A Unified Approach to Korean Causal Connective -nikka

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Abstract

This paper explores the semantic-pragmatic functions of the Korean causal connective –nikka. It has been widely observed that because-clauses are ambiguous depending on the level of causation: propositional, epistemic, and speech-act level causations. (e.g. Sweetser 1990) Many researchers argue that Korean also has three level causations and the two Korean causal connectives, -nikka and –ese ‘because’, are used in different levels of causation: while the usage of –ese is restricted to a propositional level causation, -nikka can be used in epistemic or speech-act level causations, as well as propositional level causations. I argue, departing from previous analyses, that the three different levels of causation do not exist in Korean. Alternatively, I propose that a nikka-clause always targets a propositional argument. Under this point of view, it is assumed that a nikka-clause takes a mood marked phrase: [ϕ-nikka [Mood(ϕ)]. On the basis of this structure, I argue that the various function of the nikka-clause results from the different types of mood in the main clause.
A Unified Approach to Korean Causal Connective -nikka

Yugyeong Park*

1 Introduction

It has been widely observed that because-clauses are ambiguous depending on the level of causation: propositional, epistemic, and speech-act level causations. Consider the following examples: (Sweetser 1990:77, (1))

(1) a. John came back because he loved her. (Propositional level)
   b. John loved her, because he came back. (Epistemic level)
   c. What are you doing tonight, because there’s a good movie on. (Speech-act level)

Sentence (1a) is construed as expressing the causal relation between two propositions or events. That is, John’s love caused his return. Sentence (1b), however, does not mean that his coming back caused him to love her. Rather, (1b) expresses that the speaker’s knowledge of John’s return has caused the speaker to have a judgment that John loves her. Similarly, (1c) cannot be understood as expressing the causal link between propositions or events: the because-clause does not seem to give the reason/cause of the proposition described in the main clause. In (1c), the because-clause provides a reason for the speaker asking the question of the main clause.¹

Three level causations have also been found in German. In German, there are two causal connectives, i.e., denn and weil ‘because’, and they are used in different levels of causation: While weil can only be used to express causal relations between propositions or events, denn can be used to express the causation of epistemic judgments or of speech-acts, as well as the causation of propositions. Scheffler (2008) proposes a formal analysis in which different kinds of causal relations can be reflected on their syntactic positions. Scheffler (2008) postulates that a weil-clause always takes a propositional level phrase as its argument, whereas a denn-clause can target a covert illocutionary or an epistemic level phrase above CP, as well as a propositional level phrase.

Like German, Korean also has two causal connectives, –ese and –nikka, which seem to show the similar distributions. While both ese and nikka-clause can be followed by an ordinary declarative sentence, (2), only a nikka-clause can be compatible with sentences that express the reasoning of epistemic judgments, (3), and non-assertion sentences such as imperatives (4a), exhortatives (4b), promissives (4c) (see Lukoff and Nam, 1983; Yoon, 2005; Hwang, 2008, among many others). That is, the usage of –ese is limited to propositional level causations, whereas –nikka can be used in epistemic or speech-act level causations, as well as propositional level causations². (e.g., Sohn 1993; Oh 2005).

(2) hay-ka ci-nikka/ese pakk-i kkamkkamhata
    sun-Nom go.down-because outside-Nom dark
    ‘It is dark outside, because the sun has set.’

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¹ In Sweetser (1990), it is postulated that in epistemic reading the proposition of the because-clause is the speaker’s knowledge and the proposition described in the main clause is the speaker’s conclusion. Thus, (1b) is interpreted as ‘The speaker’s knowledge of John’s return causes the conclusion that John loved her.’ Also, he interpreted (1c) as ‘I ask what you are doing tonight because I want to suggest that we go see this good movie.’ (Sweetser 1990:77)

² Oh (2005) provided a four-semantic level analysis in which –ese is interpreted more frequently on a content level, whereas –nikka is interpreted more often on an epistemic level, a textual, or an illocutionary level. (Oh 2005:470) She adopted Crevels’(2000) four semantic level analysis which is an expansion of Sweetser’s (1990).
If we adopt Scheffler’s (2008) formal analysis, the difference between the two causal connectives can be explained by assuming that an ese-clause attaches to a propositional level phrase (e.g., IP), while a nikka-clause can attach to an epistemic level or speech-act level phrase (e.g., ForceP), as well as a propositional level phrase. Under this point of view, the various functions of a nikka-clause can be understood as the result of the fact that a nikka-clause targets different types of phrases. The structures of the sentences in (2)-(4) can be schematically depicted as follows:

(5)  

a. Propositional level causation

b. Epistemic level causation

c. Speech-act level causation

Although the three-level analysis looks quite appealing, adopting it for Korean makes incorrect predictions. In what follows, I will show the problems the three-level analysis has and will suggest an alternative analysis. In the alternative analysis, it will be argued that a nikka-clause always takes a propositional argument. More specifically, it attaches to a phrase that includes a mood, i.e. a clause type marked phrase. I will further claim that the three different causal readings are attributed to the different clausal types of the main clause.

2 Problems

2.1 Overgeneration problems of Speech-act nikka

According to the three-level approach, in speech-act causations, the complement of -nikka justifies the main clause speech act: For example, in (4a), the nikka-clause provides a reason for the speaker giving the order ‘be quiet’. From this perspective, it is assumed that a nikka-clause directly at-
taches to a speech act level phrase and denotes that its proposition is the reason/cause for the following speech act.

However, such an analysis runs into problems of overgeneration. First of all, a nikka-clause cannot be followed by a question, as in (6). If we adopt the idea that a nikka-clause directly takes a speech-act as its argument, there is no reason why a nikka-clause cannot give a reason for the question act. In (7), we see that if the question act meaning is overtly expressed in syntax, the sentence becomes grammatical. Since it is not impossible to give a reason for the question act, the ungrammaticality of (6) should not be attributed to the causal relation between the proposition and the question act.

(6) *nay-ka ewusolok mantunun cwung-i-nikka ne eti-ey sani?
    I-Nom addressbook make while-Cop-because you where-at live
    Intended: ‘Where do you live, because I’m making an address book.’

(7) nay-ka ewusolok mantunun cwung-i-nikka ne eti sa-nya-ko mutnun-ke-ya
    I-Nom address.book make while-Cop-because you where live-Q-Comp ask-kes-Dec
    ‘I am asking you where you live, because I’m making an address book.’

Second, under a three-level analysis, (8) is incorrectly predicted to be acceptable, because the complement of the nikka-clause gives the reason for the imperative act of the main clause. Like the case with a question in (7), if the speech act meaning is explicitly represented in syntax, the sentence becomes grammatical, as in (9), suggesting that a causal relation between the proposition and the intended speech-act is expressible in principle.

(8) *nay-ka ney emma-nikka chayso-lul mek-ela
    I-Nom your mother-because vegetable-Acc eat-Imper
    Intended: ‘Eat your vegetables, because I’m your mother.’

(9) nay-ka ney emma-nikka chayso-lul mek-ula-ko hanun-kes-i-ya.
    I-Nom your mother-because vegetable-Acc eat-Imper-Comp do-kes-Cop-Dec
    ‘I’m ordering you to eat your vegetables, because I’m your mother.’

The ungrammaticality of (8) becomes clear if we compare it with the grammatical example in (4a). In (4a) the nikka-clause seems to give a reason why the speaker is ordering to the hearer. (4a) can be paraphrased as ‘the child’s sleeping causes the speaker to order the command ‘be quiet’’. While this paraphrase seems reasonable, (4a) can also be paraphrased as ‘because the child’s sleeping, the hearer should be quiet’; the causal clause modifies the modalized proposition described by the main clause imperative. In this way, (8) should be paraphrased as ‘because the speaker is the hearer’s mother, the hearer should eat his/her vegetables.’ The unacceptability of (8) is due to the fact that the causal link between being the hearer’s mother and the modalized proposition ‘you should eat your vegetables’ is not very likely.

2.2 An explicit modal is needed

Under the three-level approach, it is argued that a nikka-clause attaches to a covert epistemic level phrase, which includes an implicit modal operator. Under this assumption, however, we cannot explain why explicit modal expressions are required in epistemic usage. For example, in (10), if the epistemic expression thullimepsta ‘sure’ is omitted, the nikka-clause loses its epistemic reading.

(10) a. pwul-i khye-ci-e iss-unikka cip-ey nwukwunka issun-key thullimepsta.
    light-Nom turn.on-Pass Prog-because house-at someone exist-Comp sure-Dec

b. #pwul-i khye-ci-e iss-unikka cip-ey nwukwunka iss-ta.
    light-Nom turn.on-Pass Prog-because house-at someone exist-Dec
    Intended: ‘There’s someone in the house, because the light is on.’
2.3 Unembeddability of -nikka

Given the assumption that both -nikka and -ese can be used to mark propositional causations, it is natural to ask if they are fully interchangeable when used as a proposition connection. If we look into the data, the answer seems to be negative. While an ese-clause can be embedded under semantic operators such as negation and conditionals, a nikka-clause cannot. In (11), for example, while an ese-clause can be embedded under a conditional, a nikka-clause cannot be interpreted in the scope of the conditional.

(11) aphu-ese/*nikka nuckey wass-umyen, sihemcang-ey tulekal swu issta.
   sick-because late come-if exam.room-to enter can
   ‘You can enter the exam room if you are late because of sickness.’

Also, a nikka-clause cannot be in the scope of a question operator as in (12). The question in (12) can be asked in the context where several students received F for different reasons. However, a nikka-clause cannot be used in such a context.

(12) nwuka swukcey-lul an nay-ese/*nay-ess-unikka F-lul pat-ass-ni?
   who assignment-Acc not submit-because/submit-Past-because F-Acc receive-Past-Q
   ‘Who received F because he didn’t submit the assignment?’

As well, a nikka-clause cannot be embedded under negation, as in (13).

   Mina-Top bus-Acc miss-because/miss-Past-because late-not -Past-Dec
   ‘Mina wasn’t late because she missed the bus.’

The sentence in (13) can be used in a situation where Mina was late for a different reason. However, a nikka-clause is not allowed in such a situation. It seems possible to use a nikka-clause in the context where Mina was late due to the fact that she didn’t miss the bus. In that case, a nikka-clause is understood to be outside the scope of negation -ci anh- ‘not’.

3 Proposal

The problems of the three-level approach make it unlikely that three distinct levels of causation exist in Korean. In this paper, I argue that, unlike German or English, three level distinctions do not exist in Korean. Alternatively, I suggest that a nikka-clause always takes a propositional argu-

\(^4\) Given the fact that a German denn-clause cannot be embedded under semantic operators, Scheffler (2008) argues that denn contributes its causal meaning on a not-at-issue meaning tier (i.e. conventional implicature dimension). Thus, in a sentence “p, denn q”, denn conventionally implicates the causal relation between p and q, i.e. “p CAUSE q” (Scheffler 2008:53). Under this analysis, only the proposition of the main clause, i.e. q, is part of the at-issue content. Scheffler presents a variety of facts concerning denn that suggest that its causal meaning is CI in the sense of Potts (2005): i) the proposition of the denn-clause cannot be backgrounded; ii) the causal meaning of denn-clause cannot be negated or questioned. Unlike a German denn-clause, however, the causal meaning of -nikka does not satisfy the criteria for CI: i) the proposition of the nikka-clause can be backgrounded. ii) the causal meaning of a nikka-clause can be negated (ii) or questioned (iii), showing that the content of the nikka-clause is at-issue meaning.

\(^{i}\) thayphhwng-i o-nikka palam-i pwul-ko, palam-i pwu-nikka changmwun-i kkaycyeess-ta
   typhoon-Nom come-because wind-Nom blow-and wind-Nom blow-because window-Nom broke-Dec
   ‘Wind blew because typhoon came, and the window broke because the wind blew.’

(ii) Q: ton pili-lyekko wass-ni?
   money borrow-to came-Q
   ‘Are you calling me to borrow money?’

   (iii) Q: yeki way wass-ni?
   here why come-Q
   ‘Why are you here?’

A: anya, ne pokosiph-unikka wass-e.
   no, you want.to see-because came-Dec
   ‘No, I came here because I want to see you.’

A: ney-ka pokosiph-unikka
   you-Nom see want-because
   ‘Because I want to see you.’

\(^4\) Given the fact that a German denn-clause cannot be embedded under semantic operators, Scheffler (2008) argues that denn contributes its causal meaning on a not-at-issue meaning tier (i.e. conventional implicature dimension). Thus, in a sentence “p, denn q”, denn conventionally implicates the causal relation between p and q, i.e. “p CAUSE q” (Scheffler 2008:53). Under this analysis, only the proposition of the main clause, i.e. q, is part of the at-issue content. Scheffler presents a variety of facts concerning denn that suggest that its causal meaning is CI in the sense of Potts (2005): i) the proposition of the denn-clause cannot be backgrounded; ii) the causal meaning of denn-clause cannot be negated or questioned. Unlike a German denn-clause, however, the causal meaning of -nikka does not satisfy the criteria for CI: i) the proposition of the nikka-clause can be backgrounded. ii) the causal meaning of a nikka-clause can be negated (ii) or questioned (iii), showing that the content of the nikka-clause is at-issue meaning.
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I propose that a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent, which includes a Mood\(^0\), i.e. a clause type indicator. That is, a nikka-clause attaches to a clause type marked phrase.

3.1 Background: imperatives as modalized propositions

The current analysis is inspired by Condoravdi & Lauer (2011)’s analysis of imperatives as modalized propositions. In this subsection, I will give a brief overview of their analysis.

There is a common assumption that the denotation of a declarative sentence is a proposition. Taking into consideration the conversational effect, an assertion of a declarative sentence is understood as adding a proposition to the Common Ground. Unlike declaratives, imperatives have been understood to denote actions or properties (e.g. Mastop 2005; Portner 2005, 2007). Portner (2005) argues that imperatives are associated with actions the addressee has to take (i.e. the addressee’s To-Do List). Thus, an utterance of an imperative adds a property to the addressee’s To-Do List rather than to the Common Ground. For example, the denotation of the imperative sentence Leave! can be formally illustrated as in (14), (Portner 2005:5 (7)).

\[(14) \| \text{Leave} \|^{w,c} = [\lambda w \lambda x : x = \text{addressee}(c). x \text{ leaves in } w], \text{where } c \text{ refers to the context of utterance, } w^* \text{ is of an evaluative world}\]

Departing from Portner (2005), Schwager (2006) suggests that imperatives also add to the propositional content. Given the semantic equivalence between imperatives and the performatively used modal verbs, as in (15), she argues that imperatives involve a modal operator \(\text{OP}_{\text{Imp}}\), which is semantically similar to \(\text{must}\).

\[(15)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{a. You must close the door immediately!} & \text{(Performatively used modal verb)} \\
&\text{b. Close the door immediately!} & \text{(Imperative)}
\end{align*}
\]

In this way, the denotation of an imperative is a modalized proposition (i.e. \(\| \text{IMP(\text{\phi})} \|\)), and the utterance of an imperative updates the Common Ground with the modalized proposition.

Building upon the analyses developed in Schwager (2006), Condoravdi and Lauer (2011) also argue that imperatives denote modalized propositions. Departing from Schwager (2006), however, they argue that imperatives are not identical to performative modal verbs but rather they share their sentence radicals with corresponding performatively modal verbs. Given the fact that desiderative assertions can also be used as orders, as in (16a), they argue that an imperative expresses the speaker’s preference (Condoravdi & Lauer 2011:10 (13a)).

\[(16)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{a. I want you to clean your room now!} & \text{(Desiderative assertion)} \\
&\text{b. Clean your room now!} & \text{(Imperative)}
\end{align*}
\]

In this way, an imperative involves a modal operator \(\text{PEP}\), which expresses the speaker’s preferential attitudes, instead of a modal operator such as \(\text{must}\). Furthermore the semantic representation of an imperative sentence can be formulated as in (17). (Condoravdi & Lauer 2011:15 (18))

\[(17) \| \text{IMP(\text{\phi})} \| = \text{PEP(c, } \| \text{\phi} \| ), \text{where } c \text{ is the speaker in the context c}\]

According to (17), an imperative sentence consists of a sentence radical (i.e. proposition \(\phi\)) and a mood (i.e. \(\text{IMP}\)), and its denotation is a modalized proposition that involves a modal operator, which expresses the speaker’s preferential attitudes (i.e. \(\text{PEP}\)). In this way, an imperative utterance \(p\) commits the speaker to act as though he preferred \(p\) (Condoravdi & Lauer 2010: 9). For example, the imperative sentence \(\text{Stay inside!}\) commits the speaker to act as though he preferred the hearer to \(\text{stay inside}, \text{ as shown in (18)}.\)

\[(18) \| \text{IMP(\text{you stay inside})} \| = \text{PEP(c, } \| \text{you stay inside} \| ), \text{and the utterance } u \text{ exhausts } c\text{'s plan to realize } \| \text{you stay inside} \| .\]
According to Condoravdi & Lauer (2011), the analysis of imperatives can be extended to other ‘non-assertion’ type sentences that involve the preferential attitude of the speaker (e.g. promissives or exhortatives). Non-assertion type sentences are often considered as imperatives with a different agent (e.g. the speaker himself or the speaker and the hearer). For example, the utterance of the exhortative sentence *Let’s go!* commits the speaker to act as though he preferred *he and the hearer to go*, as shown in (19).

(19) \[\text{IM}(\text{we go}) \equiv \text{PEP}(c_s, [\text{we go}])\], and the utterance u exhausts c_s’s plan to realize \[\text{we go}\].

In this paper, I will follow Condoravdi & Lauer’s (2011) analysis because at least in Korean imperatives seem to behave differently from performatively used modal expressions when they are used with a causal clause. A performative modal expression such as –{(e)ya ha-} ‘have.to’ allows both ese-clauses and nikka-clauses, while an imperative allows only a nikka-clause, as in (20).

\begin{align*}
\text{(20) a. ai-ka naccam-ul ca-se/nikka coyonghi hay-ya ha-n-ta. (Performative)} \\
\quad \text{child-Nom nap-Acc sleep-because quiet do-have.to-Dec} \\
\quad \text{‘You have to be quiet, because the child is taking a nap.’} \\
\text{b. ai-ka naccam-ul ca-*se/nikka coyonghi hay-la (Imperative)} \\
\quad \text{child-Nom nap-Acc sleep-because quiet-Imperative} \\
\quad \text{‘Be quiet, because the child is taking a nap.’}
\end{align*}

### 3.2 Nikka as modifying clause type marked phrases

Condoravdi & Lauer’s (2011) analysis provides a clue to how we can capture the peculiar distributions of a nikka-clause in the case of (so-called) speech-act causation. I assume, adopting Condoravdi & Lauer’s (2011) analysis, that an imperative denotes a modalized proposition that involves the modal operator PEP, which represents the preferential attitudes of the speaker. Under this assumption, it is argued that a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent that includes an imperative mood, i.e. \text{IM}(\phi). The syntactic structure and semantic representation are shown in (21), where \(\varphi, \phi\) are propositions, \text{IM} is an imperative mood, and \(c_s\) is the speaker in the context.

\begin{align*}
\text{(21) } \text{\text{CAUSE}}(\varphi, \text{PEP}(c_s, \varphi))
\end{align*}

According to (21), a nikka-clause targets a modalized proposition as its argument, rather than a speech-act. In this way, a nikka-clause is understood to give a reason for the speaker’s preference associated with the proposition of the main clause. For example, in (22), the speaker’s knowledge of the possibility that you can catch a cold caused the speaker’s preference for ‘putting on thick clothes’. The denotation of (22) can be illustrated as in (23).

\begin{align*}
\text{(22) kamki kellil swu iss-unikka twukkewun os-ul ip-ela cold catch can-because thick clothes-Acc put.on-Impr} \\
\quad \text{‘Put on thick clothes, because you can catch a cold.’} \\
\text{(23) } \text{\text{CAUSE}}([\text{you can catch a cold}], \text{PEP}(c_s, \varphi))
\end{align*}

Since other ‘non-assertion’ type sentences can also be construed as expressing the preferential attitude of the speaker, the current analysis can extend to such cases as when a nikka-clause attaches to exhortatives or promissives. For example, the sentence in (24) expresses that the speaker’s knowledge that today is the hearer’s birthday caused the speaker to prefer to come early.

\begin{align*}
\text{(24) onul-un ney sayngil-i-nikka ilcik o-ma. today-Top your birthday-be-because early come-Promissive} \\
\quad \text{‘I will come early because today is your birthday.’}
\end{align*}
The idea that a nikka-clause takes a clause type marked phrase as its argument enables us to deal with other types of causations in a similar way. Given the assumption that a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent involving a mood, the epistemic and propositional readings are understood to arise when the nikka-clause attaches to a constituent involving an indicative mood. The structure and its semantic representation are shown in (26). Under the current theory, I assume that an indicative mood indicator, i.e. IND, does not convey any meaning. That is, IND is semantically vacuous. In this way, IND(\(\phi\)) denotes \(\phi\), and a propositional -nikka simply expresses the causal relation between two propositions.

(26) \(\parallel [\varphi\text{-nikka IND}(\phi)] \parallel = \text{CAUSE}(\varphi, \phi)\)

Here, the difference between the epistemic reading and the propositional reading rests in the existence of a modal expression in the main clause. More specifically, if the proposition of the main clause involves an epistemic modal such as thullimepsta ‘must’ or -ul kesita ‘will’, the nikka-clause is interpreted as giving a reason for the speaker’s judgment of the main clause. In contrast, if the proposition of the main clause does not involve a modal, the nikka-clause is understood to express the causal relation between two events. Consider the following examples:

(27) onul mina-ka hakkyo-ey an o-ass-unikka aphun key thullimep-ta. today Mina-Nom school-to not come-Past-because sick Comp sure-Dec
‘Mina must be sick, because she didn’t come to school today.’
(28) hay-ka ci-nikka pakk-i kkamkkamhata sun-Nom go.down-because outside-Nom dark
‘It is dark outside, because the sun has set.’

As illustrated in (29), the nikka-clause in (27) gives a reason for the possibility of Mina’s being sick. The nikka-clause in (28) is interpreted as expressing the causal relation between two propositions, as illustrated in (30). Since the proposition of the main clause does not involve a modal, it simply expresses the causal relation between two events: the sunset caused the darkness.

(29) \(\parallel [\text{Mina didn’t come to school today}]-nikka \text{IND(Mina must be sick)}] \parallel \! \parallel = \text{CAUSE( [Mina didn’t come to school today], [Mina must be sick] )}\)
(30) \(\parallel [\text{The sun has set}]-nikka \text{IND(It is dark outside)}] \parallel \! \parallel = \text{CAUSE( [The sun has set], [It is dark outside] )}\)

4 The distribution of -nikka explained

4.1 Overgeneration problem explained

Under the present theory, it is assumed that, in cases of (so-called) speech-act readings, a nikka-clause targets a modalized proposition rather than a speech act. This enables us to capture the ungrammaticality of the sentences like (31). (31) is ungrammatical although the nikka-clause gives a proper reason for the following speech act. Ungrammaticality of (31) can be explained by assuming that a nikka-clause gives a reason for the speaker’s preferential attitudes in the main clause, rather than the speech act of the main clause. (31) is not acceptable because being one’s mother cannot be a direct reason for the speaker’s preference for ‘eating vegetables’.

(31) *nay-ka ney emma-nikka chayso-lul mek-ela
I-Nom your mother-because vegetable-Acc eat-Imp
Intended: ‘Eat your vegetables, because I’m your mother.’

If the proposition of a nikka-clause describes the direct reason for the speaker’s preference described by the main clause, the sentence becomes grammatical, as in (32). Being one’s mother can
be a direct reason for the speaker’s preference for ‘being polite’, and the sentence in (32) is grammatical.

(32) nay-ka ney emma-nikka na-hantey kongsonhakey hay-la.
    I-Nom your mother-because me-to politely do-Imp

‘Be polite, because I’m your mother.’

The present theory can also explain why a nikka-clause cannot be followed by an interrogative sentence, as in (33). According to the current analysis, a nikka-clause always targets a propositional constituent as its argument. Note that a modalized proposition is still propositional. Thus, the ungrammaticality of (33) is due to the fact that the denotation of the interrogative sentence is a set of propositions rather than a proposition.

(33) *nay-ka cwusolok mantunun cwung-i-nikka ne eti-e eye san?  
    I-Nom addressbook make while-Cop-because you where-at live

Intended: ‘Where do you live, because I’m making an address book.’

Recall that if the speech act meaning is explicitly represented in syntax, the sentences, (31) and (33), become grammatical. The current analysis naturally captures those grammatical sentences. Since the speech act is overtly expressed as a verb, the main clause becomes a declarative, which is marked by IND mood. Consequently, in that case, nikka-clauses are followed by an ordinary declarative sentence and express the causal relation between two propositions.

4.2 Explicit modal explained

The present theory assumes that a nikka-clause always targets a clause type marked phrase. In this way, the epistemic and propositional readings arise when a nikka-clause attaches to a phrase that involves an indicative mood. The difference between an epistemic reading and a propositional reading is the existence of an explicit modal expression in the main clause. Under this assumption, there is no implicit epistemic modal phrase. This immediately explains the fact that an explicit modal expression is required in epistemic usage. The examples are repeated in (34).

(34) a. pwul-i khye-ci-e iss-unicika cip-e eyew-nwukwunka issnun-key thullimeps-e.
    light-Nom turn.on-Pass Prog-because house-at someone exist-Comp sure-Dec

b. *pwul-i khye-ci-e iss-unicika cip-e eyew-nwukwunka iss-e.
    light-Nom turn.on-Pass Prog-because house-at someone exist-Dec

Intended: ‘There’s someone in the house, because the light is on.’

Since there is no implicit epistemic modal, an epistemic causal reading can be derived only when the main clause includes an explicit modal expression, as in (34a). If there is no explicit modal expression in the main clause, as in (34b), the sentence should be interpreted as expressing a causal link between events (i.e. propositional causation). In (34b), the sentence is not acceptable since the fact that the light is on cannot cause someone to be in the house.

The requirement for an overt modal seems to be related to the position of a causal clause. Even in English, an explicit epistemic modal is required if a because-clause comes before the main clause. Consider the following examples:

(35) a. There is someone in the house, because the light is on.
    b. ?? *Because the light is on, there is someone in the house.
    c. Because the light is on, there must be someone in the house.

It has been widely pointed out that a because-clause behaves differently depending on where it occurs (e.g. Verstraete, 2004; Krifka, to appear). According to Krifka (to appear), while the sentence initial because-clauses only express a causal relation between propositions, the sentence final because-clauses can be used to modify a main clause speech-act. Together with Korean examples, we may find a cross-linguistic pattern that the sentence initial causal clauses can only ex-
press propositional causations, while sentence final causal clauses can also express higher level causations, i.e. epistemic or speech-act causations. Since sentence initial causal connectives are propositional, epistemic reading can arise only when the main clause involves an explicit epistemic modal. This assumption can be supported by the fact that an overt modal may not be required when a nikka-clause occurs after the main clause as a separate sentence, as exemplified in (36).

(36) (?) cip-ey wukwunka iss-ta. pwul-i khye-ci- e iss-unikka.
    house-at someone exist-Dec. light-Nom on-Pass-Prog-because
    ‘There’s someone in the house. This is because the light is on.’

4.3 Unembeddability of nikka explained

Under the present analysis, it is assumed that a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent that includes a clause type indicator (i.e. Mood). This means that a nikka-clause attaches to an intermediate level phrase located between an utterance level phrase (e.g. ForceP) and a propositional level phrase (i.e. IP) which is responsible for the core proposition of the sentence.

Analyzing a nikka-clause as a mood phrase modifier directly explains why a nikka-clause cannot be embedded under other semantic operators such as negations, conditionals, and questions. Since semantic operators are part of a proposition, they should be calculated before the proposition is packed by the clause type indicator and is ready to be uttered. Consequently, a nikka-clause, which takes a clause type marked phrase, which is higher than the (core) propositional level phrase, should not be interpreted in the scope of such operators.

The assumption that a nikka-clause takes a clause type marked phrase can also be supported by the fact that a nikka-clause can be embedded under verbs of attribution (e.g. mitta ‘believe’, malhata ‘say’). Krifka (to appear) argues that verbs like say can take speech-act arguments. For examples, the verb say in (37a) takes an assertion speech-act as its argument. Similarly, in (37b), the verb wonder takes a question speech act as its argument. (Krifka, to appear: 23 (53b), (61b))

(37) a. Mary said she hates John.
    b. John wonders who Mary saw.

Under this assumption, since verbs such as say can embed the utterance level phrase, it is expected that a nikka-clause can be embedded under such attribution verbs. In order to get an illocutionary force, the clausal type of the sentence should be identified. That is, the utterance level phrase should involve a clause type marked phrase (i.e. MoodP). Since verbs like say embed an utterance level phrase, they are understood to be able to embed a Mood phrase as well. This turns out to be true, as seen in (38); a nikka-clause can be used under attributions and the causal meaning of the nikka-clause is affected by the veracity of the main clause.

(38) mina- nun con-i kil-ul molu-nikka nuc-ess-tako mitnunta.
    Mina-Top John-Nom way-Ace not.know-because late-Past-Comp believe
    haciman con-un kil-ul cal alko iss-ess-ta.
    however John-Top way-Ace well know-Past-Dec
    ‘Mina believes that John was late because he doesn’t know the route. However he knows
    the route very well.’

It should be noted here that, unlike nikka-clause, an ese-clause can be embedded under other semantic operators. Under the current theory, it can be explained by assuming that an ese-clause must take an IP as its argument. To be more precise, while both nikka and ese-clauses target a propositional argument, only a nikka-clause can target a clause type marked phrase (i.e. MoodP). Syntactically, an ese-clause attaches to an IP, but a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent that involves a Mood⁹ (i.e. mood phrase), which is higher than a CP. Since an ese-clause is part of a (core) proposition, it can be understood to be inside the scope of other semantic operators.

5 Conclusion
In this paper, I have investigated the semantic-pragmatic functions of the causal connective –nikka. I have argued, departing from previous analyses, that the three different levels of causation do not exist in Korean. Alternatively, I have proposed that a nikka-clause always targets a propositional argument. Under this point of view, it is assumed that a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent which includes a Mood $^1$: [φ-nikka [Mood(φ)]]. On the basis of this structure, it was argued that the various function of the nikka-clause results from the different types of mood in the main clause. That is, the causal meaning of the nikka-clause differs depending on the clausal type of the main clause. First, in the case of the (so-called) speech-act reading, a nikka-clause attaches to a constituent that includes an imperative mood, and gives a reason for the speaker’s preferential attitude associated with the proposition of the main clause. In this case, I assume, following Condoravdi & Lauer (2011), that the denotation of an imperative sentence is a modalized proposition that expresses the speaker’s preferential attitudes. Since other ‘non-assertion’ sentences such as exhortatives or promissives can be considered as an imperative with a different agent, a nikka-clause also gives a reason for the speaker’s preference when it is followed by an exhortative or a promissive sentence. Second, epistemic or propositional readings arise when the nikka-clause attaches to an indicative mood phrase. In this way, the difference between a propositional reading and an epistemic reading is taken to be the existence of the overt epistemic modal in the main clause proposition.

References


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