the ascended objects. These facts would certainly seem to be consistent with the Transitivity Hypothesis.

By the way, Hopper and Thompson’s Transitivity Hypothesis also implies the following assumption with respect to the two participants (i.e., Agent, Patient) in the clause in question:

- (54) The items referred to by A and P arguments are distinct from each other.

This condition, therefore, predicts that when a body part of the agent participant is expressed as the object or patient argument, one could argue that condition (54) is not satisfied, since in this case A and P would not be physically distinct from one another. Therefore, we would expect that these clauses will be relatively low in transitivity in comparison with clauses with two separate participants. In this respect, Korean body part clauses manifest interesting case marking behaviour. Consider the following contrasts:

- (55) a. John i son ul tachi-ess-ta.  
 Nom hand Acc hurt-Past-Dec  
 “John hurt his hand.”  
 b. John i son i tachi-ess-ta.  
 Nom hand Nom hurt-Past-Dec  
 “John hurt his hand.”
- (56) a. Mary ka elkwul ul tey-ess-ta.  
 Nom face Acc burn-Past-Dec  
 “John burnt her face.”  
 b. Mary ka elkwul i tey-ess-ta.  
 Nom face Nom burn-Past-Dec  
 “Mary burnt her face.”
- (57) a. Tom i tali lul ppi-ess-ta.  
 Nom leg Acc sprain-Past-Dec  
 “Tom sprained his leg.”  
 b. Tom i tali ka ppi-ess-ta.  
 Nom leg Nom sprain-Past-Dec  
 “Tom sprained his leg.”

Verbs such as ‘*tachi-*’, ‘*tey-*’, and ‘*ppi-*’ usually take the subject’s body part as an object. Some scholars have classified these verbs as ergative verbs (cf. Ko (1986), Park (1984)). They have regarded it as a characteristic of ergativity that a verb appears in both transitive and intransitive constructions with same shape. However, the notion of ergativity, particularly when we apply it to Korean grammar, needs more elaborated

definition and careful investigation. At any rate, verbs in this class exhibit an interesting relationship between transitive and intransitive constructions, which can be expressed as follows (Yeon 1989):

$$(58) \text{ NP}_i\text{-nom NP}_j\text{-acc V} \longleftrightarrow (\text{NP}_i) \text{ (poss) NP}_j\text{-nom V} \\ (\text{NP}_j = \text{body-parts})$$

When a body part of the subject participant is expressed as the object, the object can be marked as either accusative or nominative. The fact that the object NP is marked by nominative can be explained by the Transitivity Hypothesis. Since the body part object is not distinct from the subject in (55)–(57), these clauses are relatively low in transitivity. We would expect, therefore, that object low in transitivity can be marked with nominative as pointed out earlier. This phenomenon can be compared to clauses in which the body part object is not coreferential with the subject. When the body part object is distinct from the subject, it cannot be marked with the nominative.

#### 4. Summary

So far, we have observed a range of relevant and interesting data on case-marking alternations in relation to transitivity. Among the deviations from the canonical case pattern of a transitive clause, the following are attested.

(59)	A	O		
(a)	NOM	ACC	V	(canonical pattern)
(b)	NOM	Non-ACC <sup>16</sup>	V	
(c)	NOM	NOM	V	
(d)	DAT	NOM	V	

As apparent from the above, case-marking patterns are rarely consistent even within one language. We have shown that the canonical case-marking patterns and the deviations from them are largely determined by the degree of transitivity.

The covariation between transitivity and the case marking of objects, and temporal, spatial, body-part NPs observed in Korean is consistent with

<sup>16</sup> Non-Acc indicates cases like Dat, Loc, etc.

Hopper and Thompson's (1980) transitivity hypothesis. The observations we have made in this paper are as follows:

1. As the transitivity of a sentence decreases, the case marking pattern moves from the canonical transitive Nom–Acc pattern to the Dat–Nom pattern or even to the Nom–Nom pattern. One example of low transitivity of a sentence is expressions containing stative predicates. In all the relevant languages the constructions that exhibit low transitivity involve two–place predicates expressing the notions of liking, desire, possession, necessity, and ability. In this constructions, a nominative object is the object of a predicate of low transitivity.

2. The observation that the more affected the object NP, the higher the transitivity is attested in a wide range of languages. In many languages, a distinction is made in case marking according to whether the patient is wholly or partially affected. The marking for the wholly affected patient is the accusative and the marking for the partly affected patient is usually non–accusative (whether it is locative, or genitive or partitive).

3. The accusatively marked causee in causative constructions parallels other instances of accusative marking associated with the notion of total affectedness of objects. In causative expressions, the causee marked with accusative case is supposed to be totally affected by the causer, which means the causee has no control or less control over the action in comparison with the causee marked with dative or instrumental case.

4. The accusative–nominative case alternation is found in some constructions. We have claimed that the difference in case marking also can be explained based on the degree of transitivity. The nominative marker for objects reflects the low transitivity (e.g., internal feeling of the subjects). The accusative marker *ul/lul* reflects the high transitivity of the sentence; it marks the object of a highly transitive predicate (e.g., externalization of the internal feeling).

5. The morphosyntactic behaviour of body–part NPs reflects the real–world fact that body parts are physically attached to and contiguous with their possessors. And thus when a body part is affected by action, its possessor is necessarily affected by that action as well.

Possessor Ascension is a device to promote a participant from the status of a possessor to that of affected object. We would therefore expect clauses that allow Possessor Ascension to be high in the degree of transitivity, since a highly affected object means high transitivity.

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## ABSTRACT

## The Degree of Transitivity in Korean: A Functional-Typological Approach

Jae-Hoon Yeon

In this paper, we analyze transitivity in the light of typological universals. Transitivity features can be manifested both morpho-syntactically and semantically. Thus we will examine examples of correlations between morphosyntactic features (e.g. case marking alternations) and semantic interpretations. We will show that covariation between transitivity and the case marking of objects observed in Korean is by and large consistent with Hopper & Thompson's (1980) Transitivity Hypothesis.

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