

Negative ... Concord or Polarity?: Rethinking the NCI/NPI Partition from Okinawan

1. NCIs vs. NPIs Vallduví (1994) examined behaviors of negative-sensitive items (NSIs) (Miyagawa et al. 2016, Giannakidou and Zeijlstra 2017) and proposed four diagnostic tests (1a)–(1d) to distinguish Negative Concord Items (NCIs) and Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). Giannakidou (2000) further added clause-boundedness (1e) to the list. For example, *any* in English (e.g. *Do you want anything?*) is diagnosed as NPI, while *n*-words such as *nada* in Spanish (e.g. *¿*Quieres nada?* ‘Do you want anything?’) and indeterminate-based NSIs in Japanese (e.g. **Nani-mo hosii?* ‘Do you want anything?’) are diagnosed as NCI.

(1) Diagnostic Tests for NCI vs. NPI and Typological Data (cf. Vallduví 1994, Giannakidou 2000)

	NCI	NPI	English _{any}	Spanish _{n-words}	Japanese _{wh-mo}	Okinawan _{wh-n}
a. Non-negative	*	✓	✓	*	*	✓
b. Pre-negative	✓	*	*	✓	✓	✓
c. Modifiability	✓	*	*	✓	✓	✓
d. Fragment Answer	✓	*	*	✓	✓	✓
e. Long-distance	*	✓	✓	*	*	✓

A number of works that follow have adopted this generalization and extended it further (Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, 1996, Haegeman 1995, Watanabe 2004, Miyagawa et al. 2016, Giannakidou and Zeijlstra 2017, among others). I argue, however, that this generalization is not typologically valid. Building on my fieldwork studies on Okinawan, an endangered language spoken in the Shuri/Naha area in the mainland Okinawa, Japan, I show that the alleged NCI/NPI partition must be questioned and propose a new partition.

2. The Morphosyntax of Negative-Sensitive Items in Okinawan Okinawan has a so-called indeterminate system, just as Japanese does (see Kuroda 1965, 2013, Watanabe 2004, Shimoyama 2008, Hiraiwa 2015, 2017, Saito 2017 for Japanese). Each of the five indefinite pronouns in Okinawan shares an indeterminate pronoun, and different quantificational particles ($\emptyset/n/gana/yati-n$) determine their semantics (see (2)–(3)).

(2) The Indeterminate System in Okinawan

Indeterminate	Wh	Universal	NSI	Existential	Free Choice
<i>who</i> : taa	taa-CASE	taa-CASE- n	taa- n	taa ⁷ - gana -CASE	taa- yati-n
<i>what</i> : nuu	nuu-CASE	nuu-CASE- n	nuu- n	nuu ⁷ - gana -CASE	nuu- yati-n
<i>where</i> : maa	maa-CASE	maa-CASE- n	maa- n	maa ⁷ - gana -CASE	maa- yati-n

- (3) a. Taa-ga choo-ta ga?
who-Nom come-Past Q
‘Who came?’ (Wh-Question)
- b. Taa-ga-**n** chuu sa.
who-Nom-N come Sfp
‘Everyone will come.’ (Universal)
- c. Taa-**n** kuu-n-tan.
who-N come-Neg-Past
‘No one came.’ (NSI)
- d. Taa-**gana**-ga chan.
who-GANA-Nom come.Past
‘Someone came.’ (Existential)

3. NSIs in Okinawan are neither NCIs nor NPIs As the data in (4a)–(4d) show, however, the pattern that Okinawan NSIs show does not fall under the predicted patterns of NCIs or NPIs. They pattern with NPIs in that they can appear in non-negative contexts such as questions and conditionals (4a) and can be licensed at a distance (4d). On the other hand, they pattern with NCIs in that they can be modified by an adverb (4b), precede negation (4b), and can appear as a fragment answer (4c). This is not predicted by the long-standing generalization in (1a)–(1e). Note that it cannot be explained even if we assume that NSIs in Okinawan are syntactically ambiguous between NCIs and NPIs.

- (4) a. Taa-**n** chuu mi?
who-N come Q
‘Will anyone come?’ (✓Non-neg contexts)
- b. (Ansuka) taa-**n** kuu-n-tan.
almost who-N come-Neg-Past
‘(Lit.) Almost no one came.’ (✓Modification)
(✓Pre-neg position)

- c. (Nnn.) taa-**n**. (as an answer to (4a))
 No who-N
 ‘(No,) no one.’ (✓Fragment Answer)
- d. Wannee, [_{CP} taa-**n** chuun chee], umu-ran.
 1Sg.Top who-N come C-Top think-Neg.Pres
 ‘I don’t think that anyone will come.’
 (✓Long-distance licensing)

4. A New Partition Watanabe (2004) argues that NCIs have, but NPIs lack, a neg-feature, which explains why they can be used as a fragment answer without sentential negation. He proposes that NCIs in Japanese and Greek have an uninterpretable focus feature that makes them active for Agree with a Neg head. He goes on to argue that stress in Greek NCIs is a PF-realization of this feature and so is the additive particle *mo* in Japanese NCIs, as shown in (5)–(6).

- (5) a. Q: Ti idhes?
 what saw-2SG
 ‘What did you see?’
 b. A: TIPOTA.
 nothing
 ‘Nothing.’
- (6) a. Q: Nani-o mi-ta no?
 what-Acc see-Past Q
 ‘What did you see?’
 b. A: Nani-mo.
 what-MO
 ‘Nothing.’

The presence of focus morphology in Japanese concord items is an indication of an uninterpretable focus feature, which requires checking with a Neg head, and hence blocks occurrence in nonnegative contexts (Watanabe 2004, 593). Furthermore, the scalar focus particle meaning *also/even* can participate in checking only when it is part of the indeterminate system exemplified by Japanese (Watanabe 2004, 600). This explains why Hindi NSIs behave as NPIs, even though they are associated with the focus particle *bhii also/even*.

- (7) a. Q: raam-ne kyaa khaayaa?
 Ram-Erg what ate
 ‘What did Ram eat?’
 b. A: *kuch bhii.
 anything BHII
 ‘Nothing.’

But as (2) has already shown, (i) Okinawan NSIs are based on an indeterminate system, just Japanese NSIs are, and (ii) the particles *n* in Okinawan and *mo* in Japanese mean *also/even*. Therefore, Watanabe’s explanation comes up short here.

Rather, the data in table (1) lead us to envisage a new perspective. The non-negative diagnostics (1a) and the long-distance diagnostics (1e) correlate. Thus, it is plausible to think that they form a cluster. On the other hand, the modifiability diagnosis (1c) and the fragment answer diagnosis (1d) form another cluster. Thus, we are led to a new partition based on these two clusters (Note that I am carefully excluding the pre-negative diagnostic test (1b) here, because whether or not NSIs can appear in pre-negative position seems to be a unreliable diagnostic test for determining the status of NSIs, given recent reports on Gã (Korsah and Murphy 2017), Ewe (Collins et al. 2017), and Buli (Akanlig-Pare and Hiraiwa 2018)).

(8) A New Partition of NSIs

NSI type	Cluster 1 _{non-neg/long-distance}	Cluster 2 _{modifiability/fragment answer}
Type 1: Okinawan	✓	✓
Type 2: Japanese, Spanish, W. Flemish	*	✓
Type 3: English, Hindi, Buli	✓	*
Type 4: Gã, (Ewe)	*	*

As far as I know, there are no NSIs that can be a fragment answer but cannot be modified. Neither are there NSIs that can be licensed in non-negative contexts, but requires local negation. Finally, the new partition in (8) predicts the fourth type of NSIs, which is only licensed by local negation and cannot be modified or used as a fragment answer. According to the data discussed in Collins et al. (2017) and Korsah and Murphy (2017), this last type is indeed exemplified by Ewe and Gã, known as Strong/Strict NPIs.

Selected References: Giannakidou, A. 2000. Negative . . . concord? *NLLT* 18:457–523. Giannakidou, A., and H. Zeijlstra. 2017. The landscape of negative dependencies. In *The Wiley Blackwell companion to syntax (2nd edition)*, Wiley-Blackwell. Haegeman, L., and R. Zanuttini. 1996. Negative concord in West Flemish. In *Parameters and functional heads*, 117–179. OUP. Vallduví, E. 1994. Polarity items, n-words and minimizers in Catalan and Spanish. *Probus* 6:263–294. Watanabe, A. 2004. The genesis of negative concord: Syntax and morphology of negative doubling. *LI* 35(4):559–612.