

Syntactic Positioning of Causee Nominals in Korean Periphrastic Causatives: A Tertiary Analysis

Paul Yunchul Yoo

(Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center)

Yoo, Paul Yunchul. (2025). Syntactic positioning of causee nominals in Korean periphrastic causatives: A tertiary analysis. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal*, 33(3), 153-172. The Periphrastic Causative Construction (PCC) has been a central topic in the syntactic analysis of both Korean and Japanese, but several unresolved issues persist, particularly concerning the syntactic positioning of causee nominals and the underlying syntactic structures. This study critically reviews the existing literature on PCCs in both languages and introduces a new analysis that addresses gaps in previous research. The central argument posits that the three types of causee nominals—nominative, dative, and accusative—each occupy distinct syntactic positions within the causative construction. By redefining the semantic properties of these causee nominals, the study offers both conceptual and empirical support for the proposed syntactic structures. The paper concludes with a discussion of the theoretical implications of these findings for understanding causative constructions in Korean and Japanese.

Key Words: periphrastic causative construction, causee, case, multiple accusative construction, transitivity

1. Introduction

The Periphrastic Causative Construction (PCC) is one of the most extensively studied constructions in both Korean and Japanese. However, despite a substantial body of research, several issues remain unresolved, particularly concerning the syntactic positions of causee nominals and the structures involved. This study critically reviews existing literature on PCCs in both languages and proposes a refined analysis to address these gaps. Specifically, I argue that the three types of causee nominals—nominative, dative, and accusative—occupy distinct syntactic positions. The following section reviews previous analyses of PCCs in Korean and Japanese, focusing on how each language differs in the syntactic placement of causee nominals.

2. Periphrastic Causative Constructions in Korean and Japanese

This section surveys previous analyses of periphrastic causative constructions (PCCs) in Korean and Japanese, with particular attention to how the causee arguments are syntactically realized in each language. The Japanese pattern serves as the comparative baseline: the dative causee appears in the matrix clause, while the accusative causee remains embedded. In contrast, the Korean pattern challenges this alignment, showing that both dative and accusative causees surface in the matrix clause. Section 2.1 first outlines the Japanese system, while Section 2.2 turns to Korean evidence from binding and negative polarity licensing.

2.1. The Japanese Periphrastic Causative Pattern

In Japanese, PCCs show a clear asymmetry between dative and accusative causees, depending on the transitivity of the embedded predicate. The dative causee typically appears in the matrix clause, while the accusative causee surfaces in the embedded clause (Miyagawa, 1999; Kobayashi, 2005). When the embedded clause contains a transitive predicate (e.g., *yom* ‘read’), only the dative causee is allowed, as shown in (1).

- (1) a. Taroo-ga Hanako-ni sono-hon-o yom-ase-ta.
 Taro-Nom Hanako-Dat the-book-Acc read-Caus-Pst
 'Taro made Hanako read the book.'
- b. *Taroo-ga Hanako-o sono-hon-o yom-ase-ta.
 Taro-Nom Hanako-Acc the-book-Acc read-Caus-Pst
 'Taro made Hanako read the book.'

However, when the embedded clause contains an intransitive predicate (e.g., *ik* 'go') as shown in (2), the causee can appear with either dative or accusative.

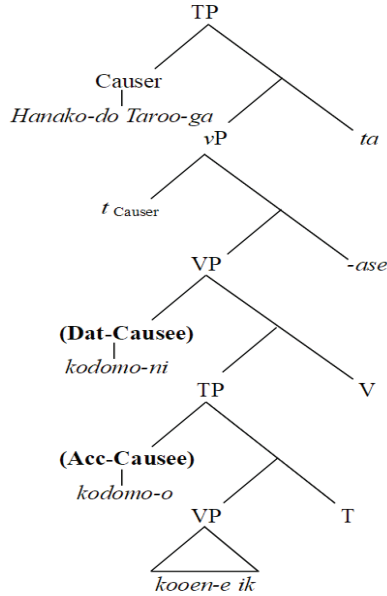
- (2) a. Hanako-ga kodomo-ni kooen-e ik-ase-ta.
 Hanako-Nom child-Dat park-Loc go-Caus-Pst
 'Hanako made the child go to the park.'
- b. Hanako-ga kodomo-o kooen-e ik-ase-ta.
 Hanako-Nom child-Acc park-Loc go-Caus-Pst
 'Hanako made the child go to the park.'

Miyagawa (1999) argues that this contrast stems from structural differences: the dative causee occupies a higher position in the matrix VP, while the accusative causee is generated within the embedded TP. The distribution of the agentive adverb *hitoride* 'alone' supports this view. As shown in (3), *hitoride* can only associate with the accusative causee in (3a), not the dative causee in (3b).

- (3) a. Hanako-to Taroo-ga hitoride kodomo-o kooen-e ik-ase-ta.
 Hanako-and Taro-Nom alone child-Acc park-Loc go-Caus-Pst
 'Hanako and Taro made the child go alone to the park.'
- b. *Hanako-to Taroo-ga hitoride kodomo-ni kooen-e ik-ase-ta.
 Hanako-and Taro-Nom alone child-Dat park-Loc go-Caus-Pst
 'Hanako and Taro made the child go alone to the park.'

The grammaticality of (3a) shows that *hitoride* modifies the embedded subject (the child), indicating that the accusative causee belongs to the embedded clause. The ungrammaticality of (3b) confirms that the dative causee is in the matrix clause, where it cannot serve as an agent for the adverb. Miyagawa's (1999) structural proposal is illustrated as in (4):

(4)



2.2. The Korean Periphrastic Causative Pattern

In contrast to Japanese, Korean PCCs allow nominative, dative, and accusative causees, all formed with the complementizer *-key* and the causative verb *ha-*. The basic construction is illustrated in (5):

- (5) Cheli-nun Yenghi-ka chayk-ul ilk-key ha-yess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Yenghi-Nom book-Acc read-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli made Yenghi read a book.'

The causee may alternatively appear with dative or accusative case, as shown in (6):

- (6) a. Cheli-nun Yenghi-eykey chayk-ul ilk-key ha-yess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Yenghi-Dat book-Acc read-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli made Yenghi read a book.'
- b. Cheli-nun Yenghi-lul chayk-ul ilk-key ha-yess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Yenghi-Acc book-Acc read-Cop Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli made Yenghi read a book.'

Recent analyses (Yeo, 2006; Lee, 2007) challenge the Japanese- based assumption that accusative causees are embedded. Instead, both dative and accusative causees in Korean are argued to occupy matrix positions, while only the nominative causee remains embedded. This section reviews the major arguments supporting this view.

2.2.1. Evidence from Binding (Lee 2007)

Lee (2007) provides evidence from Korean causative constructions, illustrating how the behavior of anaphors and pronouns depends on the case marking of the causee. The anaphor *caki* ‘self’ in (7a) must be bound by its antecedent within the same clause, whereas the pronoun *kunye* ‘her’ in (7b) and (7c) must remain free within its clause. When the matrix subject is coreferential with the causee, *kunye* can appear only when the causee bears nominative case, as in (7c). In contrast, when the causee is accusative, as in (7b), *kunye* is ungrammatical, and *caki* must be used instead, as in (7a). This distribution strongly suggests that the accusative causee originates in the matrix clause, since only an anaphor can co-refer with the matrix subject.

- (7) a. Mary_i-nun caki_i-lul totpoy-key ha-yess-ta.
 Mary-Top self-Acc look.better-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘Mary made herself look better.’
 b. Mary_i-nun kunye_i-lul totpoy-key ha-yess-ta.
 Mary-Top she-Acc look.better-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘Mary made her look better.’ (ungrammatical)
 c. Mary_i-nun [CP kunyei-ka totpoy-key] ha-yess-ta.
 Mary-Top she-Nom look.better-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘Mary made herself look better.’¹⁾

1) One reviewer has pointed out that the ungrammaticality of (8b) may not be categorical, noting that sentences such as *Mary_i-nun kunye-casin_i-ul totpoy-key ha-yess-ta* (“Mary made herself look better.”) and *Mary_i-nun caki-ka totpoy-key ha-yess-ta* (“Mary made herself look better.”) are acceptable to some speakers. This variation likely reflects differences in how speakers interpret reflexive forms (*caki/casin*) relative to *caki* and *kunye*. While this observation weakens the sharpness of Lee’s (2007) binding contrast, the overall pattern—particularly when combined with NPI and adverbial diagnostics—continues to support the view that accusative causees occupy a matrix-clause position.

2.2.2. Evidence from Negative Polarity Items (Yeo 2006)

Yeo (2006) employs two diagnostics—agentive adverbials and Negative Polarity Items—to determine the syntactic position of the causee in Korean PCCs. Using the agentive adverb *honcase* ‘alone’, she tests whether the causee can function as the agent of the embedded predicate. Unlike Japanese, where the adverb *hitoride* ‘alone’ can modify an accusative causee but not a dative one (Miyagawa 1999), the Korean counterpart *honcase* fails to associate with the causee regardless of case marking, as shown in (8).

- (8) a. *?John-kwa Bill-i honcase Mary-lul ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 John-Cnj Bill-Nom alone Mary-Acc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘John and Bill made Mary go alone.’
 b. *?John-kwa Bill-i honcase Mary-eykey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 John-Cnj Bill-Nom alone Mary-Dat go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘John and Bill made Mary go alone.’

The marginality of both (8a) and (8b) shows that *honcase* cannot find a suitable embedded agent to modify. Yeo (2006) interprets this as indicating that neither the accusative nor the dative causee serves as the embedded subject; both must instead occupy positions within the matrix clause. This conclusion directly contrasts with the Japanese pattern, where the accusative causee functions as the embedded subject and the dative causee as the matrix argument.

Yeo further supports this analysis through NPI licensing. NPIs such as *amwuto* ‘anyone’ are licensed only when c-commanded by negation within the same clause. Thus, if *amwuto* is licensed in a causative sentence where negation attaches to the matrix verb *ha-*, the NPI must reside in the matrix clause. Her key examples are given in (9).

- (9) a. John-i amwu-eykey-to ka-key an ha-yess-ta.
 John-Nom anyone-Dat go-Comp Neg Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘John did not cause anyone to go.’
 b. John-i amwuto ka-key an ha-yess-ta.
 John-Nom anyone go-Comp Neg Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘John did not cause anyone to go.’

Because both (9a) and (9b) are grammatical, Yeo concludes that both dative and accusative causees must be located in the matrix clause. However, when negation modifies

the embedded predicate rather than the causative verb, the sentences become ungrammatical, as shown in (10).

- (10) a. *?John-i amwu-eykey-to an ka-key ha-yess-ta.
 John-Nom anyone-Dat Neg go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John did not cause anyone to go.'
 b. *?John-i amwuto an ka-key ha-yess-ta.
 John-Nom anyone Neg go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John did not cause anyone to go.'

Yeo interprets this contrast as evidence that the NPI must be within the scope of matrix negation—that is, in the matrix clause. Although subsequent judgments (including mine) find (10b) marginally acceptable, this discrepancy can be reconciled by assuming that short-form negation may extend its scope over the entire causative complex. Thus, even the partial acceptability of (10b) ultimately supports the conclusion that the accusative causee occupies a matrix position.

2.2.3. Consolidated NPI Diagnostics (Scope and Case)

Korean NPIs such as *amwuto* 'anyone' require licensing by clause-mate negation. However, when the focus marker *-to* replaces a case particle, the underlying case of the NPI becomes ambiguous (*amwu-to-ka/lul*, *amwu-ka/lul-to* being morphologically ill-formed). To avoid this ambiguity, the present study employs forms like *aitul-i/lul amwuto* rather than bare *amwuto*, so that the clause position of the NPI can be diagnosed through the overt case marking of its associated argument (nominative vs. accusative causee).

To enhance empirical reliability, grammaticality judgments were obtained from fourteen Korean language instructors (ages 30–55, primarily Seoul and Gyeongsang speakers). While judgments involving short-form negation (*an*) showed moderate variability, long-form negation (*-ci anh-*) yielded consistent patterns. Ongoing work includes corpus attestation of comparable constructions (e.g., *ha-ci anh-key ha-ta*, *ka-key ha-ci anh-ta*) to further substantiate these findings.

Korean NPIs are licensed only when they occur within the same clause as negation. When negation is embedded, an NPI in the embedded clause is licensed; when negation is matrix, an NPI in the embedded clause is not. Conversely, an NPI linked to a matrix argument is licensed only under matrix negation. The following contrasts, which control for negation type (short vs. long) and causee case (NOM vs. ACC), reveal a robust asymmetry.

Embedded Negation (Short Form)

- (11) a. John-i aitul-i amwuto an ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 John-Nom children-Nom anyone Neg go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John made it so that none of the children went.' ✓
- b. ?John-i aitul-ul amwuto an ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 John-Nom children-Acc anyone Neg go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John made it so that none of the children went.' (marginal)

Embedded Negation (Long Form)

- (12) a. John-i aitul-i amwuto ka-ci-anh-key
 John-Nom children-Nom anyone go-Nml-Neg-Comp
 ha-ess-ta.
 Caus-Pst-Decl ✓
- b. *?John-i aitul-ul amwuto ka-ci-anh-key
 John-Nom children-Acc anyone go-Nml-Neg-Comp
 ha-ess-ta.
 Caus-Pst-Decl (= bad)

Matrix Negation (Short Form)

- (13) a. *John-i aitul-i amwuto ka-key an ha-ess-ta.
 John-Nom children-Nom anyone go-Comp Neg Caus-Pst-Decl
- b. John-i aitul-ul amwuto ka-key an ha-ess-ta.
 John-Nom children-Acc anyone go-Comp Neg Caus-Pst-Decl ✓

Matrix Negation (Long Form)

- (14) a. *John-i aitul-i amwuto ka-key ha-ci
 John-Nom children-Nom anyone go-Comp Caus-Nml
 anh-ass-ta.
 Neg-Pst-Decl
- b. John-i aitul-ul amwuto ka-key ha-ci
 John-Nom children-Acc anyone go-Comp Caus-Nml
 anh-ass-ta.
 Neg-Pst-Decl ✓

Two generalizations follow. First, nominative causees pattern with embedded position: they license NPIs when negation is embedded (11–12a) but not when negation is matrix (13–14a). Second, accusative causees pattern with matrix position: they license NPIs under matrix negation (13–14b) but degrade when negation is embedded (11–12b). The occasional marginality of (11b) can be attributed to the scope ambiguity of short-form negation, whose prosodic domain may extend to the causative complex (Neg [ka-key ha-]). Long-form negation (*-ci anh-*) fixes its scope within the embedded predicate, yielding categorical contrasts. Together with the binding and adverbial diagnostics, these results converge on the generalization that nominative causees occupy embedded positions, whereas accusative causees surface in the matrix clause.²⁾

3. Distinct Positions for Acc and Dat Causees

The findings from Yeo (2006) and Lee (2007) converge on a key point: unlike in Japanese, both dative and accusative causees in Korean occupy positions within the matrix clause, while nominative causees remain embedded. Building on this consensus, the present section argues that the two matrix causees do not share the same syntactic position. Specifically, I propose that the accusative causee occupies a structurally higher position than the dative causee, necessitating an additional projection between vP and VP within the matrix clause. This proposal refines the Korean PCC analysis and clarifies the internal architecture of the matrix domain.

3.1. Semantic Gradient and Conceptual Motivation for Distinct Positions

Building on Yeo (2006) and Lee (2007), the present study advances a novel argument that, although both dative and accusative causees surface in the matrix clause, they do not occupy the same syntactic position. This gap has not been explicitly addressed in prior analyses: earlier work established the *matrix status* of these causees but did not

2) Because acceptability with short-form negation (*an*) is gradient and subject to interspeaker variation, *an* serves only as a supplementary diagnostic. The argumentation in this section relies primarily on long-form negation data, which yielded quite consistent judgments across fourteen Korean language instructors.

explain their relative ordering or the semantic differences that correlate with it. I propose that the accusative causee occupies a structurally higher matrix position than the dative causee, requiring an additional functional projection between vP and VP. This refinement clarifies how Korean causative semantics map onto hierarchical argument structure.

To motivate this syntactic distinction, I reclassify Korean periphrastic causative constructions into three prototypical types, summarized in (15). These types are not mutually exclusive; rather, they represent *gradient tendencies* along a continuum of causer control and event entailment, which has played a central role in defining causative constructions cross-linguistically (Shibatani, 1976; King, 1987; Terada, 1990; Harley, 1995; Miyagawa, 1999; Kishimoto, 2001).

(15) Three Prototypical Types of Causation in Korean

- a. Situational Causation – PCC with a nominative causee
- b. Interactive Causation – PCC with a dative causee (covering persuasion / permission)
- c. Resultative Causation – PCC with an accusative causee

- (16) a. Cheli-nun Yenghi-ka ttena-key ha-yess-ta.
Cheli-Top Yenghi-Nom leave-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
'Cheli made Yenghi leave.'
- b. Cheli-nun Yenghi-eykey ttena-key ha-yess-ta.
Cheli-Top Yenghi-Dat leave-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
'Cheli persuaded / allowed Yenghi to leave.'
- c. Cheli-nun Yenghi-lul ttena-key ha-yess-ta.
Cheli-Top Yenghi-Acc leave-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
'Cheli caused Yenghi to leave.'

Each type associates with characteristic semantic properties (see Table 17 below). Situational causation with a Nom case as in (16a) represents the least direct causal link: the causer manipulates external circumstances that *indirectly* lead the causee to act (e.g., reminding *Yenghi* of the time). Interactive causation with a Dat causee, as in (16b), introduces a verbal or interpersonal component—the causer influences the causee through communication or permission. Resultative causation with an Acc causee, as in (16c), represents the strongest causal relation: the caused event obligatorily follows from the causer's action.

(17) Prototypical Properties of the Three Causation Types in Korean

Causation Type	Typical Case	Direct Contact	Possibility of Speech / Permission	Entailment (Cause → Effect)
Situational	Nom	No	No	No
Interactive	Dat	Yes	Yes	Weak / Optional
Resultative	Acc	Yes	Yes	Strong / Obligatory

The gradient nature of these types becomes clearer in sentences like (18–20). Dative causees typically appear in clauses expressing persuasion or permission, often interacting with the causee's volition.

- (18) a. John-un [ka-ko siph-e ha]-nun Bill-eykey ka-key
 John-Top go-Desid-Asp do-Rel Bill-Dat go-Comp
 ha-yess-ta.
 Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John caused Bill to leave when Bill wanted to.' (less natural)
- b. John-un [an ka-lye]-nun Bill-eykey ka-key ha-yess-ta.
 John-Top Neg go-Purp-Rel Bill-Dat go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John caused Bill to leave even though Bill did not want to.' ✓

While some speakers find both sentences acceptable, they tend to prefer (18b), where the causation involves overcoming resistance—consistent with an *interactive* (persuasive) reading.

By contrast, nominative causees—corresponding to situational causation—show little sensitivity to volition or resistance, as in (19). Speakers vary in judging (19) fully grammatical, but most perceive these as pragmatically odd rather than syntactically deviant—a difference in *naturalness* rather than *acceptability*.

- (19) a. John-un [ka-ko siph-e ha]-nun Bill-i ka-key
 John-Top go-Desid-Asp do-Rel Bill-Nom go-Comp
 ha-yess-ta.
 Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John made Bill leave when Bill wanted to.' (?natural)
- b. John-un [an ka-lye]-nun Bill-i ka-key ha-yess-ta.

John-Top Neg go-Purp-Rel Bill-Nom go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John made Bill leave when Bill did not want to.' (?natural)

Finally, accusative causees encode resultative causation, where the caused event is strongly entailed regardless of the causee's will. Here both (20a) and (20b) are natural, reflecting direct, resultative causation: the caused event necessarily follows from the causer's action.

- (20) a. John-un [ka-ko siph-e ha]-nun Bill-ul ka-key
 John-Top go-Desid-Asp do-Rel Bill-Acc go-Comp
 ha-yess-ta.
 Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John caused Bill to leave, when Bill wanted to.' ✓
 b. John-un [an ka-lye]-nun Bill-ul ka-key ha-yess-ta.
 John-Top Neg go-Purp-Rel Bill-Acc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'John caused Bill to leave, even though Bill did not want to.' ✓

Additional evidence comes from the verb *mantul-* 'make', which semantically entails completion of the caused event. The incompatibility of the dative causee in (21b) supports the interpretation that dative PCCs encode process-oriented rather than result-oriented causation. The pattern in (21) suggests that the dative causee is structurally lower and semantically less integrated into the matrix event than the accusative causee.

- (21) a. John-i Bill-i ka-key mantul-ess-ta.
 John-Nom Bill-Nom go-Comp make-Pst-Decl
 'John made Bill go.'
 b. *John-i Bill-eykey ka-key mantul-ess-ta.
 John-Nom Bill-Dat go-Comp make-Pst-Decl
 'John made Bill go.'
 c. John-i Bill-ul ka-key mantul-ess-ta.
 John-Nom Bill-Acc go-Comp make-Pst-Decl
 'John made Bill go.'

In summary, these data support a hierarchical mapping of causation types to syntactic

height: Situational (Nom) & Interactive (Dat) & Resultative (Acc). This gradient reflects increasing integration of the caused event into the matrix predicate and, correspondingly, a higher structural position for the causee.

3.2. Accusative Causee: Generated Above Matrix VP

The preceding section established a semantic hierarchy among the three causation types—Situational (Nom) vs. Interactive vs. Resultative (Acc)—reflecting increasing degrees of causal integration. This section translates that semantic hierarchy into syntactic structure. While both dative and accusative causees appear within the matrix clause, they do not occupy the same structural position. I argue that the accusative causee is generated higher than the dative causee, requiring an additional functional projection between *v*P and VP. This proposal refines the analysis of Korean PCCs by linking argument structure directly to the degree of event entailment identified in § 3.1.

3.2.1. Positional Hierarchy and Word-Order Evidence

Three sets of ordering contrasts reveal a stable hierarchical pattern: [Acc > Nom], [Dat > Nom], and [Acc > Dat]. These orders remain consistent across speakers and are confirmed by consultant data from fourteen Korean instructors. Examine the contrast between (22a) and (22b).

- (22) a. Cheli-nun Toli-lul ku-ka kongwen-ey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Toli-Acc he-Nom park-Loc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘Cheli caused Toli to go to the park.’ ✓
- b. *Cheli-nun Toli-ka ku-lul kongwen-ey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Toli-Nom he-Acc park-Loc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 ‘Cheli caused Toli to go to the park.’

Only (22a) is well-formed, showing that the accusative causee must precede the nominative causee, which is embedded in the lower subject position.

Now consider the pair in (23). The [Dat > Nom] order in (23a) confirms that the dative causee occupies a matrix position above the embedded subject but below the accusative causee.

- (23) a. Cheli-nun Toli-eykey ku-ka kongwen-ey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Toli-Dat he-Nom park-Loc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli caused Toli to go to the park.' ✓
- b. *Cheli-nun Toli-ka ku-eykey kongwen-ey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Toli-Nom he-Dat park-Loc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli caused Toli to go to the park.'

When both matrix causees co-occur, only the order [Acc > Dat] is acceptable. Together, these contrasts support the hierarchy [Acc > Dat > Nom], aligning syntactic height with causal strength.

- (24) a. Cheli-nun Toli-lul ku-eykey kongwen-ey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Toli-Acc he-Dat park-Loc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli caused Toli to go to the park.' ✓
- b. *Cheli-nun Toli-eykey ku-lul kongwen-ey ka-key ha-ess-ta.
 Cheli-Top Toli-Dat he-Acc park-Loc go-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Cheli caused Toli to go to the park.'

3.2.2. Structural Implementation

To capture this ordering, I posit that the accusative causee occupies the specifier of a higher functional projection (XP) situated between *v*P and VP, as schematized in (25).

- (25) Structural Hierarchy of Causees in Korean PCCs
 [*v*P Causer [*v'* *v* [XP Acc-Causee [X' X [VP Dat-Causee
 [V' V [CP ... Nom-Causee ...]]]]]]]

The matrix subject (causer) merges in Spec,*v*P; the dative causee merges in Spec,VP; and the accusative causee occupies Spec,XP. This additional projection licenses the higher-ranked accusative argument and correlates with the obligatory entailment observed in resultative causation.

Two properties justify this configuration. First, the specifier of *v*P is already occupied by the causer, so the accusative causee requires a distinct argument position for licensing and case checking. Second, the accusative causee shows syntactic behavior characteristic of higher objects—it can bind reflexives and scope over the dative causee, as illustrated in (26).

- (26) a. Mary-nun Toli-lul cakii-eykey chwuchen-ha-key ha-ess-ta.
 Mary-Top Toli-Acc self-Dat recommend-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Mary made Toli recommend herself.' (Acc binds Dat)
- b. *Mary-nun Toli-eykey cakii-lul chwuchen-ha-key ha-ess-ta.
 Mary-Top Toli-Dat self-Acc recommend-Comp Caus-Pst-Decl
 'Mary made Toli recommend herself.' (ill-formed)

The contrast shows that the accusative causee c-commands the dative causee, confirming its higher structural position.

3.2.3. Theoretical Consequences

This split-matrix analysis aligns with broader cross-linguistic patterns of split transitivity (Bowers, 2002; Basilico, 1998). Korean's XP can be interpreted as a transitivity-related functional head—analogous to Bowers's TrP or Basilico's TransP—responsible for licensing a higher internal argument. Unlike Japanese, where only the dative causee is matrix-bound, Korean allows two matrix objects because its clause structure contains two object positions.

Independent support for this split comes from other Korean phenomena requiring an extra argument projection, such as the Multiple Accusative Construction and Internally Headed Relative Clauses, discussed in Section 4. Thus, the additional XP is not an ad hoc invention but a language-specific realization of a universal transitivity layer within the matrix domain.

4. Theoretical Implications

4.1. Functional Decomposition and Structural Necessity

The insertion of an intermediary projection between *v*P and VP is not without precedent. Bowers (2002) proposes decomposing the traditional light verb *v* into two functional heads—Pr (Predication) and Tr (Transitivity)—arguing that both are universally present in transitive structures. Tr functions as the locus of ϕ -agreement and structural accusative case assignment. Evidence for this decomposition comes from transitive impersonal predicates in languages such as Russian, as illustrated in (27), and in certain

Khoisan languages (Collins 2000). In (27), an accusative argument surfaces despite the absence of an external agent:

- (27) a. Rabocego ubilo oskolkom plity.
 worker-Acc killed-3Sg.Neut shard-Instr of.concrete-slab
 ‘A worker was killed by a shard of concrete.’
 b. Nos zalozilo ot pyli.
 nose-Acc clogged-3Sg.Neut from dust-Gen
 ‘My nose got stuffed up from the dust.’

Because these predicates lack an external argument but still assign accusative case, Bowers argues that Tr is an independent functional head distinct from *v*. This structural refinement clarifies why some predicates behave transitively without an overt agent—a pattern mirrored in Korean when multiple accusative arguments appear.

Basilico (1998) further motivates a separate Transitivity Phrase (TransP), arguing that English has two object positions: one in Spec,VP and another in Spec,TransP (=Spec,vP in later terminology). These two positions correlate with distinct predication types. In thetic predication, the object originates low and later moves; in categorical predication, the object is base-generated in the higher position. The alternations in (28–29) illustrate this:

- (28) a. The farmer loaded a bale of hay onto the truck.
 b. The farmer loaded the truck with a bale of hay.
 (29) a. The cook baked three dozen cookies from one pound of dough.
 b. The cook baked one pound of dough into three dozen cookies.

In (28b) and (29b), the higher object forms a tighter unit with the verb, producing a resultative interpretation—precisely the kind of entailment relation seen with accusative causees in Korean. Thus, cross-linguistic evidence supports an intermediate projection that introduces an additional internal argument and licenses resultative meaning.

4.2. Syntax-Semantics Interface and Entailment

One might object that the distinctions drawn in §3 among Situational, Interactive, and Resultative Causation are purely semantic. However, extensive research on the syntax-

semantics interface shows that entailment relations are syntactically encoded through argument- structural layering. Pylkkänen (2002) demonstrates that the presence of a dedicated CauseP determines whether the caused event is compositionally entailed by the causing event: high (direct) causatives include CauseP, whereas low (indirect) causatives lack it. Harley (2008) further argues that the addition of a functional projection introducing a CAUSE relation corresponds to increased syntactic height and obligatoriness of entailment between subevents. Together, these findings show that differences in causal strength—such as those captured by the hierarchy [Acc > Dat > Nom]—are not merely descriptive generalizations but structurally grounded.

In this light, the additional projection XP proposed for Korean can be understood as the realization of CauseP or TransP within the matrix domain. It encodes the strongest causal connection, corresponding to Resultative Causation, while the dative and nominative causees are associated with lower projections expressing weaker or indirect causation.

4.3. Implications for Korean Argument Structure

This structural layering explains several Korean-specific phenomena. First, in Multiple Accusative Constructions, an additional accusative- marked argument appears alongside a lexical object:

- (30) John-i Mary-lul tali-lul cha-ss-ta.
 John-Nom Mary-Acc leg-Acc kick-Pst-Decl
 ‘John kicked Mary’s leg.’

Here, XP introduces the higher accusative argument, *Mary-lul*, while VP contains the lower one, *tali-lul*.

Second, the Internally-Headed Relative Clause (IHRC) construction allows the head nominal to bear either nominative or accusative case, as shown in (31):

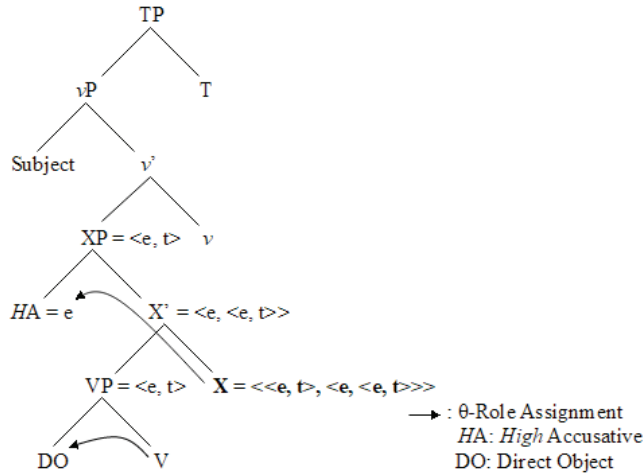
- (31) a. Cheli-nun [totwuk-i tomangka]-nun kes-ul cap-ass-ta.
 Cheli-Top thief-Nom run.away-Rel Kes-Acc catch-Pst-Decl
 ‘Cheli caught a thief while he was running away.’
 b. Cheli-nun totwuk-ul tomangka-nun kes-ul cap-ass-ta.
 Cheli-Top thief-Acc run.away-Rel Kes-Acc catch-Pst-Decl
 ‘Cheli caught the thief while he was running away.’

The availability of accusative marking on the head nominal indicates that case assignment can occur above the embedded clause, precisely the position predicted if Korean includes a functional head between *v*P and VP responsible for accusative licensing.

The category X acts as a transitivity operator that selects an already saturated VP—one that has already incorporated an internal argument—and reconfigures it as a predicate requiring an additional argument. In the Multiple Accusative Construction, for example, the VP initially contains a verb and an object, forming a transitive structure. X subsequently applies to this VP, creating an “unsaturated” transitive VP that necessitates an additional object.

Semantically, X is understood as a function with the type $\langle\langle e, t \rangle, \langle e, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle\rangle$ in the Fregean framework, as illustrated in (32). This operation mirrors the “causativization” function discussed in Pylkkänen (2002) and Harley (2008), reinforcing the link between syntactic height, structural case, and causative semantics.

(32)



4.4. Summary

Drawing on cross-linguistic evidence for structural decomposition (Bowers, 2002; Basilico, 1998) and contemporary theories of event composition (Pylkkänen, 2002; Harley, 2008), this study situates Korean periphrastic causatives within a broader typological and theoretical context. The proposed hierarchy—[Acc > Dat > Nom]—demonstrates that

degrees of causal entailment systematically align with syntactic height. The introduction of an intermediate functional head (XP) captures both the structural asymmetry among causees and the corresponding gradient of causal strength. In doing so, the analysis integrates Korean data into the general architecture of argument structure proposed in recent generative frameworks. Future research incorporating corpus-based evidence and extending the comparison to other agglutinative languages such as Mongolian or Turkish will help refine the empirical scope and theoretical universality of this tripartite model.

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Paul Yunchul Yoo

Assistant Professor

1759 Lewis Rd. Presidio of Monterey, CA 93944

Email: paul.yoo@dliflc.edu

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