Distinguishing negative polarity from concord in Korean

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1. Introduction

A common assumption about negation-sensitive elements such as *amwu*-N-*to* in Korean is that they are negative polarity items (NPIs), with a meaning similar to the English *any* (Sells & Kim, 2006; Kim, 1999; Lee, 1995 among many others). But as *any*-type NPIs, they have some rather idiosyncratic properties. For example, they are only licensed by negation; typical NPI licensers (e.g., polar questions, antecedents of conditionals) fail. These items also appear to exhibit wide scope with respect to negation. Moreover, they require clausemate negation. One might think to characterize these items instead as run-of-the-mill negative concord items (NCIs). In this respect, it is insightful to consider the following differences that have been noted between NPIs and NCIs:

(1)		NPI	NCI
a.	Ability to be modified by expressions like *almost*	No	Yes
b.	Ability to be used as an elliptical answer	No	Yes
c.	Ability to appear in non-negative contexts	Yes	No
d.	Ability to be licensed by a higher clause negation	Yes	No
e.	Participation in indeterminate system[1]	No	Yes

(Watanabe 2004; Sano et al., 2008, among others)

Given the NPI/NCI distinctions in (1), *amwu*-N-*to* would be better viewed as a run-of-the-mill NCI rather than as an idiosyncratic NPI. In this extended abstract, we present data pertaining to a similar negation-sensitive element, *etten*-N-*to*, which falls in line with neither the NPI nor the NCI column in (1). Given the distribution of *amwu*-N-*to* and *etten*-N-*to*, we suggest that there are in fact two kinds of NCIs in Korean, with different morphosyntactic properties.

2. Data

We take as the object of study apparent quantificational elements such as *etten*. *Etten*-N is used as a *wh*-indefinite in *wh*-questions, as an existential quantifier in declaratives, and additionally with the (*even*-like) focus particle *-to* constitutes a negation-sensitive element (*etten*-N-*to*). *Amwu*-N-*to* is likewise a negation-sensitive element, but *amwu* typically is not used as an existential quantifier or *wh*-indefinite.

(2) John-i *amwu/etten-chayk-ul ilk-ess-ni?
John-NOM amwu/etten-book-ACC read-PERF-Q
'Which book did John read?'

As negation-sensitive elements, both *etten*-N-*to* and *amwu*-N-*to* can appear either in subject or object position, in declaratives or interrogatives, but always require clausemate negation to be licensed:

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[1] We follow Gill et al.'s (2006) definition of indeterminate-based quantification, according to which an indeterminate pronoun associates with an operator-like element to form a quantificational expression.

(3)a. John-un {etten/amwu}-kes-to sa-ci anh-ass-ta
John-TOP etten/amwu-thing-TO buy-CI NEG-PERF-DECL
'John didn't buy anything/John bought nothing'

b. *John-un {etten/amwu}-kes-to sa-ass-ta
John-TOP etten/amwu-thing-TO buy-PERF-DECL

(4)a. {etten-salam/amwu}-to o-ci anh-ass-ta.
etten-person/amwu-TO come-CI NEG-PERF-DECL
'No one came'

b. *{etten-salam/amwu}-to wa-ss-ta
etten-person/amwu-TO come-PERF-DECL

(5) *Bill-un John-i {etten/amwu}-kes-to sa-ss-ta-ko malha-ci anh-ass-ta
Bill-TOP John-NOM etten/amwu-thing-TO buy-PERF-DECL-COMP say-CI NEG-PERF-DECL
'Bill didn't say that John bought anything'

(6)a. *{etten-salam/amwu}-to wa-ss-ni?
etten-person/amwu-to come-PERF-Q

b. {etten-salam/amwu}-to o-ci anh-ass-ni?
etten-person/amwu-TO come-CI NEG-PERF-Q
'Did anybody come?'

There are however a number of differences in the behaviour of *etten*-N-*to* and *amwu*-N-*to*: (i) *amwu*-N-*to* but not *etten*-N-*to* can form (negative) fragment answers (7); (ii) *amwu*-N-*to* but not *etten*-N-*to* can be modified by *keuy* 'almost' (8) (Sells & Kim, 2006; Lee, 1995; Lee, 1996; Lee, 2001); (iii) lexically negative predicates, in which negation is generally restricted to the predicate, license *amwu*-N-*to* (Chung & Park, 1998), but appears to be degraded with *etten* (9).

(7) Q: mwues-ul po-ass-ni?
what-ACC see-PERF-Q
'What did you see?'
A: *etten/amwu-kes-to
etten/amwu-thing-TO
'Nothing'

(8) John-un keuy {*etten/amwu}-kes-to mek-ci anh-ass-ta
John-TOP almost etten/amwu-thing-TO eat-CI neg-PERF-DECL
'John ate almost nothing'

(9) John-un {?*etten/amwu}-kes-to molu-n-ta
John-TOP etten/amwu-thing-TO not.know-MOOD-DECL
'John doesn't know anything'

Adding *amwu*-N-*to* and *etten*-N-*to* to the schema in (1) yields the following:

(10)

		NPI	NCI	*amwu*-N-*to*	*etten*-N-*to*
a.	Ability to be modified by expressions like *almost*	No	Yes	Yes	No
b.	Ability to be used as an elliptical answer	No	Yes	Yes	No
c.	Ability to appear in non-negative contexts	Yes	No	No	No
d.	Ability to be licensed by a higher clause negation	Yes	No	No	No
e.	Participation in indeterminate system	No	Yes	No	Yes

We see that (i) negation-sensitive elements in Korean do not behave uniformly, and (ii) neither *amwu* nor *etten* pattern perfectly with typical NPIs or NCIs.

3. Proposal

We propose that there are two types of NCIs in Korean, modeled off of either *amwu* or *etten*.[2] We derive their diverging properties by appealing to their particular morphosyntactic features. Assume that Agree is driven by the need to value features (cf. Pesetsky & Torrego, 2007; Bošković, 2009b, 2011; Wurmbrand, 2011, to appear; Smith, 2012). *Amwu*-type NCIs can be seen as bearing an unvalued, interpretable Neg feature [*i*Neg:__], while *etten*-type NCIs bear an unvalued, uninterpretable Neg feature [*u*Neg:__]. The unvalued Neg feature on these NCIs results in their requirement to be 'licensed' by negation. Assume further that a negative head in Korean bears either a valued interpretable Neg feature [*i*Neg: *val*] or a valued uninterpretable Neg feature [*u*Neg: *val*].[3] The differences between *etten*-type and *amwu*-type NCIs now fall out naturally.

Consider first *wh*-uses (2). *Etten* differs from *amwu* in that it does not bear an interpretable [iNeg] feature; it is thus not semantically negative and unlike *amwu*, can be used as a *wh*-indefinite. Note that unlike *amwu*-, *etten*- also appears to trigger an existential presupposition; it is odd when uttered out of the blue.

Next, consider negative fragment answers. We adopt Bošković (2009a)'s explanation of parallel facts in Serbo-Croatian. Ellipsis requires that what is elided be semantically identical to the antecedent (Merchant, 2001); in (7), the antecedent to the elided phrase is not negative, and therefore what is elided cannot be semantically negative. But since the answer contains an NCI, it must also contain a negative head to license the NCI. The only way to satisfy both requirements is for the negative head to bear an uninterpretable [uNeg] feature. Given that *etten*-N-*to* bears [*u*Neg:__], if what is elided contains a negative head with [*u*Neg: *val*], there is no way to derive a negative answer meaning. In contrast, we derive a negative answer with *amwu*-N-*to*, whose interpretable [iNeg:__] feature gets valued by [*u*Neg: *val*] of the negative head.

Next, consider the *almost*-modification facts in (8). If *amwu*-N-*to*, with its [iNeg] feature and obligatory outscoping of negation, is actually a negative universal quantifier, we expect it to be modifiable by *almost*. In contrast, the existential *etten*-N-*to* ought not to be modifiable by *almost*.

As for the lexical negation facts in (9), we assume that lexical negation in Korean projects a NegP (cf. Chung 2007). Like negative heads, lexical negation can bear either a valued interpretable Neg feature [*i*Neg: *val*] or a valued uninterpretable Neg feature [*u*Neg: *val*]. At this point, we must stipulate that only the lexical negation with [*u*Neg: *val*] can co-occur with NCIs. If this is the case, then only *amwu*-N-*to* can co-occur with lexical negation, since only it has an [iNeg] feature.

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[2] See Bošković (2009a) for arguments that Serbo-Croatian also exhibits two kinds of NCIs (*i-*/*ni*-NCIs).

[3] See Bošković (2009a) for a similar proposal for negation in Serbo-Croatian.

4. Conclusion

We have examined a range of data that forces a revision in the classificatory system of negation-sensitive elements in Korean. Given previous depictions of the NPI/NCI distinction, we have suggested that *amwu*-N-*to* is better analyzed as an NCI. But given various distinctions between *amwu*-N-*to* and *etten*-N-*to*, we must expand our classification of NCIs in Korean. Future work includes identifying the precise semantic differences between *etten*- and *amwu*-type quantificational elements.

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