

Sentential negation and negative concord licensing in Chamorro*

Jake W. Vincent[†]
University of California, Santa Cruz

May 11, 2018
AFLA 25, Academia Sinica

GOALS

1. Describe how negative sentences are formed and when negative concord is licensed in **Chamorro** (Malayo-Polynesian subgroup; Mariana Islands).
2. Discuss a way of accounting for the patterns via syntactic mechanisms.

PROBLEM

- Morphologically negative subjects in an A-position can't signal sentential negation (in contrast to some other negative concord languages), nor can they be negative concord elements (N-WORDS, after Laka 1990).

PROPOSED SOLUTION

1. **N-words in Chamorro never contribute semantic negation** (Ladusaw 1992; Zeijlstra 2008), and must be syntactically licensed by an interpretable negative operator that occurs on V, T, or C.
2. **The closest available negative operator to subject position is in C**, which must have its specifier filled by an N-word in order to express negation.

Outline

- | | |
|---|---|
| §1: Introduction | §4: Negative concord as an Agree relation |
| §2: Three routes to sentential negation | §5: Conclusion |
| §3: Negative concord licensing | |

*Acknowledgements: Thanks are due to Sandy Chung, Jim McCloskey, and Maziar Toosarvandani for discussions of this work. Un dangkulu na si Yu'us ma'âsi' (big thanks) to Bernie Sablan and Dr. Elizabeth Rechebei for sharing their knowledge of Chamorro in the course of this project. Any errors or gaps in reasoning are completely my own.

[†]Email: jwvincen@ucsc.edu Website: <https://people.ucsc.edu/~jwvincen>

1 Introduction

- **NEGATIVE CONCORD:** A sentence with multiple morphologically negative elements expresses a single semantic negation.
 - ▷ **S-structure requirement:** The semantically empty negative elements must be c-commanded by a semantically potent expression of negation at s-structure. (Ladusaw 1992)
- In Chamorro, N-words are formed by attaching the negative marker *ni* to an indefinite DP (1).

(1) CHAMORRO

Ti ya'-hu i sabot-ña ni hâfa na sitbesa.
NEG like-AGR the flavor-POSS NEG any LK beer
'I don't like the flavor of any beer.'

(BPS, 933)

(2) NON-STANDARD ENGLISH

Maria didn't say nothing to nobody.
Maria did.not say NEG.thing to NEG.person
'Maria didn't say anything to anybody.'

(Ladusaw 1992, p. 1)

(3) ITALIAN

Mario non ha parlato di niente con nessuno.
Mario NEG has speak of NEG.thing with NEG.person
'Mario hasn't spoken with anyone about anything.'

(Ladusaw 1992, p. 1)

- In a number of negative concord languages, morphologically negative subjects are capable of signaling sentential negation (and licensing N-words).

(4) a. NON-STANDARD ENGLISH

Nobody talked to Mary.
NEG.person talked to Mary
'Nobody talked to Mary.'

(Ladusaw 1992, p. 5)

- b. Nobody said nothing to nobody.
NEG.person said NEG.thing to NEG.person
'Nobody said anything to anybody.'

(Ladusaw 1992, p. 1)

(5) a. ITALIAN

Nessuno ha telefonato.
NEG.person has called
'Nobody has called.'

(Zeijlstra 2008, p. 31)

- b. Nessuno ha detto niente.
NEG.person has said NEG.thing
'Nobody has said anything.'

(Zeijlstra 2008, p. 45)

- (6) a. **SPANISH**
Nadie ha visto a Pedro.
 NEG.person has seen Pedro
 ‘Nobody saw Pedro.’ (Giannakidou 2006, p. 23)
- b. Nadie dijo nada.
 NEG.person said NEG.thing
 ‘Nobody said anything.’ (Giannakidou 2006, p. 20)
- (7) a. **CATALAN**
Ningú ha vist en Pere.
 NEG.person has seen Pedro
 ‘Nobody saw Pedro.’ (Giannakidou 2006, p. 26)
- b. Ningú va dir res.
 NEG.person AUX.3SG say NEG.thing
 ‘Nobody said anything.’ (Giannakidou 2006, p. 21)
- In contrast, negative indefinite subjects in an A-position in Chamorro *cannot* supply sentential negation (8a) and cannot license N-words. (Chung 1998, pp. 96, 385)
 - ▷ External argument subjects generally must be specific in Chamorro, so one might think this is because negative indefinites cannot be specific...
 - ▷ But even when the conditions are right for this constraint to be evaded (e.g. if an individual level predicate’s subject has a possessor (Chung 2008)), the subject still cannot supply sentential negation (8a).
- (8) a. *Måolik ni hâyiyi ha’ na lahi-n Dolores, sa’...
 good NEG any.EMPH EMPH LK son-LK Dolores because
 (None of Dolores’s sons are nice, because...) (BPS, 1034)
- b. Ti måolik hâyî na lahi-n Dolores, sa’...
 NEG good any LK son-LK Dolores because
 ‘None of Dolores’s sons are nice, because...’ (BPS, 1031)
- Why can’t negative subjects signal sentential negation in Chamorro?
 - ▷ Are Chamorro subjects too low in the clause to signal sentential negation?
 - * When subjects remain low in certain Romance languages, they cannot signal sentential negation, and must co-occur with another (higher) expression of negation (9).
 - * Subjects that haven’t undergone WH-movement in Chamorro surface in Spec, TP—arguably where the subjects are in (4-7).¹

1. See, Laka (1990) and Ladusaw (1992), though, for arguments that the negative subjects in examples like (4-7) are in the specifier of a polarity phrase that is slightly higher (string-vacuously) than Spec,TP.

- (9) ***(No)** comió **nadie**.
 NEG 3SG.ate NEG.person
 'Nobody ate.'
- (10) **Nadie** (***no**) comió.
 NEG.person NEG 3SG.ate
 'Nobody ate.' (Ladusaw 1992)

▷ Is negation too high in Chamorro for subjects to supply sentential negation?

* Plausibly, but this would predict that subjects should be able to be N-words, **which is not borne out** (11).

- (11) a. ***Ti** ha akka' yu' [**ni** hãfafa ha'].
 NEG AGR bite me not anything EMPH
 (Nothing bit me.) (Chung in preparation, p. 11, ch. 17)
- b. ***Ti** yinilang [**ni** un guma' pãtdit] nu i taifun.
 NEG PASS.destroy not a house.LK concrete OBL the typhoon
 (No concrete house was destroyed by the typhoon.)
 (Chung in preparation, pp. 11-12, ch. 17)
- c. ?***Ti** âguaguat [**ni** hãiyi ha' na patgon-ña si Dolores.]
 NEG naughty NEG anyone.EMPH EMPH LK child-AGR UNM Dolores
 (No child of Dolores's was naughty.)
 (Chung in preparation, p. 12, ch. 17)

MAIN QUESTION

What is the nature of sentential negation and negative concord licensing in Chamorro, such that negative subjects cannot signal sentential negation (without being focused) **and** cannot be N-words?

2 Three routes to sentential negation

- A sentence can be made negative in one of three ways in Chamorro:

1. By using the sentential negation marker *ti*.
2. By using an inherently negative verb.
3. By focusing a negative indefinite (via WH-movement).

2.1 Negative marker *ti*

- *ti* occurs immediately before an instantiation of the category T(ense) (12).
- If there is nothing overt in T, *ti* occurs before the inflected verb (13) or pre-verbal adverbs.

- (12) a. Ti para u fattu i istudianti gi klas...
 NEG FUT AGR arrive the student LOC class
 'The student will not come to class...' (BPS, 265)
- b. Ti ginin tumátangis gui'.
 NEG IMPF AGR.cry.PROG she
 'She had not been crying.' (Chung 1998, p. 93)
- (13) Ti hu dedekkis i tamma' siha tarabiha.
 NEG AGR cause.to.hit.PROG the marbles PL still
 'I haven't struck the marbles yet.' (CD: *dekkis*)

- I assume that *ti* realizes inherent negative features on T (with Chung (1998)), rather than being a separate Neg/Pol projection above T.
 - ▷ Subjects always scope outside of negation (so negation must not have Spec, TP in its c-command domain).

2.2 Negative verbs

- Several verbs are inherently negative and supply sentential negation without the need for other negative markers.
 - ▷ *tâya'* 'not exist', *tai* 'not have', *taigui* 'not be (in a location)'
 - ▷ *cha'* 'better not/don't', *munnga* 'don't (imperative)'
- Some of these verbs have corresponding positive versions (14-16).

- (14) a. TÂYA'
Tâya' taotao gi giput.
 NEG.exist person LOC party
 'There were no people at the party.' (BPS, 967)
- b. GUAHA
 Guaha bula taotao gi
 exist many person LOC
 giput.
 party
 'There were *many* people at the party.' (BPS, 960)
- (15) a. TAI
Tai salâppi' yu'.
 NEG.have money I
 'I don't have any money.' (CD: *tai*)
- b. GAI
 Gai guma' yu'.
 have house I
 'I have a house.' (CD: *gai*)
- (16) a. TAIGUI
Taigui i paneta-n
 NEG.be.in.place the deck-LK
 i boti.
 the boat
 'The deck of the boat is missing.' (CD: *paneta*)
- b. GAIGI
 Gaigi i batku gi
 be.in.place the ship LOC
 pantalân.
 wharf
 'The ship is at the wharf.' (CD: *pantalân*)

- Negative versions of these verbs realize interpretable negative features present on V.
 - ▷ Negative verbs can be combined with the sentential negator *ti* to produce a doubly-negated sentence (17).

- (17) Ti para u tāya' tāotao gi giput.
 NEG FUT AGR NEG.exist person LOC party
 'There won't not be people at the party' (BPS, 972)
 → 'There will be people at the party.'
 Speaker comment: "You're making an assurance that there's gonna be people at the party."

2.3 Focused negative indefinites

- Negative indefinites that are syntactically focused can signal sentential negation without any other negative markers being present.
 - ▷ Focus in Chamorro involves movement to Spec, CP (Chung 1998, ch. 7).²
 - The focused negative indefinite can be a variety of arguments:
 - ▷ Subject (18)
 - ▷ Object (19)
 - ▷ Indirect object (20)
 - ▷ Adjunct (21)
- (18) [Ni hāyiyi] gumuaiya hit.
 not anyone WH.AGR.love us
 'Nobody (even) likes us.' (EDR, 544)
- (19) [Ni hāfa na premiu] hu risibi.
 NEG any LK award AGR receive
 'I didn't receive any award at all.' (CD: *ni hāfa*)
- (20) [Ni unu na pātgun] hu nā'i ni hāfafa ha' gi kumpliaños-ña.
 not one LK child AGR give not anything EMPH LOC birthday-AGR
 'I didn't give a single child anything on his birthday.' (BPS, 898)
- (21) [Ni mǎnu] nai siña mamāhan yu' pugua'.
 NEG anywhere COMP can AGR.AP.buy I betelnut
 'There's nowhere I can buy betelnut.' (CD: *ni mǎnu*)

2. Evidence that focused phrases undergo movement to Spec, CP include that they occur to the left of preverbal topics; that they trigger WH-agreement, which only occurs with long-distance movement dependencies; and that focus movement gives rise to island effects.

2.4 Combining these methods results in multiple negation

- None of these ways of expressing negation are dependent on each other
- Co-occurrence of two of the above ways of negating a sentence → multiple sentential negations
 - ▷ *ti* can co-occur with negative verbs (17, repeated below) to create double negation.

- (17) Ti para u tāya' tāotao gi giput.
NEG FUT AGR NEG.exist person LOC party
'There will be people at the party' (BPS, 972)

- ▷ Focused negative indefinites can co-occur with *ti* (22) to create double negation.

- (22) [Ni un tāotao] ti kumåti.
not a person NEG WH.AGR.cry
'Not a one didn't cry.'
(→ 'Everyone cried.') (Chung in preparation, p. 6, ch. 17)

- ▷ Focused negative indefinites can co-occur with a negative verb (23) to create double negation.

- (23) [Ni un tāotao] tai ginatdun gi lina'la'-ñiha.
NEG a person NEG.have hardship LOC life-3PL.POSS
'Not even one person doesn't have a hardship in their lives.'
(→ 'Everyone has a hardship in their lives.') (CD: *ginatdun*)

2.5 Interim summary

- Sentential negation can be provided in three different ways
 - ▷ Using the sentential negation marker *ti* (negative features in T)
 - ▷ Using a negative verb (negative features in V)
 - ▷ Focusing a negative indefinite (negative features in ???)

3 Negative concord licensing

- Phrases exhibiting negative concord (N-WORDS) are licensed when c-commanded by *ti*, a negative verb, or a focused negative indefinite.

(24) N-WORDS LICENSED BY ti

- a. Ti hu bisita ni hăiyi ha'.
 NEG AGR visit not anyone EMPH
 'I didn't visit anyone. (Chung in preparation, p. 7, ch. 17)
- b. Ti ma patti si Kiko' ni un grănu na guihan.
 NEG AGR share.with UNM Kiko' not a bit LK fish
 'They didn't give Kiko' even one bit of fish. (CD: *ni un grănu*)
- c. Ti ha tokcha' [kalulut ni hăyi] i gaddu'.
 NEG AGR poke finger.LK not anyone the wild.yam
 'The thorny wild yam didn't poke anyone's finger.'
 (Chung in preparation, p. 9, ch. 17)

(25) N-WORDS LICENSED BY NEGATIVE VERBS

- a. Tăya' ni unu para u kinentra esti.
 NEG.exist NEG one FUT AGR PASS.oppose this
 'There isn't anyone who is going to challenge this. (*Ginin i Ubispu* 9/8/13)
- b. Tăya' ni hăyi esta um-aligagayi kinanno'-ña.
 NEG.exist NEG anyone already WH.AGR-find.for.PROG food-AGR
 'There was no one whatsoever looking for her food anymore.'
 (Cooreman 1983, p. 126)
- c. Lao tăya' ni unu ma-arienda nu esti na tănu'.
 but NEG.exist NEG one PASS-lease OBL that LK land
 'But to nobody, none at all, were these lands leased to.'
 (Cooreman 1983, p. 54)

(26) N-WORDS LICENSED BY FOCUSED NEGATIVE INDEFINITES

- a. [Ni unu na pătgun] hu nă'i ni hăfafa ha' gi
 NEG one LK child AGR give NEG anything.EMPH EMPH LOC
 kumpliaños-ña.
 birthday-AGR
 'Not one child did I gave anything to on his birthday.' (BPS, 898)
- b. [Ni hăfa ha'] siña ta cho'gui ni taimanu para ta
 NEG anything EMPH can AGR do NEG any.way FUT AGR
 na'-maguf gui'.
 CAUS-happy her
 'Nothing can we do in any way to make her happy.' (Chung 1998, p. 95)

4 Analysis

REMINDER:

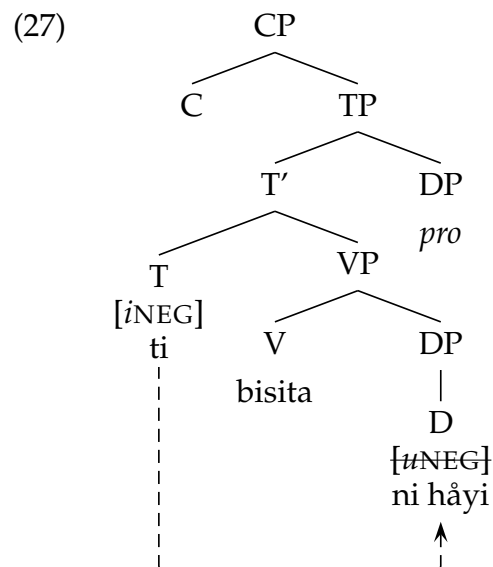
- Why can't subjects signal sentential negation from Spec, TP?

- Why can't subjects be an N-word in Spec, TP?
- Why do negative subjects have to move to Spec, CP in order to signal sentential negation?

4.1 Proposal

- Negative indefinites in Chamorro never express interpretable negation, even when they are syntactically focused.
 - ▷ *ni* realizes [*u*NEG] feature in D
- Interpretable sentential negation occurs as a feature on certain heads in the extended projection of the predicate.
 - ▷ Negative verbs realize [*i*NEG] feature in *v*/V
 - ▷ Sentential negation marker *ti* realizes [*i*NEG] feature in T
- Any head with an [*i*NEG] feature can license an N-word in its c-command domain
 - ▷ Licensing occurs via Agree, which checks the [*u*NEG] features of the negative indefinite (24a, repeated below).

(24a) Ti hu bisita ni hăyiyi ha'.
 NEG AGR visit not anyone EMPH
 'I didn't visit anyone.'



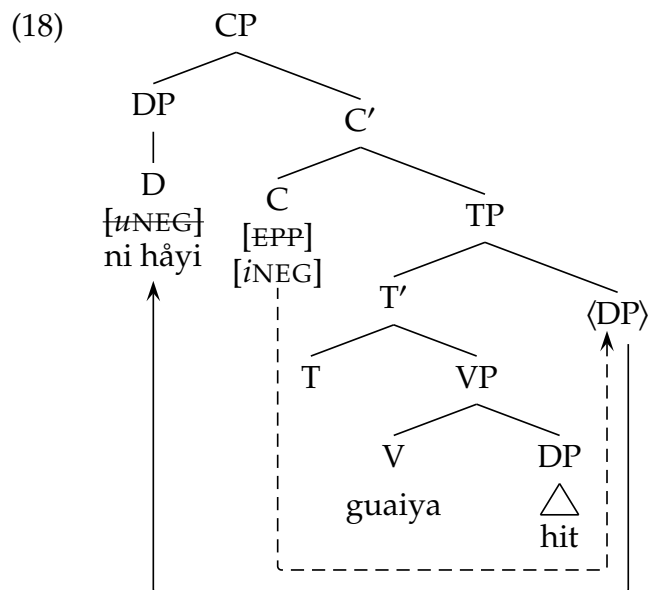
- Sentences with multiple N-words (28) and one negative operator involve Multiple Agree.

- (28) Ti mu-na'-hanao ni hãfafa ha' ni para hãiyi
 NEG AGR-CAUS-AP.go NEG anything.EMPH EMPH NEG for anyone.EMPH
 ha'.
 EMPH
 'Antonio didn't sent anything to anyone.' (Chung in preparation, p. 7)

4.2 The subject puzzle

- We can now explain the inability for subjects to be N-words:
 - ▷ If the [*i*NEG] probe is on T, then subjects in Spec, TP are not in the c-command domain of the probe and should not be able to be licensed.
 - ▷ If subjects are generated low (Spec, *v*P), why can't N-word subjects be licensed before they raise?
 - * Multiple probes associated with T, including one for φ -agreement, and another for negation.
 - * φ -agreement probe, which I assume triggers movement to Spec, TP, is active before the negation probe.
- How are subjects able to signal sentential negation when syntactically focused?
 - ▷ C is one of the heads in the extended projection that can have interpretable negation features.
 - ▷ In order for this C to be interpreted, it must have its EPP feature satisfied by a DP with a [*u*NEG] feature.

- (18) [Ni hãiyi] gumuaiya hit.
 not anyone WH.AGRlike us
 'Nobody (even) likes us.' (EDR, 544)



4.3 Predictions

4.3.1 ... for subjects

- If the fronting of a negative indefinite coincides with Focus, and if the [*u*NEG] probe on C participates in Multiple Agree, a negative indefinite subject should be licensed under the condition that it is another negative indefinite that is F-marked.
- Once the F-marked negative indefinite has raised to Spec, CP, the [*i*NEG] probe on C will continue looking for [*u*NEG] features until it can't find any.
 - ▷ In principle, there is no reason (to my knowledge) why this couldn't be a subject, as long as the conditions are right for the subject to be indefinite.
 - ▷ (29) was reported to be acceptable by the one speaker I asked, though more thorough investigation is needed.

- (29) [Ni para hãfafa ha' na cho'chu'] kualifikáo ni hãyiyi
NEG for anything.EMPH EMPH LK job qualified NEG anyone.EMPH
ha' na lahi-n Dolores.
EMPH LK son-LK Dolores.
'For no job are any of Dolores's sons qualified.'
(BPS, 994)

4.3.2 ... for the c-command s-structure constraint

- The analysis also suggests that the apparent c-command constraint on N-words is not a condition on the output, but could fall out from the mechanism of Agree.
 - ▷ Focused negative indefinites are no longer c-commanded by the negative operator in C at the end of the derivation.
 - ▷ C-command holds most of the time because probes can only look into their c-command domain.

5 Conclusions

- Chamorro doesn't allow subjects in an A-position to express sentential negation or to be an N-word.
- N-words never express semantically potent negation in Chamorro
 - ▷ There are no negative quantifiers or DP-level morphemes that contribute a negative operator to the interpretation of a sentence.
- Interpretable negation occurs on C, T, or *v*/V heads, and this negation acts as a probe that licenses N-words via Agree.
 - ▷ Syntax enforcing scope relations between negation and scopally active elements in the sentence.
- The C probe has no overt realization, but is only licit if its EPP feature is satisfied by a DP with [*u*NEG].

References

- Chung, Sandra (in preparation). "Chamorro reference grammar". Ms., University of California, Santa Cruz.
- (1998). *The design of agreement: Evidence from Chamorro*. University of Chicago Press.
- (2008). "Possessors and Definiteness Effects in Two Austronesian Languages". In: *Quantification : A cross-linguistic perspective*. Ed. by Lisa Matthewson. Vol. 64. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 179–224.
- Cooreman, Ann (1983). *Chamorro Texts*.
- Giannakidou, Anastasia (2006). "N-Words and Negative Concord". In: *The Blackwell Companion to Syntax*. Ed. by Martin Everaert. Vol. 3. August. Blackwell Publishers. Chap. 45, pp. 327–391. ISBN: 9781405114851. DOI: 10.1002/9780470996591.ch45.
- Ladusaw, William A. (1992). "Expressing negation". In: *Proceedings of the 2nd Semantics and Linguistic Theory Conference (SALT)*, pp. 237–260. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3765/salt.v2i0.3030>.
- Laka, Miren Itziar (1990). "Negation in Syntax: On the Nature of Functional Categories and Projections". PhD thesis. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Zeijlstra, Hedde (2008). "Negative Concord is Syntactic Agreement". Ms., University of Amsterdam.