

# On the Inherent (non-) Negativity of Negative Sensitive Items

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**Juhyeon Hwang. 2010. On the Inherent (non-) Negativity of Negative Sensitive Items.** *Language and Information* 14.2, 1–16. On the Inherent (non-) Negativity of Negative Sensitive Items. This paper explores the idea that Korean Negative Sensitive Items, which are better viewed as Negative Concord Items (NCIs) (Kim 2001, 2006, Watanabe 2004), should not be construed as inherently negative in spite of the fact that NCIs are able to appear as an elided form without the presence of a negative licenser. Among several diagnostics, which are designed to draw syntactic and semantic distinctions between traditional Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) and NCIs employed in previous studies, the ability of an NCI to appear as a fragment answer raises the question of whether the negativity of NCIs is inherent or not. Contrary to Kim (2001, 2006) and Watanabe (2004), who are in favor of the inherent negativity of NCIs, I claim that non-negative Korean NCIs still need contentful negation to be licensed, and therefore their ability to appear as a fragment answer should be considered as a matter of ellipsis, in support of Giannakidou (2000, 2006). The main argument will be strengthened by the fact that Korean NCIs do not express negative meaning themselves, and that double negation readings are not allowed no matter how many NCIs occur simultaneously. (Sungkyunkwan University)

**Key words:** Negative Sensitive Items, Negative Concord, diagnostic tests, fragment answer, ellipsis

## 1. Introduction

There has been a line of proposals putting forward the idea that Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs)<sup>1</sup> in Korean, which are sensitive to the presence or absence of nega-

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<sup>1</sup> I employ the term “negative sensitive item” (Sells 2001) instead of negative polarity items (NPIs) in this paper as a cover term referring to any element which is sensitive to the presence

tive items, are better viewed as Negative Concord Items (NCIs) (Kim 2001, 2006, Watanabe 2004) rather than Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). This line of reasoning is based on the fact that Korean NSIs meet the criteria for NCIs as proven by diagnostics tests employed in previous literature in order to draw distinctions between traditional NPIs and NCIs (Labov 1972, Laka 1990, Ladusaw 1992, Quer 1993, Vallduví 1994, Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996, Giannakidou 2000, 2006, Watanabe 2004, Kim 2006 etc). One of the diagnostics for NCIs is to test whether an NSI is able to appear as an elliptical answer unlike traditional NPIs, and the ability of an NSI as an elided form raises the possibility that the negativity of NCIs can be inherent just like negative quantifiers (Watanabe 2004 and Kim 2006).

In this paper, I however argue that Korean NCIs should not be construed as inherently negative in support of Giannakidou (2000, 2006), and therefore Korean NCIs still need their contentful negative licenser to be licensed just like traditional NPIs. The main argument will be supported by the fact that Korean NCIs can never express negative meaning themselves except when they appear as a fragment answer, and that double negation readings are not allowed no matter how many NCIs occur simultaneously. Accordingly, the ability of an NCI to appear as an elliptical answer should be considered as a hybrid property deriving from a different source - the matter of ellipsis of a negative licenser.

Section 2 shows that syntactic and semantic behavior exhibited by Korean NSIs conforms to the behavior of NCIs on the basis of the results of diagnostic tests employed in previous studies of NCIs. Section 3 discusses Kim (2001, 2006) and Watanabe (2004)'s analyses, arguing in favor of the inherent negativity of Korean NCIs. Section 4 rejects the inherent negativity of Korean NCIs by mainly discussing multiple NCI structures, and claim that NCIs in Korean should not be construed as inherently negative, and that they must be licensed by a contentful negation. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## 2. Korean NSIs as NCIs

### 2.1 Negative Concord vs. Negative Polarity

The expression *amwu-to* 'anybody'<sup>2</sup> in Korean has long been considered as a NPI due to its sensitivity to the appearance of negation:

- (1) a. *Amwu-to* o-ci                      **anh**-ass-ta  
 Anyone-TO come-Neg.Comp Neg-Past-Decl  
 'Nobody came.'
- b. \**Amwu-to* o-ass-ta  
 anyone-TO come-Past-Decl

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or absence of negative items. The reason for this choice of terminology is motivated by the evidence mainly presented in this paper which argues that not all NSIs can be classified as NPIs, but rather than identified as "negative concord items".

<sup>2</sup> As one reviewer pointed out, I do not discuss whether the particle *-to* attributes the negativity to the indefinite *amwu*, but assume that the particle *-to* triggers scalar implicature in the sense of Fauconnier (1975) (also Sells 2001, Lee 2003). Kim (2001), however, claims that the particle *-to* carries the [+NEG], and it contributes to the idea of classifying *amwu-to* as a NCI.

- c. John does **not** like *any* student.
- d. \*John likes *any* student.

The previous literature on Korean NSIs has not paid much attention to the possibility that Korean NSIs are negative concord items, except few studies such as Kim (2001, 2006) and Watanabe (2004). Given that Korean NSIs require the presence of negation in order to be licensed, most of the previous studies have taken it for granted that Korean NSIs are NPIs, but exhibit a distinctive licensing property. Namely, Korean NSIs must obey a ‘clause-mate condition’ that requires a NSI and its licenser to be in the same clause, whereas traditional NPIs, such as English *any*, are licensed within a c-command domain of their licenser.

Nevertheless, it has been proposed by many researchers that the sensitivity of NSIs to the presence of negation does not guarantee that all the NSIs are construed as traditional NPIs so that some negative-associated elements should rather be treated as NCIs. NC (negative concord) refers to a phenomenon where (multiple) negative elements denote a single negative proposition, no matter how many negative elements appear in the same sentence:

- (2) a. **Nobody** said **nothing** to **nobody**. (Non-standard English)  
‘Nobody said anything to anyone.’
- b. Mario *non* ha parlato di **niente** con **nessuno**. (Italian)  
Mario not have spoken with no one about nothing  
‘Mario hasn’t spoken with anyone about anything.’ (Ladusaw 1992:240)

NC phenomena have been extensively discussed over the past few decades along with full-scale debates on the status of NPIs crosslinguistically, and many Romance languages — including but not limited to Italian, Spanish, Catalan — have been known to exhibit NC.

Since both NCIs and traditional NPIs need to be licensed by negation, one might consider the possibility that NCIs are just another kind of NPIs, since both NCIs and NPIs need overt negation to be licensed. If the sensitivity to the appearance of negation is the sole factor which determines the polar property of a certain expression, there seems to be no difference between NCIs and NPIs. The syntactic and semantic contrasts between NCIs and NPIs, nevertheless, manifest the fact that NCIs cannot be merely subsumed within the category of NPIs, and therefore NCIs are fundamentally different from NPIs. Vallduví (1994) and Giannakidou (2000, 2006) provide several diagnostics revealing syntactic and semantic differences between NCIs and NPIs. First, they discuss that only NCIs can be modified by *almost* / *absolutely* / *nearly*, whereas NPIs cannot:

- (3) a. \*John did *not* eat almost **anything**.
- b. Q: Qui has vist? (Catalan)<sup>3</sup>  
who 2sg-Perf-see  
‘Who’d you see?’

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<sup>3</sup> All Catalan examples in this section come from Vallduví (1994), and all Greek examples come from Giannakidou (2000).

A: *Gairebé ningú*.

'Almost no one.' (Vallduví 1994)

The modification by *almost* manifests again the fact that NCIs cannot be construed as existentials, which is the way ordinary NPIs are analyzed.

Second, NCIs can appear in a preverbal position without a c-commanding licenser. NPIs, however, can appear only in a postverbal position, properly c-commanded by an overt syntactic licenser:

(4) a. I did *not* say that John admired **anyone**.

b. \***Anybody** did *not* criticize John.

(5) **Ni** un bri d.aire *no* passava per aquella cambra. (Catalan)

NI a bit of.air no 3sg-Imperf-pass by that room

'There wasn't a breath of air going through that room.' (Vallduví 1994)

The availability of NCIs in the preverbal position further leads to another property of NCIs, which is that they need a clause-mate licenser in order to be licensed (Giannakidou 2000, 2006). In contrast, NPIs are arguably known to be licensed within the c-command domain of negation (see also Quer 1993):

(6) a. I did *not* say that John admired **anyone**.

b. Dhen prodhosa mistika [pu eksethesan {kanenan/\*KANENAN}]

not betrayed.1st secrets that exposed.3pl n-person

'I didn't reveal secrets that exposed anybody.' (Giannakidou 2000)

In (6b), the emphatic **KANENAN** in Greek, corresponding to an NCI, cannot appear in the embedded clause, because it is not clause-bounded by *dhen* 'not'. On the other hand, *anyone* (6a) does not need to be licensed by a clause-mate licenser.

Third, Vallduví (1994) argues that only NPIs can appear in non-negative contexts, such as *yes/no* questions or *if*-clauses, whereas NCIs cannot, as shown by the following examples:

(7) a. Yes-no Q

Have you seen **anything**?

b. Conditional

If **anyone** comes, John will be happy.

(8) a. Yes-no Q

\*Que va dir **ni** paraula? (Catalan)

Q 3sg-Past-say NI word

'Did he say a word?'

b. Conditional

\**Si* li toca **ni** un pèl, avisa.m. (Catalan)

if IO 3sg-touch NI a hari 2sg-Imp-warn.me

'If s/he touches him/her at all, let me know.' (Vallduví 1994)

Traditional NPIs can be licensed in contexts which are not apparently negative, but which can be described as roughly-defined ‘downward entailing’ contexts in the sense of Ladusaw (1979). Nevertheless, NCIs cannot be licensed in non-negative contexts as in (8), and this marks a sharp contrast between NCIs and NPIs.

Finally, NCIs can be used as an elliptical answer, whereas NPIs cannot:

- (9) a. Q: What did you see  
A: \***Anything**.
- b. Q: Qui hi havia? (Catalan)  
who 3sg-Imperf-Loc/exist  
‘Who was there?’  
A: **Ningú**.  
‘Not a soul.’ (Vallduví 1994)

Based on the diagnostics given in this section, it becomes self-evident that the properties exhibited by each category do not overlap with each other, and therefore NCIs cannot be simply subsumed under the category of NPIs, excepting the sensitivity of NCIs to the appearance of negation. In support of the idea that NCIs constitute a class of elements distinct from NPIs, the following section demonstrates that behavior of Korean NSIs is that of the NCIs described in this section.

## 2.2 Korean NSIs as NCIs

Kim (2001) discusses that Korean NSI *amwu-to* meets the criteria for NCIs based upon the diagnostics employed in the previous section:

- (10) Ability to appear in non-negative context
- a. Conditional  
\***Amwu-to** John-ul manna-**myen**, Mary-ka nola-keyss-ta.  
anybody-TO John-Acc meet-if Mary-Nom be.surprised-will-Decl  
‘If anybody meets John, Mary will be surprised.’
- b. Yes-no Q  
\***Amwu-to** John-ul a-ni?  
anybody-TO John-Acc know-Q  
‘Does anybody know John?’
- (11) Clause-boundedness  
\*Mary-nun [John-i **amwu-to** manna-ss-ta-ko] sayngkak-ha-ci  
Mary-Top John-Nom anybody-TO meet-Past-Decl-Comp think-do-Comp  
*anh-ass-ta*.  
Neg-Past Decl  
‘Mary did not think that John met anybody.’
- (12) Ability to appear in preverbal position  
**Amwu-to** chayk-ul *ilk-ci* *anh-ass-ta*.  
Anybody-TO book-Acc read-Comp Neg-Past-Decl  
‘Nobody read a book.’

- (13) Ability to be modified by *almost/nearly*  
*Keuy amwu-to* o-ci            *anh-ass-ta.*  
 almost anyone-TO come-Comp Neg-Past-Decl  
 ‘Almost no one came.’
- (14) Ability to appear as an elliptical answer  
 Q: *Nwuka John-ul coha-ha-ni?*  
     *who John-Acc like-do-Q*  
     ‘Who likes John?’  
 A: ***Amwu-to.***  
     *anybody-TO*  
     ‘Anybody.’

The behaviors exhibited by *amwu-to* in (10-14) conform to those of NCIs as given in the previous section. First, Korean nominal NSIs are known to be licensed by only negated verbs, and this is accordance with the fact that NCIs cannot be licensed in non-negative contexts as given in (10).<sup>4</sup> The fact that Korean NSIs need a clause-mate licenser as in (11) further guarantees that Korean NSIs can appear in preverbal position as shown in (12). Example (13) shows that Korean NSIs can be modified by ‘almost’, and this reveals that Korean NSIs are construed as universal quantifiers/elements, in contrast to English NPIs construed as existentials. Korean NSIs also pass the last diagnostic which requires an NSI to stand alone as a fragment answer as given in (14).

When we sum up all the results from the diagnostics, it becomes clear that the behavior of Korean NSIs exhibits the same set of properties as do true NCIs. Once we define Korean NSIs as NCIs, the next question is how to define the status of negativity of Korean NSI. Recall that one of the diagnostics for NCIs is whether NSIs are able to stand alone as an elided answer, and this gives us two competing hypotheses to the negativity of Korean NSIs. The first is that Korean NCIs are inherently negative just like negative quantifiers, and their negative licensers are expected to be expletive. This line of proposal has been defended by Kim (2001, 2006) and Watanabe (2004). The second hypothesis to the status of negativity of Korean NCIs, which is defended by Giannakidou (2000, 2006), is that Korean NCIs are inherently non-negative, and therefore NCIs still need to be licensed by contentful negation.

Between the two hypotheses concerning the (inherent) negativity of Korean NCIs, this paper defends the second hypothesis by arguing that Korean NCIs do not exhibit negative quantifier-like properties except when they appear as an elided answer. Accordingly, the ability of NCIs to appear as an elliptical answer should be considered as a hybrid property deriving from a matter of ellipsis of a negative licenser, in support of Giannakidou (2000, 2006). Before turning to the main

<sup>4</sup> Licensing environments of NCIs in Korean have been extensively discussed by many researchers. Selected references are Nam 1994, Chung 1997, Lee 2003 inter alia. Although exact nature of licensing environments of Korean NSIs still looms large, it seems obvious that nominal NSIs whose forms are represented as *amwu-N-to*, should be licensed by only overtly negated predicates as argued by Hwang (2009). This fact is in sharp contrast with the fact that traditional NPIs can be licensed in non-negated environments such as conditionals or *yes-no* questions as already given in (10).

discussion, the following section first reviews Watanabe's (2004) analysis alongside Kim (2001, 2006)'s who argues for the inherent negativity of Korean NCIs.

### 3. The inherent negativity of NCIs

#### 3.1 Watanabe (2004)

Watanabe (2004) argues that an expression composed of a *wh*-phrase and the particle *-mo* in Japanese must be viewed as an NCI rather than an NPI. In Japanese, the combination of a *wh*-phrase with the particle *-mo* must be licensed by negation, otherwise the result is ungrammatical:

- (15) a. John-wa **nani-mo** tabe-*nak*-atta.  
 John-Top what-MO eat-Neg-Past  
 'John didn't eat anything.'
- b. \*John-wa **nani-mo** tabe-ta.  
 John-Top what-MO eat-Past (Watanabe 2004:561)

Given the fact that *nani-mo* in (15) needs a negative licenser, this type of expression has hitherto been regarded as an NPI (Kato 2000, Sohn 1995). Watanabe (2004), nevertheless, claims that this type of expression must be construed as an NCI, based on the diagnostics given in Section 2:

- (16) a. Ability to appear in non-negative contexts  
 \***Nani-mo** mi-mashi-ta ka?  
 what-MO see-Polite-Past Q  
 'Have you seen anything?'
- b. Ability to appear in preverbal position  
**Dare-mo** John-o hianshi-*nak*-atta.  
 who-MO John-Acc criticize-Neg-Past  
 'Nobody criticized John.'
- c. Modified by *almost/nearly*  
 John-wa *hotondo* **nani-ka-o** tabe-ta.  
 John-Top almost what-KA-O eat-Past.  
 'John ate almost nothing.'
- d. Clause-boundedness  
 ?\*Boku-wa [John-ga **dare-mo** sonkeishiteiru to] iwa-*nak*-atta.  
 I-Top John-Nom what-MO admire Comp say-Neg-Past  
 'I did not say that John admired anyone.'
- e. Ability to occur in isolation  
 Q: **Nani-o** mita no?  
 what-Acc saw Q  
 'What did you see?'  
 A: **Nani-mo**.  
 what-MO  
 'Nothing.' (Watanabe 2004:562-565)

Taking the analysis further, Watanabe claims that the expression ‘wh + -*mo*’ must be identified as inherently negative, and this is evidenced by the ability of *nani-mo* to appear as a fragment answer as in (16e). To establish this claim, Watanabe first rejects the ellipsis approach to a fragment answer, which postulates that the fragment NCI is licensed by its negative licenser before it is deleted at PF (Giannakidou 2000, 2006):

(17) Q: Nani-o mita no?  
what-Acc saw Q

A: **Nani-mo** [*mi-nak-atta*]  
what-MO see-Neg-Past  
‘Nothing.’

Watanabe argues against the ellipsis approach to fragment answers based on the lack of syntactic identity between the elided portion and its antecedent in (17). Consider the following examples:

(18) Q: Nani-o mita no?  
what-Acc saw Q

A: Hebi ∅.  
snake

(19) a. Hebi-o mita.  
snake-Acc saw  
‘I saw a snake.’

b. \*Hebi-o *mi-nak-atta*.  
snake-Acc saw-Neg-Past  
‘I didn’t see a snake.’

In (18), for the fragment answer *hebi* ‘snake’, the elided part must be (19a), not (19b), since the Q-antecedent does not provide a negative part for the elided answer ‘snake.’ Watanabe thus claims that (19b) cannot be the original structure of the elided answer *nani-mo* in (18), inasmuch as a positive question cannot serve as the proper antecedent of a negative answer. This is why he argues that the elided answer must be construed as inherently negative.

By arguing that *nani-mo* is inherently negative, Watanabe must explain how to avoid the double negation in the example of (15a). If NCIs are construed as inherently negative as Watanabe argues, it is predicted that the two negative expressions – *nani-mo* and its negative licenser – would cancel each other out, and (15a) would be interpreted as positive. However, as shown in (15a) only a single negative proposition is expressed ensuring the NC reading for (15a). The deletion of a negative licenser is not allowed either as in (15b), since *nani-mo* must be licensed by an overt negative licenser.

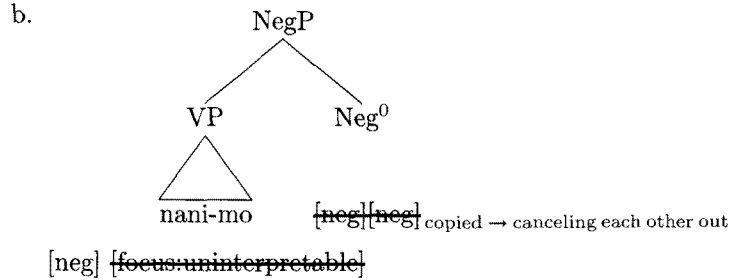
To resolve this problem, Watanabe claims that NC involves the [NEG] feature checking and copying. The following is what Watanabe hypothesizes:



- (20) Negative doubling arises when the Neg-feature of the NEG head undergoes checking with the Neg-feature of negative concord items that are made active by an uninterpretable focus feature. The additional raising of a negative concord item to Spec NegP is due to the EPP feature of the Neg head. (Watanabe 2004: 578)

The key mechanism of Watanabe’s analysis is feature copying of the [NEG] feature into the head of NegP as illustrated below:

- (21) a. H [... [... F ...] ...] ⇒ [(XP) H + F [... [XP ... F ...] ...]]



Let us see how the [NEG] feature copying derives the negative concord reading from (21a), maintaining the idea that NCIs are inherently negative. Watanabe assumes that there are two features on the head of NegP after feature copying: one which came from the NEG head itself, and the other being the NEG feature copied from the NCI *nani-mo* onto the NEG head. He stipulates that there is no hierarchical ordering between the inherent feature and the copied one, and that the particle *-mo* has an uninterpretable focus feature. The two features on the NEG head then cancel each other out, resulting in a semantically positive meaning. As a consequence, having two NEG features gives rise to an affirmative interpretation for the sentence, and having a single [NEG] feature (left in *nanimo*) yields a NC reading. In the case of simple sentential negation not involving an NCI, however, he stipulates that there is no feature copying onto the NEG head.

Following Watanabe, Kim (2001, 2006) also claims that Korean nominal NSIs such as *amwu-(N)-to* ‘any N’ must be identified as inherently negative, and that their inherent negativity comes from the particle ‘-to.’ She extends her analysis to adverbial NSIs, which are dubbed as n-words in the spirit of Laka (1990), on the grounds that they are also able to appear as fragment answers as follows:

- (22) a. John-i Mary-lul coha-ha-ni?  
 John-Nom Mary-Acc like-do-Q  
 ‘Does John like Mary?’
- b. {Cenhye / Cokumto / Pyello} [+uNEG]  
 {at.all / a.bit / much}  
 ‘Not at all.’

In a similar fashion to Watanabe (2004), Kim (2006) argues that Korean NSIs are alternatively construed as NCIs, which are inherently negative. She argues that nominal NSIs and adverbial NSIs have uninterpretable [+NEG] features, whereas overt negation, which is part of the elided portion of a fragment answer, carries an interpretable [+NEG] feature.

### 3.2 Problems

The argument for the inherent negativity of NCIs is anchored in the ability of NCIs to appear as a fragment answer as discussed in the previous section. This line of reasoning, however, does not ultimately provide strong evidence for postulating that NCIs are inherently negative, because except for fragment answers there is no configuration in which Korean NCIs can contribute their negative meaning independently. For example, Korean NCIs are never allowed to appear in coordinate structures or in superlative comparatives without the presence of a negative licenser (Zanuttini 1991, Giannakidou 2000, 2006):

#### (23) Coordination

- a. \*John-un **amwu-to** *hokun* **amwukes-to** panghay-ha-ko  
 John-Top anyone-TO or anything-TO bother-do-Comp  
 sip-e-ha-n-ta  
 want-Adn-do-Pres-Decl  
 ‘John wants to bother nobody and nothing.’
- b. \***Amwu-to** chayk-ul ilk-ko John-i shinmwun-ul  
 anybody-TO book-Acc read-and John-Nom newspaper-Acc  
 ilk-nun-ta  
 read-Pres-Decl  
 Literally: ‘No one read a book, and John read a newspaper.’

#### (24) Comparatives

- a. Equative Comparatives  
 \*John-un **amwu-haksayng-mankum-to** khi-ka khu-ta.  
 John-Top any-student-as-TO height-Nom tall-Decl  
 ‘John is as tall as any (other) student.’
- b. Superlative Comparatives  
 \*/?John-un **amwu-haksayng-pota-to** khi-ka khu-ta.  
 John-Top any-student-than-TO height-Nom tall-Decl  
 ‘John is taller than any (other) student.’

This is in contrast to English NC in which the negativity of a sentence can be expressed by using a negative constituent alone:

- (25) a. **Nobody** and **nothing** can bother me.  
 b. John is as tall as **nobody** else.  
 c. John is taller than **nobody** else.

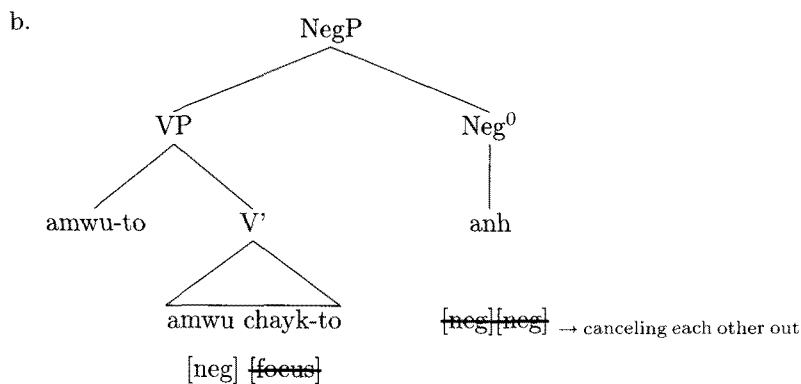
One might argue that the ungrammaticality observed in (23-24) is due to the lack of the presence of negation, so the failure of *amwuto* to occur in coordinate and comparative structures should not be considered as evidence to support the non-negativity of NCIs. Nevertheless, if NCIs were inherently negative, they should be able to denote negative meaning themselves in the absence of any other negative element. NCIs are thus expected to be able to occur in coordinate structures and comparatives which are usually composed of two structurally independent clauses, where negative quantifiers normally appear. This prediction, however, is not borne out in the case of Korean NSIs as shown in (23-24), and it strongly suggests that Korean NCIs cannot express negative meaning on their own without the presence of negation.

A more serious problem arises when multiple NSI constructions in Korean are taken into account. As given in (26), more than one NSI in Korean can cooccur in a sentence, but a negative proposition is still expressed only once:

- (26) **Amwu-to amwu chayk-to** ilk-ci      *anh-ass-ta.*  
 Anyone-TO any book read-Comp Neg-Past-Decl  
 ‘Nobody read any book.’

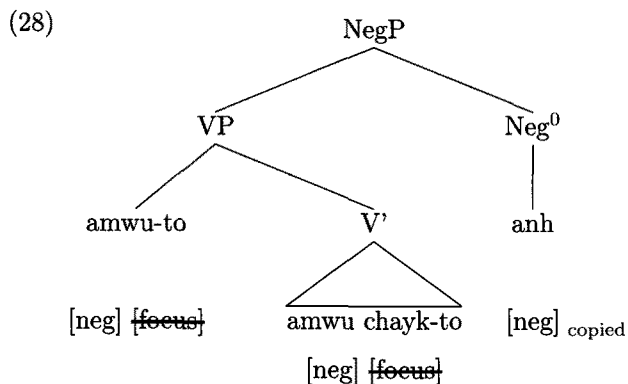
Suppose that the interpretation of multiple NSIs in (26) employs the same feature copying mechanism proposed by Watanabe (2004). First, the [NEG] feature of the object NSI *amwu-kes-to* ‘any thing’ is copied into the NEG head as follows:

- (27) a. **Amwu-to amwu chayk-to** ilk-ci      *anh-ass-ta.*  
 Anyone-TO any book-TO read-Comp Neg-Past-Decl  
 ‘Nobody read any book.’



As illustrated in (27b), under Watanabe’s analysis, the NEG head first agrees with the [NEG] feature of the object NCI, and eliminates the uninterpretable focus feature in the object NSI. After copying the [NEG] feature of the object NSI onto the NEG head, the two [NEG] features, which come from the object NSI and the NEG head respectively, cancel each other out, as in (27b). Consequently, the [NEG] feature on the object NSI remains, yielding a negative meaning. This is the end of the first derivation.

In the next step, the subject NSI must enter into an Agree relation with the NEG head, and so copies its own [NEG] feature into the NEG head again. This is illustrated below:



After the two [NEG] features cancel each other out as in (27b), the NEG head no longer has a [NEG] feature, and so the remaining [NEG] feature in the object NSI is the sole source for the negative meaning of the sentence. Up until this point, there seems to be no problem, and the idea of the inherent negativity of NSIs is still tenable.

However, when the subject NSI copies its [NEG] feature onto the NEG head as in (28), the problem arises. At the end of the second derivation illustrated in (28), three [NEG] features now remain: one in the subject NSI, another in the NEG head, and the other [NEG] in the object NSI. To create the NC reading, theoretically, two [NEG] features out of the three must cancel each other out, but it is not clear which two [NEG] features out of the three should be the qualified candidates for the cancellation in Watanabe's analysis. To solve this question, one might think of the notion of 'factorization' or 'negative absorption' which refers to the process by which multiple instances of quantifiers and negation are 'factored out' and realized as a single proposition (Ladusaw 1992, Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996). Suppose that the negative absorption rule applies to a multiple NSI construction in (27) where multiple NSIs are interpreted as inherently negative as Watanabe proposes:

- (29) a. **Amwu-to amwu chayk-to** ilk-ci anh-ass-ta.  
 Anyone-TO any book-TO read-Comp Neg-Past-Decl  
 'Nobody read any book.'
- b.  $[\forall x \neg][\forall y \neg][\neg] = [\forall x, y] \neg$  (NC reading)

We can now explain how multiple NSI constructions get the NC reading by applying the rule of factorization. After all negation, which each NSI is supposed to have inherently, is factored out, however, it becomes unclear whether the negative proposition of (29) is expressed by the negative predicate, or by the inherent negativity of the multiple NSIs. Then, it is not easy for Watanabe to explain why negation must be factored out only in the case of multiple NSI constructions, and it cannot

be guaranteed that the only negation, which survives in the negative absorption, inherently comes from multiple NSIs themselves. This is another reason why the inherent negativity of NSIs is no longer tenable in spite of the proper NC reading created by the [NEG] feature in the NEG head.

#### 4. Fragment answer revisited

Once we discard the possibility of Korean NSIs as inherently negative, the negation – not NCIs – becomes a key factor to contribute the negativity of a fragment NCI. It follows then that the traditional ellipsis approach appears an attractive alternative.

This indicates that the ability of NCIs to appear as fragment answers should not be taken as evidence for the negativity of NCIs. Watanabe's view of ellipsis is on a par with Ross' (1967) analysis, which claims that the syntactic structure of elided elements can be recovered from their antecedents. This line of reasoning is a so-called 'pure syntactic approach' (Culicover and Jackendoff 2005), which assumes that a fragment answer stands in a pure syntactic relation to its antecedent, so it can be derived from the underlying structure established in the antecedent. The interpretation of the elided elements is done by PF deletion process.

Nevertheless, the notion of the existence of syntactic identity between an elided part and its antecedent has been challenged by many counterexamples. Culicover and Jackendoff (2005) extensively discuss the problems for the pure syntactic approach to fragment answers. Firstly, when the elided elements are not in one-to-one correspondence with the linguistic antecedents, there exists more than one possible interpretation as in (30):

(30) A: Mary said that John has been drinking again.

B: Yeah, scotch.

a'. Mary said that John has been drinking scotch again.

b'. John has been drinking scotch again.

In (30), the single fragment answer generates two different readings depending on whether the fragment answer takes over the whole matrix clause or only the embedded clause. Second, it cannot always be guaranteed that the form of the antecedent will be syntactically compatible with that of the response, as in (31–33):

(31) A: What did you do to Mary?

B: Kiss her. (\*I kissed her to Susan / \*I kissed Susan to her.)

(Culicover and Jackendoff 2005:241-242)

(32) A: Nwu-ka Mary-lul ttayli-ess-ni?  
 who-Nom Mary-Acc hit-Past-Q  
 'Who hit Mary?'

B: John / John-i / \*John-ul

In (31), it is impossible for the fragment answer to find its corresponding counterpart in the antecedent. The caseless fragment answer given in (32) also displays the problem of the syntactic approach to ellipsis, since the source of case-marking in the fragment answer is not clear (see Merchant 2004, 2001, Morgan 1989 for further discussion).

Recall that Kim (2001, 2006) argues that the inherent negativity of Korean NCIs is expressed by uninterpretable [+NEG] features. Nevertheless, it remains unanswered how the uninterpretable [NEG] feature in an NCI can express negative meaning itself without being evaluated by overt negation with [+NEG]. If a fragment NCI carries an uninterpretable feature, that uninterpretable feature is expected to be checked off against the matching operator which carries the interpretable [NEG] feature. Then, there seems to be no way for Kim's analysis to erase the uninterpretable feature in a fragment NSI without positing that the negative predicate is deleted after evaluating the uninterpretable [NEG] feature of the fragment NSI. This is exactly what we would expect from the ellipsis approach to a fragment answer:

- (33) a. John-i Mary-lul coha-ha-ni?  
 John-Nom Mary-Acc like-do-Q  
 'Does John like Mary?'
- b. {Cenhye / Cokumto / Pyello} coha-ha-ci anh-a.  
 {at.all / a.bit / much} like-do-Comp Neg-Decl  
 'He does not like her at all.'
- c. Cenhye[-interpretable] coha-ha-ci anh-a.[+interpretable]

A discussion of ellipsis and fragment answers is beyond the relevance of topic of this paper, but it seems to be obvious that ellipsis cannot be defined in a purely syntactic manner. Thus, the fact that an NSI can appear as an isolated form does not ensure that it must be interpreted as inherently negative as argued by Watanabe and Kim. Rather, the ability of NSIs to appear as a fragment answer should be understood as an issue of ellipsis, and therefore the fragment answer diagnostic should not be considered to be strong evidence against the idea that Korean NSIs are not inherently negative.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, I have rejected the idea that Korean NCIs are inherently negative (*pace* Kim 2001, 2006, Watanabe 2004), and negation is expletive. The main basis for the claim that Korean NCIs are inherently negative is their ability to appear as fragment answers. And one of the main reasons for positing Korean NCIs as inherently negative is that the ellipsis approach to fragment answers does not capture the (possible) lack of syntactic identity between the elided negative part and its antecedent. Nevertheless, with respect to the controversial status of syntactic identity, the fact that an NCI can stand as an isolated form does not guarantee the negativity of an NCI itself. This has been evidenced by the fact that an NCI

in Korean is never capable of denoting its own negativity except in the case of a fragment answer. Furthermore, the fact that multiple NCIs express only a single semantic negation cannot be captured in a satisfying manner unless we reject the inherent negativity of Korean NCIs. Thus, this section concludes that NCIs in Korean are not inherently negative, and that their ability to appear as elliptical answers should not be used as evidence for the inherent negativity of an NCI.

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