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Notes on Case Alternations

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1. Introduction

This paper is mainly concerned with Nom-Acc case alternations on the object as in the following emotional constructions (Yang 1972):

   John-Top Praha-Acc/*Nom know-Pst-Ind
   'John knew Praha.'

   John-Top Praha-Acc/*Nom know-ko want-Pst-Ind
   'John wanted to know Praha.'

   John-Top Praha-Acc/*Nom know-ki not.want-Pst-Ind
   'John didn't want to know Praha.'

As in (1a), the transitive verb in the typical transitive construction can assign only Acc case to its object. The same transitive verb, however, seems to be able to assign either Acc or unexpected Nom in (1b) and (1c). In this paper I would like to extend an analysis given in Kim & Mailing (1998) such that the internal verb al- ‘know’ in (1b-c) is responsible for the Acc case on the object NP, while the external verb siph- ‘want’ in (1b) (or silh- ‘not-want’ in (1c)) is responsible for the assignment of Nom case on the object NP in terms of complex predicate formation with the internal verb.

I suggest that there are at least two varieties of head movement: namely, head raising and head lowering. Head raising might be equivalent to head movement or incorporation in the previous approaches. Head lowering, on the other hand, is analogous to Merger in Distribute Morphology, put forward in Halle & Marantz (1993). I claim that the internal and external verbs in emotional constructions in Korean may constitute two types of complex predicate. In (1b), the external verb is lowered and adjoins to the internal verb to form a complex predicate, whereby the internal verb maintains its headedness in the resulting complex verb and retains its case assigning ability. In (1b-c), in contrast, the internal verb is raised and adjoins to the external verb to form a complex predicate, whereby it loses its
case assigning ability since it is no longer the head of complex verb projection.

I would further extend my analysis to multiple verbal complex structures in which three verbs are amalgamated. I will show that independent syntactic requirements force an Acc case assignment in this structure.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2 I examines the core properties of emotional constructions concerning the Acc-Nom alternations on the object NP. I first review the observations and proposals given in Kim & Maling (1998). And I argue that the case alternations in these constructions are essentially due to the different timing of head movement. Section 3 provides some implications bearing out my claim. In this section, I illustrate how my proposal works in one problematic example discussed in Kim & Maling (1998).

2. Facts and Proposals

Kim & Maling (1998) propose that the alternation of Nom-Acc case in emotional constructions relies crucially on the optional movement of the internal verb to the external verb. Consider the following structural representation.

(2) a. John-un Praha-lul al-ko siph-ess-ta
   John-Top Praha-Acc know-ko want-Pst-Ind
   'John wanted to know Praha.'


(2a) exhibits typical bi-clausal properties according to Kim & Maling (1998), and hence the object acquires an Acc case from V1, and V1 can undergo coordination and gapping as shown in (3) (Kim & Maling 1998, 140).

(3) a. Cheli-nun pap-ul cis-ko ppally-lul/ka ha-ko siph-ess-ta
   Cheli-Top rice-Acc cook-Conj laundry-Acc/Nom do-ko wanted
   'Cheli wanted to cook rice and do the laundry.'

   C-Top Ford-Acc buy-Conj S-Top BMW-Acc buy-ko wanted
   'Cheli wanted to buy a Ford, and Swuni a BMW.'
In striking contrast, neither coordination nor gapping is possible when the verbal object is marked Nom. This is illustrated in (4) (Kim & Maling 1998, 140-1).

\[(4)\]  
\[a. *\text{Cheli-nun pap-i cis-ko ppallay-lul/ka ha-ko siph-ess-ta}\]  
\[\text{Cheli-Top rice-Nom cook-Conj laundry-Acc/Nom do-ko wanted}\]  
\[\text{'Cheli wanted to cook rice and do the laundry.'}\]  
\[b. *\text{Cheli-nun Ford-ka sa-ko Swuni-nun BMW-ka sa-ko siph-ess-ta}\]  
\[\text{C-Top Ford-Nom buy-Conj S-Top BMW-Nom buy-ko wanted}\]  
\[\text{'Cheli wanted to buy a Ford, and Swuni a BMW.'}\]

Kim & Maling indicates that when the verbal object bears Nom case, V-ko siph- behaves like a single complex predicate, hence V-ko resists linear separation since the whole verbal complex V-ko siph- itself is a syntactic atom, and none of its part like V-ko, a subword, may undergo syntactic operations such as coordination and gapping. They further suggests that V-ko siph- complex is derived by raising V-ko to siph-.

Lim (1997), however, correctly points out that V-ko siph- behaves like one complex predicate even in the emotional construction where Acc case is marked on the verbal object. Observe in (5) that nothing can intervene between V-ko and siph-, even a minor or affixal element like negative morpheme an.

\[(5)\]  
\[a. \text{Minho-ka ku yenghwa-lul/ka (ceyil) po-ko (*ceyil) siph-ess-ta}\]  
\[\text{M-Nom that movie-Acc/Nom (most) see-ko (*most) want-Pst-Ind}\]  
\[\text{'Minho wanted to watch that movie the most.'}\]  
\[b. \text{Minho-ka ku yenghwa-lul/ka (an) po-ko *an siph-ess-ta}\]  
\[\text{Minho-Nom that movie-Acc/Nom (not) see-ko (*not) want-Pst-Ind}\]  
\[\text{'Minho didn't want to watch that movie.'}\]

(5) clearly shows that V-ko siph- forms a complex predicate regardless of Nom-Acc alternation on the object NP.

The question then arises how to account for the contrasts given in (3) and (4). One might possibly assume two different underlying structures for each construction. Lim (1997) and Saito (2000) in fact make proposals along these lines for Korean and Japanese V-V complex constructions respectively. Although their proposals merit full-fledged discussion, I would not deal with their analyses in this paper, but merely noting that perhaps their approaches can be a promising alternative. Instead I would like to develop a proposal put forward in Kim & Maling (1998).
The essence of Kim and Maling’s proposal for unexpected Nom case on verbal object lies in the assumption that head movement creates the amalgamated verbal complex V-ko siph- in syntax which results in Nom case assignment to the verbal object. Then the important question remains as to the nature of complex predicate formation of V-ko siph- when the object NP is marked Acc.

I suggest that V-ko siph- in emotional constructions is uniformly formed by head movement irrespective of Nom-Acc alternations. The only difference is the level in which the amalgamation applies. I claim that V1(V-ko) is combined with the host V2(siph-) in Nom construction via “raising,” which is an instance of normal movement species. V1 in Acc construction, on the other hand, moves or merges into the host V2 via “lowering,” which is not a typical movement strategy.

I further suggest that head lowering (or Merger in the sense of Halle & Marantz 1993) can (and mostly) be triggered by pure morphological reasons. Thus, head lowering is an instance of morpho-phonological operations. Head raising, in contrast, cannot be subsumed to morpho-phonological activities. I propose that head raising is a morpho-syntactic operation, and takes place prior to Spell-Out (or S-Structure). Head lowering, on the other hand, occurs after Spell-Out.

Two pieces of consequence immediately follow from my proposal. First, head lowering creates an amalgamated verbal complex headed by V1, while head raising creates an amalgam headed by V2. This difference directly reflects the Nom-Acc alternations. In other words, in head raising construction V1, an Acc case assigner, is responsible for Acc assignment to an object NP. In contrast, V2, a Nom case assigner (or at least a Nom case trigger), is primarily responsible for the Nom marked object NP.

Another piece of consequence has to do with syntactic operations that may cause (ill-)formedness in (3)-(4). Recall that only Acc construction may undergo syntactic operations like coordination and gapping. Suppose that all morpho(-phonological) operations follow all (morpho-)syntactic operations, not an implausible assumption. Then head lowering can never get rid of an environment for syntactic operations. In other words, head lowering operates only on the output of all syntactic operations such as coordination and gapping. Head raising, in contrast, may alter the syntactic environment, and hence can block certain syntactic operations, as illustrated in (4) above.

To reiterate, there is an important difference between head raising and head lowering. I would also like to indicate that they all operate in terms of hierarchical structure. In other words, in head raising complex V1 targets the host V2, and V1 adjoins to V2 that projects. One important syntactic
consequence: V1 is losing its syntactic ability, namely, the case-assigning property for our purposes. In head lowering context, however, V2 targets V1, the host for movement. In this case, V1 retains its case-assigning ability since it’s V1 that projects, not V2. My proposal implies that only projected head can involve case assignment, and perhaps case assignment takes place right before Spell-Out, namely, at the final stage of syntactic derivations. Otherwise we may not preclude Acc assignment to an object NP where V1 raises to V2. The idea behind my proposal is that there must be a strict local relationship between an argument NP and it’s case-assigning head. Notice that when a complex head is constituted containing more than two case-assigning heads, the environment for strict locality on case assignment can be destroyed. If one head has priority over other head with respect to projecting when they are combined, and further if only projecting head can involve case-assignment, locality issue can be elegantly resolved. Another intriguing issue is whether it is necessary or possible to postulate two different mechanisms: namely, syntactic vs. post-syntactic operations. My analysis of Nom-Acc alternations in Korean emotional constructions basing this dichotomy in fact lends another support to the postulation of two levels of representation and operations.

3. Further Implications

In this section I would like explore further implications of my proposal. Consider the following sentences.

(6)  
John-Top apple-Acc/Nom dislike-do-ko/like-do-ko wanted  
'John wanted to hate/like an apple.'  
b. *John-un sakwa-lul silhe-ha-ko/coha-ha-ko issta  
John-Top apple-Acc dislike-do-ko/like-do-ko is  
'Lit. John is disliking/liking an apple.'

The ill-formedness of (6a) is due to semantic incompatibility with stative verbal complements taken by an emotional verb. (6b) is ruled out since stative verbs cannot co-occur with progress aspect -ko iss-.

Interestingly, in contrast to (6), the seemingly same VP can appear as a complement of siphe- in (7a), and can co-occur with the progressive aspect -ko iss- in (7b) where the verbal object is Mary, an animate/human being.
(7) a. John-un Mary-lul silhe-ha-ko/coha-ha-ko siphessta
   John-Top Mary-Acc dislike-do-ko/like-do-ko wanted
   'John wanted to hate/like Mary.'

b. John-un Mary-lul silhe-ha-ko/coha-ha-ko issta
   John-Top Mary-Acc dislike-do-ko/like-do-ko is
   'Lit. John is disliking/liking Mary.'

It seems that V1 in (6) is semantically stative, whereas V1 in (7) is not. Then, the problem is how the same predicate can be either stative or nonstative. I suggest that V1 in (6) is an instance of "lexicalized" stative predicates while one in (7) is an instance of complex predicates formed in syntax or post-syntax. Note the following contrast in this connection.

(8) a. John-un Mary-lul miwe-Nun/coha-Nun hayssciman
   John-Top Mary-Acc hate-Foc/like-Foc did-though
   'John did hate/like Mary, though.'

b.*John-un sakwa-lul silhe-Nun/coha-Nun hayssciman
   John-Top apple-Acc dislike-Foc/like-Foc did-though
   'John did dislike/like an apple, though.'

Insertion of (focus or contrastive) delimiter is possible in (8a) while it is excluded in (8b). This contrast lends another support to the claim that V1 in (8a) is not formed in the lexicon, while V1 in (8b) is so.


(9) a. John-un Mary-lul silhe-ha-ko/coha-ha-ko siphessta
   John-Top Mary-Acc dislike-do-ko/like-do-ko wanted
   'John wanted to hate/like Mary.'

b.*John-un Mary-ka silhe-ha-ko/coha-ha-ko siphessta
   John-Top Mary-Nom dislike-do-ko/like-do-ko wanted
   'John wanted to hate/like Mary.'

As is illustrated in (9), silhe-ha-kol/coha-ha-ko can license only Acc-marked object, but not Nom-marked object. Thus, this type of verbs pattern quite differently from normal transitive verbs because the latter can generally license Nom object in siph- construction.

The ill-formedness in (9b) may indicate that V1 (silhe-ha-ko/coha-ha-ko) cannot raise to V2 (siph-) for some reason. I would like to suggest that the reason is purely "syntactic." Suppose that V1 itself is a complex
predicate created by "raising" the first verb (silhe-, for example) to the second verb or transitivizer -ha-. Note that the alternative option of lowering -ha- to the first verb is not possible since the complex predicate assigns only Acc case to its object.

(10) John-un Mary-lul/*ka silhe-ha-ssta/coha-ha-ssta
     John-Top Mary-Acc/*ka dislike-do-Pst/like-do-Pst
     'John hated/liked Mary.'

Thus, the first predicate must raise to the second predicate in (10) to form a complex predicate for some reason. Then, our next question is why this complex predicate cannot further raise to the next higher predicate in emotional constructions in (9), and consequently the whole complex predicate (call the parts V1-V2-V3 for exposition) may be able to assign Nom to its object. I propose that if V1-V2 complex raises to V3, the trace/copy of V1 left by V1-to-V2 raising cannot be properly licensed since V1 is too much embedded in the whole complex, as depicted in the following structural representation.

(11)

```
      /     \   
       V3     
   /     \   
  V2     V3
  /     \   
 t1     V1  V2
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Suppose that V1 technically cannot c-command t1 (trace of V1) due to intervening projection V3. Perhaps V2 may not be counted as an intervening projection because V1 is not "contained" in V2 in some technical sense due to the property of adjunction structure, while V1 is contained in V3 so that V1 cannot c-command beyond V3 projection. Although we should work out more on technical details, I think the intuition behind my proposal is relatively clear.

If the whole verbal complex (V1-V2 plus V3) cannot be derived by head raising, only other possible option is for V3 to move down to V1-V2, and the result is depicted below.
In this structure, the trace $t_1$ can be properly licensed by $V_1$ since $V_2$ no longer prevents $V_1$ from c-commanding $t_1$ (because $V_2$ does not contain $V_1$ technically). Thus, $V_2$-to-$V_3$ raising is banned, and $V_3$-to-$V_2$ lowering is in fact forced by formal syntactic requirements on licensing a trace, and hence the obligatory assignment of Acc to the object results from it.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have reviewed some observations given in Kim & Maling (1998), and attempted to develop their proposal along the similar vein. I suggest there are two types of head combining operations (see Ahn 1993, 1994 for more discussion), namely, head-raising and head-lowering, and each gives rise to different case patterns for verbal objects in emotional constructions in Korean. I claim that head raising is responsible for Nom case, while head raising for Acc case on the object NP. I further extend my analysis to the transitive psych verb (e.g. *coha-ha*) plus emotional verb (*siph*) constructions where only Acc-marked object is allowed. I attribute the impossible Nom case on the object to independent syntactic requirements on the trace left by the initial head movement. Further research is needed to explore the full implications of my approach particularly with respect to other Nom-Acc alternations that are not treated in this paper.

References


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