

The Semantics of the Korean Particles *i/ka* and *ul/lul*

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While Schütze (1996, 2001) analyzed the PARTICLES appearing in (1) as focus markers, the PARTICLES were not analyzed as focus markers in its entirety, since the particles may appear with discourse neutral NPs (2), or even with given information (3). This paper argues that (2) and (3) are not counterexamples to the claim that the PARTICLES are focus markers all across the board by showing that i) it is not unusual for focus markers to appear with non-focused NPs, and ii) focus markers can appear with given information in verbatim repetition.

(1) Q1: Who is afraid of snakes?

a. Na-**eykey-ka** paym-i mwusepta
I-DAT-*ka* snake-i fearful
'I am afraid of snakes.' (Yoon 1996:110)

Q2: Did Tom go to SUSAN?

b. ani, Tom-un Jane-**eykey-lul** ka-ss-e
no, Tom-TOP Jane-DAT-lul go PAST-DECL
'No, Tom went to JANE.'

(2) (Q: What's up?)

A: John-**i** Tom-**ul** ttely-ess-e
John(NOM)-i Tom(ACC)-ul hit-PAST-DECL
'John hit Tom.'

(3) Q: John's what is big?

A: John-**i** son-i khu-ta
John-TOP hand-i big- DECL
'John's hands are big.'

English marks focus with stress. However, stress is not always on the focused element. When the VP is given focus, internal argument is stressed and not the entire VP (4). In other words, the focus marker is appearing on a non-focused NP. Focus marker in Gúrúntúm also shows such behavior. Gúrúntúm has a focus marker *á*, which occurs before the focus (Hartmann & Zimmermann 2009). However, when the VP is focused in Gúrúntúm, the focus marker does not appear before the VP, but before the internal argument (5).

(4) Q: What did John do?

A: John gave a book to a BOY.

(5) Q: *Á* *kãèã* *mái* *tí* *bá* *pí?*
FOC what REL 3SG PROG do
'What is he doing?'

A: *Tí* *bá* *ròmb* - *á* *gwèí*
3SG PROG gather - FOC seeds
'He is gathering the seeds'

I argue that the PARTICLES are not different from English and Gúrúntúm focus markers. While individual NPs marked by the PARTICLES in (2) are discourse neutral, the sentence itself is generally claimed to be focused. Therefore, I argue that both the PARTICLES in (2) are present to mark focus on

the entire sentence, which is exactly how English mark sentential focus (Katz & Selkirk 2011) (6).

(6) Q: What's up?

A: ELIZA mailed the CAMELS (Katz & Selkirk 2011)

Since English uses stress to mark focus, given information is generally not given stress (7). However, there are instances where given information can be stressed (8). In a question/answer pair, when the answer is repeating a stressed element in the question, English may also stress the repeated NP, even when the NP is understood as given information (8a). However, stress may be on the repeated NP only when it is verbatim repetition (8b).

(7) Q: Who did John_i kiss?

A: #JOHN_i kissed MARY

(8) Q: JOHN_i kissed WHO?

a. JOHN_i kissed MARY

b. #THE IDIOT_i kissed MARY

The PARTICLES are behaving exactly like the English focus markers in this sense. The PARTICLE in (3) may be understood as given information only when (3) is used in a question/answer pair with an identical focus marked antecedent in the question (9a). The PARTICLES may not appear with given information if they are not used as verbatim repetition (9b).

(9) Q: John_i-i son-i khu-ni?

John-i hand-i big-Q

'Is John's hands big'

a. John_i-i son-i kh-e

John(TOP)-i hand-i big- DECL

'John's hands are big'

Q: John_i-**un** son-i khu-ni?

b. #John_i-i son-i kh-e

John(TOP)-i hand-i big- DECL

'John's hands are big'

What I have shown in this paper is that the behaviors of *i/ka* and *ul/lul* that were previously thought as counterexamples to the claim that the PARTICLES are focus marker in its entirety, as in (2) and (3), should not be construed as counterexamples, since other known focus markers also show similar behaviors, as in (4) and (8). Therefore, focus may be analyzed as the semantic property shared universally by all instances of the PARTICLES.

References

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