

## Two classes of ‘anyone’: A contrastive analysis of *amwu* and *nwukwu* in Korean

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This paper investigates two Korean expressions, *amwu-to* and *nwukwu-to*, which are seen to be roughly equivalent in meaning to the English word *anyone* (although *nwukwu-to* has several other senses). Some (such as Park et al. 2021) have analyzed both of these expressions to be Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs) and others (such as Tieu & Kang 2014) have claimed that they both belong to the even more restricted class of Negative Concord Items (NCIs), but *nwukwu-to* has a much wider distribution – not being an NCI, an NSI, or an NPI. In closely examining their distribution and interpretations, we demonstrate that they are more distinct from each other than previously assumed. Their contrastive properties include differences in syntactic category, position in the clause, and dependency with regard to the particle *-to*, in addition to the aforementioned negation restrictions. They additionally will be shown to differ in their interpretations in certain contexts. Prefiguring our analysis here, we will wind up claiming that the differences between them are attributable to the fact that *amwu* (as an NSI/NCI) must be interpreted in the scope of NEG to check a Neg Feature and is characterized as an “absolute non-existential quantifier” (in contrast with Giannakidou’s 2008 “dependent existential quantifier”). For its part, *nwukwu* can be interpreted either inside or outside of the scope of NEG, and is characterized as an “existentially quantified head noun”. After briefly comparing and contrasting the distribution of *amwu-to* and *nwukwu-to*, the paper will turn to some additional evidence for treating the two expressions differently. Following this, we will examine the status of the postposition *-to* that accompanies *amwu* and *nwukwu* and then account for their interpretive differences with reference to their scope relations with negation. (1) shows that *amwu* and *nwukwu* are sometimes interchangeable. One might speculate from this that they occupy the same syntactic position, but this would be inaccurate.

- (1) John-un **amwu/nwukwu-to** mot po-ass.ta. ‘John didn’t see anyone.’  
 John-TOP amwu/who-TO not see-PAST.DECL

Closer examination shows their distribution to be quite different. (2) shows that *amwu* alternates with other determiners and may precede a noun, but *nwukwu* cannot. (3) shows that *nwukwu* can be preceded by a determiner such as *etten* ‘some’, but *amwu* cannot. In (4), we see that *nwukwu* can be modified (and preceded by) a relative clause, but *amwu* cannot. We conclude from this that *amwu* has the structure in (5a) and *nwukwu* that in (5b).

- (2) John-un **etten/amwu/\*nwukwu** **salam-to** mot po-ass.ta. ‘John didn’t see anyone.’  
 John-TOP some/amwu/\*who person-TO not see-PAST.DECL
- (3) John-un **etten nwukwu-to/\*amwu-to** mot po-ass.ta. ‘John didn’t see anyone.’  
 John-TOP some who-TO/amwu-TO not see-PAST.DECL
- (4) [**nay-ka senthaykha-n**] **nwuku-to/\*amwu-to** na-lul senthaykhaci anh-ass.ta.  
 I-NOM choose-REL who-TO/amwu-TO I-ACC choose not-PAST.DECL  
 ‘No one who I chose chose me.’ [even someone who I chose didn’t choose me]
- (5) a. [DP **amwu** [NP Ø/salam]] b. [DP Ø/etten [NP **nwukwu**]]

In addition, another difference between *amwu* and *nwukwu* lies in their dependency on *-to* and negation. (6a) and (6b) show that while *nwukwu* can occur with either the NOM case marker *-ka* or the particle *-to*, *amwu* requires *-to* and cannot be followed only by *-ka*. (6c) and (6d) show, respectively, that *nwukwu-to* does not require sentential negation, but that *amwu-to* does.

- (6) a. **nwukwu-{to/ka}** John-ul **an** cohahanta. ‘No one does like John.’ OR  
 TO/NOM John-ACC not likes ‘There is someone who doesn’t like John.’  
 b. **amwu-{to/\*ka}** John-ul **an** cohahanta. ONLY ‘No one does like John.’  
 c. **nwukwu-to** John-ul cohahanta. ‘Someone likes John.’  
 d. **\*amwu-to** John-ul cohahanta.

Given that *-to* is seen to alternate with the NOM case marker *-ka* in (6a), it is important to determine the status of *-to* generally. The data in (7) show that *-to* is neither a semantic postposition nor a grammatical case marker, each of these having a distinct distributional profile. (7a) and (7b) show that case markers (e.g., *-lul*) cannot cooccur with discourse particles (e.g., *-nun*) – one or the other may appear as a postposition, not both. (7c) and (7d) next show that semantic postpositions (e.g., *-eykey*) and case markers (e.g., *-lul*) are mutually exclusive. In contrast, (7e) shows that semantic postpositions (e.g., *-eykey*) and discourse particles (e.g., *-nun*) are not in complementary distribution. If the three classes of postpositions are hierarchically ordered and adjacent classes may not cooccur as shown in (8), then the grammaticality of the data in (7) is explained.

- (7) a. Harry-**lul**-(\***nun**) senmwul-ul an cwu-ess.ta. ‘I didn’t give Harry a gift’  
 Harry-ACC-TOP gift-ACC not give-PAST.DECL  
 b. Harry-(\***lul**)-**nun** senmwul-ul an cwu-ess.ta. ‘Speaking of Harry, I didn’t give him a gift.’  
 c. Harry-**eykey**-(\***lul**) senmwul-ul an cwu-ess.ta. ‘I didn’t give a gift to Harry.’  
 Harry-GOAL-ACC  
 d. Harry-(\***eykey**)-**lul** senmwul-ul an cwu-ess.ta. ‘I didn’t give Harry a gift.’  
 e. Harry-**eykey**-**nun** senmwul-ul an cwu-ess.ta. ‘Speaking of Harry, I didn’t give a gift to him.’  
 Harry-GOAL-TOP
- (8) a. [[[ N ] semantic-postposition ]<sub>POS-1</sub> case-marker ]<sub>POS-2</sub> discourse-particle ]<sub>POS-3</sub>  
 b. [[[ Harry ] **eykey** ]<sub>POS-1</sub> **lul** ]<sub>POS-2</sub> **nun** ]<sub>POS-3</sub>

With the hierarchy and distribution of postpositions, it is clear that *-to* is of the same class as *-nun* (i.e., a discourse particle). It cannot appear with a case marker (e.g., *-lul*), as in (9a). It can appear with a semantic postposition (e.g., *-eykey*), as in (9b). And it cannot cooccur with another discourse particle (e.g., *-nun*), as in (9c) and (9d).

- (9) a. \*Amwu-**lul**-**to** amwu-ACC-TO  
 b. Amwu-**eykey**-**to** amwu-GOAL-TO  
 c. \*Amwu-**eykey**-**to**-**nun** amwu-GOAL-TO-TOP  
 d. \*Amwu-**eykey**-**nun**-**to** amwu-GOAL-TOP-TOP

Turning back to interpretations available for *amwu* and *nwukwu*, we see that they exhibit a contrast with respect to scope of NEG, such that *amwu-to* induces only a narrow scope reading (Neg>∃), suggesting that it is always in the scope of NEG, while *nwukwu-to* can have either narrow scope (Neg>∃) or wide scope (∃>Neg) readings as shown in (10). These facts suggest that *amwu* can have a valued [Neg] feature and that when it does it selects the postposition *-to*. In order for this [Neg] feature to be checked, *amwu* must be in the scope of NEG at LF. Due to this, *amwu* can only appear in NSI/NCI contexts and is an “absolute non-existential quantifier”. In contrast, *nwukwu* does not carry any inherent [Neg] feature, and thus can be either within the scope of NEG or outside of it. As a simple “existential quantifier”, it can also be, in Giannakidou’s (2008) terms, a “dependent existential quantifier” and involve indefinite/specific readings as shown in (11).

- (10) John-un {**amwu/nwukwu**}-to an cohahanta.  
 John-TOP amwu/who-TO not likes  
 ‘John doesn’t like anyone.’ (Neg>∃) **amwu/nwukwu**  
 ‘There is someone who John doesn’t like.’ (∃>Neg) \***amwu/nwukwu**
- (11) {**nwukwu**/**\*amwu**}-to **casinuy**<sub>i</sub> saken-eyse cayphankwan-i toylswuepsta  
 who/amwu-TO his case-in judge-NOM should.not.become  
 ‘Any indefinite/specific person should not become a judge in their own cause.’

We conclude from these facts that (i) *amwu* is a determiner which can take a null noun head referring to a person (parallel to Choi 2011), while *nwukwu* is a noun referring to a person *per se*, (ii) the particle *-to* has the same distribution as the topic or focus postposition *-(n)un*, and (iii) *amwu* is “absolute non-existential quantifier” which is only licit under negation, whereas *nwukwu* is an “existential quantifier” that can induce indefinite/specific readings as attested in (11).

## References

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