On the ordering of the nominal particles *un/nun* and *man* in Korean

INTRODUCTION   Korean nominal particles are classified into two categories: case particles (*kyekcosa*) and semantic particles (*pocosa*). Case particles mark the case of the preceding noun phrase, whereas semantic particles do not mark case but carry their own semantic functions. The nominal particles *un/nun* and *man* are both categorized as semantic particles. Several studies have analyzed the semantic and syntactic properties of *un/nun* and *man* in isolation (e.g., Yang, 1972; Lee, C., 1999). However, to my knowledge, the relation between these two semantic particles has yet remained unexamined. The present paper seeks to explore how *un/nun* and *man* interact in a particular way, focusing on their ordering relations.

OBSERVATION   Both an *un/nun*-marked phrase and a *man*-marked phrase can appear in the initial, medial, and final position of the sentence, as in (1) and (2). The differences in their position do not affect the interpretation.

(1)   a. *chelswu-**nun** swuci-lul cohahay.*   (2)   a. *chelswu-**man**   swuci-lul cohahay.*
         Cheolsoo-TOP Suji-ACC like   Cheolsoo-ONLY Suji-ACC like
      b. *swuci-lul chelswun-**nun** cohahay.*   b. *swuci-lul chelswun-**man** cohahay.*
      c. *swuci-lul cohahay, chelswu-**nun***.   c. *swuci-lul cohahay, chelswu-**man***.
         'Cheolsoo likes Suji.'   'Only Cheolsoo likes Suji.'

When an *un/nun*-marked phrase and a *man*-marked phrase co-occur within a sentence, certain constraints are imposed on their order; an *un/nun*-marked phrase can precede a *man*-marked phrase, as in (3), but a *man*-marked phrase cannot precede an *un/nun*-marked phrase, as in (4).

(3)   *chelswu-**nun** swuci-**man** cohahay.* (4)   **chelswu-**man**   swuci-**nun** cohahay.*
      Cheolsoo-TOP Suji-ONLY like   Cheolsoo-ONLY Suji-CONT   like
      'Cheolsoo likes Suji only.'   *'Only Cheolsoo likes Suji, (but not others).'

ANALYSES   Korean makes use of case particles to identify the grammatical functions of noun phrases. If neither the subject nor the object is marked by a case particle, the first argument noun phrase (NP) is interpreted as the subject, as in (5). However, if at least one argument NP is case-marked, as *swuci-lul* 'Suji-ACC' in (1) and (2), the interpretation is independent of word order. Therefore, in (1) and (2), the accusative marked argument NP *swuci* is always understood as the object, while the other non-case-marked argument NP *chelswu* is understood as the subject.

(5)   *chelswu-Ø swuci-Ø cohahay.*
      Cheolsoo Suji   like
      a. 'Cheolsoo likes Suji.'
      b. *'Suji likes Cheolsoo.'

In (3) and (4), both arguments are not case-marked. Hence, the first argument NPs *chelswu-**nun*** in (3) and *chelswu-**man*** in (4) are expected to be interpreted as the subject. As expected, (3) is grammatical, and the first argument NP in (3) is interpreted as the subject.
    Unlike (3), (4) is an ungrammatical and uninterpretable sentence. I argue that (4) is ungrammatical due to the information structural constraint that prohibits a contrastive focus (i.e., *chelswu-**man***) from embedding a contrastive topic (i.e., *swuci-**nun***) in its background. Previous studies have described the sentence-medial *un/nun* as a marker of contrastive topic (Lee. C., 1999)

and *man* as a marker of contrastive focus (Hwang et al., 2010). Cross-linguistically, it has been generally observed that the syntactic distribution of topic and focus is restricted and that topics cannot follow foci, as depicted in (6). Based on this restriction, Neeleman et al. (2009) have claimed that a contrastive topic cannot move to a position below a contrastive focus (p. 27). If the information structural restriction in (6) can be extended to Korean, (4) would be ungrammatical as it has the ill-formed structure in (6b).

(6) a. topic [COMMENT FOCUS [BACKGROUND …]]
     b. *FOCUS [BACKGROUND topic [COMMENT …]]

     According to the analysis above, if (4) has the (6b) structure, it is expected that the orders in (4) will always result in an ungrammatical state. However, that is not the case. The sentences below are all grammatical, although a *man*-marked phrase precedes an *un/nun*-marked phrase.

(7) *aisukhulim-**man** na-**nun**   an-meke.*
     Ice cream-ONLY 1SG-TOP   NEG-eat
     'Ice cream is the only (thing) that I do not eat.'
(8) *pwumonim-**man** ne-**nun** cal mo-si-myen   tway.*
     parents-ONLY   2SG-TOP well take.care.of-HON-if   become
     'Taking care of your parents is the only (thing) you must do successfully.'

I argue that (7) and (8) are different from (4) in that the sentence-initial *man*-marked phrase is identified as the grammatical object. Although neither arguments are case-marked in (7) and (8), the subject argument and the object argument can be identified. In (7), the transitive predicate *mek(ta)* requires an animate subject. Therefore, the personal pronoun *na* [+animate] in the sentence-medial position serves as the subject, while *aisukulim* [-animate] in the sentence-initial position serves as the object. Similarly, the social hierarchy encoded into predicates can also assign subject-object roles to noun phrases. The predicate *mosi(ta)* (the humble form of *take care of*) in (8) takes two argument NPs, the subject being someone of a lower social status or a younger age and the object being someone of a higher social status or an older age. Based on the asymmetrical relation between the two NPs, *ne* (child) marked by *un/nun* takes the subject position, whereas *pwumonim* (parents) takes the object position, which in turn makes the sentence grammatical.

     If grammatical objects are reconstructed below the subject at LF, the *man*-marked phrases that are identified as the objects in (7) and (8) can be reconstructed below the *un/nun*-marked phrases. As a result, (7) and (8) would have the structure in (6a) and be interpreted as grammatical.

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