

# Inadequacy: Two different types of implications of -(n)un in Korean

SeYeon Park  
Department of Linguistics, The University of Texas at Austin  
seyeon.park@utexas.edu



## 1. Overview

- This paper investigates the various pragmatic inferences that Korean -(n)un gives rise to in different contexts – uncertainty, exhaustivity, and unwillingness.
- I will argue that:
  - These inferences can be taken to arise from a single conventionally encoded component: the **inadequacy implication**.
  - Three sub-implications arise when the context is specified with respect to the degree of speaker's knowledge, politeness, and willingness to be cooperative.

## 2. Literature review

- Previous discussions of -(n)un consider at least two different implications that -(n)un gives rise to.
- Exhaustivity implication:** the speaker is aware that all the other alternatives do not exceed the current proposition (J. Kim 2018, Lee 2003).
  - A: Do you have money?  
B: *na tongceon-un iss-e.*  
I coins-CT have-DECL  
'I have coins<sub>CT</sub>, (but not bills.)'
  - Uncertainty implication:** the speaker is uncertain about their information (Hara 2006, I. Kim 2018).  
A: Who came to the party?  
B: *JOHN-wa ki-ta.*  
John-TOP come-PST  
'As for John, he came.'  
⇒ Uncertainty implication: It is possible that it is not the case that John and Mary came.  
≈ I don't know about others.

- Attempts to account for these implications of -(n)un have taken these inferences to be either conventional (Hara 2006, J. Kim 2018, Lee 2003) or conversational (I. Kim 2018).
  - Conventional:** inferences are non-cancellable.  
(4) *?\*(2) ... kuriko cicen-un/-to iss-e.*  
and bill-CT/-also have-DECL  
'...and I have bills<sub>CT</sub>/also have bills.'

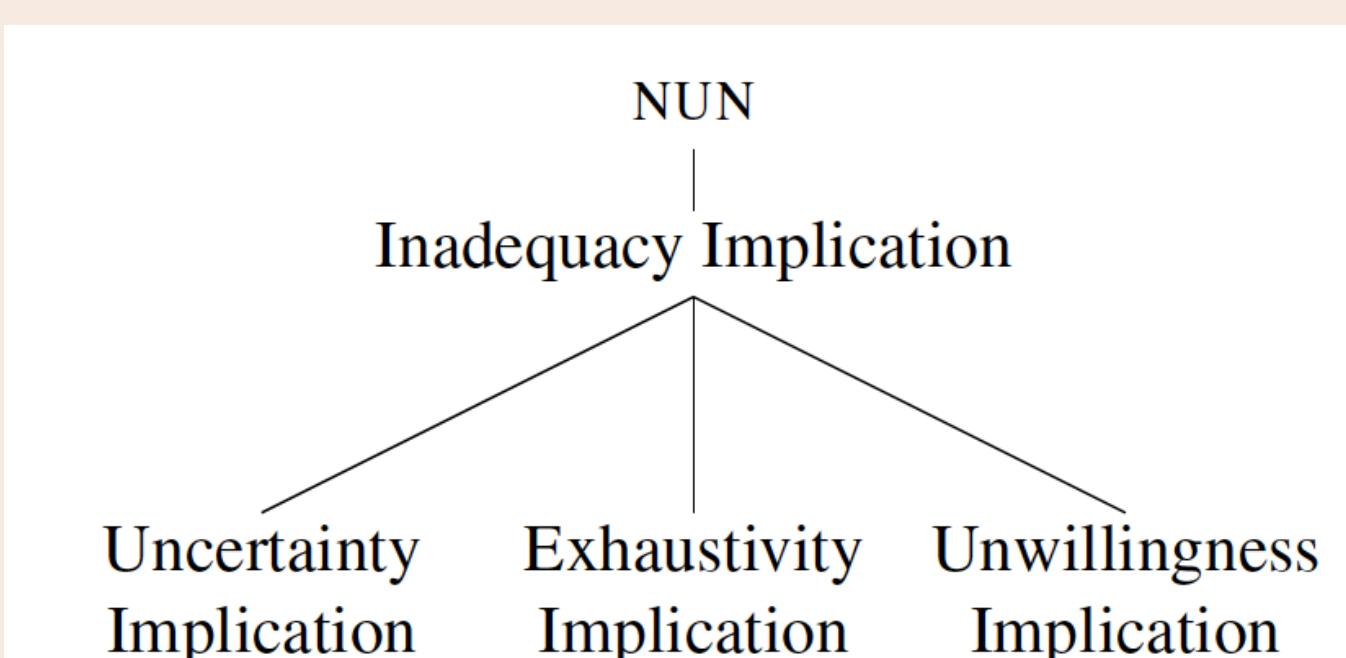
- Conversational:** inferences are cancellable.  
(5) *√(3) ... but I do not imply to mean that I don't know whether Mary came. I just don't want to let you know whether she came or not.*  
(I. Kim 2018)

## 3. Limitations of previous work

- The arguments used to support conventionality or conversationality of the inferences associated with -(n)un focus on different kinds of implications.
  - (2): (4) tries to cancel the conventional inference of -(n)un which I define as "inadequacy".
  - (3): (5) cancels the conversational uncertainty inference and provides a new context for unwillingness inference.
- Further proof:
  - (2): the conversational exhaustivity inference can be cancelled (e.g., by providing a context for unwillingness inference '... √but I do not imply to mean that I don't have bills. I just don't want to let you know whether I have bills or not.').
  - (3): the conventional inference of -(n)un cannot be cancelled (e.g., '... \*and Mary also came.').
- Thus, this seems to have led to contradictory judgements on the cancellability profile of -(n)un in previous literature.

## 4. Proposal: inadequacy

(6)



- I propose that -(n)un conventionally encodes "**inadequacy**", which is non-cancellable.
  - It implies incompleteness with respect to the information that is being shared by the speaker at the current state in discourse.
  - A -(n)un-marked sentence of the form "x-(n)un P" conventionally conveys that there are alternatives y to x such that the information that "y → P" is possibly relevant in the context but is not being provided by the speaker.
- [Context: Multiple people are expected to vote for X, Y, and Z. Speaker A does not know how many people voted for each candidate.]
  - A: Who voted for X?  
B: *swuci-lang sala-nun X ppop-ass-e.*  
Suji-and Sarah-NUN X vote.for-PST-DECL  
'Suji and Sarah voted for X.'
  - ⇒ **Inadequacy implication:** There is information that will not be shared about other possible voters, and information that is only currently accessible on who voted for X is 'Suji and Sarah'.  
b. (6a) ... # and Ina also voted for X.  
⇒ The inadequacy implication cannot be cancelled.
- In other words, -(n)un conveys that there is relevant information that will not be shared, and the hearer needs to reason about why this information is not being shared.
  - This gives rise to three contextually determined **sub-implications**.
  - Each sub-implication is cancellable, and contextual changes can easily give rise to different sub-implications (see section 5).

## 5. Sub-implications

- The inadequacy implication can be contextually enriched in three ways to the sub-implications. When the context is underspecified, it is in principle possible for any of the sub-implications to arise.
  - The particular context filters out the other two implications and gives rise to a single implication.
  - The context relies highly on the degree of speaker's knowledge on the context, but it also relies on politeness and willingness to be cooperative to the conversation.
- e.g., There is further information that will not be shared (i.e., the inadequacy implication in (6a)) because ...
  - When exhaustivity is blocked:** Speaker B only has information about 'Suji and Sarah' and no one else. There is a possibility that someone else other than 'Suji and Sarah' voted for X.  
⇒ **Uncertainty implication:** Speaker B does not know which candidate others voted for.
  - When uncertainty is blocked:** Speaker B has full information on the voters, and it is true that 'Suji and Sarah' are the only ones who voted for X. However, speaker B intends to indirectly convey this information due to politeness.  
⇒ **Exhaustivity implication:** The others did not vote for X.  
~ The others voted for Y or X, or The others did not vote at all.
  - When both exhaustivity and uncertainty are pragmatically blocked:** Speaker B has full information on the voters, but s/he is not willing to be cooperative. There is a possibility that someone else other than 'Sarah and Suji' voted for X.  
⇒ **Unwillingness implication:** Speaker B is not willing to share the information about the other voters.
- Cancellability: e.g., the uncertainty implication can be cancelled by further assuming the context where speaker B changes their mind to be non-cooperative to the conversation – '(6a) ... √In fact, I know which candidate others voted for. But I am not going to tell you.'

## 6. Theoretical implications

- This paper separates the types of implications that have been argued to support either conventionality or conversationality and shows that the inadequacy implication is conventional whereas sub-implications arise as conversational implicatures in context.
- It shows that the different sub-implications are not specified by -(n)un itself, but they rather arise from properties of the utterance context and assumptions about the speaker.

## References

Hara, Yurie. 2006. Implicature unsuspensionable: Japanese contrastive *wa*. *Proceedings of Texas Linguistics Society* 8. 35–45. Kim, Ilkyu. 2018. Is contrastive implicature induced by Korean ct-marking -(n)un conventional or conversational? *Korean Journal of Linguistics* 43(2). 223–247. Kim, Jieun. 2018. Deriving the contrastiveness of contrastive-nun in Korean. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 41(4). 457–482. Lee, Chungmin. 2003. Contrastive topic and/or contrastive focus. *Japanese/Korean Linguistics* 12. 352–364.