Some exceptional-scope indefinites: The case of anti-specificity marker wh-*inka* in Korean

Introduction Close parallels between wh-words and indefinite NPs are cross-linguistically pervasive and frequently observed in Korean and Japanese. In these languages, *wh*-words are termed as *wh-indeterminates* in the sense that they change their function depending on the particles they are associated with (Kuroda 1965; Kratzer and Shimoyama 2002; Shimoyama 2001, 2006). For example, in (1), Korean bare wh-indeterminate *nwukwu* 'who' combined with nominative marker *ka* induces the existential quantificational interpretation of 'someone'.

(1)   Nwukwu-ka o-ass-ta
        who-Nom   come-Past-Decl
        'Someone came.'

Traditionally, a shared common semantic property of indefinites has been subsumed under the label of *specificity*. However, the starting point of our discussion is that not all indefinites are created equal. We need distinctions of specificity to be more fine-grained than what is usually assumed. By introducing a particle -*inka*, I propose a novel argument that the overtly marked particle *inka* combined with wh-words (*wh-inka*, henceforth) and bare wh-indeterminates contribute different semantic effects where *inka* is claimed as an *anti-specificity marker*.

Data and puzzle Although the use of wh-*inka* appears to be akin to typical bare wh-indeterminates where wh-words plus *inka* give rise to existential quantification, a closer look reveals that wh-*inka* never induces specific interpretation, instead yielding non-specific readings implying the speaker's indifference in (2). Further, it never receives wh-question meaning and interrogatives of wh-*inka* are obligatorily interpreted as a yes-no question in (3):

(2)   Nwukwu-**inka**(-ka) o-ass-ta
        who-INKA-Nom   come-Past-Decl

        'Someone (I don't know or don't care to know) came.'

(3)   Taro-ka   mwues-**inka**(-lul) mek-ess-ni?
        Taro-Nom what-INKA-Acc   eat-Past-Q
        a.   'Did Taro eat something (I don't know or don't care to know)?'
        b.   ~~What did Taro eat?~~

This can be suggested as an obvious puzzle: How can we capture the speaker's indifference meaning induced by *inka*? and if *inka* is present in wh-words with interrogative marker *ni*, how do we explain why wh-words lose question meaning? As far as I know, the semantic function of wh-*inka* has not been studied. Immediate questions arise here: first, what is the role of wh-*inka*? Second, how is it different from bare wh-indeterminates?

Analysis I will first show that bare wh-indeterminates and wh-*inka* seems to share a semantic property, in the sense that (i) they are both indefinite (through the diagnosis of novelty condition and sluicing), and (ii) they have the same quantificational force where existential

quantifier is above negation ($\exists x \neg Q(x)$) which suggest a crucial evidence to distinguish it from other polarity sensitive items (e.g., Scopal interaction of PSIs: $\neg \exists x \, Q(x) \equiv \forall x \neg Q(x)$).

Yet, unlike bare wh-indeterminates, wh-*inka* is a "narrow scope" indefinite. This claim is supported by the following evidence: First, bare-whs arise with de re/de dicto interpretations while wh-*inka* does so with de dicto interpretation only. Second, the inference of wh-*inka* implies that the speaker is unable to identify the individual, whereas bare wh-indefinites do not. Crosslinguistically, an indefinite determiner *this*$_{ref}$ (Ionin 2006) is argued as an epistemic specificity marker, where (i) it does not take narrow scope with respect to intensional/modal operators, and (ii) an epistemic constraint of specificity involves a felicity condition encoding a certainty of the value of the indefinite in the speaker's mind. In contrast, the role of wh-*inka* is to encode the speaker's epistemic state regarding uncertainty. Based on the facts that (i) wh-*inka* is always taking narrow scope with respect to intensional/modal operators and (ii) it expresses a speaker's uncertainty about the referent of the indefinite, the evaluation of the meaning of *inka* should be the opposite of *this*$_{ref}$. Viewing it as the dual of specificity, I label *inka* an *anti-specificity marker*.

Of the several questions that anti-specificity poses, three main issues will be considered: The first issue concerns the environment of anti-specificity marker where wh-*inka* needs an anti-singleton domain (Alonso-Ovalle and Menéndez-Benito 2010). Second, the use of wh-*inka* involves the anti-specificity constraint restricting the distribution of wh-*inka* in contexts where their value is not fixed, following the 'referentially vagueness condition' (Giannakidou and Quer 2013). Third, this constraint requires non-exhaustive variation as opposed to exhaustive variation, which is the hallmark of other quantificational wh-indeterminates such as FCI. The truth condition of *inka* will come out as follows:

(4)   *inka* as an anti-specificity marker (à la Giannakidou and Quer 2013):
A sentence containing a referentially vague indefinite marker *inka* will have a truth value iff: $\exists w_1, w_2 \in W$: $[\![\text{wh-}inka]\!]^{w1} \neq [\![\text{wh-}inka]\!]^{w2}$; where wh-*inka* is the referentially vague variable.

I will further strengthen the point that the semantic effect of *inka* has been weakened from the question meaning which is reanalyzed as an exclusive disjunctive operator. My underlying hypothesis is that the quantificational readings of the combinations of wh-indeterminates and disjunctive morphemes are based on the logical equivalences between an infinite disjunction of terms and an existential quantifier. Further, my study not only shows the cases of anti-specificity providing crucial evidence of semantic parallelism in indefinite semantics between Korean, Greek, Spanish and modern Hebrew, four typologically unrelated languages, but also allows similar patterns that will not be hard to find in other languages.

Conclusions Thus far, I presented empirical data to show asymmetries between bare wh-indeterminates and wh-*inka*. By doing so, I will show that much can be gained by broadening our empirical perspective. Seen in this light, the ultimate purpose of this talk is to rethink indefiniteness. Answering this question will bring us closer to a more complete understanding of the semantics of indefinites in natural languages.

Selected References Giannakidou, A. and Quer, J. 2013. Exhaustive and non-exhaustive variation with free choice and referential vagueness: Evidence from Greek, Catalan, and Spanish. *Lingua.*