Korean Nominative Case-Stacking: A Configurational Account
Cateogry: formal syntax

Case-stacking is a known problem for both "functional-head driven" approaches (Chomsky 1981), as well as "configurational" approaches (Marantz 1991, i.a.) to case. In this paper, I argue for a particular analysis of case-stacking within the configurational approach.

Korean, a canonically nominative-accusative language, most famously demonstrates variable case-marking phenomena in possession and psych-verb constructions, as seen in (1).

(1) a. Cheli-**eykey/ka/eykey-ka**   ton-i   iss-ta
       Cheli-DAT/NOM/DAT-NOM money-NOM exist-DEC
       'Cheli has money.'

    b. John-**eykey/i/eykey-ka**   Mary-ka   mwusep-ta
        John-DAT/NOM/DAT-NOM Mary-NOM fearsome-DEC
        John is afraid of Mary.

Significant work has been done proving the subjecthood of the variably case-marked element (e.g. Gerdts and Youn 1989, Yoon 2004), and although preferences vary amongst speakers, the subjects in these constructions are marked either nominative or dative while the object is marked nominative. It is also possible for the subject to bear stacked dative and nominative case. Moreover, case-stacking is attested on adjuncts (2) and certain nominative-marked subjects.

(2) ecey-**pwuth**-(**ka**)   nalssi-ka   cohaci-ess-ta
       yesterday-from(-NOM) weather-NOM become.good-PST-DEC
       'From yesterday, the weather became good.'

(3) sensayngnim-tul(-**kkeyse**)-man(-**i**)   kulen   il-ul   ha-si-pnita
       teacher-PL-(HON.NOM)-only(-NOM) that.kind work-ACC do-SH-DEC

While the distribution of single-case-marked DPs is quite free, <u>the distribution of stacked case is restricted to focus contexts</u> – including *wh*-subject questions and their answers, correction contexts, and co-occurrence with over focus-markers like *–man* 'only' (Yoon 1996, Schutze 2001).

Configurational accounts of case assignment can straightforwardly capture the realization of either one of the two possible nominative markers in (3). They also capture the realization of dative subjects in (1), if psych and possession verbs are lexically specified to assign dative case to their subjects. However, if the subjects in (1) bear nominative case, we expect the object to be marked with dependent accusative. Most importantly, case-stacking is not predicted at all. True instances of case-stacking are problematic under any theory, as in most versions of case-theory, the assignment of case renders a nominal inactive for further access or interaction. Schutze (2001) suggests that stacked case morphemes are really homophonous focus-markers. This account does well to capture the requirement that stacked-case occurs in focus contexts. However, there are some issues with the analysis. Schutze is required to posit an additional, and as we shall see unnecessary, ambiguity. Futhermore, it is unclear under his analysis why the focus-marker should have a distribution identical to nominative case, except via an ad hoc stipulation.

I take seriously that stacked-case morphology in Korean is indeed assigned via the same mechanism as single case markers. I present an alteration of Marantz's formulation of case assignment, which allows us to capture such case-marking phenomena without appealing to a focus-marker treatment at all and without sacrificing any of the empirical coverage of the original formulation. I adopt, in general, that all languages are underlyingly case-stacking languages, which differ only in the PF-realization of their accumulated stack of cases (Richards 2007, Pesetsky 2010, ia). I then posit that case-stacking occurs whenever movement occurs. In examples like (1), the experiencer subject is always assigned both dative and nominative morphological case. Similarly, examples like (2) involve the assignment of both lexical case and unmarked nominative. Finally, examples like (3) show two instances of unmarked case assignment. In fact, multiple case assignment to a single DP has been argued to occur in a variety of languages including Russian (Pesetsky 2010), Icelandic (Sigurdsson 2004), and Lardil (Richards 2007). However, none of these accounts utilize a configurational system of case assignment. Working within

such a system, I suggest that we can achieve multiple case assignment by allowing both the head and tail (and possibly all intermediate positions) of a movement-chain to enter the case-disjunctive hierarchy.

In examples such as (1), the tail of the chain formed by the subject's movement from it's base-position within the vP to Spec-TP is assigned lexical dative by virtue of being the subject of a psych or possession verb, and the head of the chain is assigned unmarked nominative, because it neither receives lexical nor dependent case. Similarly, examples like (3) can be accounted for if unmarked nominative is assigned twice – once to the subject's vP-internal tail, and once to its vP-external head. Such assignment obeys the case disjunctive hierarchy proposed by Marantz if we take case assignment to be conducted phase-by-phase as suggested by Baker and Vinokurova (2010).

Examples like (2) require slightly more exposition. The adjunct DP receives lexical case within the vP, and unmarked nominative after the adjunct undergoes movement to some position above the subject in Spec-TP. Under the current analysis, movement to a position above, yet within the same phase as, the subject's head should result in an accusative-marked subject. However, I incorporate Pesetsky's analysis of dependent case as binding (2011). Specifically, he proposes that dependent case is assigned to a nominal to indicate that it is disjoint in reference with another nominal present in the same domain. Much as A'-movement does not create new antecedents for binding, I suggest it also does not create new competitors for dependent case competition. Thus although the A'-moved adjunct can receive its own unmarked nominative case, it is invisible for the purposes of assigning dependent case, and the subject receives nominative as well.

With the exception of adjuncts which can only be marked with lexical or stacked case, a PF deletion process akin to Pesetsky's One Suffix Rule (2010), originally proposed to explain case and number mismatches in Russian DPs modified by paucal numerals, intervenes forcing one of the two cases to go unpronounced. I propose to parameterize the One Suffix Rule. Such a move may be necessitated independently of the facts of Korean by suggestions put forth by Sigurdsson (2004), who posits that preservation of Icelandic quirky case in movement constructions might indicate that the first assigned case, and not those that follow, must be pronounced. Unlike Russian and Icelandic, Korean speakers are free to choose which case to delete leading to the attested case variability. In instances of case-stacking, the One Suffix Rule must be overridden to realize multiple case morphemes on a single nominal. As we have seen, stacked-case can only be pronounced when it has information-structural import. Pronouncing both cases serves the distinct purpose of marking focus. Similar observations have been made for instances of single nominative (and accusative) case marking in Korean (Kim 2008 ia). In colloquial speech, nominative (and accusative) morphology can go unpronounced. However, when the nominal bears focus its case morphology must be realized. Prominence and undeletability of case morphology on focused nominals is indicated phonologically by placing a pitch-accent on the single case marker or, in the case of stacking, the outside case morpheme (Youn 1999). Finally, it is important to note that many logically possible combinations of case markers in Korean are unavailable, because these particles are subject to morphological co-occurrence restrictions (Cho and Sells 1995). Specifically, it is suggested that all forms of lexical case and honorific nominative occupy one morpheme slot, while accusative, nominative, and genitive occupy another preventing stacking of morphemes which occupy the same position.

The proposed analysis is an improvement upon previous treatments of the data in that it accurately captures the distribution of stacked-case while still treating such morphemes as genuine case markers. Moreover, it does so without the increased ambiguity of utilizing a focus-marker homophonous with and occurring in identical environments as the nominative case morpheme. Burzio's generalization and the Ergative generalization are also still accounted for, because the condition for dependent case assignment is unchanged. Crucially, an nominal must be c-commanded (or c-command in the case of ergative) a distinct nominal within the local domain. Thus while every occurrence of a nominal can receive case the algorithm is further sensitive to whether they are occurrences of the same or distinct nominals. Furthermore, the proposed analysis can immediately be extended to instances of dative-accusative stacking on focused indirect objects with no additional modification.