

# Assertion and Presupposition in Focus Constructions in Korean<sup>1)</sup>

Soo-Jae Lee

(Kunsan College of Nursing)

Lee, Soo-Jae. 2000. Assertion and presupposition in Focus constructions in Korean. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Korea*, 8(3), 87-107. There have been various interesting opinions about assertion and presupposition employed in the previous or current literatures in order to solve the relation of meaning proper and extra meaning not captured in the sentence. In this paper I analyse focus constructions with Korean focus markers *-ga*, *-nun*, *-man* and *-do*, aiming to make explicit what is asserted and what is presupposed in expressing some proposition. Following Atlas' (1991) idea on the distinction between assertion and presupposition, I argue that the size of the domain set formed in discourse or conversation must be taken into consideration in order to account for the proper use of focal particles in Korean. (Kunsan College of Nursing).

## 1. Introduction

In the study of meaning in natural language truth conditional semantics or logical semantics is concerned with the truth values of the sentences, ignoring those aspects of meaning captured in the use of language. So, the following English sentences in (1a-d) are treated as having the same truth values.

---

1. This paper, which was presented at the 2000 Taehan Linguistics Conference held at Choson University on Dec. 4, 2000, was supported by funds of academic effort and research of Kunsan College of Nursing. Thanks for comments from participants in the conference and especially from Byong-Seon Yang for eliciting the use of the particle *-ga* in non-presupposed context. And also thanks to the reviewers of my paper for their useful comments on arrangements of logical argumentation and styles as well.

- (1) a. Mary was asleep.
- b. Mary was asleep, too.
- c. Only Mary was asleep.
- d. Even Mary was asleep.

However, the above sentences illustrate that there is some variation in meaning among them and consequently, logical semantics cannot represent this mode of representation without extra devices. For instance, the sentence (1b) implies or suggests that someone other than Mary in the domain of universe of discourse was asleep, (1c) implies that no one other than Mary was asleep, and there is also some implication in (1d) that everyone in the domain of universe of discourse was asleep and specifically, it was unexpected for Mary to be asleep.

The implications or suggestions shown in the above sentences (1b-d) cannot be represented in the truth tables and are explained in the context of language use. In other words, the proper use of the above sentences depends on conditions under which the sentences above are expressed. These extra meaning or non-truth conditional aspects of meaning were accounted for in terms of conventional implicature in Lauri Karttunen and S. Peters' various articles (Karttunen and Peters 1975, 1977, 1979). Thus, a conventional implicature, which arises from the conventional meaning, that is, from the words such as *too*, *only* and *even*, were incorporated into Montague grammar along with truth conditional semantics (cf. Lee 1976 for Korean delimiters).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze non-truth conditional aspects of meaning on the basis of focus constructions in Korean. For this purpose I will introduce in section 2 the sentences containing focus markers *-ga*, *-nun*, *-man* and *-to* and describe some general information on Korean sentence structure. In section 3 I will introduce the conception of presupposition and some characteristics of the properties of presupposition. In section 4 the previous analysis of the sentences containing focus markers *only* and *too* are discussed. In section 5 I will present the proper analysis of focus constructions in

Korean, claiming that assertions and presuppositions must be distinguished because what is presupposed is a precondition for what is asserted and is not necessary to be stated in what the speaker said. The final section gives a summarizing conclusion.

## 2. Some aspects of Korean focus constructions

Before entering into the main issue of meaning analysis of Korean Focus constructions let me briefly introduce some general aspects of Korean sentence structure. Korean is a verb-final language whose basic word order is Subject-Object-Verb but admits fairly flexible word order. Grammatical relations are encoded not by word order but by morphological markings, even though word order affects the functional aspects of meaning. For instance, each sentence in (2a-e) below consists of a subject, an object and a verb.

- (2) a. Mary-ga sakwa-rul coaha-n-ta.  
 Mary-Nom apple-Acc like-Non Past-Decl  
 'Mary likes an apple.'
- b. Mary-nun sakwa-rul coaha-n-ta.  
 Mary-Top apple-Acc like-Non Past-Decl  
 'As for Mary, she likes an apple.'
- c. Sakwa-rul Mary-ga coaha-n-ta.  
 apple-Acc Mary-Nom like-Non Past-Decl  
 'It is Mary who likes an apple.'
- d. Sakwa-nun Mary-ga coaha-n-ta.  
 apple-Cont Top Mary-Nom like-Non Past-Decl  
 'As for apple, Mary likes it.'
- e. Mary-nun sakwa-rul coaha-ko Sue-nun pae-rul coaha-n-ta.  
 Mary-Top apple-Acc like-and Sue-Top pear-Acc like-Non Past  
 'Mary likes an apple, but Sue likes a pear.'

The sentence (2a) above expresses a very neutral aspects of grammatical relation if there is no significant stress on the constituents of the sentence. The sentence (2a) just describes the fact that Mary likes an apple. However, if the stress is on the subject, on the object, or on the verb, then each stressed element receives a focus interpretation. For instance, putting the stress on the subject *Mary* which is marked with the nominative marker *-ga* we can interpret the sentence in two different ways depending on the context. In one interpretation the speaker knows or believes that *Mary* is the unique person who likes an apple among the members of the universe of discourse. The sentence (2a) can be a response to the question *Who likes an apple?* This interpretation has been called in many linguistic literatures the exhaustive-listing interpretation since the Japanese linguist Kuno first used this term in his analysis of the Subject and Topic in Japanese, and the subject *Mary* in (2a) is interpreted as an exhaustive-listing Focus.<sup>2)</sup> In the other we can have the expressive meaning, i.e. Mary's liking an apple is unexpected from the speaker's point of view. In the exhaustive-listing interpretation we usually presuppose that there is a referent of the subject noun phrase; however, in the neutral description the existence of the referent of the subject noun phrase is not presupposed.

(2b) is a little different from (2a) because it is better considered to consist of Topic and Comment structures.<sup>3)</sup> Topic elements, unlike focus

---

2. The term *Focus* is defined as the newest, most important, salient and significant information which the speaker assumes that the hearer does not currently share with him (cf. Kim 1985: 9). See Gundel (1988: 232-33) for the brief mention of various senses of focus: focus in terms of intonation peak (Halliday 1967), the psychological notion of focus or attention (Sidner 1983), the semantic focus (Cutler and Fodor 1979) and syntactic focus (Chomsky 1970).

3. The term *Topic* is defined here as 'what the sentence is about.' Sometimes it was defined by various scholars as 'old information' or 'given information' in contrast with the term *Focus* which is considered to be the new information. The *Topic* used here is a sentence topic but not a discourse topic. Gundel (1988: 210) gives a more precise definition of *Topic* in terms of pragmatic relations as follows: 'An entity, E, is the topic of a sentence, S, iff in

elements, cannot have stress on them, but as in exhaustive-listing interpretation the referent of the topic is presupposed. *Mary* in (2b) is a topic which is marked with the topic marker *-nun* and the rest of the sentence called *Comment* describes something about the topic.

In (2c) the word order is reversed with respect to the subject and object, namely, the object is fronted. The initial element *sakwa* 'apple' is given information because the sentence with the fronted object is appropriate only if the fronted object was mentioned in the previous discourse or conversational context. In this type of sentence also the subject *Mary* is interpreted as an exhaustive-listing focus because the consequence of the reverse ordering of the subject and object places the subject *Mary* in the pre-verbal position.<sup>4)</sup> Consequently, it is not necessary to have so much stress as *Mary* in (2a) in order to be interpreted as an exhaustive-listing interpretation.

The sentence (2d) is the same as (2c) in that the pre-verbal element *Mary* is interpreted as an exhaustive-listing focus. The difference is on the choice of the particles *-rul* and *-nun* in representing the relation of the fronted element and the other ones in the domain of the universe of discourse. In (2d) *sakwa* 'apple' is a Topic and the speaker has in mind something else (e.g. pear or whatever) which is contrasted with the apple; however, in (2c) the speaker doesn't express any contrastive meaning in the use of the fronted element *sakwa* 'apple' and just use it because it was previously mentioned in relation to the topic in the sense of Gundel (1988), e.g. *Who likes an apple?* Here, too, the fronted elements in (2c-d) cannot be stressed.<sup>5)</sup>

---

using S the speaker intends to increase the addressee's knowledge about, request information about, or otherwise get the addressee to act with respect to E.' Her (ibid) definition of *Comment* as 'A predication, P, is the comment of a sentence, S, iff, in using S the speaker intends P to be accessed relative to the topic of S.' comprises sentence and pragmatic topic.

4. In Korean the element in the pre-verbal position can get attention or focus by default. See Kim (1985) for more information on this.

5. Some linguists call the fronted element *sakwa* 'apple' in (2c) as the scrambled Topic in order to distinguish *nun*-marked Topic from the objective case

Lastly, the sentence (2e) shows that it is not the case that all *nun*-marked elements are without stress. The particle *-nun* can be ambiguous: it can be a topic marker or a contrastive focus marker depending on the context. If the primary function of the particle *-nun* is to contrast the elements to which it is attached with other elements, then the elements marked with *-nun* are considered to be a Focus rather than a Topic because they can be stressed. The *nun*-marked subjects *Mary* and *Sue* in (2e) must be stressed in order to show that they are contrasted with each other.

As we have seen in (2a-e), morphological markers and word order in Korean are very significant in expressing the speaker or hearer's perspectives on the function of the elements of the sentence. In addition to the above case or topic markers there are other particles or delimiters such as *-man* 'only', *-to* 'too' which delimit the nouns to which they are attached in terms of selecting the elements in the domain set in order to indicate argument-predicate relations. Let's consider the following sentences (3a-d) which are possible answers to the question *Who came late?*

- (3) a. *Mary-ga neucke o-ass-eyo.*  
       *Mary-Nom late come-Past-Polite Decl*  
       '*Mary came late.*' or '*It is Mary who came late.*'
- b. *John-un neucke an o-ass-eyo.*  
       *John-Top late not come-Past-Polite Decl*  
       '*As for John, he did not come late.*'
- c. *Keith-man neucke o-ass-eyo.*  
       *Keith-only late come-Past-Polite Decl*  
       '*Only Kieth came late.*'
- d. *Jane-do neucke o-ass-eyo.*  
       *Jane-also late come-Past-Polite Decl*  
       '*Jane also came late.*'

---

*rul*-marked element. *Nun*-marked Topic with a contrastive meaning, being called Contrastive Topic, can be differentiated from 'the aboutness Topic.'

The sentence (3a) without stress on the subject *Mary* can be uttered in a null or very neutral context, for instance, as an answer to *What happened?*<sup>6)</sup> if the speaker knows that *Mary* is the one who came late without reference to any other person who is possibly beyond the speaker's concern, and the speaker can continue to say with (3d). So, the hearer need not know whether there is any other person than *Mary* who came late. The sentence (3a) is true only if *Mary* came late. The use of nominative marker *-ga* without putting stress on the subject *Mary* makes the sentence (3a) very neutral in description. However, if (3a) is used in conversation with stress on *Mary*, the subject has an exhaustive-listing interpretation as discussed above. That is, *Mary* is the unique person who came late as far as the speaker knows. The speaker of (3a) believes *Mary* to be the most likely person who came late even though he or she did not check all the members of the domain set of the universe discourse.<sup>7)</sup>

In (3b), on the other hand, the speaker has some other person in mind in expressing the proposition (3b) because the topic marker *-nun* also represents contrast even though the contrast is not overt in the surface syntactic structure as in (2e). So, the speaker can continue to say with (3a), putting the stress on the subject *Mary*. Of course the sentence (3b) is true only if John did not come late but has extra

---

6. Byong-Seon Yang suggests that the nominative marker *-ga* is used even in sentences without presupposition. In other words, *Mary* is not presupposed in (3a) and in fact, there is no presupposition in (3a). (3a) as a response to 'What happened?', according to him, is both assertion and focus and the focus domain is the whole sentence. He asserts that in this case only *-ga* is used as in the sentence initiating a story or describing a situation or telling about new events (Yang 1998: 129-130). I think he is right, but when I stated that there must be at least one entity in the domain set as a precondition for the use of the nominative marker *-ga* I don't mean that the existence of the subject *Mary* is presupposed but an individual or an entity in the set model (or in more abstract mental model) is presupposed. In my paper I only deal with the nominative marker *-ga* with focus or stress.

7. If the speaker says (3a) after having checked all the members of the domain set in which *Mary* is the unique person who came late, it should be more appropriate for him or her to use the focal particle *-man* 'only' as in (3c).

meaning not represented in truth tables.

The sentence (3c) which has a formal representation ' $C(k) \ \& \ \sim \exists x [x \neq k \ \& \ C(x)]$ ' means that in the domain of universe of discourse only Keith and no other person came late. In the similar way, the sentence (3d) which is formally represented as ' $C(j) \ \& \ \exists x [x \neq j \ \& \ C(x)]$ ' is interpreted as follows: Jane came late and there is at least one other person than Jane who came late.

### 3. The properties of presupposition

In his discussion of assertion Stalnaker (1978) provides three principles as essential conditions in communication. The main point is that the speaker should not assert what is already presupposed since asserting what is already taken for granted by the speaker is redundant or self-defeating. In order to understand the relation between assertion and presupposition we need to know how the conception of assertion and presupposition has arisen in the history of philosophical logic.

The history of reference and presupposition can be traced back to the Russell and Strawson debate over the determination of the truth value of the sentence containing the subject with the definite article.<sup>8)</sup> Let's consider the sentence below.

(4) The dog is barking.

According to Russell's analysis the above sentence asserts that there is one and only one dog barking. The sentence (4) which is represented formally as ' $\exists x \forall y [D(y) \equiv y=x \ \& \ B(x)]$ ' is false if there is no dog or more than one dog. Following Strawson's (1950) analysis the fact

---

8. Actually, the concept of presupposition is due to Frege (1948: 221). In his example *Kepler died in misery* he made a distinction between asserted meaning and presupposed meaning. According to him, the fact that the name Kepler designates something is a presupposition for the assertion *Kepler died in misery*.



that there is one and only one dog must not belong to the part of the assertion but is assumed by the speaker to be a necessary condition for the appropriateness of the utterance of (4). In other words, the uniqueness condition which is included in Russell (1905) was treated as presupposition. Consequently, sentences which do not satisfy the existential presupposition cannot be true or false.

Since then, many philosophers and linguists have developed the idea of presupposition in terms of entailment or pragmatic properties. Some scholars pointed out that presupposition cannot be characterized in terms of entailment because there are cases where the context influences the speaker's judgments of whether his utterance carries presuppositions. The arguments against a purely semantic account of presupposition can be seen in various articles of Stalnaker (1970, 1975, 1978), and in Karttunen and Peters (1979) who treat presuppositions as conventional implicatures, unifying the truth conditional and non-truth conditional aspects of meaning in Montague grammar. According to Stalnaker (1975: 31), the presupposed part must not be included in what is asserted, for to say things already taken for granted would be redundant and background assumptions may be used without being spoken. In this view, Stalnaker departs from truth conditional semanticists including Karttunen and Peters in that he relates presupposition phenomena to the general communication purpose or strategy. With the general background on presupposition in mind as stated above, I will, in section 5, analyze the focus constructions in (3a-d) in the previous section, aiming to make explicit what is asserted and what is presupposed in uttering the sentence. The next section is the general survey of previous analysis of focal particles *only* and *also*.

#### 4. The previous analysis of *only* and *also*

In order to be redundant-free in the on-going conversation or discourse we have to leave off what the speaker already knows or assumes, or what the hearer knows. This is the basic claim of those

who want to characterize presuppositions in terms of pragmatics. For instance, let's consider the following situation where a group of people is passing the village in a car and one of the people in the car says suddenly the sentence (4). Hearing this, another man who was half asleep in the car responds as follows: *Is the dog barking?* Facing this situation the speaker and the hearer all understand which dog is meant when he said *Is the dog barking?* Obviously the dog that was barking is not the dog in the car but the dog in the village, so the speaker doesn't need to mention the phrase *the dog in the village* since the phrase modifying the dog can be inferred from the general background knowledge.<sup>9)</sup> This is one of the many examples showing that the presupposed part in asserting some proposition must be removed for the efficiency and economy of communication. Following this line of argument let me analyse the sentences in (3b-d) in turn, skipping the sentence (3a) because it will be analysed in detail in section 5 and has no direct relation to the English counterpart of *only* and *too*.

First, in interpreting (3b) there is no explicit way of distinguishing what is asserted and what is presupposed. Following Stalnaker's idea we can say that the speaker of (3b) asserts that John did not come late and someone else came late or just that someone other than John came late without stating that John did not come late. The problem is whether to go with the first or the second analysis. Before solving this problem let me introduce first David Atlas' analysis of English focal particles *only* and *also*, because his analysis gives some help in solving Korean focus constructions such as (3c-d). Basically, Atlas (1991) counters the analyses of assertion and presupposition or entailment made by previous scholars such as Geach (1962/1980), Horn (1969) and Taglich (1979). His analysis is based on the following principle:

---

9. It is very common that a dog in a car doesn't bark.

(5) Focal Noun Phrase Limitation Principle (Atlas 1991: 135)

Focal noun phrases in natural language statements cannot be translated by singular terms that are logical subjects in the semantic representations of their truth-conditions.

The above principle has the following consequence: the sentences cannot presuppose the existence of the subject nouns unless the subject nouns are Topics. So, in the construction of *Only a is F* or *a also is F* the predicate F is not about the subject *a* and this sentence doesn't presuppose the existence of *a* unlike the topic nouns. The following table illustrates how two scholars have different conceptions about assertion and presupposition in the sentences containing *only* and *also*.

(6) Atlas' (1991) analysis of focal particles *only* and *also*

	Only <i>a</i> is F	Also <i>a</i> is F
Assertion	Exactly one individual, and no one other than <i>a</i> is F ( $\exists x[Fx \ \& \ \sim \exists y[Fy \ \& \ y \neq x] \ \& \ \sim \exists z[Fz \ \& \ z \neq a]]$ )	At least two individuals, one of whom is <i>a</i> , are F
Grammatical Presupposition	There is someone other than <i>a</i>	There is someone other than <i>a</i>

(7) Horn's (1969) analysis of focal particles *only* and *also* (or *even*)

	Only <i>a</i> is F	Also <i>a</i> is F
Assertion	No one other than <i>a</i> is F ( $\sim \exists y [y \neq a \ \& \ Fy]$ )	<i>a</i> is F
Presupposition	<i>a</i> is F (Fa)	Someone other than <i>a</i> is F ( $\exists y [y \neq a \ \& \ Fy]$ )

Comparing the above two analyses we notice great different opinions about the distinction between assertion and presupposition. Horn seems to have based his idea of presupposition and assertion on the distinction between what is said and what is implied. For instance, in someone's asking the following question *Is only Mary watching TV?* the negative answer *No, Tom also is watching TV* or the positive answer *Someone else is watching TV as well* is possible, but *She isn't watching TV* is impossible. From this appropriate and inappropriate continuation of discourse we can argue that what is asserted is *No one other than Mary is watching TV* and what is presupposed is *Mary is watching TV*. Also in the following interrogative sentence *Is Tom also watching TV?* the direct response *No, Tom is not watching TV, he is studying* is natural, but *Mary is watching TV* or *Someone else is watching TV* is inappropriate. From these we can say that what is asserted is *Tom is watching TV* and what is presupposed is *Someone else is watching TV*. Thus, if only what is said is the assertion and the other extra meaning is an implicature Horn's analysis seems to be right.<sup>10)</sup>

In contrast, Atlas' analysis is greatly deviant from the previous scholars in that his existential presupposition is based on his noun phrase limitation principle and that focal subjects cannot presuppose the existence of the subject, unlike the case of topical subjects. Consequently, he claims that the logical form for *only a is F* is not *a is F & no one other than a is F*. Rather Atlas argues that the assertion of *only a is F* does not assert *a is F* but entails *a is F*. The ungrammatical sentences in (8a-b) support his argument that the use of *only* or *also* is directly related to the size of the domain set of the current universe of discourse. That is, all elements of the domain set cannot be mentioned with *only* and *also*.

---

10. In fact, in Horn (1969: 105) there is no analysis of focal particle *also*. On the basis of his analysis of *only* and *even* we can summarize his idea of assertion and presupposition in the table (6). In the following sentence formula *Even a is F* Horn writes that the presupposition is  $\exists y[y \neq a \ \& \ Fy]$  and the assertion is *Fa*.

- (8) a. \*Only everyone was asleep.  
 b. \*Everyone also was asleep.

The reason for the ungrammaticality of (8a-b) lies on the following view: we usually understand by the sentence *Only a is F* that there is someone who is not F and by the sentence *a also is F* that there is someone other than *a* is F. In this view the arguments in (8a-b) cannot be all members of the domain set. At least, we have to consider the size of the domain set in order to produce and comprehend the sentences containing the focal particles *only* and *also*. This is a necessary and precondition for the well-formedness of the sentences containing *only* and *also* in human cognition and language use.

Generally, I agree with Atlas in distinguishing assertion from presupposition. Also in Korean the choice of particles such as *-man* 'only' and *-to* 'also' cannot be made without considering the size of the number of elements of the domain set of the currently conceived universe of discourse before we combine the argument with the predicate in expressing some proposition. Admitting the arguments presented in Atlas' paper I would like to test his logical argument on the Korean focus constructions, especially with regard to *-man* 'only.' First, let me present two domain sets A and B as below.

- (9) A = {m, j}  
 B = {m, j, k}  
 m = Mary    j = Jane    k = Keith

Let's suppose a situation where Mary, Jane and Keith took a college entrance examination and only Mary passed the examination. If someone who knows that the above students applied for the examination asks me who passed the examination, my answer would be (10a).

- (10) a. Mary-man hapkyukha-ess-eyo.  
 Mary-only pass-Past-Polite Decl  
 'Only Mary passed the exam.'

- b. Jane-man hapkyukha-ci mos ha-ess-eyo.  
 Jane-only pass-Conn not do-Past-Polite Decl  
 'Only Jane did not pass the exam.'
- c. Jane-un hapkyukha-ci mos ha-ess-eyo.  
 Jane-Top pass-Conn not do-Past-Polite Decl  
 'As for Jane, she did not pass the exam.'

Now, let's think about the situation in which only Jane did not pass the examination. Similarly, if someone asks me who did not pass the examination there is nothing odd about my responding to him with (10b) or (10c). In this way, if the domain set consists of at least three members there is nothing strange in the positive or negative answer.

However, the situation changes greatly if the domain set consists of just two members, say, *Mary* and *Jane* as in the set A above. In the same way, if someone asks me who passed the exam, (10a) would be natural, supposing *Mary* passed and *Jane* failed. Again, if I am asked to answer *Who did not pass the exam?* my answer with (10b) is a little strange, if not impossible. Rather, I would say (10c) in which contrastive topic marker *-nun* is attached to the subject *Jane*. Although this is based on my intuitive judgment, if we turn to a couple of other examples it seems very obvious that there is a difference between the positive and negative statements employing the focus marker *-man* 'only.' The most apparent example can be found in the real situation where we, humans have only two hands, namely, left and right hands. If the parents ask their children to use only the left hand because their children were hurt in the right hand, they will say (11a) instead of (11b) which is a negative request. If the parents ask their children not to use the right hand, they will say (11c) instead of (11b). That is, the linguistic behaviour or cognitive process in producing the sentences in a real situation tells about felicitous status of the sentences produced.

- (11) a. Oin son-man s'e-ra.  
 left hand-only use-Imp  
 'Use only the left hand.'

- b. Orun son-man s'e-ci mal-ara.  
right hand-only use-Conn not-Imp  
'Don't use the right hand only.'
- c. Orun son-un s'e-ci mal-ara.  
right hand-Top use-Conn not-Imp  
'Don't use the right hand.'

The following data also provide convincing evidence for the claim that presupposition for the negative sentences containing *-man* 'only' seems to be that there must be at least three objects. The following (12a-c) are given as questions to the person who has only two children. Again, (12c) is preferred to (12b) in asking his second son's having married.

- (12) a. Chesc'ae-man kyolhonha-ess-ci?  
first-only marry-Past-Q  
'Did only the first marry?'
- b. Tulc'ae-man kyolhon an ha-ess-ci?  
second-only marriage not do-Past-Q  
'Did only the second not marry?'
- c. Tulc'ae-nun kyolhon an ha-ess-ci?  
second-Top marriage not do-Past-Q  
'Did the second not marry?'

## 5. The Analysis of Focus Constructions in Korean

In this section I will present my analysis of assertion and presupposition of focus constructions in Korean on the basis of Atlas' (1991) argument and some points indicated in the previous section in analysing negative sentences containing *-man* 'only.' For convenience of explanation let me present the sentences in section 2 again here.

- (13) a. Mary-ga neucke o-ass-yo.  
Mary-Nom late come-Past-Polite Decl  
'Mary came late.' or 'It is Mary who came late.'

- b. Sakwa-nun            Mary-ga    coaha-eyo.  
 apple-Top (Contr) Mary-Nom like-Polite Decl  
 'As for apple, Mary likes it.'
- c. Mary-nun            neucke an    o-ass-eyo.  
 Mary-Top (Contr) late    not    come-Past-Polite Decl  
 'As for Mary, he did not come late.'
- d. Mary-man neucke o-ass-eyo.  
 Mary-only late    come-Past-Polite Decl  
 'Only Mary came late.'
- e. Mary-do neucke o-ass-eyo  
 Mary-also late    come-Past-Polite Decl  
 'Mary also came late.'

In expressing (13a) which is an answer to *Who came late?* the speaker has in mind only Mary which is accompanied with much stress, and she is the unique person who came late as far as the speaker knows. If the speaker had checked all the members of the domain set in which Mary is the only person who came late, he or she should have said (13d). In this case the subject *Mary* is interpreted as being exhaustively listed in the speaker's domain set rather than the domain shared by the speaker and the hearer. Thus, if someone else responds to the speaker's answer by saying *Tom also came late* then the speaker of (13a) can respond just by saying like *Is that so?* or he can still insist by saying *No, Tom did not come late* that Mary is the only person who came late. So, the presupposition for the use of the nominative marker *-ga* in (13a) is that there is at least one individual in the domain set, and the assertion is that exactly one individual and no one other than Mary came late as far as the speaker knows.

In the same way, in (13b) the subject *Mary* has an exhaustively listed interpretation as in (13a) due to the reversed order of subject and object. In this sentence the object is topicalized and the subject is in the pre-verbal position and gets a focus interpretation by default. In (13a) the speaker asserts that Mary and only Mary came late and in



(13b) Mary is the only person who likes an apple. The speaker presupposes that in both (13a-b) that there is at least one individual in the domain set because Mary is not contrasted with other people. If it is known that other person than Mary came late, he or she would not have said (13a), following the Cooperative Principle and the maxim of Quantity (Grice 1975),<sup>11</sup> but should have specified the members of the domain set that he believes to have come late. The further supporting evidence for this argument can be sought in the following dialogue.

(14) Storekeeper: Nu-ga sakwa humchi-ess-e?  
 who-Nom apple steal-Past-Q  
 'Who stole the apples?'

Boy 1: Insu-ga humchi-ess-eyo.  
 Insu-Nom steal-Past-Polite Decl  
 'Insu stole the apples.'

Storekeeper: Insu-man humchi-ess-ni? Ne-nun an humchi-ko?  
 Insu-only steal-Past-Q you-Top not steal-Conn  
 'Did only Insu steal the apples? Didn't you steal any?'

In the dialogue above the storekeeper, knowing that several apples in the box were gone, asks a group of boys who has come to his store to buy something and has gone. One of the boys gives an answer by using the subject marker *-ga* with stress on Insu. The storekeeper interprets Insu in Boy 1's answer as the only person who stole the apples as we recognize it in the storekeeper's response to Boy 1 in which he used the particle *-man* 'only.' The use of the particle *-man* 'only' indicates that the storekeeper implicitly understands that Boy 1 believes only Insu to have stolen the apples. However, the storekeeper's second question *Ne-nun an humchi-ko?* 'Didn't you steal any?' shows that the hearer who is a storekeeper does not believe that Insu is the only boy who stole the apples. Thus, we can conclude that the speaker

---

11. The Quantity maxim is described as follows (Grice 1965/1991: 308): Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of exchange) and do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

presupposes that Insu is the unique member and asserts that he stole the apples even though this presupposition is not so explicit as that in the sentences containing the focal particle *-man* 'only.'

(13c) can be a possible answer to (13a) by the third person who thinks (13a) is wrong or can be said by the third person when the questioner directly asks Mary by saying *Mary, did you come late?* In (13c) the speaker asserts that at least Mary did not come late and he can continue to say *It seems that there is no person who came late or Bill came late.* The speaker of (13c) presupposes that there is someone other than Mary in the domain set in order to contrast Mary with someone else and asserts that exactly one individual, who is Mary, did not come late as far as the speaker knows. Even though *Mary* is marked with the topic marker *-nun* it is interpreted as the contrastive focus rather than the pure topic because the speaker has some other person in mind as the person who came late even though he does not know who the person is, and in fact it is a little odd to say that the predicate *come late* is a pure description about Mary.

In (13d) which is already familiar to us the speaker asserts that one individual and no other person than Mary came late. The presupposition seems to be that there must be some other person than Mary in the set of the domain. However, there is a constraint on the use of *-man* in negative sentences in such a way that there must be at least three individuals in the domain set.

In (13e) the speaker asserts that Mary came late and one other person than Mary came late. The presupposition is exactly the same as that in (13d), i.e. there is someone other than Mary in the domain set. The claims made above can be supported by the following grammatical or ungrammatical sentences.

- (15) a. Modeun saram-i            neucke    o-ass-eyo.  
           every person-Nom    late        come-past-Polite Decl  
           'Every person came late.'

- b. \*Modeun saram-un neucke o-ass-eyo.  
 every person-Top late come-past-Poite Decl  
 'As for every person came late.'
- c. \*Modeun saram-man neucke o-ass-eyo.  
 every person-only late come-past-Polite Decl  
 'Only every person came late.'
- d. \*Modeun saram-do neucke o-ass-eyo.  
 every person-also late come-past-Polite Decl  
 'Every person also came late.'

The sentences in (15b-d) above which contain *-nun*, *-man* and *-do* are ill-formed because all the members are included in the domain set; that is, the constraint that there must be some other person than the subject argument in the domain set is violated. The table (16) illustrates the different conception of presupposition and assertion for these focal particles.

(16) My analysis of Korean focal particles *-ga*, *-nun*, *-man*, and *-do*

Particle	Sentence	Presupposition	Assertion
<i>-ga</i>	<i>a-ga is F</i>	There is at least one individual including <i>a</i>	Exactly one individual, and no one other than <i>a</i> is F
<i>-nun</i>	<i>a-nun is F</i>	There is at least one individual other than <i>a</i>	At least one individual, one of whom is <i>a</i> , is F
<i>-man</i>	<i>a-man is F</i>	There is at least one individual other than <i>a</i>	Exactly one individual, and no one other than <i>a</i> is F
<i>-man</i>	<i>a-man is not F</i>	There is at least two individuals other than <i>a</i>	Exactly one individual, and no one other than <i>a</i> is F
<i>-do</i>	<i>a-do is F</i>	There is at least one individual other than <i>a</i>	At least two individuals, one of whom is <i>a</i> , are F

## 6. Conclusion

The incorporation of presupposition into the analysis of topic and focus constructions in Korean helps clarify the ambiguous aspects of non-truth conditional semantics. Even though there have been various interesting opinions about assertion, presupposition or conventional implicature employed in the previous literatures in order to solve the relation of meaning proper and extra meaning not captured in the sentence, I followed Atlas' idea on the distinction between assertion and presupposition in my analysis on Korean focal particles with a slight modification. Especially, it is very significant that Atlas takes into consideration the size of the amount of the set which is formed in the context of discourse or conversation. The ungrammatical sentences such as *Only everyone is running* or *Not only everyone is running* are convincing evidence for the above data. Also in Korean, it is a precondition that there must be at least two members in the domain set for the well-formedness of the sentences containing topic or focus marker *-nun* and two other focal particles *-man* 'only' and *-do* 'also.' In this paper I did not cover the aspects of particles *-pak'e* 'outside of', *oie* 'besides' and *cocha* 'even.' I also feel that the meaning analysis of these particles must be made in relation to the general cognition and perception. In other words, how we perceive and recognize the objects in the world influences the use of language, especially in interactional communicative situations.

## References

- Atlas, J. D. 1991. *Topic/comment, presupposition, logical form and focus stress implicature*. *Journal of Semantics* 8.127-147.
- Block, P. I. 1991. *Focus and presupposition*. *Journal of Semantics* 8.149-165.
- Cooper, David E. 1974. *Presupposition*. *Janua Linguarum Series minor*: 203. Mouton: the Hague.
- Davis, Steven. 1991. *Pragmatics: A reader*. Oxford University Press. New York.

- Dowty, D., R. Wall, and S. Peters. 1981. *Introduction to Montague semantics*. D. Reedel Publishing Company. Dordrecht, Holland.
- Frege, G. 1948. *Über Sinn und Bedeutung*. *The Philosophical Review* 57.209-230.
- Geach, P. T. 1962/1980. *Reference and generality*. Cornell University Press.
- Grice, H. P. 1975. *Logic and conversation*. Reprinted in S. Davies 1991.
- Gundel, J. 1988. *Topic-Comment structure*. *Studies in syntactic typology*, ed. by M. Hammond, E. Moravcsik and J. Wirth. John Benjamins Publishing Co.
- Hajicova, Eva. 1984. *On presupposition and allegation*. *Contribution to functional syntax, semantics and language comprehension*, ed. by Sgall. 99-123. Benjamins. Amsterdam Academia, Prague.
- Horn, L. 1969. *A presuppositional analysis of only and even*. *CLS* 5.98-107.
- Karttunen, Lauri. 1974. *Presupposition and linguistic context*. *Theoretical Linguistics* 1.181-194.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and S. Peters. 1975. *Conventional implicature in Montague grammar*. *BLS* 1. 266-278, *position*. *BLS* 3.360-371.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1979. *Conventional implicature*. In *Syntax and Semantics: presupposition*, ed. by Oh & Dinnen. Academic Press, New York. 1-56.
- Katz, J. and Langendoen, D. 1976. *Pragmatics and presupposition*. *Language* 52.
- Kim, Alan Huyn-Oak. 1985. *The grammar of Focus of Korean syntax and its typological implications*. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Southern California.
- Lee, Ik-Whan. 1976. *Syntax and semantics of Korean delimiters*. *CLS* 13. 13.302-315.
- Russell, B. 1905. *On denoting*. *Mind* 14.479-493.
- Sellers, Wilfrid. 1954. *Presupposing*. *Philosophical Review* 63.197-215.
- Stalnaker, Robert. 1970. *Pragmatics*. *Synthes* 22.272-289.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1975. *Presuppositions*. *Contemporary research in philosophical logic and linguistics semantics*, ed. by Hockney et al. 31-41.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1978. *Assertion*. *Pragmatics*, ed. by S. Davies 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991. *Pragmatic presuppositions*. *Pragmatics*, ed. by S. Davies 1991.
- Strawson, P. F. 1950. *On referring*. *Mind* 59.320-344.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1954. *A reply to Sellars*. *Philosophical Review* 63.216-231.
- Taglicht, Josef. 1984. *Message and emphasis: on focus and scope in English*. Longman house. New York.
- Yang, Byong-Seon. 1998. *Role and refrence grammar*. Hankug Publishing Co.

Kunsan College of Nursing  
 413 Kaejong-Dong, Kunsan, Chonbug  
 E-mail: Lee2491@kcn.ac.kr  
 Fax: (063) 450-3850  
 Tel.: (063) 540-3828