



-(N)un cannot mark contrastive focus: A reply to Jun (2019)*

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Kim, Ilkyu. 2024. -(N)un cannot mark contrastive focus: A reply to Jun (2019). *Linguistic Research* 41(3): 453-473. In terms of the function and meaning of *-(n)un*, there is ongoing debate about whether the particle can indicate contrastive focus (CF). Some argue that it can mark contrastive topic (CT) but not CF, while others believe it can mark both CT and CF. This study aims to address this issue by focusing on 1) the connection between *-(n)un* and relational givenness-newness and 2) the nature of contrastive implicatures induced by the use of *-(n)un*. By critically examining Jun's (2019) argument for *-(n)un*'s ability to mark CF, it is claimed that *-(n)un* necessarily marks relational givenness (not relational newness) and contrastive implicatures generated by *-(n)un* are non-cancellable and cannot convey exhaustivity, which all lead to the conclusion that *-(n)un* can mark CT but not CF. **(Kangwon National University)**

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1. Introduction

Regarding the function/meaning of *-(n)un*, one of the issues about which a consensus has yet to be made is whether it can mark contrastive focus (CF). Some argue that the particle can mark contrastive topic (CT) but not CF (e.g. Lee 2003, 2006, 2007; Kim 2015, 2016) while others claim that it can mark CF as well (e.g. H. W. Choi 1996; Han 1998; K.-S. Choi 2004; Jun 2005, 2019).¹

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1 It is firmly established that *-(n)un* can mark non-contrastive topic but cannot mark non-contrastive, or plain/information focus.

Building on Kim's (2015, 2016) analysis of the contrastive meaning of *-(n)un*, this paper aims to solve the problem by focusing on 1) the relation between *-(n)un* and relational givenness/newness and 2) the nature of the contrastive implicature generated by using *-(n)un*. In doing so, Jun's (2019) analysis will be critically examined, which provides the most recent and comprehensive treatment of *-(n)un* as not only a CT marker but also a CF marker.²

The main point of this paper is twofold: 1) because *-(n)un* necessarily makes the element to which it is attached relationally given information, it cannot mark (contrastive) focus, which is, by definition, relationally new, and 2) there is no empirical ground for positing two different types of contrastive implicature induced by different types of *-(n)un*, that is, one for CT-marking *-(n)un* and one for CF-marking *-(n)un*.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In Section 2, it will be argued that *-(n)un* marks only relational givenness but not relational newness. Here, what is crucial is that not only a sentence but also *part of a sentence*, focus in particular, can be further bifurcated into relationally old and new parts. In Section 3, it will be argued that contrastive implicatures the speaker generates using *-(n)un* are always of the same nature and cannot be divided into two kinds based on the notions of cancellability and exhaustivity. Finally, Section 4 concludes the paper.

2. Can *-(n)un* combine with relationally new information?

In order to figure out whether *-(n)un* can combine with relationally new information, including CF, let us first look at one of the examples provided by Jun (2019) based on which he concludes that it can mark CF.

² Note that the aim of this paper is not to provide a detailed analysis of the issue at hand. Rather, it focuses on supplementing Kim (2016) with extra data and issues that have been introduced by Jun (2019) but not dealt with by Kim (2016). For a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the (contrastive) meaning of *-(n)un*, on which this paper is based, see Kim (2015, 2016).

(1) Q: (In a situation where Chelswu or Yenghuy is supposed to come)

nwu-ka wa-ss-ni
who-Nom come-Past-Int
'Who came?'

A: Chelswu-nun wa-ss-e
Chelswu-NUN come-Past-Dec
'As for Chelswu, he came.'

(Jun 2019: 106)

According to Jun (2019), the reason that *-nun* in (1A) is a CF marker is because *Chelswu* is relationally new information, and the reason that *Chelswu* is relationally new is that it is the information required by the *wh*-word (i.e. *nwu-ka* 'who-Nom') and the hearer cannot expect *Chelswu* to be uttered in the given situation.

First of all, it is important to note that relational givenness/newness of information is not determined by whether the hearer could expect the information to be uttered solely based on the *previous* context but by *its relation to other information in the same sentence*. Let us look at the definition of relational givenness/newness provided by Gundel (2012: 589).

Relational givenness/newness involves a partition of the semantic-conceptual representation of a sentence into two complementary parts, X and Y, where X is what the sentence is about and Y is what is predicated about X. X is given in relation to Y in the sense that it is independent and outside the scope of what is predicated in Y. *Y is new in relation to X in the sense that it is new information asserted, questioned, etc. about X* [emphasis added].

As shown above, whether some information is relationally given or new should be determined by its relation to the other information in the same sentence rather than by its relation to the prior context. What is crucial here is the fact that relational givenness and relational newness do not always correspond to discourse-oldness and discourse-newness, respectively. Relationally given information can be discourse-new and relationally new information can be discourse-old.

(2) a. Relationally old and discourse-new information

A: Could you recommend any good restaurants around here?

B: **The Italian restaurant**, you should definitely try.

b. Relationally new and discourse-old information

A: Among John, Bob, and James, who do you like?

B: I like **Bob**.

Especially, the fact that relationally old information can be discourse-new as in (2a) shows that what is relationally old can be unpredictable from the hearer's point of view. Thus, the fact that *Chelswu* is not predictable in (1A) itself does not guarantee its relational newness.

Next, let us examine which part of (1A) provides the information that fills the variable of the open proposition generated by (1Q), namely *X came*. According to Jun (2019), it is *Chelswu* but not *wa-ss-e* 'came' that fills the variable because *wa-ss-e* is already given in (1Q) and thus relationally old. Indeed, this is what is typically expected just as the open proposition itself manifests.

However, the predicate *wa-ss-e* in (1A) is not predictable or relationally given although it has been already uttered in (1Q). In order to understand why, let us compare two different answers to the question in (1Q), which is repeated in (3Q) below.

(3) Q: (In a situation where *Chelswu* or *Yenghuy* is supposed to come)

nwu-ka wa-ss-ni
 who-Nom come-Past-Int
 'Who came?'

A1: *Chelswu*(-ka).*Chelswu*(-Nom)A2: #*Chelswu*-nun.'As for *Chelswu*.'

In (3A1), where the subject argument is nominative-marked, the predicate (*wa-ss-e* 'came') can be omitted, which means that it is predictable and recoverable from (3Q) by the hearer. That is, *Chelswu* (and only *Chelswu*) is the focus (and thus relationally new) and the omitted predicate is what is "pragmatically presupposed" (Lambrecht

1994), or relationally old. Note that (3A1) but not (3A2) is a typically expected answer to questions like (3Q).

In (3A2), where the subject argument is *-(n)un*-marked, the predicate is not predictable anymore from the hearer's point of view and its absence makes the sentence unacceptable (Kim 2016). Hearing (3A2), a natural response would be 'As for Chelswu, what? Did he come or not?'. Note that the same response would also be expected in English given the English translation of (3A2).

Furthermore, note that not only *wa-ss-e* 'came' but also other predicates such as *an wa-ss-e* 'did not come' and *molukess-e* 'not know' are also possible after (3A2), as shown in (4A1), (4A2), and (4A3).

(4) Q: (In a situation where Chelswu or Yenghuy is supposed to come)

nwu-ka wa-ss-ni
 who-Nom come-Past-Int
 'Who came?'

A1: Chelswu-nun wa-ss-e
 Chelswu-NUN come-Past-Dec
 'As for Chelswu, he came. (But as for Yenghuy, ...)'

A2: Chelswu-nun an wa-ss-e
 Chelswu-NUN not come-Past-Dec
 'As for Chelswu, he didn't come. (But as for Yenghuy, ...)'

A3: Chelswu-nun molukeyss-e
 Chelswu-NUN not.know-Dec
 'As for Chelswu, I don't know whether he came or not. (But as for Yenghuy, ...)'

In this respect, *wa-ss-e* 'came' in (1A) is new information in relation to *Chelswu*. That is, *-(n)un* makes *Chelswu* given information in relation to the predicate *wa-ss-e* in that *wa-ss-e* "is new information asserted about" *Chelswu*.

According to this analysis, then, it is not just the subject itself (*Chelswu-nun*) but the whole VP that is required as the focus. It is also important to note that the English translation provided in (1A) (and (4A1)-(4A3)) (i.e. 'As for Chelswu, ...') is more appropriate and natural than the simple clause 'Chelswu came', which further supports the claim that *Chelswu* in (1A) (and (4A1)-(4A3)) is relationally given but not new.³

Let us now analyze the information structure of (1A) and (3A1), both of which are possible answers to (1Q).

(5) a. Information structure of (1A)

[Chelswu-nun]_{CT/R-old} [wa-ss-e]_{Comment/Focus/R-new}⁴

b. Information structure of (3A1)

[Chelswu(-ka)]_{Focus/R-new} [(wa-ss-e)]_{Pragmatic Presupposition}

What is crucial is the fact that although the typical information structure expected from (1Q) is (5b), it is not the only possibility. For instance, the speaker can choose (5a) if she wants to convey some extra meaning such as contrastiveness with uncertainty and/or concessivity,⁵ which would be impossible to express with the information structure in (5b).⁶

Note that it has been also pointed out by Jun (2009) that the information structure of a certain sentence does not have to comply with what is expected from previous

3 Jun (2019: 107) claims that *-i/ka*, which can be used as a focus marker in Korean, can replace *-(n)un* in (1A), and this fact suggests that the function of *-(n)un* is associated with focus-marking. However, the fact that *-(n)un* and *-i/ka* can be attached to an NP itself does not have to do with whether they have the same information-structural function. Note that *-i/ka* can also replace *-(n)un* when it is used as a topic marker, as shown below:

(i) John-un kyosa-ta
John-NUN teacher-Dec
'John is a teacher.'

It is problematic to conclude, based on (i), that *-i/ka*, just like *-(n)un*, can function as a topic marker. The fact that *-(n)un* and *-i/ka* are interchangeable from a grammatical perspective does not guarantee that they are interchangeable from a pragmatic perspective.

4 The subscripts R-old and R-new stand for relationally old and relationally new, respectively.

5 The contrastiveness with uncertainty and/or concessivity will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.

6 Y.-J. Choi (2021) also points out that the speaker, in making her utterance, does not have to follow but can adjust the information structure typically expected from prior context. Her analysis differs from the current analysis in that it acknowledges that *Chelswu-nun* in (1A) can be understood either as CT or CF depending on how it is interpreted. That is, Y.-J. Choi claims that if (1A) is interpreted according to the information structure expected by the question, *Chelswu-nun* is CF, because it corresponds to the relationally new information required by the question; On the other hand, if it is interpreted according to the information structure intended by the speaker, *Chelswu-nun* is CT. The position taken in this paper is that once the speaker decides to deviate from what is expected in forming the information structure of her utterance (by, for instance, using *-(n)un* instead of *-i/ka* in (1A)), the information structure of the utterance must be analyzed only as intended by the speaker.

context.

- (6) Q. ce salam-un nwukwu-ya
that person-NUN who-Int
'Who is that person?'
- A1. ce salam-i ipen tayhoy wusungca-ya
that person-Nom this competition winner-Dec
'It is that person that is the winner of this competition.'
- A2. ce salam-un ipen tayhoy wusungca-ya
that person-NUN this competition winner-Dec
'That person is the winner of this competition.' (Jun 2009: 233)

The expected information structure of the answer to the question in (6Q) is the topic-comment structure in (6A2). According to Jun (2005), however, the argument-focus structure is also possible as in (6A1) if the prior context guarantees that the question *Who is the winner of this competition?* is at issue, or a question under discussion (QUD), at the time of (6Q) being uttered. That is, the speaker can not only answer (6Q) but also identify the winner of the competition at the same time by uttering (6A1) instead of (6A2).

Jun's (2019) relying on predictability from prior context as the criterion of focushood gives rise to a further problem, according to which both *appa* 'dad' in (7A) and *kumyungpwumwun* 'financial sector' in (8) should be analyzed as the focus not the topic of the sentence.

- (7) Q: emma eti iss-e-yo
mom where exist-Int-Hon
'Where is mom?'
- A: appa-nun matang-ey iss-e
dad-NUN yard-Dat exist-Dec
'As for dad, he is at the yard.' (Jun 2019: 104)

- (8) Let's talk about the current economic situation.

mence, kumyungpwumwun-un khun mwuncey-ka
 First, financial.sector-NUN big problem-Nom
 eps-upnita
 not.exist-Dec(Hon)

'First, as for the financial sector, it is not in trouble.' (Jun 2019: 104)

That is, they are exactly the same as *Chelswu* in (1A) with respect to their predictability from prior context; that is, both of them are discourse-new and not predictable from the given context. However, Jun (2019) analyzes them as topics because both *appa* and *kumyungpwumwun* are part of the topic introduced in the previous context. The problem is that two different criteria are applied for determining topic- and focus-hood which may contradict each other, namely predictability from prior context and relatedness to topic in the prior context.

Rather, once we understand topic- and focus-hood in terms of the relational givenness-newness defined by Gundel (2012) above, it is easy to see that *appa* and *kumyungpwumwun* are topics. They are topics because they are "independent and outside the scope of what is predicated" in the sentence and that the rest of the sentence conveys "new information asserted about them", which is made clear by the fact that the *as for* construction is a natural English translation for both sentences.

Let us now move on to a little more confusing case in terms of determining the information-structural status of a *-(n)un*-marked element. Once it is accepted that *Chelswu-nun* is given in relation to *wa-ss-e* in (1A), it is clear that *Chelswu-nun* is the sentence topic as shown in (5a). But what about *Chelswu-nun* in (9A)?

- (9) Q: (In a situation where Minswu could meet Chelswu or Yenghuy)

Minswu-nun nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni
 Minswu-NUN who-Acc meet-Past-Int
 'Who did Minswu meet?'

A: (Minswu-nun) Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e
 Minswu-NUN Chelswu-NUN meet-Past-Dec

'As for Chelswu, (Minswu) met him. (But as for Yenghuy, ...)'

(9Q) makes it clear that the sentence topic is *Minswu* but not *Chelswu* in (9A); that is, in (9Q) the predicate (VP) provides information “questioned about” *Minswu* and (9A), accordingly, provides information “asserted about” *Minswu*.⁷

Again, (9A) is not the type of answer typically expected from (9Q), where *Chelswu* would be -(l)ul-marked and thus being new in relation to *manna-ss-e*. Rather, just as in (1A), (9A) makes the whole VP (i.e. *Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e*) focus, which is further divided into two parts such that the verb *manna-ss-e* is new in relation to *Chelswu*. Thus, the information structure of (9A) should be analyzed as in (10) below.

(10) Information structure of (9A)

([Minswu-nun]_{Topic}) [[Chelswu-nun]_{Contrast/R-old}
[manna-ss-e]_{R-new}]_{Comment}

First, the whole sentence is divided into two complementary parts: topic and comment. Then, the comment part is further divided into relationally given and new parts, which is expressed by the subscripts R-old and R-new. In addition, the special pragmatic effect created by the use of -(n)un (i.e. contrastiveness with uncertainty and/or concessivity) is expressed by the subscript Contrast⁸. Here, what is important is that *Chelswu-nun* cannot get its status as (sentence) topic anymore; also, it is not CF itself, either. As to its exact information-structural status, we follow Kim (2015), who posits contrast as an independent information-structural category. According to this view, *Chelswu-nun* is neither CT nor CF but simply contrast.⁹

7 It has been claimed that there can be multiple sentence topics (e.g. Lambrecht 1994: 146-150), but dealing with this issue in detail is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that topichood of *Minswu* is unquestionable whereas that of *Chelswu* is controversial.

8 As to what contrast is, we follow the definition of contrast proposed by Kim (2015), according to whom “contrast is a relation between discourse referents that are partitioned with respect to some semantic property P such that it is established (either via assertion or implicature) that the value ‘true’ results when P is applied to one part of the set and ‘false’ or ‘unknown’ when applied to the other” (Kim 2015: 95).

9 An example of CT is the subject argument of (1A), which is not only a topic (based on aboutness and relational givenness) but also related to its alternative(s) by a contrast relation. An example of CF is the subject argument of (iA) below, which forms contrast relation with its alternative (i.e. *Chelswu*) and, at the same time, is the relationally new part of the sentence.

3. The nature of contrastive implicatures induced by *-(n)un*

3.1 Cancellability

Jun (2019) claims that contrastive implicatures induced by CT-marking *-(n)un* and those connected to CF-marking *-(n)un* can be distinguished from each other depending on cancellability; that is, the former can be cancelled while the latter cannot. For example, according to Jun (2019), the contrastive implicature generated in the first sentence in (11A) (e.g. ‘I don’t know about Yenghuy.’) can be cancelled by the second sentence while it is impossible in (12A) as indicated by the hash sign.

(11) Q: (In a situation where Chelswu and Yenghuy were playing around the speaker)

ay-tul eti iss-e
 child-Plural where exist-Int
 ‘Where are the children?’

A: Chelswu-nun lopi-ey iss-e.
 Chelswu-NUN lobby-Dat exit-Dec
 kuliko Yenghuy-to lopi-ey iss-e
 and Yenghuy-also lobby-Dat exist-Dec
 ‘As for Chelswu, he is at the lobby. And Yenghuy is at the lobby,
 too.’ (Jun 2019: 113)

(12) Q: (In a situation where Minswu could meet Chelswu or Yenghuy)

Minswu-ka nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni
 Minswu-Nom who-Acc meet-Past-Int
 ‘Who did Minswu meet?’

(i) Q: Chelswu-ka phathi-ey ka-ss-ci
 Chelswu-Nom party-Dat go-Past-Int
 ‘Chelswu went to the party, didn’t he?’

A: ani. Minswu-ka ka-ss-e
 no Minswu-Nom go-Past-Dec
 ‘No, Minswu went (to the party).’

A: Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e.
Chelswu-NUN meet-Past-Dec
#kuliko Yenghuy-to manna-ss-e
and Yenghuy-also meet-Past-Dec
'As for Chelswu, (Minswu) met (him). And (he) met Yenghuy, too.'
(Jun 2019: 113)

First and foremost, Jun's acceptability judgment is not shared by every native speaker of Korean. Rather, previous works have observed that any contrastive implicature, once generated by the use of *-(n)un*, can hardly be cancelled (e.g. Lee 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007; Kim 2018).^{10,11} According to them, the second sentence in (11A) is equally unacceptable as the second sentence in (12A).

The view that there is no difference in terms of the degree of cancelability between (11A) and (12A) is further supported by the fact that the use of *-(n)un*, contra Jun (2019), always generates the same type of contrastive implicature, which is best captured by notions of uncertainty and/or concessivity (e.g. Lee 2003, 2006, 2007; Kim 2018, 2019).¹² For example, it is undeniable that both the first sentences in (11A) and (12A) can evoke the same type of uncertainty implicature, namely 'But it is not certain where Yenghuy is' in (11A) and 'But it is not certain whether Minswu met Yenghuy' in (12A). If contrastive implicatures generated by *-(n)un* are always of the same nature, it is highly unlikely that some are cancelable and some are not.

10 However, Lee (2003, 2006, 2007) and Kim (2018) differ from each other on the issue of whether the contrastive implicature is conventional or conversational.

11 Whether an implicature is cancelable or not is not binary in nature. When we say that the contrastive implicature induced by the use of *-(n)un* is hard to cancel, it does not mean that it's categorically impossible to cancel, but rather that it's relatively hard to cancel compared to a typical conversational implicature.

(i) A: Let's go to a movie tonight.

B: I have an exam tomorrow morning. But I will join you.

As shown in (i), the speaker of (iB) can easily cancel the conversational implicature generated by her first sentence (i.e. 'So I can't go to a movie tonight.'). It seems not hard to see that the contrastive implicatures generated by *-(n)un* in (11) and (12) are harder to cancel than the one in (i) above.

12 See Kim (2018, 2019) for details on the exact nature of the uncertainty and concessivity expressed by the use of *-(n)un*.

3.2 Exhaustivity

Jun (2019) argues that *-(n)un* conveys exhaustivity only when it is used as a CF marker. The evidence, he argues, comes from the fact that (13A1) semantically entails (13A) while (14A1) does not entail (14A).

(13) Q: (In a situation where Chelswu and Yenghuy were playing around the speaker)

ay-tul eti iss-e
child-Plural where exist-Int
'Where are the children?'

A: Chelswu-nun lopi-ey iss-e.
Chelswu-NUN lobby-Dat exit-Dec
'As for Chelswu, (he) is at the lobby.'

A1: Chelswu-wa Yenghuy-nun lopi-ey iss-e.
Chelswu-and Yenghuy-NUN lobby-Dat exit-Dec
'As for Chelswu and Yenghuy, (they) are at the lobby.'

(14) Q: (In a situation where Minswu could meet Chelswu or Yenghuy)

Minswu-ka nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni
Minswu-Nom who-Acc meet-Past-Int
'Who did Minswu meet?'

A: Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e.
Chelswu-NUN mee-Past-Dec
'As for Chelswu, (Minswu) met (him).'

A1: Chelswu-wa Yenghuy-nun manna-ss-e.
Chelswu-and Yenghuy-NUN meet-Past-Dec
'As for Chelswu and Yenghuy, (Minswu) met (them).'

His logic is based on É Kiss (1998), according to whom the truth of (15a) does not entail the truth of (15b) due to the exhaustivity conveyed by the *it*-cleft construction.

- (15) a. It was a hat and a coat that Mary picked for herself.
 b. It was a hat that Mary picked for herself.

First, note that it is still controversial whether the exhaustivity expressed in *it*-clefts is semantic or pragmatic. In fact, more and more experimental studies are converging on the position that the exhaustivity of *it*-clefts is not semantic entailment/presupposition, but rather (pragmatic) conversational implicature (Onea 2019). Thus, Jun (2019) and É Kiss's (1998) claim that (15a) does not semantically entail (15b) due to the semantic exhaustivity expressed by *it*-clefts is not empirically motivated.

More importantly, the exhaustivity conveyed in (15), contra Jun (2019), is not conveyed by the utterances in (14A) and (14A1), let alone in (13A).¹³ There is no doubt that the *it*-cleft construction conveys exhaustivity either semantically or pragmatically that can be characterized as ‘completeness’ or ‘totality’. And since (15b) semantically/pragmatically expresses ‘Mary picked only a hat but nothing else (including a coat)’, it is understandable to conclude that (15a) is semantically/pragmatically inconsistent with (15b).

However, the contrastive implicature generated by the use of contrastive *-(n)un* basically conveys uncertainty (and/or concessivity) even in the “CF-marking” context, as already shown in (12).¹⁴ And uncertainty, by its nature of the speaker’s being uncertain about the other alternative(s), is in contradiction with exhaustivity (shown in (15)).¹⁵ For instance, by uttering (14A) the most plausible implicature the speaker is assumed to express is that she is not certain whether Minswu met Yenghuy or not. This is clearly different from the exhaustivity, according to which Minswu met only Chelswu but not Yenghuy. Note again that (13A) and (14A1), by default, convey

13 (13A1) does not produce any contrastive implicature because the referents of the *-(n)un*-marked NP “exhausts” all the topics in the given context, namely *Chelswu* and *Yenghuy*.

14 Although it is possible that the speaker can implicate exhaustivity by using *-(n)un* in a certain situation, it is by no means the only possibility let alone the most typical and representative type of implicature. For instance, if (14A) is uttered in a situation where the speaker knows whether Minswu met Yenghuy, the uncertainty implicature (‘But it is not certain whether Minswu met Yenghuy’) is not generated. Instead, she can implicate ‘But I don’t want to let you know who he met’, ‘But Minswu did not meet Yenghuy’, or something else. The fact that the exact contrastive meaning is not fixed but indeterminate strongly supports the view that the contrastive implicature is conversational rather than conventional in nature (Birner 2013).

15 In this sense, the argument for the status of *-(n)un* as a CF marker based on the (assumed) exhaustivity (or exclusivity) is problematic (e.g. H. W. Choi 1996; Han 1998; K.-S. Choi 2004).

exactly the same kind of uncertainty as (14A). And if the contrastive implicatures in (13-14) are uncertainty implicatures, both (13A1) and (14A1), contra Jun (2019), semantically entail (13A) and (14A), respectively.

In order to see that contrastive *-(n)un* always gives rise to the same type of contrastive implicature, let us look at another example with a different context. *Chelswu* in (16A) is not a CF (in Jun's terms) as in (14A), due to the slightly modified context given in (16Q), in which *Chelswu* is introduced as a grammatical object. Alos, it cannot be a CT because it is not a topic; the topic of the sentence is the omitted subject argument, *Minswu*.

- (16) Q: (In a situation where Minswu could meet Chelswu or Yenghuy)
 Minswu-nun Chelswu-lul manna-ss-ni
 Minswu-NUN Chelswu-Acc meet-Past-Int
 'Did Minswu meet Chelswu?'
 A: Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e
 Chelswu-NUN meet-Past-Dec
 'As for Chelswu, (Minswu) met (him).'

Here, we can still see that the contrastive implicature generated by the speaker of (16A) is exactly the same type of uncertainty as that in (13A), (14A) and (14A1), that is, 'But it is not certain whether Minswu met Yenghuy'. The fact that contrastive implicatures produced by the use of *-(n)un* are always of the same kind is not consistent with Jun's (2019) distinction between CT-marking and CF-marking *-(n)un* based on the alleged different semantic/pragmatic effects such as cancellability and exhaustivity.

Further evidence that contrastive *-(n)un* does not generate exhaustivity comes from taking into account English translation of *-(n)un*. That is, a natural English counterpart of contrastive *-(n)un* is *as for*, as shown in the English translations of the relevant Korean examples above. Another way of naturally translating contrastive *-(n)un* into English is to use the topicalization construction, as in (17) below.

- (17) Q: Minswu-ka nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni
 Minswu-Nom who-Acc meet-Past-Int
 'Who did Minswu meet?'

A: Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e
Chelswu-NUN meet-Past-Dec
'Chelswu, (Minswu) met.' (But Yenghuy, I don't know whether he met.)'

Note that the translation in (17A) is much more natural and appropriate than '(Minswu) met Chelswu' or 'It is Chelswu that (Minswu) met', which means that the pragmatic effect of -(n)un is equivalent to that of *as for* or topicalization rather than the plain argument-focus construction or *it*-clefts.

What is important here is the fact that English topicalization does not induce exhaustivity and thus differs from *it*-clefts in terms of whether the topicalization version of (15a) semantically entails that of (15b).

- (18) a. A HAT AND A COAT, Mary picked for herself. →
b. A HAT, Mary picked for herself. (É Kiss 1998: 251)

According to É Kiss (1998), if (18a) is true (18b) will be true as well, because English topicalization does not express exhaustivity. This is exactly what happens in Korean too. That is, both the English examples in (18) and their -(n)un-marked counterparts convey uncertainty (but not exhaustivity), and it leads to the same logical result in terms of the semantic relation between the two sentences in each language.

The last point to be made is that exhaustivity is typically expressed by *-i/ka* but not by -(n)un in Korean, as shown in (19) below.

- (19) Q: Chelswu-wa Yenghuy cwung-ey Minswu-ka
Chelswu-and Yenghuy among-Dat Minswu-Nom
nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni
who-Acc meet-Past-Int
'Among Chelswu and Yenghuy, who did Minswu meet?'
- A: Chelswu-lul manna-ss-e
Chelswu-Acc meet-Past-Dec
'(Minswu) met Chelswu.'
- A1: Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e
Chelswu-NUN meet-Past-De
'As for Chelswu, (Minswu) met (him).'

In (19A), the speaker conveys exhaustivity by using *-(l)ul*. That is, the interpretation of the utterance is that it is only Chelswu but not Yenghuy that Minswu met.¹⁶ In (19A1), on the other hand, the more natural interpretation one can get by default is not exhaustivity but, again, uncertainty. Comparing *-(n)un* with *-(l)ul* (and *-i/ka*) thus makes it clearer that *-(n)un* does not evoke exhaustivity.

3.3 Understanding the contrastive meaning of *-(n)un* in terms of discourse strategy

Jun (2019) analyzes the meaning of contrastive *-(n)un* within a framework of discourse strategy (e.g. Büring 2003). The main claim is that CT-marking *-(n)un* and CF-marking *-(n)un* introduce a question under discussions (QUD) in different ways. According to him, the former forms a superordinate question by connecting subordinate questions in a conjunctive ('and') manner, whereas the latter does it in a disjunctive ('or') way.

It is important to note, however, that how subordinate QUDs are formed is determined by previous context, where the superordinate question is introduced, and has nothing to do with the function of *-(n)un*. For instance, CF-requiring contexts such as (1Q), which is repeated below, introduces subordinate QUDs in a disjunctive way.

- (1) Q: (In a situation where Chelswu or Yenghuy is supposed to come)
- nwu-ka wa-ss-ni
 who-Nom come-Past-Int
 'Who came?'

That is, the superordinate QUD (i.e. 'Who came?') is divided into subordinate QUDs which are connected to each other in a disjunctive way (i.e. 'Did Chelswu come? or Did Yenghuy come?').

On the other hand, CT-requiring contexts introduce subordinate QUDs in a conjunctive way.

¹⁶ Note that this exhaustive implicature is not semantic entailment but conversational implicature (e.g. Y.-S. Lee 1995; Kim 2014).

- (20) (In a situation where Chelswu and Yenghuy is supposed to come)
ay-tul-un wa-ss-ni
child-Plural-NUN come-Past-Int
'Did the children come?'

For example, the superordinate QUD (i.e. 'Did the children come?') in (20) is divided into two subordinate QUDs in a conjunctive way (i.e. 'Did Chelswu come? and Did Yenghuy come?'). Note that how the subordinate QUDs are connected to each other is the context including a superordinate QUD itself and *-(n)un* has no role in it.

Then, what is the role of *-(n)un* in terms of discourse strategy? It evokes the remaining sub-questions and leaves them unanswered. For instance, to the question in (19Q), which is repeated below with (19A) and (19A1), if the speaker utters (19A), it does not evoke the remaining sub-question ('Did Minswu meet Yenghuy?') and pragmatically conveys exhaustivity.

- (19) Q: Chelswu-wa Yenghuy cwung-ey Minswu-ka
 Chelswu-and Yenghuy among-Dat Minswu-Nom
 nwukwu-lul manna-ss-ni
 who-Acc meet-Past-Int
 'Among Chelswu and Yenghuy, who did Minswu meet?'
- A: Chelswu-lul manna-ss-e
 Chelswu-Acc meet-Past-Dec
 '(Minswu) met Chelswu.'
- A1: Chelswu-nun manna-ss-e
 Chelswu-NUN meet-Past-De
 'As for Chelswu, (Minswu) met (him).'

However, if the speaker chooses to utter (19A1), it evokes the sub-question and leaves it unanswered, thus conveying uncertainty.¹⁷ What is crucial is the fact that this function of *-(n)un* is always the same in every context as long as there are sub-questions to be evoked.

¹⁷ In fact, this point is also made by Jun (2019: 124) himself. It is not certain, though, how he comes from this observation to the conclusion that CF- and CT-marking *-(n)un* differ from each other in terms of discourse strategy.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to show that *-(n)un* cannot mark CF. The specific points made in this paper are summarized in (21) below, each of which is a counterargument to Jun's arguments for *-(n)un*'s capability to mark CF.

- (21) a. *-(N)un* necessarily marks relational givenness (not relational newness).
 b. Contrastive implicatures generated by *-(n)un* are (widely accepted to be) non-cancellable.
 c. Any contrastive implicature generated by *-(n)un* cannot convey exhaustivity (but uncertainty and/or concessivity).
 d. The discourse strategy of *-(n)un* is unitary (not binary), which is to evoke the remaining alternative sub-question(s) thus giving rise to uncertainty about the alternative(s).

All the claims in (21) lead to a single conclusion that contrastive *-(n)un* cannot be divided into two kinds (as Jun (2019) has proposed): one for CT-marking and one for CF-marking.

Following Jun (2019), let me conclude this paper by discussing the information-structural status of the underlined NPs in (22).

- (22) ecey sikkwu-tul-hako pakk-eyse hoy-lul
 yesterday family-Plu-with outside-at sashimi-Acc
 mekesse-yo. hoy-nun yeksi kwangehoy-ka
 ate-Hon sashimi-NUN as.expected flatfish.sashimi-Nom
 choykotelako-yo. totalihoy-nun mas-un
 best-Hon ridged-eye.flounder.sashimi-NUN taste-NUN
 iss-nuntey nemwu pissa-yo.
 exist-but too expensive-Hon
 'Yesterday, I ate sashimi with my family outside. As expected, flatfish sashimi was the best. As for ridged-eye flounder sashimi, it is tasty but too expensive.'

As to the first two NPs, *hoy-nun* 'As for sashimi' and *totali-nun* 'as for ridged-eye

flounder sashimi’, there is no doubt that they are sentence topics. What is at issue is the information-structural status of *mas-un* ‘taste-NUN’. Jun (2019) claims that it is CF because it is part of relationally new information (i.e. *mas-un iss-nuntey* ‘tastes good but’) and forms a contrastive relation with the following predicate (i.e. *nemwu pissa-yo* ‘too expensive’).¹⁸ However, according to the current view, *mas-un* is not CF itself but the relationally given part of the comment about the topic, *totalihoy*. The information structure of the whole sentence is illustrated in (23).

- (23) [totalihoy-nun]_{Topic} [[[mas-un]_{R-old}
 [iss-nuntey]_{R-new}]_{Comment1/Contrast}
 [nemwu pissa-yo]_{Comment2}]_{Comment3}

Comment3, the comment about the sentence topic, comprises Comment1 and Comment2, which are connected with each other via the connective *-(nu)ntey* ‘but’. Note that *mas-un* is the relationally given part of Comment 1 and cannot form the focus/comment by itself.¹⁹

Lastly, I would like to conclude this paper by introducing two research topics for future research. First, as briefly discussed in footnote 7, the possibility of having multiple sentence topics in a single sentence must be addressed in detail so that the exact information-structural status of *Chelswu-nun* in (10) and *mas-un* in (23) can be correctly understood.

Second, if the analysis proposed in this paper is on the right track, it has non-trivial implications for the theory of relational givenness-newness. In particular, whereas the standard view of relational givenness-newness allows a sentence to be bifurcated into two complementary parts and no more, the current analysis of *-(n)un* allows the relationally new part of a sentence to be further divided into relationally given and new parts. Note that the relationally given part marked by *-(n)un* within the relationally new part, is also different from “tail” (in Vallduví’s (1990) terms) in that tail, unlike *-(n)un*-marked elements, is always the expected information from the previous context

18 Note that this analysis is inconsistent with Jun’s (2019) own claim that CF-marking *-(n)un* expresses exhaustivity as semantic entailment, because there is no exhaustivity conveyed in this example.

19 Interestingly, the scope of contrast evoked by *-(n)un* is extended from *-(n)un*-marked NP to the whole predicate (i.e. Comment1) so that Comment 1 can be contrasted with Comment2. To explain how this is possible is beyond the scope of this paper.

corresponding to “pragmatic presupposition” (in Lambrecht’s (1994) terms). Future research is called for in order to understand implications of this characteristic of *-(n)un* for information structure theory and its typology.

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