Oblique Case Marking on Core Arguments in Korean and Japanese

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Introduction

For canonical subjects and objects, the primary function of case is perhaps to mark a direct grammatical function, though as we will show, case and grammatical function have to represented independently in syntax.* Spencer (2003) has argued that more generally, case marking can reflect properties of the entire clause; this would suggest that there are uses of case marking which are defined within the clause but which may not be reducible directly to properties of some lexical or functional head within the clause, or which may not be associated with an identifiable thematic role such as Patient or Goal. In this paper we discuss examples from Japanese and Korean in which case markers or other types of marking on NP systematically indicate meanings which go beyond thematic properties, and which bring out the limitations of current views of the expressive potential of case.

1.   Japanese Oblique Subjects

(1)   Japanese postpositional markers:

Postpositions		Case/Topic	
de (1.1)	'at'	ga	NOM
kara (1.2)	'from'	o	ACC
de	'with'	wa	TOP
ni	DAT	no	GEN

1.1.   *de*-Marked Subjects in Japanese

Japanese allows subjects of certain clause types to be marked with *de* ('at, with, by means of').

(2) a.   Macys-ga   iPod-o   utte-i-ru
           Macys-NOM iPod-ACC sell-PROG-PRS
           'Macy's sells iPods.'

     b.   Macys-de iPod-o   utte-i-ru
           Macys-*de* iPod-ACC sell-PROG-PRS
           'Macy's sells iPods.'

In (2)b, the interpretation is closer to 'iPods are sold at Macys' or 'At Macys they sell iPods', even though the Japanese structure is clearly transitive with an accusative object.
Inoue (2000) presents arguments for the subjecthood of the *de* phrase in examples like (2)b, given in (3).

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(3) Arguments for subjecthood, from Inoue (2000)

   a. In many examples, the oblique subject marker cannot be replaced by *ga* while retaining the same precise interpretation. (examples not given here)

   b. The oblique subject cannot be doubled by a *ga*-marked argument.

   c. The oblique markers *de* or *kara* (below) disappear in a prenominal context linked by the genitive *no*, just like the structural case markers *ga/o*. (examples not given here)

1.1.1. Institutional Subjects

Alfonso (1974: 990–993) presents examples with *de* to be used "with institutions or 'moral entities'". (4) has an interpretation where the lunches are available through the company (maybe because they let some lunch service do business inside their building), but not where the company directly provides the lunch itself:

(4) kaisya-de dasite kureru hiruhan-wa amari umaku arimasen
    company-*de* put.out give-PRS lunch-TOP rather tasty NEG.PRS
    'The lunches provided through the company are not too tasty.'

(5), from Katsuki-Pestemer (2003: 37), means that some (unspecified) members of the opposition party have taken a stance, and the speaker presents them as representing the whole opposition party. Note again that the clause is transitive and describes an event which is volitional and (cognitively) agentive. In this example the subject refers to an 'institution' but not a location as such.

(5) yatoo-gawa-de kono kaikaku-an-ni tuyoi hantai-no sitei-o simesi-ta
    opposition parties-*de* this reform plan-DAT strong opposition-GEN stance-ACC show-PST
    'The opposition parties showed a firm stance of rejection to this reform plan.'

In (6), the subjects of surface transitive verbs are marked with *de*, though it is clear that there must be some individual who acts for the institution in question:

(6) a. ano mise-de kookoku-o dasite-imasu
     that shop-*de* ad-ACC put.out-PROG.PRS
     'That shop is putting out an ad.'

   b. gakkoo-de meirei suru koto-ni sitagau-no-wa toozen desu
     school-*de* order do.PRS fact-DAT obey-NOMIN-TOP natural COP.PRS
     'Obeying the directives that the school gives is a matter of course.'

   c. ano kaisya-de atarisi-ku kooin-o nizyuu-nin bakari atumete-imasu
     that firm-*de* new-ADV worker-ACC twenty-person just gather-PROG.PRS
     'That firm is hiring about twenty new workers.'

   d. keisatu-de suru koto-ni nandemo hantai suru hito-ga imasu
     police-*de* do.PRS fact anything oppose do.PRS person be.PRS
     'There are those who oppose anything the police do.'

1.1.2. 'Designated Group' Subjects

Other examples with *de* are rather different, such as (7)a from Inoue (2000: (1d)). At first glance, *de* seems to have some partitive sense, as well as being a marker of an agentive subject, as seen in the different acceptabilities of the examples in (7):

(7) a.   taroo-to   hanako-de bokoo-o   otozure-ta
           Taroo-CONJ Hanako-*de* alma.mater-ACC visit-PST
           'Taroo and Hanako visited their alma mater.'

     b.   *taroo-de/kimi-de   bokoo-o   otozure-ta
           Taroo-*de*/you(sg.)-*de* alma.mater-ACC visit-PST

     c.   taroo-dake-de bokoo-o   otozure-ta
           Taroo-only-*de* alma.mater-ACC visit-PST
           'Only Taroo visited his alma mater.'

Inoue says that (7)a has the meaning of 'Taroo and Hanako alone excluding others'. This is clearly not part of the meaning with 'institutional' *de*. Inoue suggests that *de* acts as an intensifier of an agentive subject with a meaning of 'alone, on X's own' and suggests that it is associated with a Focus feature in syntax. Her specific proposal within Minimalist syntax is that *all* core arguments are marked in their base position by a semantic case marker, which is then overwritten by structural nominative or accusative in most instances. Under this view, *kara* (see below) marks an Agent in SpecVP, while *de* is a delimiter or focus marker which requires its host to move to the specifier of a projection labelled FP. While (7)a is acceptable with a (small) group-denoting subject, (7)b is not. Yet, surprisingly, (7)c is acceptable, even though its referent is singular, as long as the singular is accompanied by the particle *dake*. It seems that the *de* subject has to pick out a 'group', which *dake* forces to have a cardinality of just 1. In general, bare nouns cannot be *de*-subjects of the verb phrase in (7), but are acceptable if suffixed with the group-denoting suffix *tati*:

(8) a.   kodomo*(-tati)de bokoo-o   otozure-ta
           child*(-group)-*de* alma.mater-ACC visit-PST

     b.   gakusei*(-tati)de bokoo-o   otozure-ta
           student*(-group)-*de* alma.mater-ACC visit-PST

The significance of *tati* is that it is not strictly speaking a pluralizer, but rather, *X-tati* means 'the group represented by X' (see e.g., Nakanishi and Tomioka (2004)). In other words, *de* is attached to a group-denoting expression. In particular, it selects for this interpretation, but does not impose it – otherwise there would be no contrasts in (7). Other examples with *de* show the apparently 'exhaustive' interpretation that Inoue mentions:

(9) a.   titi-to   haha-de ryokoo-ni itte   katte   kita   mono desu
           father-CONJ mother-*de* trip-DAT   go.COMP buy.COMP come.PST thing COP.PRS
           'This is what father and mother brought back from their trip.'   (Alfonso (1974))

     b.   kono sigoto-wa taroo-to   hanako-de katazuke-masu
           this   work-TOP Taroo-CONJ Hanako-*de* finish-PRS
           'This task, Taroo and Hanako will finish.' (Inoue (2000: (30)a))

In these examples, the subject marked with *de* does denote a group, and it seems that there is an implication that this is an exhaustive characterization of the group (hence Inoue's idea mentioned above that this *de* may be connected with focus).

1.2. *kara*-Marked Subjects in Japanese

Japanese also allows subjects marked with *kara* ('from') rather than *ga*. Kuroda (1978: 50) noted that subjects of verbs of transaction may be marked in this way:

(10)   haha-kara   kane-o   okutte   kita
          mother-*kara* money-ACC send.COMP come.PST
          'Mother sent me some money.'

(11) schematizes similar examples, inspired by Inoue (2000: (44)a):

(11)   ken-kara tomodati-ni zibun-no zisyo-o   okutta/   watasita/ kasiteita/ *utta
          Ken-*kara* friend-DAT   self-GEN dictionary-ACC send.PST/ hand.PST/ lend.PST/ *sell.PST
          'Ken sent/handed/lent/*sold his dictionary to his friend.'

The verbs which may be used in this construction all have a clear sense of something passing from a source to a goal. *kara* may be used instead of *ga* with verbs of telling or informing (examples from Alfonso (1974) and Martin (1975: 45)):[1]

(12) a.   kono koto-wa watasi-kara ano hito-ni   denwa-o   kakete oki-masyoo
              this fact-TOP 1sg-*kara*   that person-DAT phone-ACC give   do-PROPOS
              'Regarding this, let me call that person.'

      b.   konna tegami-o   watasi-kara okuttara   siturei-ni   nari-masu-kara
              such.a letter-ACC 1sg-*kara*   send-COND rudeness-DAT become-PRS-because
              syatyoo-san-kara okutte   kudasaru hoo-ga   ii-to   omoi-masu
              president-*kara*   send.COMP give   option-NOM good-COMP think-PRS
              'If I send such a letter it will appear rude so I think it is better that the president send it.'

(13) a.   kono mondai-wa   anata-kara ano hito-ni   itte   kudasaru-no-ga
              this problem-TOP 2sg-*kara*   that person-DAT say.COMP give-NOMIN-NOM
              itiban-da-to   omoi-masu
              best-COP-COMP think-PRS
              'As for this problem, I think it is best if you discuss it with that person.'

      b.   anata-ga i-e-nai-to-iu-nara   watasi-kara kotowatte   yari-masyoo
              2sg-NOM say-POT-NEG-COMP-say-if 1sg-*kara*   refuse.COMP do-PROPOS
              'If you can't say it, I will refuse him myself.'

One important constraint on the interpretation of this construction is that the intention of the communicator has to be known. Consequently the examples are most natural with first-person subjects (or second-person subjects if interrogative). An example like (14) is acceptable only if the speaker knows for sure that the section chief is going to speak, as it making an announcement as the section chief steps forward to make a speech.

(14)   butyoo-kara   hanasi-masu
          section.chief-*kara* speak-PRS
          'The section chief will speak.'

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[1]English: 'coming from me' – as in something like 'You can tell him, but it may be better *coming from me*'.

The specific semantic and pragmatic interpretations of these various oblique subjects in Japanese require further investigation. However, we can summarise as follows:

(15) a. *kara* marks subjects, instead of *ga*, if they have the thematic role of Source;

b. *de* marks subjects, instead of *ga*, if they have the meaning of an institution, moral entity, or group;

c. hence nominative case is not literally assigned in every Japanese clause, or even in every transitive clause.

2.   Korean Oblique Subjects

(16)   Korean adpositional markers:

Postpositions		Case/Topic	
eyse (2.2)	'at'	i/ka	NOM
pwuthe (3)	'from'	(l)ul	ACC
(u)lo	'with'	(n)un	TOP
eykey	DAT	uy	GEN
hanthey	DAT		
kkey	HON.DAT		
kkeyse (2.1)	HON.SUBJ		

2.1. *kkeyse* Subjects

The subjects of Korean verbs which are of a socially superior status may be marked with the honorific subject marker *kkeyse*, in which case the verb also takes a subject-honorific suffix *si*.

(17) a. haksayng-tul-i   o-ass-ta
        student-PLU-NOM come-PST-DECL
        'The students came.'

b.   sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse o-si-ess-ta
        teacher-HON-PLU-*kkeyse* come-HON-PST-DECL
        'The teachers came.'

Yoon (2005) argues that while *kkeyse* is a pure subject marker, for honorific subjects, its case is non-nominative, and that the NP it marks is an ablative oblique. One fact to observe about *kkeyse*-marked subjects is that they allow case-stacking with *i/ka* under the right circumstances. Case-stacking is illustrated in (18), where both subjects have a marker which is in the postposition slot, but also a structural case marker of nominative:

(18) a. cheli-eykey-ka ton-i   manh-ta
        Cheli-DAT-NOM money-NOM much-DECL
        'Cheli has much money.'

b.   sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse-man-i   o-si-ess-ta   (cf. (17)b)
        teacher-HON-PLU-*kkeyse*-only-NOM come-HON-PST-DECL
        'Only the teachers came.'

In addition to honorification, the control construction indicates that a *kkeyse*-marked phrase functions as the subject. Such a phrase may control the embedded subject of a predicate like *try*, as in (19)a, as well into a *myense(to)* ('although') clause, whose unexpressed subject of this clause must be the matrix subject, as in (19)b (see Youn (1989)):

(19) a. sensayng-nim-kkeyse [haksayng-ul manna-lyeko] nolyek ha-si-ess-ta
teacher-HON-*kkeyse*   [student-ACC meet-COMP]   try-HON-PST-DECL
'The teacher tried to meet the students.'

b. [pappu-si-myense(-to)] sensayng-nim-kkeyse [haksayng-ul manna-lyeko]
[busy-although(-even)] teacher-HON-*kkeyse*   [student-NOM meet-COMP]
nolyekha-si-ess-ta
try-HON-PST-DECL
'Although the teacher was busy, he tried to meet the students.'

Raising constructions also indicate that the *kkeyse*-phrase is the subject:

(20) a. na-nun [sensayng-nim-kkeyse hyenmyeng ha-si-ess-ta-ko]   mit-nun-ta
I-TOP   [teacher-HON-*kkeyse*   wise do-HON-PST-DECL-COMP] believe-PROC-DECL
'I believe that the teacher was wise.'

b. na-nun sensayng-nim-ul [hyenmyeng ha-si-ta-ko]   mit-nun-ta
I-TOP   teacher-HON-ACC [wise do-HON-DECL-COMP] believe-PROC-DECL
'I believe the teacher to be wise.'

In (20)b, the phrase raised to object position is the notional subject of the lower clause, marked with *kkeyse* in the unraised version in (20)a. Korean has a 'multiple subject' construction in which successive nominative NPs stand in a possessive relation. A *kkeyse*-marked phrase can correspond to either NP in such a construction:

(21) a. cheli-ka   ape-nim-kkeyse   pwuca-i-*(si)-ta
cheli-NOM father-HON-*kkeyse* rich-COP-*(HON)-DECL
'It is Cheli whose father is rich.'

b. kim-sensayng-nim-kkeyse twulccay atu-nim-i   chencay-i-si-ta
kim-teacher-HON-*kkeyse*   second   son-HON-NOM genius-COP-HON-DECL
'Professor Kim's second son is a genius.'

Yoon (2005) carefully argues through a variety of tests that *kkeyse* is a subject marker, yet, he concludes that it is grammatically oblique: although it is a subject marker, it is not a marker of nominative case. He makes two observations. The first is that case-stacking with an outer nominative is possible with clearly oblique non-nominative subjects, as in (18)a. The second argument is that a *kkeyse*-marked NP does not have the distribution of any nominative-marked NP, but the restricted distribution of a subject: a *kkeyse*-marked NP is quite poor as a nominative floated quantifier (see (23)b below), or as a nominative object, as the examples in (22) show. The verb 'become' in Korean takes two nominative arguments, but only the subject can bear the honorific marker *kkeyse*:

(22) a. kim-kyoswu-nim-i/kkeyse   chongcang-nim-i   toy-si-ess-ta
kim-professor-HON-NOM/*kkeyse* president-HON-NOM become-HON-PST-DECL
'Professor Kim became president.'

b. *kim-kyoswu-nim-i/kkeyse   chongcang-nim-kkeyse toy-si-ess-ta
kim-professor-HON-NOM/*kkeyse* president-HON-*kkeyse*   become-HON-PST-DECL

The honorific marker *kkeyse* is not obligatory on the subject, as (22)a shows. Even though the complement is nominative in (22)a, it definitely cannot be marked with *kkeyse*, as shown in (22)b. Hence, the distribution of *kkeyse* is narrower than that of the regular nominative marker. The examples in (23) show that *kkeyse* can float a nominative quantifier, as long as it is marked with a structural nominative, and not marked with *kkeyse* itself. The example in (23)b is not completely unacceptable for all speakers, but (23)a is the interesting example. On the relatively uncontroversial assumption that a floated quantifier agrees in case with its antecedent, the subject in this case, the only conclusion is that the subject in (23)a is in nominative case.

(23) a. sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse twu-pwun-*i* o-si-ess-ta
   teacher-HON-PLU-*kkeyse* two-person(HON)-NOM come-HON-PST-DECL
   Subject   Float Q   Predicate
   'Two teachers came.'

  b. ??sensayng-nim-tul-kkeyse twu-pwun-kkeyse o-si-ess-ta
   teacher-HON-PLU-*kkeyse* two-person(HON)-*kkeyse* come-HON-PST-DECL
   'Two teachers came.'

Such contrasts show that *kkeyse* is best analyzed as follows: it is a marker of (structural) nominative case, and it is restricted to grammatical subjects.[2] It has these properties even though it falls in the slot in the nominal morphology otherwise associated with oblique-marking postpositions, as in (16).

2.2. *eyse* Subjects

Yoon (2005), citing Martin (1992), refers to this as the 'Ablative subject construction'. All the examples given below would also allow *ka* as a nominative marker on the subject, but do not allow the stacked sequence **eyse-ka*. In other words *eyse* and *ka* represent options that the speaker must choose between. The examples below are taken from Martin (1992: 504), Ihm et al. (1988) and Yoon (2005):

(24) a. hoysa-eyse na-hanthey phosangkum-ul cwu-ess-ta
   company-*eyse* 1sg-DAT award-ACC give-PST-DECL
   'The company gave me an award.'

  b. wuli hakkyo-eyse iky-ess-ta
   1pl school-*eyse* win-PST-DECL
   'Our school won.'

  c. wuli kyohoy-eyse umak yeypay-lul ha-nuntey kkok o-sey-yo
   1pl church-*eyse* music service-ACC do-because surely come-HON-LEVEL
   'Our church is having a musical service, please come.'

(25) a. kim sensayng-nim tayk-eyse wuli-lul chotay hay-ss-supni-ta
   kim superior-HON residence-*eyse* 1pl-ACC invite do-PST-LEVEL-DECL
   'The Kims have invited us.'

  b. cengpwu-eyse mwue-la-ko mal hay-ss-supni-kka?
   government-*eyse* what-COP-COMP say-PST-LEVEL-Q
   'What did the government say?'

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[2]There is no source of nominative in (23)a other than *kkeyse*.

(26) a. nay-ccok-eyse   ceyuy-lul mence hay-ss-ta
        1sg-location-*eyse* offer-ACC first   do-PST-DECL
        'I made the offer first.'

    b. apenim-ccok-eyse   ka-si-lyeko   sito ha-si-ess-ta
        father-location-*eyse* go-HON-PUR attempt-HON-PST-DECL
        'Father attempted to go.'

(27) a. sicheng-eyse ku   hayngsa-lul cwuchoy hay-ss-ta
        city hall-*eyse* that event-ACC   organize-PST-DECL
        'City hall organized that event.'

    b. lotte paykhwacem-eyse ku   hayngsa-lul cwuchoy hay-ss-ta
        Lotte dept. store-*eyse*   that event-ACC   organize-PST-DECL
        'Lotte department store organized that event.'

These examples all involve subjects which denote institutions or locations which can be conceived of as engaging in intentional action. Below we will generalize over these properties with the term 'a-location', for a location capable of having agentive abilities. It should be pointed out that the part of the meaning that the subject refers to an institution or location is apparently a presupposition – *eyse* cannot impose this meaning on an NP that otherwise does not refer to an institution or location.

The Internally-Headed Relative Clause construction can also provide a test for subjecthood. The subject of the internally-headed clause is naturally picked out as the salient argument in the interpretation of the relative clause (e.g., Chung and Kim (2002), Kim (2002)):

(28) a. *pro* [sicheng-eyse ku   hayngsa-lul cwuchoy ha-nun kes-ul]   mak-ass-ta (cf. (27)a)
            [city hall-*eyse* that event-ACC   organize-MOD   thing-ACC] block-PST-DECL
        'They blocked city hall which was organizing that event.'

    b. *pro* [e-sicang-eyse   mwune-lul phal-ko   iss-nun   kes-ul]   cheypho hay-ss-ta
            [fish-market-*eyse* octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-MOD thing-ACC] catch-PST-DECL
        'They caught the fish market which was selling octopus.'

In both examples, the semantic argument of the matrix predicate *mak-ass-ta* and *cheypho hay-ss-ta* is the *eyse*-phrase, the subject of the embedded clause.

Now, in contrast to *kkeyse* in (23)a, an *eyse*-marked subject does not float a nominative quantifier. First of all, note the floated nominative quantifiers relating to nominative subjects, in (29):

(29) a. e-sicang-i   yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul phal-ko   iss-ta
        fish-market-NOM many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
        Subject   Float Q
        'Many fish markets are selling octopus.'

    b. e-sicang-i   han-kwuntey-man-i mwune-lul phal-ko   iss-ta
        fish-market-NOM one-place-only-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
        Subject   Float Q
        'Only one fish market is selling octopus.'

While the examples in (29) have a floated quantifier interpretation, (30) does not, and the *eyse*-phrase cannot be interpreted as the subject, but rather only as a locative adjunct.

(30)   e-sicang-eyse   yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul   phal-ko   iss-ta
                fish-market-*eyse* many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
                Locative   Subject
            *Subject   FloatQ
            'In the fish market, many places are selling octopus.'

The contrast (29)/(30) shows that *eyse*-subjects do not float a nominative quantifier: they are not themselves nominative subjects. Due to the nominative, the *eyse*-phrase is interpreted as a locative adjunct with the nominative phrase as the actual subject. It is impossible to mark both of the first two phrases in (30) with *eyse*; the example in (31) does not have a Subject–FloatQ interpretation (see also (32)):

(31)   e-sicang-eyse(-nun)   yele-kwuntey-eyse mwune-lul   phal-ko   iss-ta
                fish-market-*eyse*(-TOP) many-place-*eyse*   octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
                Locative   Locative
            'In the fish market, in many places, someone is selling octopus.'

(32)   hoysa-eyse   twu-kwuntey-eyse ku   hayngsa-lul cwuchoy hay-ss-ta
                company-*eyse* two-place-*eyse*   that event-ACC   organize-PST-DECL
            *Subject   Float Q
            Locative   Subject
            *'Two companies organized that event.'
            'At the company, two places (i.e., some parts of the company) organized that event.'

The clear contrast with the *kkeyse*-phrase indicates that the *eyse*-phrase is a subject with oblique case.[3] The data suggests that floated quantifiers do not relate to their antecedents purely by grammatical function – that is, it is not the case that a nominative quantifier takes a subject as its antecedent, and an accusative quantifier takes an object as its antecedent. Such an account could not explain why *kkeyse*-subjects can be associated with a floated nominative quantifier, but *eyse*-subjects cannot.

The contrast (29)/(30) also provides direct evidence against an analysis which would posit the apparent subject *eyse*-phrase as actually being an adjunct, binding a *pro* as the real subject. Such a null subject would be nominative, and hence float a nominative quantifier; the account would therefore directly predict that (30) should have the same interpretation as (29)a, contrary to fact. This diagnosis is confirmed by the contrast in the examples in (33), using the proper name 'Noryangjin' (a fish market):

(33) a.   nolyangcin-sicang-eyse yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul   phal-ko   iss-ta
             Noryangjin-market-*eyse* many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
             'In Noryangjin market, many places are selling octopus.'

     b. ??nolyangcin-sicang-i   yele-kwuntey-ka mwune-lul   phal-ko   iss-ta
             Noryangjin-market-NOM many-place-NOM octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL

(33)b is strange as the first NP cannot provide a locational context for the second NP, which is the grammatical subject of the clause. In fact, (33)b does have an interpretation in which the first NP is a Major Subject, a focus phrase, characterized by the rest of the clause. Hence, (33)b would be a suitable answer to the question 'At which market do many places sell octopus?', and would mean 'It is Noryangjin market where many places sell octopus'. With this in mind, we note that it is also possible to have the sequence in (34):

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[3]To be more accurate, if speakers accept (32) at all, the only possible interpretation is the second one, with *twu-kwuntey* as an *eyse*-subject, not a floated quantifier.

(34) nolyangcin-sicang-i   yele-kwuntey-eyse mwune-lul   phal-ko   iss-ta
Noryangjin-market-NOM many-place-*eyse*   octopus-ACC sell-COMP PROG-DECL
Major Subject   Subject
'It is Noryangjin market where many places are selling octopus.'

This appears to have the structure in which *nolyangcin-sicang-i* is a Major Subject and *yele-kwuntey-eyse* is the grammatical subject inside the clause.

Looking for a different diagnostic, Yoon (2005) presents the example in (35)a, with the analysis in (35)b, to show that the *eyse*-marked subject can be interpreted as animate (as a controller), and as a subject in both the matrix and embedded clauses, it can cooccur with honorific agreement on the verb:

(35) a.   ape-nim-ccok-eyse   ka-si-lyeko   sito ha-si-ess-ta
father-HON-location-*eyse* go-HON-PUR attempt-HON-PST-DECL
'Father attempted to go.'

b.   ape-nim-ccok-eyse   [PRO ka-si-lyeko]   sito ha-si-ess-ta
father-HON-location-*eyse* [PRO go-HON-PUR] attempt-HON-PST-DECL
'Father attempted to go.'

An a-location subject can also be interpreted as an honorable subject:

(36)   nop-un   kos-eyse   i il-ul   cisi ha-si-ess-ta
high-MOD place-*eyse* this work-ACC instruct-HON-PST-DECL
'The high place instructed (us to do) this work.'

While it is not clear how reliable a test for subjecthood honorific marking is (see Sells and Kim (2007)), certainly the simplest interpretation of (36) is that the *eyse*-phrase is the subject. In summary, *eyse* can mark an NP as being subject, with oblique case, but only if the NP refers to an a-location.

3.   Korean Oblique Non-Subjects

Here we focus on the Korean suffix *pwuthe* ('from'), on non-subjects. Before getting to the full discussion, we note that *pwuthe* can be used in some circumstances on subjects, indicating 'the first' agent of a distributed action. (37)a is considered somewhat marginal, but (37)b is possible, as is (38):

(37) a.   kak kaceng-mata-pwuthe   kyoyuk-ey   kwansim-ul kacye-ya   ha-n-ta
each household-each-*pwuthe* education-DAT interest-ACC hold-COMP must-PROC-DECL
'Each household must take an interest in education.' (Martin (1992: 690))

b.   kak kaceng-eyse-pwuthe   kyoyuk-ey   kwansim-ul kacye-ya   ha-n-ta
each household-*eyse-pwuthe* education-DAT interest-ACC hold-COMP must-PROC-DECL
'Each household should be the first to take an interest in education.'

(38)   ne-pwuthe tul-e ka-la
2sg-*pwuthe* go.in-IMP
'You go in first!' ('Starting with you . . . ')

3.1. Case Marking and *pwuthe*-Marked Objects

Korean also allows *pwuthe*-marked objects; the examples below are from or based on Ihm et al. (1988: 179) and Martin (1992: 761–2)). The construction indicates that the whole event of the clause containing the object is salient as the first event in some sequence.

(39) a. son-pwuthe (twu pen-ul) ssis-ko capswu-sey-yo
 hand-*pwuthe* (two time-ACC) wash-CONJ eat-HON-LEVEL
 'Wash your hands (two times) first before you eat.'

 b. etten siktang-un ton-pwuthe nay-yo
 some restaurant-TOP money-*pwuthe* give-LEVEL
 'In some restaurants you pay first (before you eat).'

 c. achim-ey il-e na-se tampay-pwuthe phiwu-nun salam-i iss-e.yo
 morning-at get up after cigarette-*pwuthe* smoke-MOD person-NOM exist-LEVEL
 'There are people who have a cigarette first (when they get up).'

(40) a. cemsim-pwuthe mek-ca
 lunch-*pwuthe* eat-PROPOS
 'Let's have lunch first.'

 b. swukcey-pwuthe-tul hay-la
 homework-*pwuthe*-PLU do-IMP
 '(You (pl.)) do your homework first.'

 c. swukcey-pwuthe ha-y noh-ko TV-lul po-ala!
 homework-*pwuthe* do-COMP put-CONJ TV-ACC watch-IMP
 'Do the homework first and (then) watch TV!'

(41) mina-nun swukcey-pwuthe ha-ci anh-ko, TV-pwuthe po-ass-ta
 Mina-TOP homework-*pwuthe* do-COMP NEG-CONJ TV-*pwuthe* watch-PST-DECL
 'Mina did not do the homework first, but watched TV first.'

This construction has the meaning that the speaker is presenting the clause containing *pwuthe* as either describing (or not describing, if the clause is negated) some salient first event in the discourse. This example shows that *pwuthe* does not simply mean "the event described by my clause precedes some other event": if it did, (41) would be some kind of contradiction, because each clause would then carry the meaning that it preceded the other. Rather, the meaning is that there is some salient first event in the context, and the clause in question characterizes it (or not). The meaning is (42)a, not (42)b:

(42) a. "Doing homework was not the first salient event, but watching TV was the first salient event."

 b. *"Not doing homework was the first salient event, but watching TV was the first salient event."

Negation is interpreted as being about the descriptive applicability of the clause, and is not part of the propositional content which is used to characterize the salient first event. Note that there is only one salient first event even though there are two occurrences of *pwuthe*. This suggests that the contribution of *pwuthe* cannot be strictly compositional, but rather is constructional in some way. Now a *pwuthe*-marked object can be the antecedent for a accusative floated quantifier, as shown in (43).

(43)   kaylon-chayk-*pwuthe*   twu-kwen-ul   ilk-ko na.se nonmwun-ul ssu-tolok   hay
              introduction-book-*pwuthe* two-volume-ACC read-after   paper-ACC   write-COMP do
              Object   Float Q
              'After you first read two introductory books, try to write a paper.'

A *pwuthe*-phrase can also function as an object in the control construction in (44):

(44)   haksayng-tul-pwuthe ttena-tolok   seltuk hay-ss-ta
              student-PLU-*pwuthe*   leave-COMP persuade-PST-DECL
              'First, we persuaded students to leave.'

The example has at least two interpretations, as control is not fully obligatory with the predicate *seltuk ha-ta* (see Choe (2006)). If 'students' is taken as the object of the matrix predicate, controlling the subject of the embedded predicate, the interpretation is as shown, and *pwuthe* allows the interpretation of 'the first salient event'. Another interpretation of (44) is one in which some unmentioned arbitrary persons were persuaded that the students should leave. Under this interpretation, 'students' is only the subject of the embedded predicate, and then the example means 'I persuaded (someone) [that first the students should leave] (and then others should leave)'. This contrast in interpretations aligns with the idea that the *pwuthe*-marked phrase is the object in (43) and in the primary reading of (44).

One might also take the possibility of accusative case on the frequency adverbial in (39)a to also show that accusative case is assigned within the clause, even though it does not appear overtly on any argument. However, it is known that that the case on adverbials is primarily governed by semantic properties of the clause which do not necessarily correspond with the transitivity of the clause (see e.g., Wechsler and Lee (1996), Kim and Sells (2006)).

3.2.   Oblique Internal Arguments

The *pwuthe*-marking on internal arguments is similar in some ways to focus marking. First of all, *pwuthe*-marking as such can appear on any constituent, indicating what we will call 'narrow' scope (meaning 'starting with ...'), where the referent of the *pwuthe*-phrase is the first in a series, as in (45). *pwuthe* can also take 'wide' scope from an internal argument, in which case it means 'the first thing is (what is denoted by the VP)', the more interesting interpretation described above:

(45) a.   ne-pwuthe   tul-e ka-la (= (38))
           2sg-*pwuthe* go.in-IMP
           'You go in first!' (narrow: 'starting with you, then others go in')

      b.   seoul-ey-pwuthe ka-se   ...
           Seoul-to-*pwuthe* go-CONJ
           'First, go to Seoul ... .' (wide: 'the first thing you do, then you do something else')

      c.   taykay yeca.ay-tul-un namca.ay-tul-i ttayli-kena cangnan-ul chi-myen
           usually girl-PLU-TOP   boy-PLU-NOM hit-or   play.around.with-if
           sensayng-nim-kkey-pwuthe   ka-se   ilu-n-ta
           teacher-HON-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* go-CONJ tell-PROC-DECL
           'If boys hit or play around with them, the first thing that girls usually do is go to the teacher and tell tales.' (wide: 'the first thing that girls do ... ')

While *pwuthe* is most natural on a canonical direct object, with the wide-scope interpretation, this also seems to be possible with at least some dative and oblique arguments, as in (45)b-c (cf. Martin (1992)). The examples in (46) also show the wide-scope interpretation:

(46) a. sensayng-nim-kkey-pwuthe   i   chayk-ul poye tuli-ko   hakkyo-ey ka-la
     teacher-HON-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* this book-ACC show give-CONJ school-DAT go-IMP
     'First show this book to the teacher, then go to school.'

    b. sensayng-nim-tul-kkey-pwuthe   insa   tuli-ko na.se anc-ala
     teacher-HON-PLU-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* greet give-after   sit-IMP
     'First greet the teacher and then sit down.'

    c. senmwul tul-e o-n   ttek-un   halmeni-kkey-pwuthe   poye
     present   come in-NMOD ricecake-TOP grandmother-HON.DAT-*pwuthe* show.COMP
     tuli-ko (na.se) nanwu-e   mek-tolok ha-ela!
     give(-after)   divide-COMP eat-COMP   do-IMP
     'The rice cake (that somebody sent as a present), show it to the grandmother first and then share it among yourselves!'

The wide-scope meaning of *pwuthe* projects from an internal argument, but not a subject, rather like focus projection in English, or Korean (cf. Chung et al. (2007)). In addition, the form *pwuthe* functions morphologically like the suffix *(n)un*, supplanting structural case markers but following postpositional oblique markers such as *eykey*, *ey* or *kkey*, as seen in (47):

(47) a. ai-tul-eykey-pwuthe   kwaca-lul   cwu-ela
     child-PLU-DAT-*pwuthe* cookie-ACC give-IMP
     'Give cookies to the children (first).'

    b. i   san-ey-pwuthe   olla   ka-se   ...
     this mountain-LOC-*pwuthe* ascend.COMP go-CONJ ...
     'Go up this mountain first and then ... .'

In summary, *pwuthe* appear on any argument, and can mark it as being the first in a series, or, on any internal argument, it can mark the clause containing it as describing a salient first event.

4. Conclusions and Consequences

The overall conclusion from the observations above is that nominative and accusative marking on arguments may be 'supplanted' by the oblique case markers cited from Korean and Japanese, which mark semantic and pragmatic information, possibly peculiar to a given construction. Specifically, through the Korean data, we have shown that the oblique markers *kkeyse*, *eyse* and *pwuthe* have different properties when marking core arguments, summarized in (48):

(48) a. *kkeyse* marks a subject as nominative, with the meaning of honorification;

    b. *eyse* marks a subject with non-nominative oblique case, with the meaning that the subject refers to a location;

    c. *pwuthe* may appear on an internal argument marking the wide scope 'salient first event' interpretation; and like the topic marker *(n)un* it suppresses the appearance of accusative case on an object.

These specific proposals lead to several more general conclusions.

(49)　a.　that having a grammatical function is not equivalent to being in a position where structural case is checked or assigned; nominative and accusative do not necessarily have to be assigned by a transitive verb;

　　　b.　that a transitive verb does not change its meaning when it combines with an oblique argument – a transitive verb does not take a 'location' or 'institution' argument, and certainly not a 'salient first event', yet these meanings can be provided by oblique arguments. In other words, it must be the oblique form, or the construction which involves it, which provide these extra components of meaning;

　　　c.　that case has a meaning, anywhere from the level of argument structure to propositional semantics to pragmatics.

Appendix: Analyses of Case Marking

Butt (2006) identifies 'semantic' case markers as those which (i) involve semantic predictability and (ii) are subject to syntactic restrictions (such as being limited to certain grammatical functions). Butt (2006: 149) writes "the information associated with case morphology is assumed to interact with information specified in other parts of the grammar at several levels of representation".

　　Within HPSG, the Korean forms summarized in (48) have been analyzed in Sells (2004a), building on proposals for structural case marking by Bratt (1996) and Kim (2004). In this kind of analysis the relevant additional information is not introduced by the case marker, but rather is introduced by the grammatical rule which combines an argument and a head (either a head and its subject, or a head and its complement), adding in the relevant semantic or pragmatic information.

(50)　　　$hd\text{-}subj\text{-}ph \Rightarrow$　$\left[\text{SUBJ} \langle\ \rangle\right] \rightarrow \boxed{1}\left[\text{CASE } nom\right],\ \mathbf{H}\left[\text{SUBJ } \langle\boxed{1}\rangle\right]$

(51)　　　$hd\text{-}comp\text{-}ph \Rightarrow$　$\left[\text{COMPS } \boxed{A}\right] \rightarrow \boxed{1}\left[\text{CASE } acc\right],\ \mathbf{H}\begin{bmatrix}\text{CAT}\,|\,\text{COMPS} & \langle\boxed{1}\rangle \oplus \boxed{A} \\ \text{CONT} & [cause\text{-}rel]\end{bmatrix}$

(52)　　　$hd\text{-}subj\text{-}kkeyse\text{-}ph \Rightarrow$
　　　　　$\left[\text{SUBJ} \langle\ \rangle\right] \rightarrow \boxed{1}\left[\text{CASE } nom\right],\ \mathbf{H}\begin{bmatrix}\text{CAT} & \begin{bmatrix}\text{SUBJ} & \langle\boxed{1}\rangle \\ \text{HEAD} & [\text{HON } +]\end{bmatrix}\end{bmatrix}$

(53)　　　$verb \Rightarrow \begin{bmatrix}\text{HEAD} & \boxed{1} \\ \text{DEPS} & \boxed{A} \oplus list\left(\left[\text{MOD} \begin{bmatrix}\text{HEAD} & \boxed{1} \\ \text{KEY} & \boxed{2}\end{bmatrix}\right]\right) \\ \text{ARG-ST} & \boxed{A} \\ \text{CONT}\,|\,\text{KEY} & \boxed{2}\end{bmatrix}$
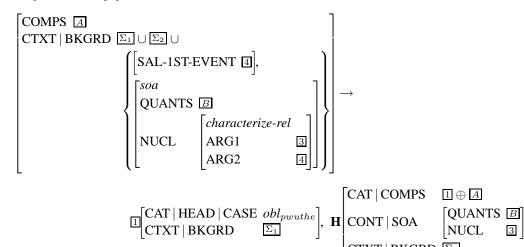
(54)   *hd-dep-eyse-ph* $\Rightarrow$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{DEPS} & \boxed{A} \end{bmatrix} \to \boxed{1}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CASE} & obl_{eyse} \end{bmatrix}, \mathbf{H}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{HEAD} & \boxed{4} \\ \text{DEPS} & \boxed{1}\begin{bmatrix} \text{MOD}\begin{bmatrix} \text{HEAD} & \boxed{4} \\ \text{KEY} & \boxed{5} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \oplus \boxed{A} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CONT} & \begin{bmatrix} loc\text{-}rel \\ \text{KEY} & \boxed{5} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

(55)   *hd-subj-eyse-ph* $\Rightarrow$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{SUBJ} & \langle\ \rangle \\ \text{CTXT} \mid \text{BKGRD} & \boxed{\Sigma_1} \cup \boxed{\Sigma_2} \cup \\ & \begin{bmatrix} \text{RESTR} & \{location(i)\} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \to$$

$$\boxed{1}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} \mid \text{HEAD} \mid \text{CASE} & obl_{eyse} \\ \text{CONT} \mid \text{INDEX} & i \\ \text{CTXT} \mid \text{BKGRD} & \boxed{\Sigma_1} \end{bmatrix}, \mathbf{H}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} \mid \text{SUBJ} & \langle \boxed{1} \rangle \\ \text{CTXT} \mid \text{BKGRD} & \boxed{\Sigma_2} \\ \text{CONT} & \begin{bmatrix} cause\text{-}rel \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

(56)   *hd-pwuthe-comp-ph* $\Rightarrow$

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{COMPS} & \boxed{A} \\ \text{CTXT} \mid \text{BKGRD} & \boxed{\Sigma_1} \cup \boxed{\Sigma_2} \cup \\ & \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} \text{SAL-1ST-EVENT} & \boxed{4} \end{bmatrix}, \\ \begin{bmatrix} soa \\ \text{QUANTS} & \boxed{B} \\ \text{NUCL} & \begin{bmatrix} characterize\text{-}rel \\ \text{ARG1} & \boxed{3} \\ \text{ARG2} & \boxed{4} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix} \right\} \end{bmatrix} \to$$

$$\boxed{1}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} \mid \text{HEAD} \mid \text{CASE} & obl_{pwuthe} \\ \text{CTXT} \mid \text{BKGRD} & \boxed{\Sigma_1} \end{bmatrix}, \mathbf{H}\begin{bmatrix} \text{CAT} \mid \text{COMPS} & \boxed{1} \oplus \boxed{A} \\ \text{CONT} \mid \text{SOA} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{QUANTS} & \boxed{B} \\ \text{NUCL} & \boxed{3} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{CTXT} \mid \text{BKGRD} & \boxed{\Sigma_2} \end{bmatrix}$$

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