

Sicak-ha-ta as an Ergative Verb¹⁾

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Lee, Keon Soo. 1999. *Sicak-ha-ta* as an Ergative Verb. *Linguistics* 7-2, 77-100. The Unaccusative Hypothesis (Perlmutter & Postal (1984)) and the Universal Alignment Hypothesis (Perlmutter & Postal (1984)) together require that the English verb *begin* and the Korean verb *sicak-ha-ta* take the same relational valency. Further, the Little Alignment Hypothesis (Rosen (1984)) requires that the alignment remain invariant for all clauses. However, Bak (1984) claims that, unlike *begin*, *sicak-ha-ta* is used transitively in complex clauses whereas ergatively in complex clauses. This paper argues that both *begin* and *sicak-ha-ta* respect the above three universal hypotheses, by showing that those two verbs maintain ergativity for all clauses. (Kyung Hee University)

1. Introduction

Ergativity has been originally defined with respect to the case marking on constituents of a noun phrase. In such a system transitive subjects are differently case-marked from intransitive subjects and transitive objects. In this sense, English as well as Korean has not been generally considered ergative. The term 'ergative' has been however extended to cover the situation in which transitive patient nominals are also used as intransitive subjects with transitive agent subjects being suppressed. For this reason, English verbs like *begin* are called ergative (cf. Lyons (1968)). The illustration below witnesses the ergativity of

1) An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Conference on Korean Linguistics held at Champaign. I wish to thank the audience for their valuable discussions and comments. However, all remaining errors are solely mine.

begin and the ergativity is also maintained in complex clauses in accordance with the Little Alignment Hypothesis (Rosen (1984)), as will be shown in Section 2.

- (1) a. John began the song.
 b. The song began.

However, Bak (1984) observes that *sicak-ha-ta*, which is equivalent to *begin*, strangely enough behaves with respect to ergativity, based on the data given below:

- (2) a. Chelswu-ka nolay-lul *sicak-ha-yess-ta*.
 -N song-A begin-do-Past
 'Chelswu began the song.'
 b. *Nolay-ka *sicak-ha-yess-ta*.
 sing-N begin-do-Past
 'The song began.'
- (3) a. Chelswu-ka nolay-lul pwulu-ki *sicak-ha-yess-ta*.
 -N song-A sing-Comp begin-do-Past
 'Chelswu began to sing a song.'
 b. Pi-ka o-ki *sicak-ha-yess-ta*.
 rain-N come-Comp begin-do-Past
 'It began to rain.'

Bak argues that *sicak-ha-ta* is only used transitively in simple clauses but ergatively in complex clauses. In this regard, he claims that *sicak-ha-ta* exceptionally behaves unlike the English verb *begin*. Thus, a question arises; whether *sicak-ha-ta* indeed falsifies the Little Alignment Hypothesis as well as the Unaccusative Hypothesis and the Universal Alignment Hypothesis.

Assuming the theoretical framework of the standard Relational Grammar (Perlmutter (1983), Perlmutter & Rosen (1984)), this paper argues that *sicak-ha-ta* respects the aforementioned three universal hypotheses,

although Bak (1984) claims that *sicak-ha-ta* is used ergatively in complex clauses while it is only used transitively in simple clauses. This paper also shows that Bak's analysis is not adequate to account for the syntactic phenomena related to the *sicak-ha-ta* constructions.

Section 2 discusses the ergativity of the English verb *begin*. Section 3 shows that *sicak-ha-ta* is an ergative verb as the English verb *begin* is, and also demonstrates that the ergativity of *sicak-ha-ta* coincides with the Little Alignment Hypothesis requirement for all clauses. Section 4 concludes this paper.

2. *Begin* as an Ergative Verb

Before discussing the ergativity of *sicak-ha-ta*, this section shows that the English verb *begin* is an ergative verb in simple clauses, and that its ergativity is also maintained in complex clauses.

2.1. Unaccusative Hypothesis

Perlmutter & Postal (1984) point out that in English some intransitive verbs allow pseudo-passives while others do not, as shown below:

- (4) a. The bed was slept in by the shah.
b. *The bed was fallen on by dust.

Perlmutter & Postal attribute the difference above to a difference in initial stratum relations. They argue that the failure of sentences like (4b) to permit pseudo-passives is ascribed to the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law which limits advancements to a subject to one per clause.²³⁾ Unaccusative verbs contain an initial object but, not an initial

2. Within the framework of Relational Grammar, '1', '2', '3', and 'P' stand for the relations of subject, direct object, indirect object, and predicate, respectively, for convenience' sake.

3. **1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law** (Perlmutter & Postal (1984))

The set of advancements to subject in a single clause contains at most

subject. Hence, the initial object first advances to a subject in accordance with the Final 1 Law.⁴ For this reason, the oblique nominal in unaccusative clauses is banned from advancing to subject. Based on the difference above, they accordingly suggest that intransitive verbs should be further divided into two different classes: unergatives like *sleep* and unaccusatives like *fall*. This is the Unaccusative Hypothesis. In consequence, the relational valency of unergatives and unaccusatives can be represented, as shown in (5).

- (5) a. unergatives: (1)
 b. unaccusatives: (2)

In the context of the Unaccusative Hypothesis, Perlmutter & Postal (1984) further hypothesize that there exist principles of universal grammar which predict the initial relation borne by each nominal in a given clause from the meaning of the clause. This is the Universal Alignment Hypothesis. According to Perlmutter & Postal's criteria, aspectual verbs like *begin* are included to a class of unaccusatives. And the fact that the clause containing *begin* fails to permit a pseudo-passive, as shown below, confirms the unaccusativity of *begin*.

- (6) *The tree was begun under by the song.

On the other hand, Levin & Hovav (1995) observe that the class of unaccusatives is not homogeneous. Some unaccusatives do not participate in the causative alternation but permit *there*-insertion while others reveal an opposite, as shown below:

- (7) a. A ship appeared on the horizon.
 b. *The programmer appeared a picture (on the screen).
 c. There appeared a ship on the horizon.

one member.

4. Final 1 Law (Perlmutter & Postal (1983))

Every basic clause must contain a final subject.

- (8) a. The door opened.
b. The janitor opened the door.
c. *There opened the door.

In English, unaccusative verbs permit the advancement of an initial object to subject, as noted above, or, alternatively, allows the insertion of a dummy subject (*there*) to satisfy the Final I Law requirement. Then, the contrast with respect to the causative alternation and *there*-insertion might again be attributed to a difference in initial stratum relations. That is, the verb *appear* cannot allow a non-dummy nominal since it initializes only an object. However, the verb *open* cannot permit a dummy subject (*there*) since it is a verb which initializes only an object or both a subject and an object. Thus, it can be said that the verb *open* is different from the verb *appear* in that it can also be used as a transitive verb which needs an agentive subject.

Based on the difference above, Levin & Hovav (1995:82) suggest that unaccusative verbs be divided into two distinct classes: true unaccusatives and ergative-type unaccusatives.⁵⁾ Thus, ergative-type unaccusatives refer to the verbs which are called ergatives in the sense of Lyons (1968). Then, the relational valency of ergatives can be schematized, as in (9):

- (9) **ergatives:** ((1), 2)⁶⁾

In consequence, the fact that *begin* behaves in the same way with ergative-type unaccusative verbs in connection with the causative alternation and *there*-insertion, as shown in (10), confirms the ergativity of *begin*.

5. These terms are quoted from Cho (1995).

6. The question will be left open here as to whether verbs of this type are single verbs or two distinct verbs.

- (10) a. The song began.
- b. John began the song.
- c. *There began the song.

2.2. Little Alignment Hypothesis

Demonstrating that the unergative-unaccusative distinction does not strictly work across languages though obviously the distinction operates on a fairly semantic base, Rosen (1984) proposes the Little Alignment Hypothesis. According to the Little Alignment Hypothesis, for a particular verb in a particular language, there is a fixed mapping between semantic roles and initial relations and the alignment remains invariant for all clauses with that verb. Thus, the Little Alignment Hypothesis requires that the ergativity of *begin* would be also maintained when it occurs in complex clauses.

Due to the syntactic properties of *begin* as a main verb taking a (seeming object) complement clause which includes the verb that it is semantically modifying (Dixon (1994:135)),⁷ clauses never surface as a subject of *begin*. Accordingly, the transitivity of *begin* is hard to distinguish since sentences like (11) are allowed while sentences like (12) are not.

- (11) a. John began to build the house.
- b. John began to work.
- (12) a. *That John built the house began.
- b. *That John worked began.
- c. *(For) John to work began.

However, (11b), but not (11a), can be interpreted in a non-agentive meaning or an agentive meaning, as illustrated in (13).⁸

7. According to Dixon (1994:134), this is one of the two major kinds of syntactic behavior when Secondary concepts (such as 'begin', 'finish', 'try', 'want') are expressed by verbs.

8. (13b) is the first meaning which can be drawn from (11b). However, the

- (13) a. John's work has begun.
 b. John is beginning to work right now.

To account for such an ambiguity, Perlmutter (1970) proposes two different underlying structures, illustrated in (14), for (11b), claiming that *begin* can be used as an intransitive verb like *seem* and *happen* or as a transitive verb like *try*:⁹

- (14) a. [_S [_S Zeke work] [_{VP} began]]
 b. [_S [_{NP} Zeke] [_{VP} began [_S Zeke work]]]

Pointing out that *recourse* cannot be the deep structure subject of *begin* since it only occurs in the fixed phrase *have recourse (to)* in deep structure, Perlmutter argues that if *begin* occurs as a transitive verb in deep structure, there would be no way to account for the grammaticality of (15). For this reason, he claims that *begin* appearing in sentences like (15) should occur as an intransitive verb in the deep structure something like (14a).

- (15) Recourse began to be had to illegal methods.

Similarly, pointing out that *begin* in (16) should occur in the deep structure something like (17a) because of the like-subject constraint verbs like *try* impose, Perlmutter argues that if *begin* occurs in the deep structure something like (17b), (16) must be ungrammatical due to the violation of like-subject constraint. Based on this, Perlmutter claims that *begin* appearing in sentences like (16) should occur as a transitive verb in the deep structure as in (17a), that is, in turn, in the deep structure of something like (14b).

order given in (13) is just for expository purpose since it has no relevance to the discussion in this paper.

9. Perlmutter's discussion is simplified just for expository purpose. For the discussion in detail, see Perlmutter (1970).

(16) I tried to begin to work.

(17) a. [s I tried [s I begin [s I work]]]

b. [s I tried [s [s I work] begin]]

Thus, Perlumtter (1970) succinctly shows that *begin* is also used either intransitively or transitively in complex clauses. As discussed, ergatives are verbs which are used either transitively or unaccusatively. Then, the ambiguity in (11b) would be removed by the imperative formation since unaccusative verbs do not generally permit imperatives. And the fact that (18) only contains one reading related to the meaning in (13b) confirms that the ambiguity in (11b) comes from the fact that *begin* is an ergative verb which can be used either transitively or unaccusatively.

(18) Begin to work.

Consequently, it can be concluded that *begin* is certainly an unergative verb, and that its ergativity follows the Little Alignment Hypothesis requirement.

3. *Sicak-ha-ta* as an Ergative Verb

Section 3.1 argues that *sicak-ha-ta* is an ergative verb just as the English verb *begin* is. Section 3.2 shows that the ergativity of *sicak-ha-ta* also observes the Little Alignment Hypothesis.

3.1. Ergativity of *Sicak-ha-ta*

Sino-Korean verbal nouns combine with the Korean native verb *ha* to form *ha-ta* verbs. *Sicak-ha-ta* belongs to such a class of verbs. Like other typical transitive verbs, *sicak-ha-ta* takes two arguments, as in (19).¹⁰

10. The internal structure of *sicak-ha-ta* is ignored in this paper. However,

(19) Chelswu-ka nolay-lul sicak-ha-yess-ta.

-N song-A begin-do-Past

'Chelswu began the song.'

Passivization is a universal syntactic process which promotes a direct object to subject-hood. Accordingly, the fact that *sicak-ha-ta* appearing in the sentence (19) can be passivized, as in (20), shows that *sicak-ha-ta* is a transitive verb.

(20) Nolay-ka Chelswu-ey uyhay sicak-toy-ess-ta.¹¹⁾

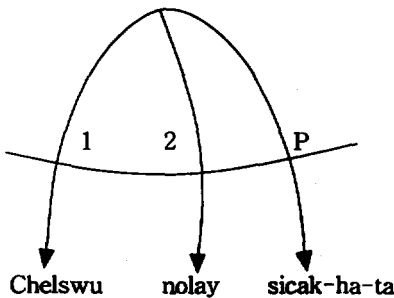
sing-N -by begin-Pass-Past

'The song was begun by Chelswu.'

Then, the relational valency of *sicak-ha-ta* in (19) can be schematized as (21), and the structure of (19) can be represented as (22).

(21) *sicak-ha-ta*: (1, 2)

(22)



Stratal diagram (22) shows that *Chelswu* and *nolay*, respectively,

this is not to say that *sicak-ha-ta* is a single verb. The internal structure is irrelevant to the discussion in this paper since the transitivity of *sicak-ha-ta* is always determined by the transitivity of *sicak*.

11. As generally assumed, *toy* is considered a passive morpheme, which corresponds to *ha* in active sentences.

assume a final subject relation and a final object relation. For this reason, *Chelswu* is nominatively marked while *nolay* is accusatively marked. In Korean, case markers are generally assumed to be assigned on the base of the final term-hood which the nominals bear.¹²⁾ Thus, the fact that the nominative marker and the accusative marker are, respectively, attached to *Chelswu* and *nolay* is a morphological indication that *sicak-ha-ta* in (19) is a transitive verb.

Since ergative verbs can take either transitivity or unaccusativity, *sicak-ha-ta* would be also expected to allow an unaccusative pattern. Accordingly, *sicak-ha-ta* would be firstly expected to be able to take only one argument. This expectation follows from the fact that the class of unaccusatives are subsumed under the class of intransitives. However, Bak (1984) claims that *sicak-ha-ta* is a verb which can be used only transitively, based on the data illustrated in (23).

- (23) a. *Nolay-ka sicak-toy-ess-ta/*sicak-ha-yess-ta.*
 song-N begin-become-Past/begin-do-Past
 'The song began.'
- b. *Chelswu-ka nolay-lul sicak-ha-yess-ta/*sicak-toy-ess-ta.*
 -N song-A begin-do-Past/*begin-become-Past
 'Chelswu began the song.'

Assuming that *NP+toy-ta* is an intransitive verb taking one argument whereas *NP+ha-ta* is a transitive verb taking two arguments, Bak claims that *sicak-ha-ta* must be a transitive verb, not an ergative verb. According to him, *sicak-ha-ta* takes two arguments and it cannot occur in the intransitive clause whose subject is inanimate although the co-occurrence with an animate subject is the characteristic of ergative verbs.

However, this line of reasoning seems dubious. First of all, the fact

12. For the case assignment in Korean within the framework of Relational Grammar, see Choi (1988), Youn (1990), Lee (1991) and others.

that sentences like (24) are grammatical easily counter-exemplifies the claim that *sicak-ha-ta* must be a transitive verb.

- (24) a. Yengwha-ka sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 movies-N begin-do-Past
 'Movies began.'
- b. Cicin-i sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 earthquake-N begin-do-Past
 'The earthquake began.'

Contrary to Bak's claim, the above shows that *sicak-ha-ta* can take only one argument, and that it can co-occur with an inanimate subject in intransitive clauses. Bak treats sentences like '*Nolay-ka sicak-ha-yess-ta*' as ungrammatical sentences. It is however true that sentences like (24) are largely considered grammatical among native Korean speakers.

Then, a question subsequently arises as to what the difference might be attributed to. Close examination of the given data seems to reveal a difference. Words such as *nolay* 'song', *kangyen* 'lecture' usually presuppose a distinct initiator or controller while words such as *yengwha* 'movies', *cicin* 'earthquake' do not necessarily presuppose a distinct initiator or controller. When we are listening to music or a lecture, we usually know or want to know who is/are singing a song, or giving a lecture. However, when we are watching a movie or feeling an earthquake, we don't want to know who is/are running a projector, or what is/are causing an earthquake. Usually we don't have to know such a thing.

If the above is the case, the difference, if any, might be attributed to semantic and/or pragmatic reasons, not to syntactic reasons.¹³ Moreover, the fact that some greater part of Korean native speakers admit sentences like '*Nolay-ka sicak-ha-yess-ta*' as grammatical

13. This matter will be left open here for further studies.

sentences strongly suggests that the difference might be due to the degree of acceptability, not the degree of grammaticality. In consequence, the sentences in (24), including sentences like '*Nolay-ka sicaek-ha-yess-ta*', should be considered grammatical from the syntactic point of view. For this reason, this paper treats sentences like (24) as the legitimate instances of intransitive clauses of *sicaek-ha-ta*.

Now, if the sentences in (24) are intransitive clauses, *sicaek-ha-ta* appearing in those sentences will be either an unergative verb or an unaccusative verb. Then, let us first see what differences these two classes of verbs exhibit. Perlmutter & Postal (1984) hypothesize that the predicates describing willed or volitional acts and the predicates describing certain involuntary bodily processes are unergative verbs, but that other intransitive predicates are unaccusative verbs. According to Perlmutter & Postal's criteria, *yehayng-ha-ta* 'travel' belongs to a class of unergative verbs while *cilsik-ha-ta* 'choke' belongs to a class of unaccusatives. Kim (1990) argues that, in Korean, transitive and unergative verbs carry an agentivity feature whereas unaccusative predicates do not. For this reason, Kim provides four different tests to define the unaccusativity in Korean. Those tests are: Imperative formation, Propositive formation, Embedding under control verbs like *nolyek-ha-ta* 'try', and embedding under coercive verbs like *kangyo-ha-ta* 'force'. Then, it would be expected that *yehayng-ha-ta* behaves differently from *cilsik-ha-ta* with respect to these tests since unergative clauses are closely related to the notion of agentivity whereas unaccusatives are not. The illustration below shows that *yehayng-ha-ta* is subject to the aforementioned tests while *cilsik-ha-ta* is blind to those tests, as has been expected:

(25) Imperative:

- a. Yehayng-ha-yela.
travel-do-Imperative
'Travel!'

- b. *Cilsik-ha-yela.
choke-do-Imperative
'Choke!'
- (26) Propositive:
- a. Yehayng-ha-ca.
travel-do-Propositive
'Let's travel.'
- b. *Cilsik-ha-ca.
choke-do-Propositive
'Let's choke.'
- (27) Embedding under control verbs:
- a. Chelswu-ka yehayng-ha-lyeko nolyek-ha-yess-ta.
-N travel-do-Comp try-do-Past
'Chelswu tried to travel.'
- b. *Chelswu-ka cilsik-ha-lyeko nolyek-ha-yess-ta.
-N choke-do-Comp try-do-Past
'Chelswu tried to choke.'
- (28) Embedding under coercive verbs:
- a. Swuni-ka Chelswu-eykey yehayng-ha-lako kangyo-ha-yess-ta.
-N -to travel-do-Comp force-do-Past
'Swuni forced Chelswu to travel.'
- b. *Swuni-ka Chelswu-eykey cilsik-ha-lako kangyo-ha-yess-ta.
-N -to choke-do-Comp force-do-Past
'Chelswu forced Swuni to choke.'

As shown above, the unaccusative *cilsik-ha-ta* permits none of the syntactic processes which are triggered by agentivity. This might be a natural consequence since the tests above all presuppose the presence of an agentive subject. However, unaccusative verbs never take an agentive subject since they only initialize an object nominal which cannot be an agent.

However, *sicak-ha-ta* in (24) shows an identical behavior with unaccusative verbs with respect to agentivity, as shown below:

(29) Imperative:

*(Yengwha-ya) Sicak-ha-yela.
 movies-Voc begin-do-Imp
 'Begin the movies.'

(30) Propositive:

*(Yengwha-ya) Sicak-ha-ca.
 movies-Voc begin-do-Imp
 'Let the movies begin.'

(31) Embedding under control verbs:

*Yengwha-ka sicak-ha-lyeko nolyek-ha-yess-ta.
 movies-N begin-do-Comp try-do-Past
 'The movies tried to begin.'

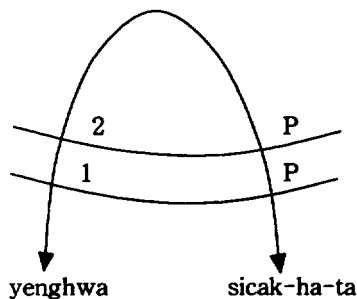
(32) Embedding under coercive verbs:

Chelswu-ka yengwha-eykey sicak-ha-lako kangyo-ha-yess-ta.
 -N movies-Dat begin-do-Comp force-do-Past
 'Chelswu forced the movies to begin.'

Then, the above fact strongly suggests that *sicak-ha-ta* in (24) is an unaccusative verb. Accordingly, the relational valency of *sicak-ha-ta* appearing in sentences like (24) can be schematized as (33), and the structure of (24) can be represented as (34).

(33) *sicak-ha-ta*: (2)

(34)



The stratal diagram (34) shows that *yengwha* bears an object relation

in the initial stratum but it acquires a final subject relation due to the Final 1 Law. For this reason, *yengwha* is nominatively marked although it seems to be a semantic object of *sicak-ha-ta* in sentences like (24). Thus, the nominative marker attached to the seeming object is a morphological evidence that the initial object has advanced to a subject (via the unaccusative advancement).

However, the class of unaccusatives is not homogeneous either in Korean, as can be seen below:

- (35) a. Chelswu-ka cilsik-ha-yess-ta.
 -N choke-do-Past
 'Chelswu choked.'
- b. *Swuni-ka Chelswu-lul cilsik-ha-yess-ta.
 -N -A choke-do-Past
 'Swuni choked Chelswu.'
- (36) a. Yengwha-ka sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 Movies-N begin-do-Past
 'The movies began.'
- b. Kisa-ka yengwha-lul sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 projector-N movies-A begin-do-Past
 'The projector began the movies.'

As noted above, both *cilsik-ha-ta* and *sicak-ha-ta* are unaccusative verbs. However, *sicak-ha-ta* allows the causative alternation whereas *cilsik-ha-ta* does not. Consequently, the contrast above suggests that the unaccusative verbs in Korean also should be divided into distinct classes: the class of true unaccusatives which includes *cilsik-ha-ta*, and the class of ergative-type of unaccusatives which includes *sicak-ha-ta*.

Thus, it can be concluded from the discussion above that, like the English verb *begin*, *sicak-ha-ta* is an ergative verb whose relational valency can be schematized, as shown in (37).

- (37) *sicak-ha-ta*: (1, 2)

3.2. *Sicak-ha-ta* in Complex Clauses

The previous section has shown that *sicak-ha-ta* is an ergative verb which can be used as a transitive verb or as an unaccusative verb. This section shows that its ergativity also respects the Little Alignment Hypothesis as the English verb *begin* does.

Like *begin*, *sicak-ha-ta* also has the syntactic property of a main verb taking a complement clause which includes the verb that it is semantically modifying. Accordingly, the transitivity of *sicak-ha-ta* is hard to tell since it always takes a (seeming object) complement clause being introduced by the complementizer *-ki*, as illustrated in (38).

- (38) a. Chelswu-ka nolay-lul pwulu-ki sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 -N song-A sing-Comp begin-do-Past
 'Chelswu began to sing a song.'
- b. Pi-ka o-ki sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 rain-N come-Comp begin-do-Past
 'It began to rain.'

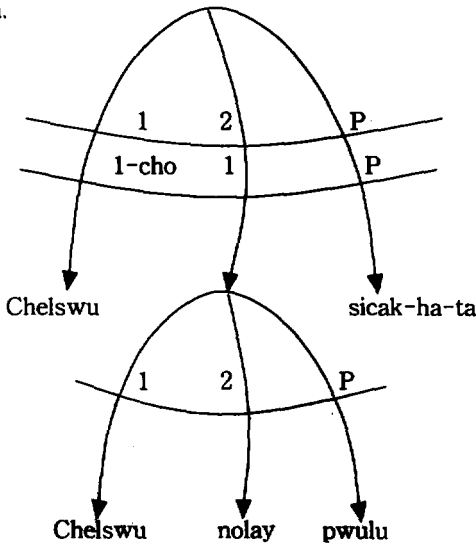
However, the sentences in (38) show a different behavior with respect to passivization, as shown below:

- (39) a. Nolay-lul pwulu-ki-ka Chelswu-ey uyhay sicak-toy-ess-ta.
 sing-A sing-Comp-N -by begin-Pass-Past
 'To sing was begun by Chelswu.'
- b. *Pi-ka o-ki-ka sicak-toy-ess-ta.
 rain-N come-Comp-N begin-Pass-Past
 '(For) The rain to come was begun.'

(39a) sounds a little bit odd. However, the oddness might be partly due to the violation of the 'Like Subject Condition' which *sicak-ha-ta* should observe.¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless, it is true that many Korean native speakers admit (39a) as a grammatical sentence. At any rate, the stratal

diagram (40a) shows how the embedded clause can be passivized.

(40) a.



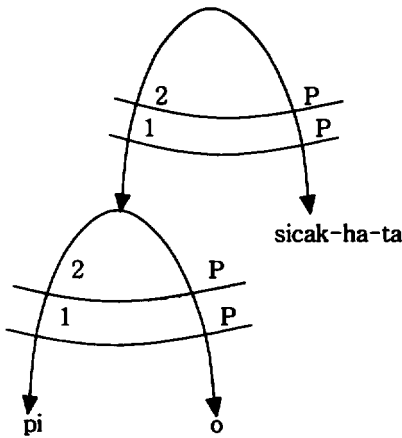
As shown in (40a), the whole embedded clause [(*Chelswu-ka nolay-lul pwul-ki*)] can be passivized, though a little bit odd due to other reasons, since it takes the object relation of the matrix clause. Accordingly, the fact that the embedded clause itself can be passivized makes it possible to hypothesize that *sicak-ha-ta* in (38a) is a transitive verb.

However, as shown above, (39b) cannot be passivized. The stratal diagram (40b) clearly shows why the embedded clause [*Pi-ka o-ki*] cannot be passivized.¹⁵⁾

14. "Like Subject Condition" is assumed when *sicak-ha-ta* is a transitive verb. This follows from the fact that *begin* and *sicak-ha-ta* add no semantic roles to those of the verb they occur with. (cf. Dixon 1994:135).

15. Verbs like *o* 'go' and *ka* 'come' take unergativity or unaccusativity in accordance with the agentivity of the sentence in which they occur.

(40) b.



As shown in (40b), the whole embedded clause first advances to take the final subject relation of the matrix clause to satisfy the Final 1 Law. Since the embedded clause takes the final subject relation, passivization cannot be applied. If applied (i.e., impersonal passivization), the 1-Advancement Exclusiveness Law will be violated. Taken either way, unaccusative clauses cannot be subjected to passivization by universal laws. Accordingly, the failure of sentences like (38b) to permit passivization also leads us to hypothesize that *sicak-ha-ta* in (38b) is an unaccusative verb.

In the ergative pattern, the transitive subject is typically agentive whereas the unaccusative subject is non-agentive. For this reason, sentences in (38) would be expected to behave differently with regard to the processes which are sensitive to agentivity. And the illustration below shows that such an expectation is right.

(41) Imperative:

- a. (Chelswu-ya) Nolay-lul pwulu-ki sicak-ha-yela.
 -Voc song-A sing-Comp begin-do-Imp
 '(Chelswu) Begin to sing a song.'
- b. *(Pi-ya) o-ki sicak-ha-yela.

rain-Voc come-Comp begin-do-Imp

'(The rain) Begin to come.'

(42) Propositive:

a. (Chelswu-ya) Nolay-lul pwulu-ki sicak-ha-ca.

-Voc song-A sing-Comp begin-do-Propositive

'(Chelswu) Let us begin to sing a song.'

b. *(Pi-ya) o-ki sicak-ha-ca.

rain-Voc come-Comp begin-do-Propositive

'(The rain) Let us begin to come.'

(43) Embedding under control verbs:

a. Chelswu-ka nolay-lul pwulu-ki sicak-ha-lyeko nolyekhayessta.

-N song-A sing-Comp begin-do-Comp try-do-Past

'Chelswu tried to begin to sing a song.'

b. *Pi-ka o-ki sicak-ha-lyeko nolyek-ha-yess-ta.

rain-N come-Comp begin-do-Comp try-do-Past

'The rain tried to begin to come.'

(44) Embedding under coercive verbs:

a. Swuni-ka Chelswu-eykey nolay-lul pwulu-ki sicak-ha-lako

-N -to song-A sing-do-Comp begin-do-Past

kangyo-ha-yess-ta.

force-do-Past

'Chelswu forced Swuni to begin to sing a song.'

b. *Chelswu-ka pi-eykey o-lako kangyo-ha-yess-ta.

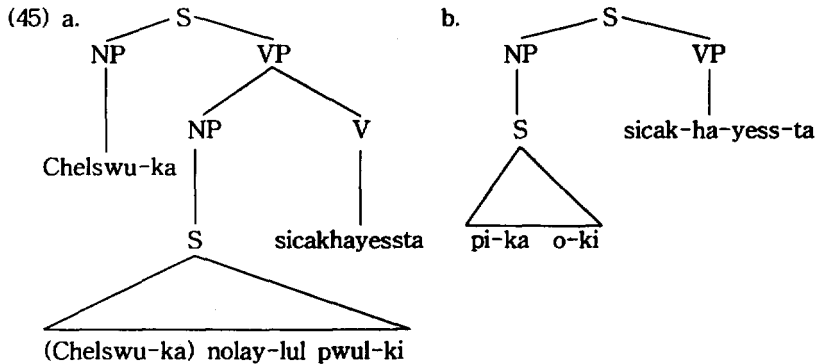
-N rain-to come-Comp force-do-Past

'Chelswu forced the rain to come.'

It has been shown in the previous section that unaccusative clauses are not subject to the above syntactic processes which are all sensitive to agentivity. Accordingly, the above contrast strongly confirms that (38a) is transitive whereas (38b) is unaccusative. This follows from the fact that ergative verbs are unaccusative verbs when they are intransitive but transitive verbs when they are not intransitive. In consequence, the above contrast naturally leads to the conclusion that

sicak-ha-ta is also an ergative verb in complex clauses.

Bak (1984) also attributes the difference between the sentences in (38) to a difference in their structures. Below are the structures for (38a) and (38b), which were proposed by Bak.



Relying on the structures above, Bak argues that (38b) cannot be subjected to the processes which presuppose the existence of an agentive subject. In other words, he argues, that (38a) satisfies the condition of an agent subject but that (38b) does not meet the condition since the subject is not an NP but an embedded clause. Thus, the structures proposed by Bak seems to be well motivated to give an adequate account for the difference between the sentences in (38).

However, Bak's claims need to be closely examined. His claim was that *sicak-ha-ta* must be a transitive verb (see Section 3.1). However, he now claims that *sicak-ha-ta* can take either transitivity in complex clauses. Then, a question subsequently arises as to what determines the transitivity of *sicak-ha-ta* in complex clauses. Regarding this question, he states that the transitivity of *sicak-ha-ta* accords with the transitivity of embedded clauses. That is, he suggests, if an embedded clause is transitive, *sicak-ha-ta* is transitive, and if an embedded clause is intransitive, *sicak-ha-ta* is intransitive.

Let us then see how (46) can be accounted for under Bak's analysis.

- (46) Chelswu-ka ket-ki sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 -N walk-Comp begin-do-Past
 'Chelswu began to walk.'

(46) is expected to take the structure of (45b) since the embedded clause is intransitive. If this is the case, (46) is expected to have only one meaning. However, such is not the case. In fact, (46) can be interpreted in an agentive meaning or a non-agentive meaning, as illustrated in (47).

- (47) a. Chelswu is beginning to walk right now.
 b. Chelswu's walk has begun.

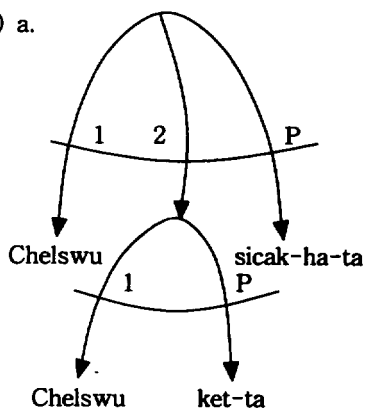
Furthermore, *sicak-ha-ta* in (46) can be modified by adverbs like *ilpwule* 'purposely' and *cecelo* 'unconsciously', as in (48)

- (48) a. Ilpwule Chelswu-ka ket-ki sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 purposely -N walk-Comp begin-do-Past
 'Chelswu purposely began to walk.'
 b. Cecelo Chelswu-ka ket-ki sicak-ha-yess-ta.
 unconsciously -N walk-Comp begin-do-Past
 'Unconsciously, Chelswu began to walk.'

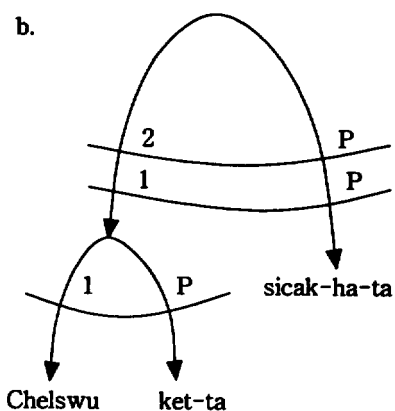
Ilpwule goes with the verbs denoting agentivity while *cecelo* goes with the verbs denoting non-agentivity. Thus, this fact confirms that (46) has both an agentive meaning and a non-agentive meaning.

Under Perlmutter & Postal's (1984) criteria, unergative verbs are the predicates describing willed or volitional acts. Accordingly, *ket-ta* 'walk' is an unergative verb. Since unergative verbs initialize an agentive subject, *ket-ta* only has an agentive meaning. Then, the ambiguity in (46) must be caused by *sicak-ha-ta* which can be used as a transitive verb occurring in the structure of (49a) or as an unaccusative verb occurring in the structure of (49b).

(49) a.



b.



In (49a), *sicak-ha-ta* is a transitive verb which takes the clause [*Chelswu-ka ket-ki*] as an object. Since *Chelswu* bears the final subject relations of the matrix and embedded clauses, it can serve as an agentive subject of *sicak-ha-ta*. On the other hand, in (49b), the clause takes the initial object relation of *sicak-ha-ta* but the clause itself advances to satisfy the Final 1 Law. Since *Chelswu* only takes the final subject relation of the embedded clause, it cannot serve as an agentive subject of *sicak-ha-ta*.

Thus, it has been shown above that the ambiguity in (46) can be accounted for only when *sicak-ha-ta* in (46) is assumed to take either transitivity or unaccusativity. For this reason, any analysis that reserves only one structure for (46) might be denied. In addition, it should be pointed out that sentences like (46) is good evidence that the transitivity value of *sicak-ha-ta* (for all clauses) is determined by the agentivity of the sentences in which *sicak-ha-ta* occurs, rather than by the transitivity value of embedded clauses.

In sum, it has been shown that *sicak-ha-ta* is used as an ergative verb in simple clauses and complex clauses. Consequently, it has been shown that the Little Alignment Hypothesis is still valid as far as the verb *sicak-ha-ta* is concerned, although Bak (1984) claims that the

transitivity of *sicak-ha-ta* is not invariant between simple clauses and complex clauses.

4 Conclusion

This paper has argued that the Unaccusative Hypothesis and the Universal Alignment Hypothesis are respected as far as the English verb *begin* and the Korean verb *sicak-ha-ta* are concerned. By demonstrating that *begin* and *sicak-ha-ta* are ergative verbs for all clauses, this paper has also shown that the Little Alignment Hypothesis is still valid as far as those verbs are concerned.

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