Is *amwu* (N)-to a negative quantifier?*

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Chung, Daeho. 2012. Is *amwu* (N)-to a negative quantifier? *Linguistic Research* 29(3), 541-562. Watanabe (2004) analyzes the traditionally called negative polarity item in Japanese as a negative quantifier (N-word), to account for the fact that it can be a fragmental answer to an affirmative interrogative sentence, despite the apparent polarity mismatch between the affirmative predicate in the antecedent clause and the negative predicate in the ellipsis site. The polarity disparity resolves in his system due to Agree between the N-word and the elided negative predicate, which induces the [NEG] feature of the former to get copied into the latter and ultimately cancels out the [NEG] feature of the predicate in the ellipsis site as an instance of double negation. This work argues that although Korean behaves like Japanese with respect to the N-word fragments, the negative quantifier analysis cannot be carried over to Korean based on the following two reasons: (i) the neg-feature-copy-followed-by-cancel-out mechanism leads to interpretation failure in some structures involving an N-word (e.g., an N-word as a short answer to a negative interrogative, an N-word in the RNR construction, and an N-word in the non-negation context); and (ii) polarity mismatch can be induced by a non-N-word (e.g. *acik* ‘still, yet’ as a short answer to an affirmative interrogative sentence and *selma* ‘not a chance’ as a short response to an affirmative declarative sentence). As for the availability of an N-word as a fragmental response to an affirmative sentence, it is speculated in this work, conforming to Ahn and Cho (2011), that such N-word fragments involve no ellipsis and they are to be pragmatically licensed. If this is on the right track, then the semantic isomorphic condition becomes irrelevant to such fragments, and the polarity mismatch problem disappears accordingly.  

**Keywords**  
Negative Polarity Item (NPI), Negative Quantifier (N-word), polarity

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1. Introduction

Watanabe (2004) claims that the traditionally called negative polarity items (NPIs) in Japanese, expressions like *wh-mo*, are to be analyzed as negative quantifiers, based on the observation that they behave like N-words found in Romance languages. (See Watanabe (2004) for a series of N-word properties that Japanese *wh-mo* displays.) His major argument comes from the availability of *wh-mo* in Japanese as a short fragmental answer to an affirmative interrogative sentence.

(1) (Watanabe 2004, 564; his (13b))
A: Nani-o mita no?
   What-Acc saw QE
B: Nani-mo
   What-MO
   ‘Nothing.’

_Amwu_ (N)-to in Korean behaves similarly, as shown below:¹

(2) A: nwu-ka o-ess-ni?
   who-Nom come-Pst-QE
   ‘Who came?’

So I assume that the discourse in (2) is basically acceptable, though not perfect.

¹ The discourse in (2) does not sound perfectly natural, as one of the reviewers points out, and many informants do not accept the short answer in (2B). Most of them, however, accept the following discourse:

(i) A: nwukwu-nwukwu o-ess-ni?
   who-who come-Pst-QE
   ‘Who came?’
B: acik-kkaci-nun amwu-to-yo.
   now-until-Top AMWU-TO-DE
   ‘Nobody until now.’

So I assume that the discourse in (2) is basically acceptable, though not perfect.
The discourses in (1) and (2) appear to be problematic, as there is an apparent polarity disparity between the elided part and its potential antecedent, i.e., the negative vs. affirmative status of the predicates. Watanabe (2004) basically follows Merchant (2001, 2004) and makes the following assumptions on ellipsis: (i) Ellipsis is to meet a *semantic* isomorphic condition (SIC, henceforth), i.e., the elided part must have a *semantically* identical antecedent; (ii) Ellipsis needs a linguistically expressed antecedent; and (iii) Ellipsis is a PF suppression of a string of expressions that are informatively given. With these assumptions in mind, consider the following, which is (2) with the elided part represented:\(^2\)

\[
(2)\text{'}A: \text{nwu-ka} \quad \text{o-ess-ni?} \\
\quad \text{who-Nom} \ \text{come-Pst-QE} \\
\quad \text{‘Who came?’} \\
\text{B: amwu-to} \quad \{ \text{o-ci} \quad \text{ani-ha-ess-ta} \} \\
\quad \text{AMWU-TO} \ \text{come-CI} \ \text{NEG-do-Pst-DE} \\
\quad \text{‘Nobody did.’}
\]

Since the antecedent clause in (2A)’ has an affirmative predicate, while the elided part in (2B)’ is negative, the ellipsis process in (2B)’ appears not to satisfy the SIC at first glance.

To resolve the polarity mismatch, Watanabe (2004) proposes a negative quantifier analysis (NQA, henceforth) of the traditionally called NPIs, according to which NPIs are in fact negative quantifiers (N-words in his term) that need to be licensed by Agree.\(^3\) The negative feature in an N-word (like *dare-mo* in Japanese and *amwu-to* in Korean) gets copied via Agree into the negation head, which is also negative due to the negative morpheme. The two negative features in the negation head now

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\(^2\) Korean examples will be used from now on, unless indicated otherwise.

\(^3\) I realized that Kim (2001) also claims that the particle *to* in *amwu N-to* in Korean bears a [+NEG] feature, rendering the DP/NP into a negative quantifier. However, I do not find any additional empirical evidence for the NQA provided in her work.
cancel each other, which turns the originally negative predicate into a non-negative, i.e., affirmative counterpart. The feature-copy-followed-by-cancel-out mechanism makes it possible to satisfy the semantic isomorphic condition on ellipsis, as described below.

\[(2)"\text{ A: nwu-ka o-ess-ni?} \]\n
\[
\text{B: acik-kkaci-nun amwu-to [ani-o-ess-ta].} \\
\quad [\text{NEG}] [\text{NEG}] [\text{NEG}] [\text{NEG}] [\text{NEG}] \quad \text{([NEG] copy due to Agree)} \\
\quad [\text{NEG}] [\text{NEG}] [\text{NEG}] \quad \text{(Feature cancellation due to double negation)} \\
\quad [\text{NEG}] [\text{AFF}] \quad \text{(SIC satisfied.)}
\]

The current work argues, however, that the NQA cannot be carried over to the traditionally called NPIs (at least not in Korean), as NPIs do not necessarily bear a \([+\text{NEG}]\) feature and the polarity mismatch is not necessarily induced by an N-word. The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, it will be shown that there are at least two kinds of problems the NQA faces. First, the neg-feature-copy-followed-by-cancel-out mechanism leads to interpretation failure in some structures involving an N-word (Section 2.1). Second, the polarity mismatch can be induced by a non-N-word like \textit{acik} ‘still, yet’ and \textit{selma} ‘(not) a chance’ (Section 2.2). Then, some speculation will be made on the availability of \textit{amwu N-to} as a fragmental response to an affirmative sentence, in Section 3, where it will be conjectured, along the similar lines of Ahn and Cho’s (2011) treatment of Case-less fragmental expressions, that such NPI fragments involve no ellipsis and they are to be pragmatically licensed. Section 4 concludes the paper.

2. Problems with the NQA

Watanabe’s (2004) argument for the NQA is crucially motivated to account for
the fact that the so-called N-word can function as a short answer to an affirmative interrogative sentence. His argument only goes through under several assumptions. First, ellipsis observes the SIC. Second, the N-word and the head of NegP Agree. Third, Agree copies the [NEG] feature in the N-word, which is inherently negative, into the head of NegP. Due to the feature copy followed by the cancel-out of the double negation, the SIC is satisfied in the relevant ellipsis context.4

It will be argued in this section that the NQA is not tenable for the following two reasons. First, as will be shown in Section 2.1, the neg-feature-copy-followed-by-cancel-out mechanism leads to interpretation failure in several contexts involving an N-word (e.g., an N-word as a short answer to a negative interrogative, an N-word in the RNR construction, and an N-word in a non-negation context etc.). Second, as will be illustrated in Section 2.2., the polarity mismatch sometimes takes place despite absence of an N-word (e.g. *acik* ‘still, yet’ as a short answer to an affirmative question and *selma* ‘(not) a chance’ as a short response to an affirmative statement.

2.1 Interpretation failure cases

2.1.1 N-words as short responses to a negative utterance

Expressions of the form *amwu* *(N)-to* in Korean can be used as a short answer to a negative interrogative (as well as to an affirmative interrogative) sentence. Consider the following example:

(4) A: mwues-mwues-ul ani-kacieo-ess-ni?
    what-what      NEG-bring-Pst-QE
    ‘What things didn't you bring?’

B: ssulmanha-n kes-un amwukes-to-yo.
    useful-Rel   thing-Top   AMWUKES-TO-DE

---

4 The third assumption, however, sounds orthogonal to the Chomsky’s (2007, 2008) no-tampering condition (NTC), which demands that Merge of X and Y leaves X and Y unchanged. How is it possible for a neg head to attain a feature in the course of derivation? As Watanabe (2004) himself admits, there seems to be no other instance where a syntactic object changes its feature composition in the course of derivation. Features can be valued, but alteration of a feature composition of a given expression is a dubious operation due to the NTC.
‘Nothing useful.’

Under Watanabe’s (2004) Agree and feature copy mechanism, the relevant feature representation will be as follows.

(4)’ A: mwues-mwues-ul ani-kacieo-ess-ni?

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{[NEG]} & \text{[AFF]} \\
\end{array}
\]

B: ssulmanha-n kes-un amwukes-to ani-kacieo-ess-ta.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{[NEG]} & \text{[NEG]} & \text{[NEG]} \\
\text{[NEG]} & \text{[NEG]} & \text{[NEG]} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{[NEG]} & \text{[NEG]} & \text{[NEG]} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c}
\text{[NEG]} & \text{[AFF]} \\
\end{array}
\]

The elided predicate in (4B)’ is originally negative due to the negative morpheme (the sentence negation) but turns out to be non-negative ([AFF]) due to the [NEG] feature copy (caused by Agree) and the cancel-out of the two [NEG] features. The elided predicate, which is ultimately non-negative, has a [NEG] expression as its antecedent in (4A)’, violating the SIC on ellipsis. Then the discourse in (4) should be infelicitous, contrary to fact.

A similar problem arises in the opposite environment, where an N-word resides in the antecedent clause, while no N-word in the ellipsis site. Consider the discourse in (5) and its relevant feature matrix in (5)’:

(5) amwu-to moim-ey nathana-ci ani-ha-ess-ta.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
\text{AMWU-TO} & \text{moim-ey} & \text{nathana-ci} & \text{ani-ha-ess-ta} \\
\end{array}
\]

‘Nobody appeared at the meeting. Not even the president or vice president.’
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(5) \[ \text{amwu-to} \] \[ \text{moim-ey} \] \[ \text{nathana-ci} \] \[ \text{ani-ha-ess-ta}. \]

\[ \text{[NEG]} \] \[ \text{[NEG]} \] \[ \text{[NEG]} \] \[ \text{copy followed by [NEG]} \]
\[ \text{feature cancel-out} \]

Simcie hoycang-to, pwhoycang-to \[ \text{moim-ey} \] \[ \text{nathana-ci} \] \[ \text{ani-ha-ess-ta} \]
\[ \text{[NEG]} \]

The antecedent of the elided predicate starts as a negatively valued element due to the presence of the sentence negation but its polarity turns out to be affirmative due to the feature copy caused by Agree and cancel-out of double [NEG] features in the antecedent clause. The elided predicate in the second sentence is simply negative since there is no N-word available in the sentence. Despite the violation of the SIC, the fragmental expression in the discourse does not lead to a semantic anomaly, again contrary to the expectation the NQA makes.

2.1.2 N-words in RNR constructions

The shared part in a so-called right-node-raising (RNR) construction is distributively interpreted. Consider the following examples:

(6) a. A-nun sakwa-lul, B-nun pay-lul, \( \text{C-nun photo-lul mek-ess-ta} \).  
A-Top apple-Acc B-Top pear-Acc C-Top grape-Acc eat-Pst-DE  
‘A (ate) apples, B (ate) pears, and C ate grapes.’

b. A-nun sakwa-lul, B-nun pay-lul, \( \text{C-nun photo-lul mek-ci ani-ha-ess-ta} \).  
A-Top apple-Acc B-Top pear-Acc C-Top grape-Acc eat-CI Neg-do-Pst-DE  
‘A (did not eat) apples, B (did not eat) pears, and C did not eat grapes.’

The shared predicate in (6a) is affirmative, and each conjunct is affirmatively interpreted, as the English translation indicates. Likewise, the shared predicate in (6b) is negative, and each conjunct is negatively interpreted.

With this in mind, consider the cases where amwu( N)-to is asymmetrically
distributed in an RNR construction, as exemplified below:

(7) (In a situation where students have to pass tests for English, math, and science to be qualified.)
A-nun yenge-lul, B-nun swuhak-ul, C-nun amwu kwamok-to
A-Top English-Acc B-Top math-Acc C-Top AMWU subject-TO
thongkwaha-ci mos-ha-ess-ta.
pass-CI Neg-do-Pst-DE
‘A (did not pass) English, B (did not eat) math, and C did not pass any subject.’
#’A (passed) English, B (passed) math, and C passed no subject.’

If the shared predicate in the last conjunct were interpreted as a non-negative due to the operation of Agree with N-word amwu kwamok-to, the first two conjuncts would have to be interpreted as a non-negative reading. In fact, however, the first two conjuncts are negatively interpreted, as the English translation indicates.5

2.1.3 N-words in contexts lacking overt negation

In Watanabe’s (2004) system, the N-word needs an overt negation to obligatorily Agree with. Otherwise, the derivation is expected to crash at LF due to the presence of an uninterpretable focus feature in the N-word. Amwu( N)-to in Korean cannot be an N-word as it shows up in certain contexts where no overt negation is realized. There exist at least two such contexts.

First, like English any, Korean amwu( N)-to can be licensed by some inherently negative predicates (INPs), e.g., V-ki silh ‘to be displeased to V’ or V-ki silheha ‘to dislike V-ing’, when embedded under a complement clause but not when appearing as their direct complement.6 (See Klima 1964, Linebarger 1987, Progovac 1988,

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5 There are three major approaches to the RNR constructions: movement analyses, deletion analyses, and multi-dominance analyses, among others. (See Chung and Sohn 2007, and references therein.) No matter which theory is taken, Watanabe’s (2004) system, where a [NEG] feature in a negative predicate gets cancelled due to Agree with an N-word, fails to properly capture the polarity interpretation in the RNR, since the shared predicate has to be heterogeneously interpreted depending on the presence or absence of an N-word in the conjunct.

6 As observed in Chung (2006), amwu( N)-to can be positioned in a subject position as far as it is
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(8) a. The witness denied that anybody left the room before dinner.
   b. The professor doubts that the students understood any explanation.

(9) a. *The witness denied anything.
   b. *The professor doubts any explanation.

(10) (=Sohn 1995:42, (57a))
    John-un [e amwuto manna-ki] silheha-n-ta.
J.-TOP anyone meet-C dislike-PRES-DE
‘John dislikes seeing anyone.’

(11) (=Sohn 1995:42, (56a))
*John-un amwuto silheha-n-ta.
J.-TOP anyone dislike-PRES-DE
‘John dislikes anyone.’

licensed by an inherently negative predicate that takes a complement clause.

(i) (=Chung 2006, 214, his (7))
   a. amwuto [e kulen telewun il-ul ha-ki] silheha-n-ta.
      anyone that dirty work-ACC do-KI dislike-PRES-DE
      Lit. ‘Anyone among them dislikes doing that sort of dirty job.’
      ‘No one likes to do that sort of dirty job.’
   b. amwuto [e1 na-wa ccakha-ki] silheha-ess-ta.
      anyone I-with become;partner-KI dislike-PST-DE
      Lit. ‘Anyone among my classmates disliked being my partner.’
      ‘None of my classmates liked to be my partner.’
   c. chilswun-i toy-n nokwu-lul ikkul-ko amwuto ka-ki
      70;years;of;age become-Rel old;bones take;along anyone go-KI
      dislike-Rel islands;and;remote;countryY.-Gen end, ..
      ‘... the end of Yewu, a remote island place where no one likes to go, carrying an old
      and week body at the age of seventy, ...’
   d. amwuto math-ki silheha-nun hoycangcik-eyse kokwunpuntwa-ha-ess-taun ..
      anyone take-KI dislike-Rel presidency-at make;a;strenuous;effort-PST-they;say, ...'
      ‘...made a strenuous effort as a chair whose duties no one liked to take...’

7 Kim (1999) makes a different generalization: Only content elements can be licensed by an inherently negative predicate, while entity elements cannot. This generalization cannot accommodate the fact that inherently negatives like V-ki silheha and V-ki silh can license a subject NPI, as observed in Chung (2006). See the examples cited in footnote 6.
A second context where \textit{amwu( N)-to} can also be licensed without an overt negation is when it appears in a BEFORE clause, as in (12).\footnote{Not every native speaker agrees on the grammatical status of sentences like (11). They are taken to be basically grammatical in Lee (1993), Chung (1993, 1997) and Lee (1996), while Nam (1997) states that \textit{amwu( N)-to} is not available in a BEFORE clause in Korean. Nam (1997), however, does not seem to be completely committed since such sentences are marked as ??, not as *, which applies to totally ungrammatical sentences. I believe that sentences like (12) are not perfect, but qualitatively different from the sentences which are identical but with BEFORE replaced by AFTER.}

\begin{equation}
\begin{aligned}
\text{(12) } \quad &\text{(Chung 1997, his (2))} \\
\text{\textit{amwuto} } &\text{\textit{ilenaki} } \text{\textit{ceney}, na-nun mollay ku pang-eyse any}\text{\textit{enaka-ess-ta}.} \\
\text{I got out of the room stealthily before anyone got up.'}
\end{aligned}
\end{equation}

Agree cannot take place, as there is no overt negation available in sentences in (10) and (12). Thus it is expected under Watanabe’s (2004) system that such sentences are to be illegitimate, contrary to fact.\footnote{Contrary to the widely accepted view that expressions of the form \textit{wh-mo} in Japanese are strong NPIs, typically based on the contrast like (i), Yabushita (2012) claims that \textit{dare-mo} in Japanese is not an NPI, not even a weak NPI, taking the examples in (ii):}

\begin{itemize}
\item [(i)] *\textit{amwuto} \textit{ilen-n} \textit{hwuey, na-nun mollay ku pang-eyse ppacyenaka-ess-ta.} \\
\text{I went out of the room stealthily after anyone woke up.}'
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item [(ii)] (=Yabushita 2012, 471; his (4))
\begin{description}
\item [a.] *\textit{Dare-mo} puatii-ni \textit{ki-ta.} \\
\text{who-MO party-Dat come-Past }
\item [b.] \textit{Dare-mo} puatii-ni \textit{ko-nakat-ta.} \\
\text{who-MO party-Dat come-Neg-Past}
\end{description}
\text{‘Nobody came to the party.’}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item [(ii)] (=Yabushita 2012, 472; his (6))
\begin{description}
\item [a.] \textit{Hito-wa} \textit{dare-mo} itsukawa shinu. \\
\text{human-Top who-MO someday die}
\item [b.] \textit{Hito-wa} \textit{dare-mo} jibun-ni amai. \\
\text{human-Top who-MO self-Dat lenient}
\end{description}
\text{‘Everyone (Anyone) dies someday.’}
\end{itemize}
2.2 Polarity mismatch despite absence of an N-word

In this subsection it will be observed that polarity mismatch may arise in fragmental responses, even when there is no N-word in the discourse. Two such cases will be discussed in this subsection. It will be illustrated that adverbs like *acik ‘still, yet’ and *selma ‘(not) a chance; (no) way’ are not N-words, but they may cause polarity reversal.

2.2.1 Acik ‘still/yet’ as a short answer to an affirmative interrogative

Adverb acik ‘still/yet’ is licensed as far as it comes with a predicate containing an [+continuous] aspectual feature. Thus, stative predicates like iss ‘to stay’ are semantically compatible with acik, while achievement predicates like tochakha ‘to arrive’ are not, as shown below:

(13) a. Mary-ka acik cip-ey iss-ta.
   M.-Nom still home-at stay-DE
   ‘Mary still stays at home.’

   M.-Nom still arrive-Pst-DE
   ‘Mary still arrived.’

When negated, a [-continuous] predicate becomes compatible with acik, as it changes into a [+continuous] counterpart. Compare (13b) and the following:

c. Hito-wa dare-mo yume yabure, furikaeru.
   human-Top who-MO dream break reflect
   ‘Everyone (Anyone) loses in her dream and reflects on herself.’

The crucial difference between the sentence in (ia) and those in (ii) lies in the fact that the former contains an episodic predicate, while the latter take a non-episodic predicate. He attributes the contrast to the logical property of dare-mo: it is an ‘unrestricted’ universal quantifier. (ia) is ungrammatical because it is a contradictory sentence: it is impossible that every human being came to a party at a specific time in the past.

Regardless of the validity of Yabushita’s (2012) theory, the data he provides in (ii) makes an interesting theoretical implication. Whi-mo in Japanese cannot be treated as inherently negative expressions, casting doubt on Watanabe’s (2004) negative quantifier analysis.
    M.-Nom still arrive-CI NEG-Pst-DE  
    ‘Mary has not arrived yet.’

It is clear that adverb *acik* cannot be an N-word since sentences like (13a) never carry a negative interpretation. As such, it should not induce a negation-feature-copy-followed-by-cancel-out process that the N-word does, for the sentences like (14). If it did, the sentences like (14) would be semantically odd, as the predicate would ultimately become non-negative and [-continuous], violating the semantic restriction that adverb *acik* is subject to.

With this background information in mind, let us examine how *acik* behaves in the context of fragmental answers. Interestingly, *acik* can be used as a short answer to an affirmative interrogative sentence with a [-continuous] predicate, as in (15), as well as with a [+continuous] predicate, as in (16).

(15) A: John-i tochakha-ess-ni?  
    J.-Nom arrive-Pst-QE  
    ‘Has John arrived?’

    B: (anyo) acik [tochakha-ci ani-ha-ess-ec]-yo  
        No still arrive-CI NEG-do-Pst-E-DE  
        ‘(No,) (not) yet.’

    B’: #(yey) acik [tochakha-ess-e]-yo  
        yes still arrive-Pst-E-DE  
        (Intended) ‘(Yes,) he has already arrived.’

(16) A: John-i cip-ey iss-ni?  
    J.-Nom home-at stay-QE  
    ‘Is John home?’

    B: (yey), acik [cip-ey iss-e]-yo  
        Yes still home-at stay-E-DE  
        ‘(Yes,) (he is) still (at home).’

    B’: #(anyo) acik [cip-ey eps-e]-yo  
        yes still home-at not;stay-E-DE  
        (Intended) ‘(No,) he is still not at home.’
The short answer in (16B) does not cause any particular problem with Watanabe’s (2004) system, since the affirmative predicate in the elided part has an affirmative predicate as its antecedent, meeting the SIC on ellipsis. In contrast, the short answer in (15B), if interpreted as non-negative, will be problematic, since the elided predicate is negative, while the predicate in the antecedent clause is non-negative.

2.2.2 Selma ‘(not) a chance’ as a fragmental response

Adverb selma ‘(not) a chance’ appears in an affected environment, but its distribution differs from that of a typical N-word of the form amwu(N)-to since it can be licensed in an affirmative interrogative sentence, as well as in a negative declarative sentence and in a negative interrogative sentence:

(17) a. selma A-ka pelsse o-l li-ka
   (not);a;chance -Nom already come-PNE possibility-Nom
   eps-ta.10
   not;exist-DE
   ‘A hasn't already come, has she?’

   b. selma A-ka acik-to ani-o-ess-nayo?
   (not);a;chance -Nom still Neg-come-Pst-QE
   ‘A has come already, hasn't she?

   c. selma A-ka pelsse o-ess-nayo?
   (not);a;chance -Nom already Neg-come-Pst-QE
   ‘A hasn't come yet, has she?

This indicates selma does not always require the presence of negation at least at the syntactic level. Nevertheless, selma or selma V-(u)li-ka can be a (negatively interpreted) fragmental response to an affirmative sentence, as exemplified below:


10 Like selma, V-*li-ka can be licensed by a negative copular verb in a declarative or by an affirmative copular verb in a rhetoric question form. It can be a short response to an affirmative utterance.
3. Some speculation on fragmental answers in Korean

We have seen that there are several theoretical and empirical problems with the system pursued in Watanabe (2004) in relation to the availability of the so-called N-word in the context of short answers. A legitimate question then is how it is possible for amwu( N)-to to be a short response to an affirmative interrogative sentence, despite the apparent violation of the ellipsis condition, as in (2), repeated below:

(2) A: nwu-ka o-ess-ni?
   who-Nom come-Pst-QE
   ‘Who came?’
B: amwu-to
   AMWU-TO
   ‘Nobody.’

I have no definite answer to this important question for the moment. However, I speculate in this section, basically following Ahn and Cho (2011), that not every instance of fragmental expressions in Korean involves a process of PF ellipsis.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{11} Admittedly, the discussion to be made in this section remains literally a speculation and much

With this background information, let us examine how expressions of the form \textit{amwu N} behave in fragmental environments. First notice that \textit{amwu N} may come with a Case marker (as well as with a delimiter -\textit{to}), as in (19):

\begin{enumerate}
  \item a. John-\textit{eykey amwu calmos-i/-to eps-ta.} \hfill (19)
    \begin{align*}
      \text{J.-Dat} & \quad \text{any fault-Nom/-TO not;exist-DE} \\
      \text{‘John has no fault.’}
    \end{align*}
  \item b. John-\textit{i amwu yekhal-ul/-to} mos-ha-ko.iss-ta.\footnote{As one of the reviewers points out, \textit{amwu N-Acc} (19b) sounds less acceptable than the nominative counterpart in (19a). However, I believe accusative vs. -\textit{to} in (21B) differ in grammaticality from each other.} \hfill (19)
    \begin{align*}
      \text{J.-Nom} & \quad \text{any role-Acc/-TO Neg-do-Prog-DE} \\
      \text{‘Chelswu is not playing any role.’}
    \end{align*}
\end{enumerate}

It is interesting to observe, however, that \textit{amwu N}-\textit{to} but not \textit{amwu N}-Case, can be used as a short response to a question, as in (20) and (21):

\begin{enumerate}
  \item A: John-\textit{eykey mwusun calmos-i iss-ni?} \hfill (20)
    \begin{align*}
      \text{J.-Dat} & \quad \text{what fault-Nom exist-QE} \\
      \text{‘What fault does John have?’}
    \end{align*}
  \item B: \{\text{amwu calmos-\textit{to}(-yo)/} \text{amwu calmos-i(-yo)}\} \\
    \text{any fault-TO(-DE)/ any fault-Nom(-DE)} \\
    \text{(Intended) ‘Not any fault.’} \hfill (21)
  \item A: John-\textit{i mwusun yekhal-ul ha-ko. iss-ni?} 
\end{enumerate}
J.-Nom what role-Acc do-Prog-QE
‘What role is John playing?’
B: {amwu yekhal-to(-yo)/*amwu yekhal-ul(-yo)}
any role-TO(-DE)/ any role-Acc(-DE)
(Intended) ‘Not any role.’

The contrast between *amwu*( N)-to vs. *amwu*( N)-Case can be accounted for, given that only the latter type of short answers involves ellipsis, and such answers are subject to the restrictions that ellipsis is subject to, including the SIC.

(20)’ A: John-eykey mwusun calmos-i iss-ni?
J.-Dat what fault-Nom exist-QE
‘What fault does John have?’
B: *[amwu calmos-i] John-eykey e iss-e-yo
any fault-Nom J.-Dat exist-(-DE)
(Intended) ‘Not any fault.’

(21)’ A: John-i mwusun yekhal-ul ha-ko.iss-ni?
J.-Nom what role-Acc do-Prog-QE
‘What role is John playing?’
B: *[amwu yekhal-ul] John-i e ha-ko.iss-e-yo
any role-Acc J.-Nom do-Prog- (-DE)
(Intended) ‘Not any role.’

As the N-words in (20B) and (21B) are Case-marked, the short responses can be said to involve ellipsis. In other words, the short responses are reduced from the full-fledged syntactic structures due to ellipsis at PF. If so, the ellipsis leads to a violation of the SIC, accounting for the illegitimacy of those short responses with a Case marker.

In contrast, there is some room that *amwu*( N)-to in fragments is, or at least can be, directly interpreted with the help of pragmatics, as no Case is attached.14 Then

14 One of the journal reviewers points out to me that it is not clear whether *amwu*( N)-to bears abstract Case as the particle -to and case particles cannot co-occur, as discussed in Ahn (2012, 129, footnote 60), who claims that a nominal expression with a delimiter -to can be ambiguously construed with respect to Case. Discussions in this section go through under the assumption that ellipsis is sensitive to morphologically case.
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*amwu-to* in (2) will not have any additional structure and its interpretation is achieved by some pragmatic accommodation, as schematically indicated in (2B)', where the symbol $\Delta$ stands for lack of any structure:

(2)'A: nwu-ka o-ess-ni?
   who-Nom come-Pst-QE
   'Who came?'

B: amwu-to $\Delta$ (Syntax & LF)
   (Pragmatic Accommodation)
   amwu-to (DID NOT COME)

A similar comment can be made of the case of polarity mismatch involving *acik*, another Case-less element, when it is used as a short answer:

(14)' A: John-i tochakha-ess-ni?
    J.-Nom arrive-Pst-QE
    'Has John arrived?'

B: (anyo) *acik* $\Delta$ (Syntax & LF)
   (Pragmatic Accommodation)
   (JOHN HAS NOT ARRIVED) yet.

Semantics requires that *amwu(N)-to* have negation in its immediate scope (Kim 1999); that *acik* be followed by a [-continuous] predicate. Probably, these requirements are fulfilled with the help of pragmatic accommodations.15

One last question may arise is why there is no pragmatic fix or salvation effect in the sentences like the following.

(22) *John-i amwuto manna-ess-ta.
    J.-Nom anyone see-Pst-DE

15 Short answers with *yes* or *no* in English may have to be similarly treated:

(i) A: Did he come?
    B: No. [[he did not come]] (Polarity mismatch problem)
    B': No.
(Intended reading due to the pragmatics) ‘John did not see anyone.’

If pragmatics fixes all the grammatical anomalies, then expressions like (22) ought to be improved in their acceptability. Of course, pragmatics is not a cure-all.

There lies a crucial difference between \textit{amwu}(N)-to in a fragmental environment vs. \textit{amwu}(N)-to in a non-fragmental environment. \textit{Amwu}(N)-to in a fragmental environment can get a semantic interpretation with the help of pragmatics since syntax does not feed the semantic structure. In contrast, \textit{amwu}(N)-to in a full-fledged structure does not have the privilege of being interpreted in this way, as the syntax is ready to feed the corresponding semantic structure. A sort of ‘resolve earliest possible’ principle is in action in grammar. It seems to be the case that pragmatics intervenes only when grammar does not have chance to resolve a problem.

4. Conclusion

Watanabe (2004) claims that the traditionally called negative polarity items (NPIs) in Japanese (\textit{wh-mo}) are to be analyzed as negative quantifiers, crucially from the fact that these expressions can be used as short responses to an affirmative interrogative sentence, apparently violating the semantic isomorphic condition on ellipsis. This paper has argued, however, that the negative quantifier analysis cannot be carried over to Korean NPIs of the form \textit{amwu}(N)-to. It has been shown that Watanabe’s crucial mechanism to solve the polarity mismatch problem, i.e., the [NEG] copy followed by [NEG] feature cancel-out due to double negation leads to interpretation failure in some constructions containing an N-word/NPI in Korean. This indicates that Agree for an N-word/NPI assumed to be obligatory in Watanabe (2004) is questionable. It has also been illustrated that polarity mismatch takes place even without an N-word, which indicates Agree may be irrelevant to polarity reversal at all. For these reasons, I conclude that the answer to the question, \textit{Is amwu}(N)-to a negative quantifier? is negative.

As for the availability of \textit{amwu}(N)-to as a short response to an affirmative interrogative sentence, it is conjectured that the fragmental expression of the form \textit{amwu}(N)-to, as a typical Case-less fragment, does not have a full-fledged structure,
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obviating the need to satisfy the semantic isomorphic condition (SIC) on ellipsis. In contrast, amwu N with a Case marker does involve ellipsis and cannot be used as a short fragmental response to an affirmative interrogative sentence without violating the SIC. If this conjecture is on the right track, there is some room that pragmatics intervenes to resolve the semantic requirement that amwu (N)-to is to satisfy. Of course, much work is required on this speculation, which I leave open to future research.

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