

Korean nominal stacking and the argument/oblique alternation

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Introduction

Korean “case stacking” as an argument/oblique alternation?

- (1) Lee-ka Mina-**hanthey(-lul)** senwmul-ul cwu-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT-ACC present-ACC give-PST-DECL
‘Lee gave Mina a present.’
- (2) Lee-**hanthey(-ka)** Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT-NOM Mina-NOM miss-DECL
‘Lee misses Mina.’
- (3) Lee-ka hakkyo-**ey(-lul)** ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC-ACC go-PST-DECL
‘Lee went to school.’

(4) Korean nominal template (Cho and Sells 1995, Park 1995)

Noun	Slot A		Slot B	
N	DAT	<i>-hanthey</i>	NOM	<i>-i~ka</i>
	LOC	<i>-ey</i>	ACC	<i>-(l)ul</i>
	HON.DAT	<i>-kkey</i>	TOP	<i>-(n)un</i>
	HON.NOM	<i>-kkeyse</i>	FOC 'even'	<i>-to</i>

- Slot A markers are in complementary distribution
- Slot B markers are in complementary distribution
- Slot A and B markers may alternate or stack

Slot B markers are in complementary distribution

- (5) a. Lee-**ka** sakwa-**lul** mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM apple-ACC eat-PST-DECL
'Lee ate the apples.'
- b. Lee(*-**ka**)-**nun** sakwa-lul mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM-TOP apple-ACC eat-PST-DECL
'[Lee]_{TOP} ate the apples.'
- c. Lee-ka sakwa(*-**lul**)-**nun** mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM apple-ACC-TOP eat-PST-DECL
'Lee ate [the apples]_{TOP}.'

Slot B markers are in complementary distribution

- (6) a. Lee-**ka** sakwa-**lul** mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM apple-ACC eat-PST-DECL
'Lee ate the apples.'
- b. Lee(***-ka**)-**to** sakwa-lul mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM-FOC apple-ACC eat-PST-DECL
'Even [Lee]_{FOC} ate the apples.'
- c. Lee-ka sakwa(***-lul**)-**to** mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM apple-ACC-FOC eat-PST-DECL
'Lee ate even [the apples]_{FOC}.'

Slot A and B markers may alternate or stack

- (7) a. Lee-ka Mina-**hanthey** senwmul-ul cwu-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT present-ACC give-PST-DECL
'Lee gave Mina a present.'
- b. Lee-ka Mina-**nun** senwmul-ul cwu-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM Mina-TOP present-ACC give-PST-DECL
'Lee gave [Mina]_{TOP} a present.'
- c. Lee-ka Mina-**hanthey-nun** senwmul-ul
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT-TOP present-ACC
cwu-ess-ta.
give-PST-DECL
'Lee gave [Mina]_{TOP} a present.'

Slot A and B markers may alternate or stack

- (8) a. Lee-**hanthey** Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT Mina-NOM miss-DECL
'Lee misses Mina.'
- b. Lee(-**hanthey**)-**nun** Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT-TOP Mina-NOM miss-DECL
'[Lee]_{TOP} misses Mina.'
- (9) a. Lee-ka hakkyo-**ey** ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC go-PST-DECL
'Lee went to school.'
- b. Lee-ka hakkyo(-**ey**)-**nun** ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC-TOP go-PST-DECL
'Lee went [to school]_{TOP}.'

“Case alternation” and “case stacking” when NOM/ACC are involved

- (10) Lee(-**hanthey**)-**ka** Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT-NOM Mina-NOM miss-DECL
‘[Lee]_{FOC} misses Mina.’
- (11) Lee-ka Mina(-**hanthey**)-**lul** senwmul-ul cwu-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT-ACC present-ACC give-PST-DECL
‘Lee gave [Mina]_{FOC} a present.’
- (12) Lee-ka hakkyo(-**ey**)-**lul** ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC-ACC go-PST-DECL
‘Lee went [to school]_{FOC}.’

Use of a Slot B marker NOM/ACC when a Slot A marker is available
results in a focused interpretation

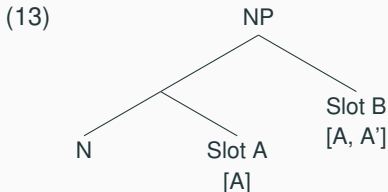
(4) Korean nominal template (Cho and Sells 1995, Park 1995)

Noun	Slot A		Slot B	
N	DAT	<i>-hanthey</i>	NOM	<i>-i~ka</i>
	LOC	<i>-ey</i>	ACC	<i>-(l)ul</i>
	HON.DAT	<i>-kkey</i>	TOP	<i>-(n)un</i>
	HON.NOM	<i>-kkeyse</i>	FOC 'even'	<i>-to</i>

- Previous efforts have been concentrated on capturing “case stacking” with NOM/ACC (Gerdtz and Youn 1988, Levin 2017)
- Slot A as inherent case, Slot B as structural or dependent case (Gerdtz and Youn 1988, Yoon 2004, Levin 2017)
- TOP/FOC is often overlooked, or only used as evidence in support of analyses of NOM/ACC (Schütze 2001, Lee and Nie 2022)
- Nominal alternation is often overlooked, or is assumed to be derived from nominal stacking and deletion (Schütze 2001, Levin 2017)

Proposal

- Slot A markers reflect agreement in the thematic domain:
A-agreement with Appl, P, Voice
- Slot B markers reflect agreement in the discourse domain:
composite A/A'-agreement with C, transitive Voice
- Nominal template is reflected in the structure of the nominal (Cho and Sells 1995): Slot A or Slot B or both heads may be present on the nominal, deriving alternation and stacking
- No real effect on argument structure: Non-promotional alternation



1. Slot B markers as composite A/A'-agreement
2. Slot A markers as A-agreement
3. Slot A and B alternation and stacking
4. Argument/oblique alternation

(4) Korean nominal template

Noun	Slot A		Slot B	
N	DAT	- <i>hanthey</i>	NOM	- <i>i~ka</i>
	LOC	- <i>ey</i>	ACC	-(<i>l</i>) <i>ul</i>
	HON.DAT	- <i>kkey</i>	TOP	-(<i>n</i>) <i>un</i>
	HON.NOM	- <i>kkeyse</i>	FOC 'even'	- <i>to</i>

Slot B markers as composite A/A'-agreement

TOP and FOC markers display mixed case/discourse properties

- TOP/FOC can appear on adjuncts
- TOP/FOC can replace Slot A case marking on arguments (nominal alternation)
- TOP/FOC-marked nominals are exempt from weak crossover

NOM and ACC markers display the same above properties

TOP/FOC can appear on adjuncts

(14) Ecey-**nun** Mina-ka cha-lul wuncenhay-ss-ta.
yesterday-TOP Mina-NOM car-ACC drive-PST-DECL
‘[Yesterday]_{TOP}, Mina drove the car.’

(15) Mina-ka cal-**un** anilato ancenhakey-**nun**
Mina-NOM well-TOP even.though safely-TOP
cha-lul wuncenhay-ss-ta.
car-ACC drive-PST-DECL
‘Mina drove the car [safely]_{TOP} even though she did not drive it
[well]_{TOP}.’

TOP/FOC can appear on adjuncts

- (16) Ecey-**to** Mina-ka cha-lul wuncenhay-ss-ta.
yesterday-FOC Mina-NOM car-ACC drive-PST-DECL
'Even [yesterday]_{FOC}, Mina drove the car.'
- (17) Mina-ka ancenhakey-**to** cha-lul wuncenhay-ss-ta.
Mina-NOM safely-FOC car-ACC drive-PST-DECL
'Mina drove the car even [safely]_{FOC}.'

TOP/FOC can replace Slot A case marking on arguments (nominal alternation)

- (18) Lee(-**hanthey**){-**nun**/-**to**} Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT-TOP/-FOC Mina-NOM miss-DECL
‘[Lee]_{TOP/FOC} misses Mina.’
- (19) Lee-ka Mina(-**hanthey**){-**nun**/-**to**} senwmul-ul
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT-TOP/-FOC present-ACC
cwu-ess-ta.
give-PST-DECL
‘Lee gave [Mina]_{TOP/FOC} a present.’
- (20) Lee-ka hakkyo(-**ey**){-**nun**/-**to**} ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC-TOP/-FOC go-PST-DECL
‘Lee went [to school]_{TOP/FOC}.’

TOP/FOC-marked nominals are exempt from weak crossover (WCO) violations

- A'-movement incurs WCO violations, while A-movement does not (Postal 1971, Lasnik and Stowell 1991, Mahajan 1990)

- (21) a. Who₁ *t*₁ appears to her₁ mother *t*₁ to be pretty?
b. *Who₁ does her₁ mother love *t*₁?

- Topicalized objects in Japanese (Miyagawa 2009, 2017) and Dinka (van Urk 2015) are exempt from WCO

- (22) [**Taroo-to Hanako-o**]_i otagai-no sensei-ga *t*_i
Taro-and Hanako-ACC each.other-GEN teacher-NOM *t*_i
suisensita.
recommended
'Taro and Hanako, each other's teachers recommended.'
(Miyagawa 2017:6)

TOP/FOC-marked nominals are exempt from weak crossover (WCO) violations

- (23) [**John-kwa Mary-nun**]_i selo_i-uy sensayng-i
John-CONJ Mary-TOP each.other-UY teacher-NOM
chwuchenhayssta.
recommended
'John and Mary, each other's teachers recommended.'
- (24) [**John-kwa Mary-to**]_i selo_i-uy sensayng-i
John-CONJ Mary-FOC each.other-UY teacher-NOM
chwuchenhayssta.
recommended
'Even John and Mary, each other's teachers recommended.'

NOM/ACC can appear on adjuncts, resulting in a focused interpretation

- (25) Ecey-ka Lee-ka cengmal aph-ass-ta.
yesterday-NOM Lee-NOM really sick-PST-DECL
‘[Yesterday]_{FOC}, Lee was really sick.’
- (26) Lee-ka san-ul sey pen-**ul** ol-ass-ta.
Lee-NOM mountain-ACC three times-ACC climb-PST-DECL
‘Lee climbed the mountain [three times]_{FOC}.’
- (27) Lee-ka sakwa-lul twu sikan-tongan-**ul** mek-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM apple-ACC two hour-for-ACC eat-PST-DECL
‘Lee ate the apples [for two hours]_{FOC}.’

NOM/ACC can replace Slot A case marking on arguments (nominal alternation), resulting in a focused interpretation

- (28) Lee(-**hanthey**)-**ka** Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT-NOM Mina-NOM miss-DECL
‘[Lee]_{FOC} misses Mina.’
- (29) Lee-ka Mina(-**hanthey**)-**lul** senwmul-ul cwu-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT-ACC present-ACC give-PST-DECL
‘Lee gave [Mina]_{FOC} a present.’
- (30) Lee-ka hakkyo(-**ey**)-**lul** ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC-ACC go-PST-DECL
‘Lee went [to school]_{FOC}.’

NOM/ACC-marked nominals are exempt from weak crossover (WCO) violations

- (31) [John-kwa Mary-ka]_i selo_i-uy sensayng-hanthey
John-CONJ Mary-NOM each.other-UY teacher-NOM
kulip-ta.
miss-DECL
'John and Mary, each other's teachers miss.'
- (32) [John-kwa Mary-lul]_i selo_i-uy sensayng-i
John-CONJ Mary-ACC each.other-UY teacher-NOM
chwuchenhayssta.
recommended
'John and Mary, each other's teachers recommended.'

Slot B markers reflect agreement with composite A/A'-probes (van Urk 2015)

- A single probe can agree in both A- and A'-features
- A-feature: [CASE]
- A'-features: [\pm TOP], [\pm FOC]
- Composite probes are phase heads: C and transitive Voice

Composite probes

Slot B markers reflect agreement with composite A/A'-probes (van Urk 2015)

- C probe: [NOM] + [\pm TOP / \pm FOC]
- Transitive Voice probe: [ACC] + [\pm TOP / \pm FOC]
- TOP/FOC markers appear on both subjects and objects
- NOM marker appears on subjects, ACC marker on objects
- Use of a Slot B marker NOM/ACC when a less marked form is available (Slot A) results in a focused interpretation

(33) A/A'-features associated with Slot B markers

	[+TOP]	[+FOC]	[-TOP]
C [NOM]	-(<i>n</i>) <i>un</i>	- <i>to</i>	- <i>i~ka</i>
Voice [ACC]	-(<i>n</i>) <i>un</i>	- <i>to</i>	-(<i>l</i>) <i>ul</i>

Slot A markers as A-agreement

Slot A markers encode thematic information but not discourse information

- Often analyzed as postpositions (Cho and Sells 1995, Yoon 2004)
- We focus on DAT and HON.NOM

(34) Slot A markers (Cho and Sells 1995)

DAT	- <i>hanthey</i> , - <i>eykey</i>
LOC	- <i>ey</i> , - <i>eyse</i>
INSTR	-(<i>u</i>) <i>lo</i>
GOAL	- <i>kkaci</i>
COM	- <i>hako</i> , -(<i>k</i>) <i>wa</i>
HON.DAT	- <i>kkey</i>
HON.NOM	- <i>kkeyse</i>

DAT and HON.DAT mark psych verb experiencer subjects, indirect objects (IOs) in ditransitives, and transitive causees in causatives

- (35) Halmeni{-**hanthey**/-**kkey**} ai-ka kulip-ta.
 grandmother-DAT/-HON.DAT child-NOM miss-DECL
 'Grandmother misses the child.'
- (36) Yuli-ka halmeni{-**hanthey**/-**kkey**} chayk-ul
 Yuli-NOM grandmother-DAT/-HON.DAT book-ACC
 tuli-ess-ta.
 give.HON-PST-DECL
 'Yuli gave grandmother a book.'
- (37) Yuli-ka halmeni{-**hanthey**/-**kkey**} chayso-lul
 Yuli-NOM grandmother-DAT/-HON.DAT vegetable-ACC
 mek-i-ess-ta.
 eat-CAUS-PST-DECL
 'Yuli made grandmother eat vegetables.'

DAT and HON.DAT mark psych verb experiencer subjects, indirect objects (IOs) in ditransitives, and transitive causees in causatives

- DAT and HON.DAT have identical distribution, modulo honorification
- We assume that DAT is assigned by Appl
- Kim (2011) proposes 3 types of applicatives in Korean
 - Low Appl: IOs
 - High Appl: Causees
 - Peripheral Appl: Experiencers
- 2 basic behaviors for DAT arguments: Subject and object
 - Subject (highest nominal): Alternation and stacking with NOM
 - Object (not the highest nominal): Alternation and stacking with ACC

DAT (and HON.DAT) only involves A-features

- DAT undergoes nominal alternation and stacking with Slot B markers
- However, in contrastive focus constructions involving the negated copula *anila*, NOM is required, even if DAT is already present
- DAT does not encode A'-features

(38) Nay-ka senwmul-ul Mina(-**hanthey**)*(-**ka**) anila
 1.SG-NOM present-ACC Mina-DAT-NOM but.not.be
 Lee-hanthey cwu-ess-ta.
 Lee-DAT give-PST-DECL
 'I gave a present to Lee, not [Mina]_{FOC}.'

HON.NOM does not have the same distribution as NOM (Lee and Nie 2022, Lee 2024)

- Unlike DAT and HON.DAT, which have identical distribution
- HON.NOM is a Slot A marker, NOM a Slot B marker
- In the contrastive focus *anila*-construction, NOM is required, even if HON.NOM is already present
- HON.NOM does not encode A'-features

(39) Halmeni(-**kkeyse**)*(-**ka**) anila Lee-ka
 grandmother-HON.NOM-NOM but.not.be Lee-NOM
 Kim-ul po-ass-ta.
 Kim-ACC see-PST-DECL
 'Lee, not [grandmother]_F, saw Kim.'

HON.NOM does not have the same distribution as NOM (Lee and Nie 2022, Lee 2024)

- HON.NOM can appear in $-(u)m$ nominalizations, while NOM cannot (Lee 2024)
- We assume that HON.NOM is assigned by Voice
 - Additional evidence from root suppletion (Choi and Harley 2019)

(40) [Kim sensayngnim{-**kkeyse**/*-**ka**}-uy
Kim teacher-HON.NOM/-NOM-UY
kaluchi-si-**m**]-i insangcek-i-ta.
teach-HON-NMZL-NOM memorable-COP-DECL
'Teacher Kim's teaching is memorable.'

LOC and other Slot A markers as agreement with a postposition

- (41) Lee-ka hakkyo-**ey** ka-ss-ta.
Lee-NOM school-LOC go-PST-DECL
'Lee went to school.'
- (42) Lee-ka kyengchal-**ey-uyhay** cap-hi-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM police-LOC-depend.on catch-PASS-PST-DECL
'Lee was caught by the police.'

Slot A markers reflect agreement with A-probes

- Appl: [DAT]
- Voice: [HON.NOM]
- P: [LOC], [INSTR], ...
- No A'-features

Slot A and B alternation and stacking

Nominal alternation

Slot A and B markers may alternate or stack

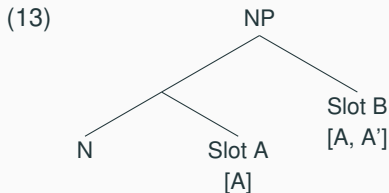
- TOP/FOC markers appear on both subjects and objects
- NOM marker appears on subjects, ACC marker on objects
- Alternation is often overlooked, or is assumed to be derived from nominal stacking and deletion (Schütze 2001, Levin 2017)

(43) Lee{-**hanthey**/-ka/-**hanthey-ka**} Mina-ka kulip-ta.
Lee-DAT/-NOM Mina-NOM miss-DECL
'Lee misses Mina.'

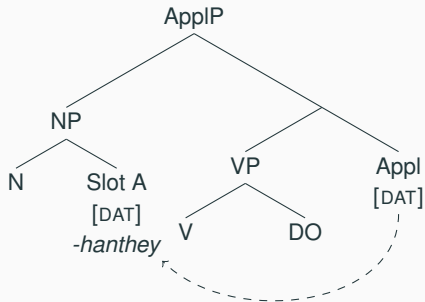
(44) Lee-ka Mina{-**hanthey**/-lul/-**hanthey-lul**} senwmul-ul
Lee-NOM Mina-DAT/-ACC present-ACC
cwu-ess-ta.
give-PST-DECL
'Lee gave Mina a present.'

Nominal structure

- Slot A markers reflect agreement in the thematic domain:
A-agreement with Appl, P, Voice
- Slot B markers reflect agreement in the discourse domain:
composite A/A'-agreement with C, transitive Voice
- Nominal template is reflected in the structure of the nominal (Cho and Sells 1995): Slot A or Slot B or both heads may be present on the nominal, deriving alternation and stacking

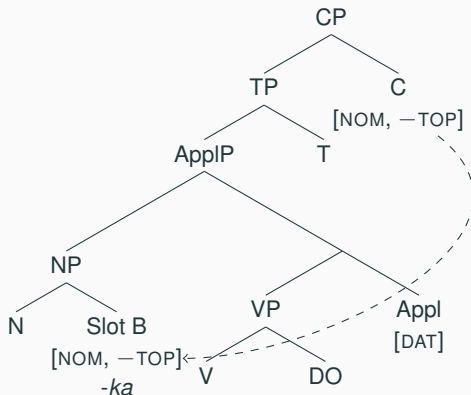


(45) Slot A marking with DAT



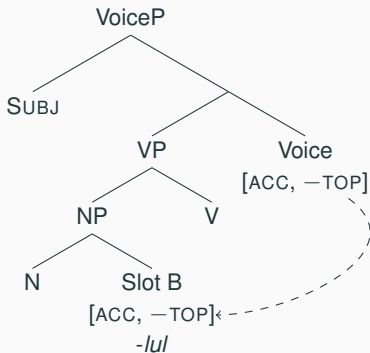
Nominal alternation

(46) Slot B marking with NOM



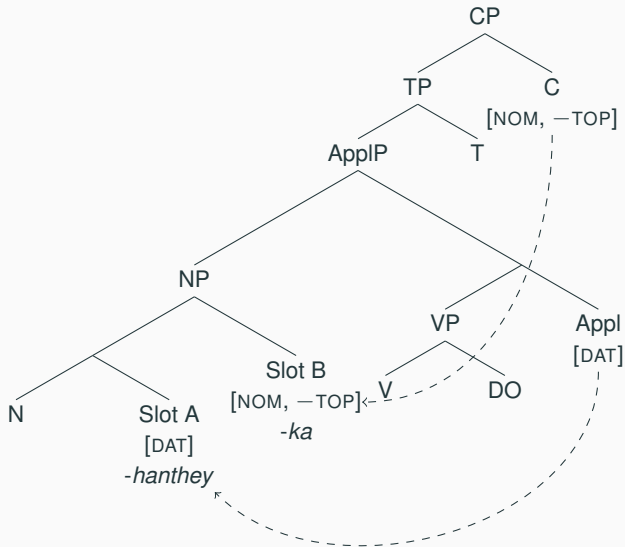
- NOM focus interpretation arises from pragmatic competition with a less marked form (Slot A)

(47) Slot B marking with ACC



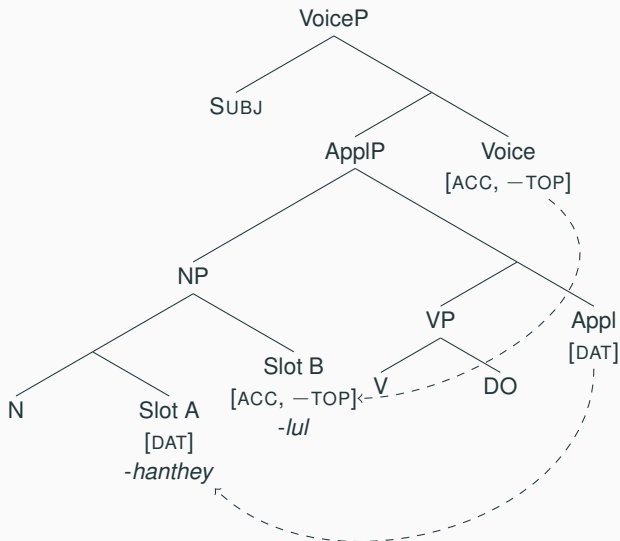
Nominal stacking

(48) Slot A and B stacking with NOM



Nominal stacking

(49) Slot A and B stacking with ACC



Argument/oblique alternation

Case/agreement as a window into the argument/oblique alternation

- Structural case: Arguments
- Inherent case: Some arguments, obliques
- Multiple case assignment: Inherent case + structural case (Babby 1985, Moravcsik 1995, Richards 2013)
- Slot A as inherent case, Slot B as structural or dependent case (Gerds and Yoon 1988, Yoon 2004, Levin 2017)

“Case/agreement” markers may have other functions across languages

- Slot A markers: A-agreement in the thematic domain
- Slot B markers: A/A'-agreement in the discourse domain

NOM/ACC do not behave like structural or dependent case

- Multiple NOM and ACC constructions
- Multiple agreement with composite A/A'-probes
- Adverbials can be focused using NOM/ACC

(50) Cheli-**ka** apeci-**ka** pwucaya.
Cheli-NOM father-NOM rich
‘[Cheli’s]_{FOC} father is rich.’

(51) Ecey-**ka** Lee-**ka** cengmal aph-ass-ta.
yesterday-NOM Lee-NOM really sick-PST-DECL
‘[Yesterday]_{FOC}, Lee was really sick.’

NOM/ACC do not behave like structural or dependent case

- Multiple NOM and ACC constructions
- Multiple agreement with composite A/A'-probes
- Adverbials can be focused using NOM/ACC

(52) Lee-ka Mina-**lul** senwmul-**ul** cwu-ess-ta.
Lee-NOM Mina-ACC present-ACC give-PST-DECL
'Lee gave [Mina]_{FOC} a present.'

(53) Lee-ka san-**ul** sey pen-**ul** ol-ass-ta.
Lee-NOM mountain-ACC three times-ACC climb-PST-DECL
'Lee climbed the mountain [three times]_{FOC}.'

Adverbials can be focused using NOM/ACC

- “Situation delimiters”: extensive measure function which quantifies an event or state (Wechsler and Lee 1996)
 - Durative, multiplicative but not manner, frequency adverbials
- Situation delimiter adverbials can bear A/A'-features in Korean

(54) Tom-i twu sikan-tongan(-**ul**) tali-ess-ta.
Tom-NOM two hours-for-ACC run-PST-DECL
'Tom ran for two hours.'

(55) Tom-i coyonghi(*-**ul**) wa-ss-ta.
Tom-NOM silently-ACC come-PST-DECL
'Tom approached silently.' (Wechsler and Lee 1996:631)

- Relationship between argument promotion and discourse prominence
- Agreement driven by discourse features, e.g. [TOP]
 - Bantu object marking (Van der Wal 2015, 2022, Nie 2024)
 - Philippine-type voice (Chen 2017)
- A'-probing for closest NP, e.g. [PROBE:A'+D]
 - Subject-only extraction restrictions (Aldridge 2004, 2008, Branen and Erlewine 2024)
- Composite A/A'-probes in discourse-configurational languages

Thank you!

Appendix: A'-features

Trivalent A'-feature system

- A'-features can have one of three featural specifications: $[+F]$, $[-F]$, and underspecified, notated $[\emptyset F]$ (see Kastner 2020 on Voice)
- A nominal with an unspecified $[\emptyset FOC]$ feature is not treated as focused morphosyntactically but may nonetheless receive a focus interpretation due to pragmatic factors

(56) Trivalent A/A'-features associated with Slot B markers

	$[+TOP, -FOC]$	$[-TOP, +FOC]$	$[\emptyset TOP, \emptyset FOC]$
C [NOM]	-(n)un	-to	-i~ka
Voice [ACC]	-(n)un	-to	-(l)ul

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