

A Unified Approach to Korean Causal Connective *-nikka*

Yugyeong Park, University of Delaware

It has been widely observed that the two Korean causal connectives, *-nikka* and *-ese* ‘because’, are used in different sets of sentences: while both *ese* and *nikka*-clause can be followed by an ordinary declarative sentence (1), only a *nikka*-clause can be compatible with non-assertion sentences such as imperatives, exhortatives (2), as well as sentences that express the reasoning of epistemic judgments (3) (e.g., Lukoff and Nam, 1983; Yoon, 2005; Hwang, 2008, among many others)

Many researchers argue, following Sweetser’s (1990) three-level approach, that *-nikka* is ambiguous depending on the level 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 (e.g., Oh 2005; Sohn 1993). Under this view, the various functions of a *nikka*-clause can be captured by assuming that a *nikka*-clause targets different types of clauses as its argument (e.g., ForceP, IP). However, I will show in this talk that adopting such a multi-level approach makes for wrong predictions:

First, a multi-level analysis fails to capture the ungrammaticality of (4) and (5): i) a multi-level analysis cannot account for the fact that a *nikka*-clause cannot be followed by a question (4); ii) (5) is wrongly predicted to be grammatical. Since it is possible for a *nikka*-clause to give the reason of a speech-act as in (6), the ungrammaticality of (5) cannot be attributed to its causal meaning. The second problem is that, even if used as a propositional connection, *-nikka* is not always interchangeable with *-ese*: i) *-nikka* is often infelicitous as an answer to a *why*-question (7); ii) a *nikka*-clause cannot be embedded under other semantic operators (e.g., negation, *wh*-question, conditional), as in (8). One might argue, following Scheffler (2008), that the causal meaning of a *nikka*-clause is located in the Conventional Implicature (CI) dimension, similar to German *denn*. However, unlike German, the causal meaning of *-nikka* is always at-issue meaning. While Scheffler presents a variety of facts concerning *denn* that suggest that its causal meaning is CI in the sense of Potts (2005), the causal meaning of *-nikka* does not satisfy the criteria for CI: i) the proposition of a *nikka*-clause can be backgrounded. As in (9), for example, *-nikka* can have the sentence that has been already mentioned; ii) the causal meaning of a *nikka*-clause can be negated (10) or questioned (11), showing that the content of a *nikka*-clause is at-issue meaning; iii) unlike *denn*, a *nikka*-clause can be interpreted in the scope of attributions as in (12), showing that the causal meaning of *-nikka* is not speaker-oriented.

In this talk, I propose that a *nikka*-clause attaches to a constituent that includes a Mood⁰, the indicator of a clause-type. Schematically, the structure can be illustrated as [ϕ -*nikka* [Mood(ϕ)]]. Under this view, it is postulated that the different types of moods associated with the main clause result in different types of causation. For instance, adopting Condoravdi and Lauer’s (2011) analysis, it is assumed that an imperative denotes a proposition that informs the preferential attitudes of the speaker. In this way, a *nikka*-clause gives a reason for the speaker’s preference associated with the proposition of the main clause. This can extend to other ‘non-assertion’ type sentences that involve the preferential attitude of the speaker (e.g., exhortatives, or promissives). Also, I postulate that propositional and epistemic causations are attributed to a Mood that denotes the subject’s beliefs. It is proposed that a declarative sentence following a *nikka*-clause includes an indicative mood and refers to certain beliefs held by the subject.

Under the current analysis, all the peculiar properties of *-nikka* can naturally be captured. First, the current theory can account for the ungrammaticality of (4): since the *nikka*-clause should attach to a propositional type sentence, it cannot be followed by an interrogative sentence whose denotation is a set of propositions. Additionally, the unacceptability of (5) can be accounted for by the fact that being one’s mother cannot be a direct reason for the speaker’s preference for ‘eating vegetables’. As well, the current theory directly accounts for the fact that *nikka*-clause is not always accepted as an answer to a *why*-question (e.g., (7) and (11)): a *nikka*-clause is allowed as an answer only when the speaker’s preferential attitude or belief is asked. Lastly, the fact that a *nikka*-clause cannot be embedded under other semantic operators (e.g., negation, *wh*-question, conditional) can also be explained: a *nikka*-clause denotes its causal meaning on an assertion level therefor understood to be outside the scope of other semantic operators.

- (1) pi-ka o-ase/nikka siwenhata
rain-Nom come-because cool
'It is cool because it rains.'
- (2) a. ai-ka naccam-ul ca-*se/nikka coyonghi hay-la
child-Nom nap-Acc sleep-because quite do-Imperative
'The child is taking a nap, so be quite.'
b. pay-ka aphu-*ase/nikka pyengwen-ey ka-ca.
stomach-Nom sick-because hospital-to go-Exhortative
'I have a pain in my stomach, so let's go to the hospital.'
- (3) onul mina-ka hakkyo-ey an *o-ase/oass-unikka aphun key thullimeps-ta.
today Mina-Nom school-to not come-because/came-because sick Comp sure-Dec
'Mina must be sick, because she didn't come to school today.'
- (4) *nay-ka cwusolok-ul mantunun cwung-i-nikka ne eti-ey sa-ni?
I-Nom addressbook-Acc make during-be-because you where-at live-Q
Intended: 'Because I'm making an address book, where do you live?'
- (5) *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.'
- (6) nay-ka ney emma-nikka chayso-lul mek-ula-ko hanun-kes-i-ya.
I-Nom your mother-because vegetable-Acc eat-Imp-Comp do-kes-Cop-Dec
'I order you to eat your vegetables, because I'm your mother.'
- (7) (Why did you come here by bus?) (from Hwang 2008)
cha-ka kocangna-se/#kocangna-ass-unikka.
car-Nom breakdown-because/breakdown-Past-because
'Because the car broke down.'
- (8) a. aphu-ese/*nikka nuckey wass-tamyen, 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.'
b. nwuka pesu-lul nohchi-ese/*nohchi-ess-(u)nikka nuc-ess-ni?
who bus-Acc miss-because/miss-Past-because late-Past-Q
'Who was late because he missed the bus?'
- (9) thayphwung-i o-nikka palam-i pwul-ko, palam-i pwu-nikka changmwun-i kkaycyess-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.'
- (10) Q: pokkwen-ey tangchem-toyn ke calanghako siph-unikka cenhwahay-ss-ni?
lottery-to win-pass Comp boast want-because call-Past-Q
'Are you calling me because you want to boast that you won the lottery?'
A: aniya, ne moksoli tutko siph-unikka hayss-e.
no, your voice hear want-because did-Dec
'No, I called you because I want to hear your voice.'
- (11) Q: yeki way wass-ni? A: ney-ka poko siph-unikka
here why come-Q you-Nom see want-because
'Why are you here?' 'Because I want to see you.'
- (12) kwake salamtul-un ttang-i napcakha-nikka cikwu-to napcakha-tako sayngkakhayss-ta.
past people-Top ground-Nom flat-because earth-also flat-Comp thought-Dec
'In the past, people thought that the earth was flat because the ground is flat.'

Selected References: Condoravdi, C. and Lauer, S. 2011. Imperatives: Meaning and Illocutionary Force, Handout presented in Fachbereichskolloquium 2011. Hwang, Hwa-Sang. 2008. *The Semantic Function of Conjunctive Ending '-eoseo, -nikka' in Korean*. Kwukehak 51. Kwukehakhoy. Oh, Sang-Suk. 2005. A multi-level semantic approach to Korean causal conjunctive suffixes *-(e)se* and *-(u)nikka*: A corpus-based analysis. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 10: 469-488. Potts, Christopher. 2005. *The Logic of Conventional implicatures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Scheffler, Tatjana. 2008. *Semantic operators in different dimensions*. Dissertation. University of Pennsylvania. Yoon, Pyung-Hyun. 2005. *hyentaykwuke cepsokemi yenkwu* 'A study of Korean connective endings'. Pakiceng Press.