

# Covert Generic Causatives as Dispositional Ascriptions

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# What are covert generic causatives?

- Covert generic causatives consist of:

- a sole causer subject which is strictly **non-agentive** (\*agentive subject)
- a verb which is strictly **non-causative** (\*causative verb)

- (1) *khal-un tachy-e.*  
knife-TOP get.hurt-DECL  
'Knives hurt e.g., people'

- Is this really a causative?

- ⇒ Yes! They describe a dispositional causative property of the subject that brings about a result state described by the verb.

# My proposal in a nutshell

- I argue that the verb undergoes **covert/zero causativization**.
- Why is this interesting?
  - (i) Locally unexpected: Korean already has an overt causativizing strategy.
  - (ii) Typologically unexpected: covert causativization shows a restriction on one semantic domain, namely non-agentive causers.

# Three research questions & my answers

1. Is the causer DP an actual syntactic subject of the verb?  $\Leftarrow$  Yes!
2. How does covert causativization differ from overt/morphological causativization?  $\Leftarrow$  Basically the same process!

	overt causativization (adds <b>agentive</b> causer)	covert causativization (adds <b>non-agentive</b> causer)
patient-subject verbs	direct causation	direct causation
agent-subject verbs	sociative causation	$\emptyset$

- The covert process not only fits nicely into a causativization paradigm in Korean, but also adds a non-agentive puzzle piece into the paradigm.

3. What are covert generic causatives?  $\Leftarrow$  Middles?

# Covert generic causatives vs. dispositional middles

- Covert generic causatives look awful lot like dispositional middles.

(2) *khal-un tachy-e.*  
knife-TOP get.hurt-DECL  
'Knives hurt e.g., people.'

(3) *This bread cuts smoothly.*  
(English)  
[Dispositional middle]

- (i) They are both **generic**.
- (ii) They are both **intransitive**.
- (iii) They both involve **causative semantics**.
- (iv) They both involve an **unexpressed argument** in their meaning.

- Only difference: one talks about a causer and the other about a patient.

# So...

- If you would like to learn more about this typological beast,
  - A causative with a non-agentive subject/non-causative verb
  - A dispositional middle with a causer subject

<p><b>Covert Generic Causatives as Dispositional Ascriptions</b> <b>(SeYeon Park)</b></p>
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- Please come see my poster presentation this afternoon!

Thank you!

# Selected References

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