A unified approach to the two types of honorifics in syntax

Introduction. Two types of honorific markers have been reported in the literature: (i) the utterance-oriented honorific markers (or utterance honorifics), which are sensitive to the honorificity of the addressee and (ii) the content-oriented honorific markers (or argument honorifics), which are sensitive to the honorificity of a non-addressee referent (see Portner et al. 2019 and McCready 2014, 2019). In this work, we argue that parallels can be drawn between the two. This work provides empirical evidence from Korean honorific-sensitive case markers and suggests that the honorific case markers originate from argument-introducing heads such as Voice (Kratzer 1996) and Appl (Pylkkänen 2002, 2008). Under this approach, the addressee is introduced in syntax similar to how a subject and an indirect object (IO) are introduced in syntax. An implication here is that the addressee can be viewed as an applied argument realized in the left periphery.

Puzzle & analysis. Korean adopts a case system which displays overt realizations of NOM, DAT, ACC, and VOC (vocative). NOM is often associated with the subject, DAT with the IO, ACC with the direct object (DO), and VOC with the addressee. Most of these markers have an honorific counterpart (i.e. HON.NOM, HON.DAT, and HON.VOC). A question arises as to why *HON.ACC is absent in the case paradigm:

(1)

NOM	*i*∼*ka*	DAT	*hanthey*	ACC	*(l)ul*	VOC	*(y)a*
HON.NOM	*kkeyse*	HON.DAT	*kkey*	*HON.ACC	N/A	HON.VOC	ø

The absence of *HON.ACC is predicted under a syntactic analysis. We propose that the honorific case markers (HON.NOM, HON.DAT, and HON.VOC) are associated with Voice/Appl. For simplicity, we refer to Voice/Appl as *i**, which is an umbrella term for argument-introducing heads (Wood & Marantz 2017). Subjects and IOs are realized in the *specifier* of an *i** whereas DOs are realized as the *complement* of either *v* (in transitive constructions) or Appl (in ditransitive constructions). Here, I argue that the specifier of an *i** is the target for HON-sensitive case licensing. The absence of *HON.ACC on DOs follows accordingly: a DO is not an external or applied argument introduced by Voice/Appl (*i**) in its specifier. The current analysis also provides an account for the presence of HON.VOC on the addressee: the addressee is realized in the *specifier* of an *i** above TP. Here, we emphasize that the *alternation* between *(y)a*∼ø is what matters rather than the overt vs. null status of the forms themselves. Note that the same type of alternation holds for familiar and formal allocutive markers in southern dialects of Basque (Haddican & Etxeberria 2022). Under this approach, the head that hosts the addressee in the CP domain (SAP for Haegeman & Hill 2013; cP for Portner et al. 2019; AddrP for Miyagawa 2022) is a flavor of Voice/Appl (*i**). According to Speas & Tenny (2003), the addressee receives a *p(ragmatic)*-role which is similar to a theta-role (see also Akkuş & Hill 2021; Burukina 2021; Haddican & Etxeberria 2022). The details of our proposal are fleshed out in (6).

Data. Our analysis applies to arguments in various constructions including unergatives and (di)transitives:

(2) a. Halmeni**-kkeyse** wus-usi-ess-ta.
grandmother-HON.NOM laugh-HON-PST-DECL
'Grandmother laughed.' (unergative)

b. Halmeni**-kkeyse** halapeci-lul an-usi-ess-ta.
grandmother-HON.NOM grandfather-ACC hug–HON-PST-DECL
'Grandmother hugged grandfather.' (transitive)

c. Halmeni**-ø**, halapeci**-kkeyse** sunim**-kkey** sangca-lul tuli-si-ess-eyo.
grandmother-HON.VOC grandfather-HON.NOM monk-HON.DAT box-ACC give-HON-PST-YO
'Grandmother, grandfather gave the monk a box.' (ditransitive & vocative)

Predictions. Based on the current assumption that only external and applied arguments are eligible for HON-sensitive case assignment, it is predicted that honorified causees and benefactives which are also applied arguments should receive an HON-sensitive case marker. This prediction is borne out as shown in (3).

(3) a. Kamtoknim-kkeyse paywunimtul**-kkey** chima-lul ip-hi-si-ess-ta.
director-HON.NOM actors-HON.DAT skirt-ACC wear-CAUS-HON-PST-DECL
'The director made the actors wear a skirt.' (causative)

b. Sarah-ka emeni**-kkey** khayikh-ul kwuwe-tuli-ess-ta.
Sarah-NOM mother-HON.DAT cake-ACC bake-give.HON-PST-DECL
'Sarah baked a cake for mother.' (benefactive)

It is also predicted that HON.NOM-NOM stacking should be possible if we take the standard assumption that plain NOM is assigned from T. (4) shows that NOM is obligatorily realized with HON.NOM in the presence of the negated copula *anila* inducing contrastive focus (Schütze 2001). Here, switching the order of HON.NOM and NOM on *halmeni* 'grandmother' is not possible, which follows from the current analysis: Voice assigns HON.NOM and T assigns NOM.

(4) Halmeni**-kkeyse*(-ka)** anila Mary-ka John-ul poa-ss-ta.
grandmother-HON.NOM-NOM but.not.be Mary-NOM John-ACC see-PST-DECL
'Mary, not grandmother, saw John.' (case stacking)

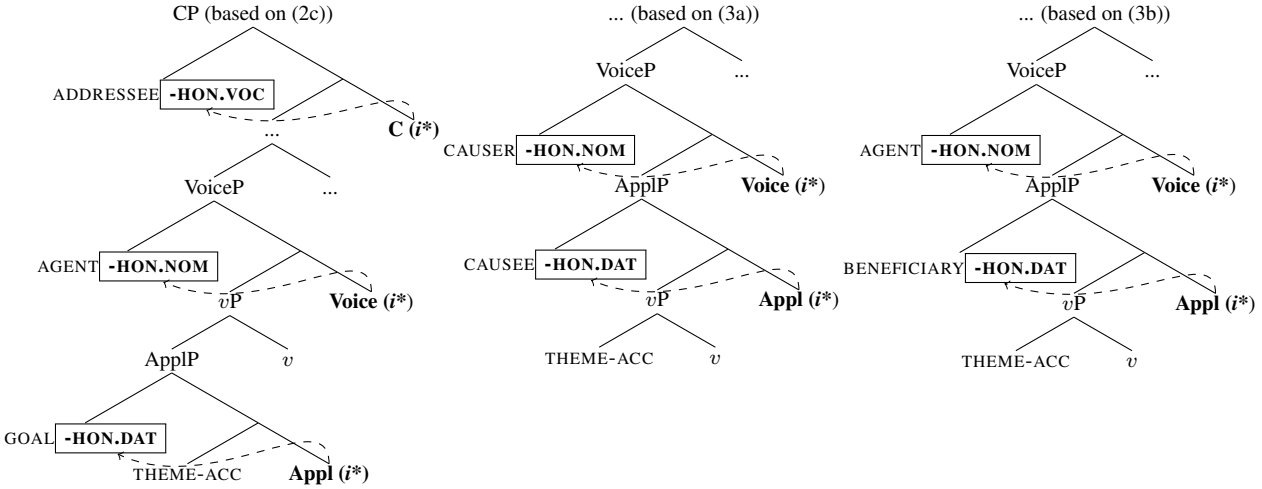
We assume that honorified subjects in unaccusative and passive constructions move to Spec,VoiceP where HON.NOM is assigned. This is consistent with Legate's (2003) analysis that the edge of VoiceP (a phase) can be a derived position. In fact, this is reminiscent of raising to ergative constructions in Shipibo (Baker 2014) and Nez Perce (Deal 2019), where a theme argument moves into Spec,VoiceP and is assigned ergative case. Note that Korean HON.NOM-assignment is not possible for DOs in transitive constructions even if they move to the edge of VoiceP, since HON.NOM on Voice is already assigned to the subject externally merged in Spec,VoiceP.

(5) a. Halapeci**-kkeyse** tochakha-si-ess-ta.
grandfather-HON.NOM arrive-HON-PST-DECL
'Grandfather arrived.' (unaccusative)

b. Halapeci**-kkeyse** cap-hi-si-ess-ta.
grandfather-HON.NOM catch-PASS-HON-PST-DECL
'Grandfather was caught.' (passive)

We posit that a transitive Voice assigns ACC following Burzio's Generalization (Burzio 1986), Appl assigns (HON.)DAT, and C (*i**) assigns (HON.)VOC. An (2014) argues that Korean lacks a genuine genitive case marker (GEN). Under his view, *uy*, which has traditionally been labeled as GEN, is in fact a prenominal modifier. *Uy* attaches to already case-assigned PPs, numerals, and modifiers. Hence, *uy* contrasts with GEN in other languages. Adopting An's proposal, we posit that GEN is absent in Korean and thus *HON.GEN is also absent in the case paradigm. (6) provides the tree derivations for some of the examples provided above:

(6)



Implications. This work has emphasized the Spec-head relation between an argument and Voice/Appl (*i**). Based on this analysis, the addressee is a part of syntax, just like subjects, IOs, and other applied arguments, which are eligible for honorific case assignment. We highlight that an argument can be introduced *outside* the thematic domain (above TP) (see also Tsai 2018). In this regard, this work draws parallels between the thematic domain and the speech act domain, which have been considered to be two separate domains. Hence, a unified approach to handling the utterance-oriented honorific markers (or utterance honorifics) and the content-oriented honorific markers (or argument honorifics) is made possible.

Selected references. Portner, Paul, Miok Pak & Raffaella Zanuttini. 2019. The speaker-addressee relation at the syntax-semantics interface. *Language* 95(1). 1–36. Tsai, Wei-Tien Dylan. 2018. High applicatives are not high enough: A cartographic solution. *Lingua Sinica* 4(1). 1–21.