An Overview of Korean Case Marker Alterations: Focusing on the *eul/reul* 을/를 – *i/ga* 이/가 Alteration

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Abstract

In this research, we examine the manifestation of the accusative case marker *eul/reul* 을/를 alteration, where it is replaced by the nominative case marker *i/ga* 이/가, specifically in *-go sipda* -고 싶다 construction and in clauses with a transitive predicate (NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP). The results show that the object or theme must have a definitive reference, and the verb immediately preceding *-go sipda* construction should not form part of a complex predicate within the inner clause. In case of the NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP structure, the verb should convey a static meaning. The case marker *i/ga* attached to NP2, does not indicate the subject. Instead, it functions as type of auxiliary marker with characteristics similar to those of determiners.

Keywords: case marker alteration, *eul/reul – i/ga* alteration, *-go sipda* construction, case marker functions, determiner

Povzetek

Članek preučuje primere konstrukcije *-go sipda* -고 싶다 in stavkov s prehodnim povedkom (NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP), v katerih se namesto tožilniškega členka *eul/reul* 을/를 uporablja imenovalniški členek *i/ga* 이/가. Rezultati kažejo, da mora predmet ali tema stavka vsebovati določeno referenco, hkrati pa glagol neposredno pred obliko *-go sipda* ne sme biti del kompleksnega povedka notranjega stavka. V primeru stavkov s prehodnim povedkom NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP mora glagol vsebovati statični pomen. Sklonski členek *i/ga*, pritrjen na NP2, ne označuje predmeta. Namesto tega deluje kot vrsta besedilnega členka s podobnimi značilnostmi, kot jih imajo členi.

Ključne besede: sprememba rabe sklonskih členkov, sprememba rabe *eul/reul – i/ga*, struktura *-go sipda*, funkcije sklonskih členkov, členi

1   Introduction

Case marker alteration (*gyeogjosa gyoche* 격조사 교체) is a phenomenon where one case marker is replaced by a different case marker. In this paper, we will look at the examples of syntactic structures where one case marker *eul/reul* 을/를 is changed, or altered, with case marker *i/ga* 이/가, and try to determine in what environment can alteration occur, whether there is a change in the syntactic or pragmatic meaning of the sentence, and what is the meaning of *i/ga*.

A typical example of case alteration is the *-go sipda* -고 싶다 construction, where the noun phrase immediately before the predicate connected with *-go sipda* construction changes the case marker from *eul/reul* to *i/ga*. However, in Korean, case marker alterations are not a rare phenomenon. They appear in various sentence constituents. One of the most commonly used case marker alterations is the subject case alteration form, where the type of case marker to appear depends on the preceding noun phrase's features such as [± group], and [± honorific].

(1) a. 철수가   집에서   게임한다.
    Cheol-su-ga   jib-e-seo   ge-im-han-da.
    Cheolsu-NOM house-LOC game-do-present- DEC
    'Cheolsu is playing a game at home.'

  b. 회사에서   중요한   상을   받았다.
    Hoi-sa-e-seo   jung-yo-han   sang-eul   bad-ass-da.
    company-NOM(+group) important-ADN prize-ACC receive-past-DEC
    'The company has received/won an important award.'

  c. 할머니께서   댁에   계신다.
    Han-meo-ni-kke-seo   daeg-e   gye-sin-da.
    grandmother-NOM(+hon) house(+hon)-LOC be(+hon)- present-DEC
    'Grandmother is at home.'

In (1b), the 'company' *hoisa* 회사, having a [+group] feature, is followed by case marker *eseo* 에서 while in (1c), 'grandmother' *halmeoni* 할머니, having an [+honorific] feature, is followed by case marker *kkeseo* 께서. The first example presented, namely (1a) 'Cheolsu' *cheolsu* 철수, which is characterized by [-group] and [-honorific] features is followed by case marker *i/ga* and could be considered an unmarked case marker.

There are numerous case marker alterations in an adverb (*busaeo* 부사어) positions as well. Let us look at the *e* 에 – *(eu)ro* (으)로 case marker alteration.

(2) a. 부산에   가는   기차
      bu-san-e   ga-neun gi-cha
      Busan-LOC go-ADN Train
      'a train going to Busan'

    b. 부산으로   가는   기차
      bu-san-eu-ro ga-neun gi-cha
      Busan-DIR   go-ADN train
      'a train going to Busan'

This paper will focus on case marker alterations that occur in object positions and analyze their functions or meanings. It is organized as follows. Section 2 will briefly review case markers in Korean and discuss them in a sentence or clause. Section 3 will first delve into case marker alterations in the *-go sipda* construction and continue with case alterations in a transitive sentence of the following structure: NP1 이/가 NP2 을/를 VP. In Section 4, the focus will be on the meaning of the case marker *i/ga* and its function when it appears as the alternative case marker. Lastly, Section 5 will sum up our findings.

2   The position and functions of case markers in a noun phrase

In Korean, grammatical case is usually indicated by the use of case markers.[1] Case markers point to the syntactic relation between a predicate and its arguments. However, case markers do not necessarily have to appear for the case to be expressed, and are indicated without a marker. When so, the sentence constituent loses the ability to move to a different position in a sentence.

To better understand the position of case markers, let us look at what position they take in a noun phrase. Due to the case markers' ability to be omitted, their inability to appear as a free-standing form, and the fact that they only carry a grammatical meaning, it could be considered, that they are not the head of the phrase; instead, the noun is. However, according to Lim (2008) case markers take the position of a head of a phrase. As proof of that, he points out that the presence or absence of case marker changes the

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[1] In Korean, reference grammars define case markers as follows. In Nam et al. (2019), a case marker binds to a noun or noun-like form and expresses the relation that the noun or noun-like form has with a different word. In Ko and Koo (2008), case markers denote grammatical relations between words.

meaning of the clause or sentence. [2] And that in cases where the predicate can facilitate the use of two different case markers for the same argument, the use of either of cases does not depend on the different theta roles but on the meaning of the sentence. For example, the verb 'to leave' *tteonada* 떠나다, which is a motion verb, demands a noun phrase NP2 to denote a departure or exit point. However, the verb 'to leave' *tteonada* 떠나다 can realize both *eseo* 에서 and *eul/reul* 을/를 within the same noun phrase. Let us look at the examples below.

(3) a. 친구가   한국에서   떠났다.
     Chin-gu-ga   han-gug-e-seo tteo-nass-da.
     friend-NOM Korea-LOC   leave-past-DEC
     'Friend left Korea.'

   b. 친구가   한국을   떠났다.
     chin-gu-ga   han-gug-eul tteo-nass-da
     friend-NOM Korea-ACC   leave-past-DEC
     'Friend left Korea.'

According to Lim (2008), the theta role of the NP2, namely 'Korea' *hangug* 한국, remains as a departure point in both examples, however, while in (3a), it is the semantic relation that is more enhanced, in (3b), the grammatical relation takes the enhancement.

Moreover, the accusative case marker *eul/reul* appears to have more than just a pure syntactic function. Lee (2015) examined the phenomenon of the case marker *eul/reul* being attached to an adverb which immediately preceded the main predicate in long negation form. The findings indicate that the appearance of case markers *eul/reul* is due to the auxiliary predicate *anihada* 아니하다 which is a transitive verb, and therefore, requires an object. However, in this case, a case marker no longer performs the function of marking an object of the sentence; instead, it functions as a focus marker.[3]

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[2] Kim (1991) and Kim (2007) found that when noun phrase is not marked with a case marker, it expresses a specific or definitive reference. In other words, when case is expressed without the use of a case marker, it expresses already-known information.

[3] Sentences with two accusative case markers are observed to behave similarly. Their NP2 and NP3 are both marked with accusative eul/*reul*, however, the accusative case marker attached to NP2 does not express the meaning, object, or patient. Instead, the function of case marker seems to be closer to the one of an auxiliary marker. For example:

It seems that although the primary meaning of case markers is purely syntactic, there are situations where markers express meanings that go beyond their grammatical relations with predicates and their arguments. In such examples, case markers seem to add to the overall semantic meaning of a clause or sentence.

3   *Eul/reul – i/ga* case marker alteration

In this section, we will look at the examples where the accusative case marker *eul/reul* is replaced by the nominative case marker *i/ga*. The focus will be on two types of constructions or clauses where the alteration takes place: the *-go sipda* -고 싶다 construction and a transitive verb clause or sentence.

3.1   *Eul/reul – i/ga* case marker alteration in the *-go sipda* construction

Arguably, the most typical example is the replacement of the case marker *eul/reul* with the case marker *i/ga* in the *-go sipda* structure. With the most well-known example illustrated as follows.

(4) a. 저는　　　친구가　　　보고　　　싶다.
　　　Jeo-neun chin-gu-ga　bo-go　　　sip-da.
　　　I-TOP　　friend-NOM see-CONN Want-DEC
　　　'I miss my friend(s).'

　　b. 저는　　　친구를　　　보고　　　싶다.
　　　Jeo-neun chin-gu-reul bo-go　　　Sip-da
　　　I-TOP　　friend-ACC　see-CONN want-DEC
　　　'I miss my friend(s).'

Researchers generally agree that the case marker change does not necessarily occur in all of the *-go sipda* constructions. Um (2003) focused on the type of structures where case marker alteration can or cannot occur. He found out that the alteration cannot take place in the following two cases: 1. When the 'inner' predicate consists of a main and an auxiliary verb, as in (5a).

(i)　철수가　　　　영희를　　　　손을　　　잡았다.
　　Cheol-su-ga　yeong-hui-reul son-eul　　jab-ass-da.
　　Cheolsu-NOM Yeonghui-ACC　hand-ACC grab-past_DEC
　　'Cheolsu grabbed Yeonghui's hand.'

2. When the entire *-go sipda* construction modifies a noun, as in (5b). According to Lee (2016), the alteration cannot be realized when a verb before *-go sipda* is an adjective with the *ha* -하- suffix as in (5c).[4]

(5) a. 치마{를/*가}   입어   보고   싶다.
    Chi-ma-reul-ga ib-eo   bo-go   sip-da.
    skirt-ACC-NOM wear-CONN see- CONN want-DEC
    'I would like to try on the skirt.'

  b. 그런   이야기{를/*가}   듣고   싶은   생각도
     Geu-reon i-ya-gi-reul-ga   deud-go   sip-eun   saeng-gag-do
     this-ADN story-ACC-NOM hear-CONN want-ADN thought-AUX

     없었다.
     eobs-eoss-da.
     not have-past-DEC
     'I had no intention of listening to this kind of story.'

  c. 오늘만큼은   우리의   승리{를/*가}
     O-neul-man-keum-eun u-ri-eui   seung-ri-reul-ga
     today-AUX-TOP   our-GEN win-ACC-NOM

     기뻐하고   싶다.
     gi-ppeo-ha-go   sip-da
     happy-suffix-CONN   want-DEC
     'Today I want to celebrate our victory.'

Whilst Um (2003) examined the overall characteristics of the *-go sipda* construction involving case marker alteration, Lee (2016) and Kim (2020) focused on analyzing the noun phrases where alteration takes place and the types of predicates (verbs) that permit such alteration. According to Lee (2016, p. 35), predicate must be either a transitive or non-transitive verb with an argument which can be perceived as patient or target.

(6) a. 도서관에   가고   싶다.
    Do-seo-gwan-e ga-go   sip-da.
    library-LOC   go-CONN want-DEC
    'I want to go to the library.'

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[4] Example (5b) corresponds to the example (19a') in Um (2003, p. 181) and (5c) corresponds to the example (17)ㄴ in Lee (2016, p. 36).

b. 도서관이　　　가고　　　싶다.
　Do-seo-gwan-i ga-go　　sip-da.
　library-NOM　go-CONN want-DEC
　'I want to go to the library.'

Interestingly, though example (6b) is grammatically possible according to Lee (2016), Kim (2020) does not accept it as such due to the lack of examples in corpora of Korean language. He extends his claim to all motion verbs that appear in the main clause. Kim also argues that in constructions with typical transitive verbs (*jeonhyeongjeogin tadong guseong* 전형적인 타동 구성) and in cases where the noun phrase directly preceding the verb must serve as its object or theme, it typically denotes a definitive or specific reference. In sentences where a noun phrase in the object position does not refer to a specific reference, alteration cannot occur.

(7) 우리 강아지{를/가}　　　그리고　　　싶다.
　　U-ri gang-a-ji-reul-ga　geu-ri-go　　sip-da.
　　our puppy-ACC-NOM　draw-CONN want-DEC
　　'I want to draw our puppy.'

(8) 어떤　　　것{을/*이}　　　그리고　　　싶니?
　　Eo-tteon　geos-eul/i　　geu-ri-　　sip-ni?
　　What-ADN thing-ACC-NOM draw-CONN want-INT
　　'What would you like to draw?'

If we sum up, the following conditions have to be met for the marker alteration to take place. First, the target noun phrase must serve as an argument functioning as a specific object or theme of the predicate. Second, the predicate of the main clause must be a transitive verb and not an adjective with the suffix *ha* -하-.

Even though the environment in which a case marker alteration occurs can be pinned down, there is no clear consensus on what motivates case markers to change, and how to classify the marker *i/ga* once it replaces the original *eul/reul*.[5] The reason for this might be in the fact that the case alteration is not obligatory. To put it plainly, the occurrence or the non-occurrence of case marker alteration has no influence on the grammatical correctness of the entire construction. Despite the fact that the factor or motivator for case marker alteration is not necessarily agreed upon, there

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[5] Park (2001) sees the NP2 as the cause of the action or state in the predicate that the NP1 wishes to occur, which facilitates case marker *eul/reul* to be replaced by case marker *i/ga*.

seems to be an agreement regarding the function of *i/ga*. That is, it no longer has the ability to function as a case marker. As seen from the examples, the overall grammatical meanings of the sentences that undergoes alteration are not affected. On the contrary, the semantic meanings are. *I/ga* functions as a focus marker for the patient, the target of the action, or the state that is expressed in a predicate.

On the other hand, Ko (2003) and Lee (2016) argue that with the occurrence of a case marker alteration, a change in grammatical structure also arises. According to Ko (2003) a case marker alteration is nothing more than a phenomenon which occurs when the syntactic properties of some predicates require multiple argument structures. Lee (2016) partially agrees but adds that it is a combination of the main verb's argument structure and auxiliary verb's lexical characteristics.[6]

3.2   Case marker alteration in NP1 *i/ga* 이/가 NP2 *eul/reul* 을/를 VP constructions

The case marker *eul/reul* can undergo the alteration to case marker *i/ga* even in constructions with simple predicates. Unfortunately, there is not much literature on the *eul/reul – i/ga* case marker alteration in non-complex sentences, compared to the works that focus on case marker alteration in the *-go sipda* constructions.

Yu (2009) looked at the verbs which allow the alteration and divided them into different groups based on their meaning. She further looked into the semantic changes of sentences before and after case marker alterations and found out that verbs belonging to 'middle voice auxiliary verbs' (*piwiseong junggandongsa* 피위성 중간동사) which can be categorized by meaning as *dachida*-type verbs 다치다류 act differently than the verbs belonging to the group of 'reflexive middle verbs' (*jaegwiseong junggandongsa* 재귀성 중간동사). In case of the former, the NP2 *i/ga* 이/가 receives more focus, and in case of the latter, the entire clause reportedly expresses the meaning of a patient. Let us look at a few examples.

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[6] The *-go sipda* construction is not the only construction where the combination of two verbs causes an overlaying effect. In Lee (2015), it is pointed out that a similar phenomenon takes place in sentences with long-form negation. In long-form negations, a case marker *eul/reul* can occur in the main clause behind an adverb (*busaeo* 부사어). They argue that eul/reul appears due to *anihada* 아니하다's transitive characteristics, which overlay into the main clause.

(9) a. 교통   사고에   철수가   머리를   다쳤다.
      Gyo-tong sa-go-e   cheol-su-ga   meo-ri-reul da-chyeoss-da.
      traffic   accident-LOC Cheolsu-NOM head-ACC   hurt-past-DEC
      'Cheolsu hurt his head in a traffic accident.'

   b. 교통   사고에   철수가   머리가   다쳤다.
      Gyo-tong sa-go-e   cheol-su-ga   meo-ri-ga da-chyeoss-da.
      traffic   accident-LOC Cheolsu-NOM head-NOM hurt-past-DEC
      'Cheolsu hurt his head in a traffic accident.'

(10) a. 영희가   아주 졸려서   눈을   감았다.
      Yeong-hui-ga   a-ju jol-lyeo-seo   nun-eul gam-ass-da.
      Yeonghui-NOM very sleepy-CONN eyes-ACC close-past-DEC
      'Yeonghui closed her eyes because she was very sleepy.'

   b. 영희가   아주 졸려서   눈이   감았다.
      Yeong-hui-ga   a-ju jol-lyeo-seo   nun-i   gam-ass-da.
      Yeonghui-NOM very sleepy-CONN eyes-NOM close-past-DEC
      'Yeonghui closed her eyes because she was very sleepy.'

In (9a), 'hurt (his) head' *meorireul dachyeossda* 머리를 다쳤다 merely expresses where Cheolsu got hurt. On the other hand, in (9b) 'hurt (his) head' *meoriga dachyeossda* 머리가 다쳤다 puts an emphasis on the fact that Cheolsu hurt his head. Therefore, the semantic meaning of the sentence has changed with the alteration of a case marker. Whereas, in the case of the latter, the case marker alteration prompts changes in the meaning of the construction – the agent is not as clear anymore and the meaning of a patient is more widespread. To go further, in example (9b), a case marker *i/ga* seems to carry the meaning of exclusivity that affects an object or target. The case marker alteration in example (10b) seems to convey a different meaning. Namely, due to the verb expressing an involuntary action, the action is not intentionally or purposefully done by the subject.

Parallels can be drawn with findings by Hong (2017), who identified *i/ga* as a case marker that marks a controller, and *eul/reul* as a target of change either caused by the controller or expressed with a full clause. He further classified verbs into different groups. One of the groups includes verbs that describe situations where change is possible without a controller, allowing for the *eul/reul – i/ga* case marker alteration. According to (Hong, 2017, p. 977), the verbs allowing this case marker alteration share the following characteristics: the predicate must be a state verb expressing the continuation of a state and must be non-accusative, while the subject of such predicates is non-specific.

It does appear there is a common thread that indicates the use of and function of the case marker alteration in this environment. The alternative case marker *i/ga* does not fulfil its function or meaning as a subject case marker. On the contrary, it seems to hold purely pragmatic meaning of altering the overall meaning of the clause or sentence. Therefore, the case marker *i/ga* has lost its syntactic meaning, and it functions similarly if not identically as an auxiliary marker.

4   Characteristics of the case marker i/ga in contexts of case marker alteration

In this section we will look at the characteristics of case marker i/ga in more detail. In cases like these, the question that may occur is whether with the change of marker, a change of function of the noun phrase also occurs. For example, the noun phrase changing from object to subject of the predicate. According to Lee (2016), in instances of case alteration, where the previously object noun phrase receives the subject case markers, it does not make the entire noun phrase a subject marker. Lee (2016) concludes that this means that *i/ga*, when replacing *eul/reul*, is not functioning as a subject case marker but is instead more akin to auxiliary markers.

From distribution's point of view, it is easy to draw the similarities between the case marker *i/ga* and auxiliary markers, as both belong to the same family of parts of speech – markers (*josa* 조사). However, considering the meaning expressed by *i/ga*, it does not function as a case marker. It appears to do more than just place focus on the noun phrase, as an auxiliary marker would; it also conveys definitiveness, making the noun phrase more specific (Um, 2003; Kim, 2020).[7] Let us compare the sentences in which case alteration occurs and where *eul/reul* is replaced by auxiliary marker.

(11) a. 영희는   민수를   보고   싶다.
     Yeong-hui-neun min-su-reul bo-go   sip-da.
     Yeonghui-TOP   Minsu-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
     'Yeonghui misses Minsu.'

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[7] Kim (2020, p. 43) points out that noun phrase with *i/ga* expresses a more concrete object.

b. 영희는   민수가   보고   싶다.
   Yeong-hui-neun min-su-ga   bo-go   sip-da.
   Yeonghui-TOP   Minsu-NOM see-CONN want-DEC
   'Yeonghui misses Minsu.'

c. 영희는   민수만   보고   싶다.
   Yeoung-hui-neun min-su-man bo-g-   sip-da.
   Yeonghui-TOP   Minsu-AUX   see-CONN want-DEC
   (literally) 'Yeonghui misses only Minsu.'

d. 영희는   민수까지   보고   싶다.
   Yeoung-hui-neun min-su-kka-ji bo-go   sip-da.
   Yeonghui-TOP   Minsu-AUX   see-CONN want-DEC
   (literally) 'Yeonghui misses everyone up to Minsu.'

In the examples above, we can see that in (11b), 'Minsu' *minsu* 민수 is the friend who 'Yeonghui' *yeounghui* 영희 misses. However, when comparing this sentence to (11c), we notice a difference in meaning when the auxiliary marker *man* 만 is used instead. With *man*, the only person Yeonghui misses is Minsu, and no one else. On the other hand, when *kkaji* 까지 is used, it conveys the meaning that Yeonghui misses everyone up to and including Minsu. In contrast, in (11b), it is not explicitly stated whether Minsu is the only one missed; however, Minsu is the person who is in focus.

When comparing this to auxiliary markers, we can also observe that the meaning is not fully aligned. It is argued that in case marker alterations, *i/ga* points out that the noun phrase (NP2) refers a specific entity, which is the object or theme of the action or state verb in the predicate. From this, we can infer that *i/ga* expresses some form of exclusivity. However, when compared to *man,* we can observe that the meaning differs. *Man* expresses 'strict' exclusivity, meaning that out of all friends, only Minsu is missed. In contrast, *kkaji* 까지 also carries a sense of exclusivity but is not as rigid as in *man* 만. It suggests that there are more people than just Minsu whom Yeonghui misses.

This far, we have only examined examples of case marker alterations where the noun phrase refers to something or someone specific. Now, let us investigate whether case marker alteration is possible when NP2 refers to a non-specific noun.

(12) a. * 철수는   아무 사람을   보고   싶다.
　　　　Cheol-su-neun a-mu sa-ram-eul bo-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   any   person-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
　　　　* 'Cheolsu wants to see anyone.'

　　b. * 철수는   아무 사람이   보고   싶다.
　　　　Cheol-su-neun a-mu sa-ram-i   bo-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   any   person-NOM see-CONN want-DEC
　　　　* 'Cheolsu wants to see anyone.'

　　c. 철수는   아무 사람이나   보고   싶다.
　　　　Cheol-su-neun a-mu sa-ram-i-na bo-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   any   person-AUX see-CONN Want-DEC

　　　　'Cheolsu wants to see anyone.'

(13) a. 철수는   떡볶이를   먹고   싶다.
　　　　Cheol-su-neun tteog-bokk-i-reul meog-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   tteogbokki-ACC   eat-CONN Want-DEC
　　　　'Cheolsu wants to eat tteogbokki.'

　　b. 철수는   떡볶이가   먹고   싶다.
　　　　Cheol-su-neun tteog-bokk-i-ga   meog-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   tteogbokki-NOM eat-CONN Want-DEC
　　　　'Cheolsu wants to eat tteogbokki.'

　　c. 철수는   아무 음식{*을/*이/이나}   먹고   싶다.
　　　　Cheol-su-neun a-mu eum-sig/i/a-ni   meog-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   any   food-ACC/NOM/AUX eat-CONN Want-DEC
　　　　'Cheolsu wants to eat any food.'

　　Looking at the above examples (12c) and (13c), we can observe that in sentences where a noun phrase expresses a non-definite reference, case marker alteration cannot take place. Instead, the auxiliary marker *(i)na* (이)나 is used.

(14) a. 철수는   사람을   보고   싶다.
　　　　Cheon-su-neun sa-ram-eul bo-go   sip-da.
　　　　Cheolsu-TOP   person-ACC see-CONN want-DEC
　　　　'Cheolsu misses people.'

b. 철수는　　　　사람이　　　보고　　　싶다.
Cheon-su-neun sa-ram-i　　　bo-go　　　sip-da.
Cheolsu-TOP　　people-NOM see-CONN want-DEC
'Cheolsu misses people.'

(15) a. 철수는　　　　　음식을　　　먹고　　　싶다.
cheon-su-neun eum-sig-eul meog-go　sip-da
Cheolsu-TOP　　food-ACC　　eat-CONN want-DEC
'Cheolsu wants to eat food.'

b. 철수는　　　　음식이　　　먹고　　　싶다
cheol-su-neun eum-sig-i　 meog-go　sip-da
Cheolsu-TOP　food-NOM eat-CONN want-DEC
'Cheolsu wants to eat food.'

Examples (14) and (15) show that, despite the nouns for people and food being less specific and definitive compared to 'Minsu' *minsu* 민수 in (11) and 'tteogboggi' *tteogbokki* 떡볶이 in (13), case marker alteration can still occur. The potential reason for the alteration to take place are the nouns with their contrasting meanings. In case of 'people' *saram* 사람 it can be contrasted with 'animals' *dongmul* 동물, and in case of 'food' *eumsig* 음식 it can be contrasted with 'drinks' *eumnyo* 음료. On the contrary, with 'any person' *amu saram* 아무 사람 and 'any food' *amu eumsig* 아무 음식, which also express the lack of specificity, a reference with a contrasting meaning cannot be found.[8]

Considering the case marker *i/ga* following a noun phrase and denoting a relatively specific reference, it would also be interesting to analyze the case marker *i/ga* from the point of view of a determiner. Mok (1998a, 1998b) researched this angle and concluded that case markers *i/ga* and *eul/reul* function as determiners [9] though expressing a different meaning. Whilst the

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[8] This does not seem to be the case in other cases of alterations, such as *e* – *eul/reul* alterations. In those cases, alteration is possible due to syntactic characteristics of the verb in a predicate position. In other words, a verb enables both case markers *eul/reul* and *e* to appear in the same structure. However, there are different views on why alteration is possible. As already pointed out, Lim (2008) argues that with case alteration, theta roles remain the same and only the semantic meaning of the sentence changes. Kim (2014) explains the phenomenon as the NP2's ability to express two semantic roles – theme and goal. In some research, the condition that dictates whether alteration can take place or not is assigned to a predicate, which should contain a motion verb or a resultative state verb (*gyeolgwa-sanghwang dongsa*, 결과-상황 동사) (Kim, 2004; Park, 2007).

[9] It should be pointed out that Mok (1998a, 1998b) holds the position that case markers do not possess the function of marking cases. Instead, NPs are the ones who do so through the position in the sentence and argument relation with the predicate.

case marker *i/ga* expresses a distinct and subject-oriented meaning, the case marker *eul/reul* expresses a common and object-oriented meaning.

5   Conclusion

In this paper we looked at the possible case marker alteration that takes place in the object noun phrase position. To be more specific, we looked at two instances in which the case marker *eul/reul* is replaced by *i/ga*: one in a construction with a simple predicate and the other in the *-go sipda* construction. Our analysis focused on the conditions that allow case marker alteration to take place and the changes that take place in clauses or sentences after the alteration.

Regarding the conditions, alteration can occur if the noun phrase is not a non-specific reference. The predicate also plays an important role in the facilitation of case marker alteration. In case of the *-go sipda* construction, the verb immediately preceding the construction should not be part of a complex predicate of the inner clause. In case of the NP *i/ga* 이/가 NP *eul/reul* 을/를 VP structure, the verb should carry static meaning, such as state or result of a situation.

The changes that occur within a clause or sentence once the alteration takes place are more often semantic than syntactic or grammatical. We observed, that the structure NP2 *i/ga* 이/가 does not have the function of marking the subject. Instead, the case marker *i/ga* generally functions as a type of a focus marker, which makes the reference in the noun phrase more definitive. We have briefly looked at the characteristic of case marker *i/ga* in this environment and compared it with auxiliary markers.

Though the case marker *i/ga* conveys some similarities with them, it would be worthwhile to explore *i/ga* as an auxiliary marker in more detail in future studies. Further research into *i/ga* as a determiner could also offer deeper insights into its characteristics.

Abbreviations

ACC   Accusative case marker
ADN   Adnominal case marker
AUX   Auxiliary marker
CONN   Connective ending
DEC   Declarative ending
DIR   Directional case marker
GEN   Genitive case marker
INT   Interrogative ending
LOC   Locative case marker
NOM   Nominative case marker
TOP   Topic marker

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