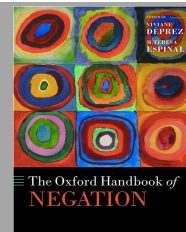# Drawing the limits between Negative Polarity and Negative Concord

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The Oxford Handbook of NEGATION

GOALS

i. To focus on the limits between Polarity Licensing (PL) and Negative Concord (NC)
ii. To understand the differences between Polarity Items (PIs) and Negative Concord Items (NCIs)
iii. To evaluate some contrasts between Basque, Hindi, English and some Romance languages

SOME DATA

SPANISH

(1) a. **No** vino **nadie**.
     not came anybody
   b. **Nadie** vino.
     nobody came
     'Nobody came'
     (Laka 1990:107 ex(23))
   c. *Vino **nadie**.
     came nobody
   d. **Nadie** **no** vino.
     nobody not came
     'Nobody didn't come'

CATALAN

(2) **Ningú** (**no**) pensa **res**.
   nobody not think anything
   'Nobody thinks anything'

BASQUE

(3)a. *Inork   hori erosi du.
     anybody that buy aux
   b. **Ez** du **inork**   hori erosi.
     not aux anybody that buy
   c. **Inork**   **ez** du hori erosi.
     anybody not aux that buy
     'Nobody bought that'

QUESTIONS / HYPOTHESES / PREDICTIONS

QUESTIONS

Q1. What is the difference, if any, between these negative sentences? Do they show the same phenomenon?
No. Cat and Spa show NC. Basque PL

Q2. Under what conditions an indefinite expression can be said to behave as a PI or as an NCI?
PIs require a semantic licensor that must be overt.
NCIs require a syntactic licensor that can be covert

Q3. Are Basque PIs NCIs, which would be a requirement for Basque being a Strict NC language (Etxepare 2003, Etxeberria et al. 2018)?
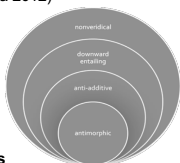*Basque i-indefinites are not NCIs. Not an NC lang.*

HYPOTHESES AND PREDICTIONS

H1. A distinction must be made between:
(i) PL, output of semantic dependency (Giannakidou 1998)
(ii) NC, output of syntactic Agree (Zeijlstra 2004)

H2. (i) Whereas NCIs can trigger a Last Resort Operator (Zeijlstra 2004), **in negative contexts PIs always need an overt licensor**

P1. PIs without a licensor should be considered ungrammatical and give rise to low acceptability ratings
P2. PIs without a negative licensor should give rise to existential non-negative readings

(ii) Whereas NCIs behave like NPIs (Laka 1990), **not all NPIs are NCIs**

H3. Basque does not have NCIs, and therefore it is not a Strict NC language

POLARITY LICENSING vs NEGATIVE CONCORD. Background

POLARITY LICENSING

Semantic dependency (Giannakidou 1997)

Hierarchy of polarity contexts (Zwarts 1995, Hoeksema 2012)

nonveridical
downward entailing
anti-additive
antimorphic

Units: PIs

NEGATIVE CONCORD

Negative spread or **negative doubling** yielding only one logical negation (Labov 1972; Den Besten 1986, 1989; Van der Wouden & Zwarts 1993)

Strict vs Non-Strict NC (Giannakidou 1997, in press; Zeijlstra 2004)

Units: n-words (Laka 1990) or **NCIs**

Crucial:
- NCIs can provide negative fragment answers
- NCIs allow double negation readings

ANALYSIS

1. Competition among lexical variants at the time of lexical insertion
- languages that only have PIs (Basque, Hindi)
- languages that have both PIs and NQs (English)
- languages that have both PIs and NCIs, but the latter are only used in neg contexts (Greek, Romanian)
- languages that have PIs, NCIs, plus minimizers that behave either as PIs or as NCIs (Cat, Sp)

	BASQUE	HINDI	ENGLISH
PIs	✓	✓	✓
NQs	✗	✗	✓

BASQUE & HINDI: Lack of a NQ series explains that PIs may occur in pre-negative position with a single negation reading

ENGLISH: NQ series is chosen in pre-negative position and in fragment answers.

Strict NC
- **Greek** has non-emphatic PIs (e.g., *tipota*) distinct from emphatic NCIs (e.g., *TIPOTA*) (Giannakidou 1997, 2000).
- **Romanian** has a PI series (e.g., *vreun*) distinct from an NCI series (e.g., *nimeni*) used exclusively in neg contexts (Fălăuş 2013).

Hybrid Strict and Non-strict NC:
- **Hungarian** has, in addition to a PI series (Kiss 2015), two series of NCIs (*nikto, senki*) that can combine with the preverbal neg markers *nem* 'not' and *sem* 'nor'. *Nem* only occurs preverbally, *sem* may also accompany NCIs in postverbal position (Surányi 2006, Szabolcsi 2018).

Non-strict NC:
- **Catalan & Spanish** have dedicated PIs (*gaire*; N *alguno*), PIs/NCIs (*ningú*), NCIs (*nadie*), and minimizers (with and without *ni*, e.g. (*ni*) *un alma* lit. not even a soul). Only NCIs and minimizers with *ni* can occur preverbally and as fragment answers.

2. Being an NCI entails being an NPI, but not the other way around:
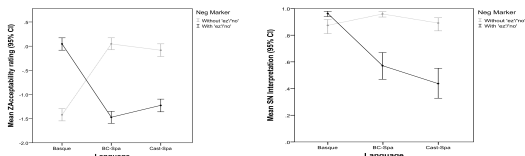- PIs encode a [+σ] semantic feature (cf. Chierchia 2006)
- NCIs additionally encode a [uNEG] syntactic feature (Zeijlstra 2004)
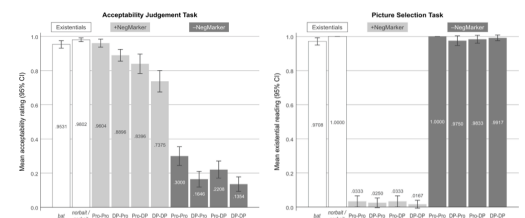
Laka's (1990) hypothesis revisited:
NCIs are a subset of PIs: they encode [+σ] plus [uNEG]

3. Experimental Studies

Basque NPIs and Spanish NCIs (Etxeberria et al. 2018)

Basque NPIs with and without *ez* (Etxeberria et al. 2021)

PROPERTIES OF NEGATIVE INDEFINITES

BASQUE i-indefinites

1. Inor, ezer, etc. cannot negate a sentence:
a. *Inork   hori erosi du.
     anybody that buy aux
b. Ez du inork   hori erosi.   c. Inork   ez du hori erosi.
   not aux anybody that buy   anybody not aux that buy
   'Nobody bought that.'

2. The sentential negative marker licenses multiple PIs:
Inork   ez du ezer   inon   erosi.
anybody.ERG not aux anything.ABS anywhere buy
'Nobody bought anything anywhere.'

3. Not as fragment answers:
Q: Inor etorri da?
   who come aux
A: Inor   ez.   A': *Inor.
   anybody not   anybody

4. No DN readings (Etxeberria et al 2018):
Inork   ez du ezer   egin.
anybody.erg not aux anything do
'Nobody did anything.'
*'Everybody did something.'

Despite these properties, Basque has been described as a NC language (Etxepare 2003, Etxeberria et al 2018)

HINDI PIs ek bhii 'any'

1. The negative marker is required to build a neg sentence
2. PIs alone are not possible in fragment answers
3. Lack of Neg Spread
4. Lack of DN
5. Licensed in subject position
6. Pre-/post-negative symmetry (Lahiri 1998)

ENGLISH PI any

1. Clausemate negative marker is required in well-formed negative sentences
2. Not as fragment answers
3. Lack of Neg Spread
4. Lack of DN
5. *Any* cannot be used in fronted positions
6. Pre-/post-negative asymmetry

GR / HUNG / ROM NCIs

1. Clausemate negative marker required in Strict NC and with postverbal NCIs/PIs
2. Allowed as fragment answers.
3. Neg Spread
4. Possible DN (not in Greek, though)
5. Licensed in subject position
6. Pre-/post-negative symmetry

	Basque Hindi	English	Romanian	Catalan Spanish
Indefinites as fragments	✗	✗	✓	✓
Potential DN with indefinites	✗	✗	✓	✓
Negative spread without a negative marker	✗	✗	✓	✓
Indefinites licensed in subject position	✓	✗	✗	✗
Pre- / post-negative symmetry	✓	✗	✓	✓
Competing lexical variants	✗	✓	✓	✓

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Basque i-indefinites are similar to Hindi PIs
- cannot occur without an overt negative marker

2. Basque PIs are distinct from English PIs
- can occur in focus fronted positions

3. Basque PIs are distinct from NCIs in so-called (Strict and Non-Strict) NC languages.
- cannot occur in isolation as fragment answers
- cannot license DN readings (not even in denial contexts)

SELECTED REFERENCES: Etxeberria, Urtzi, Tubau, Susagna, Déprez, Viviane, Borràs-Comes, Joan and M.Teresa Espinal. 2018. Relating (un)acceptability to interpretation. Experimental investigations on negation. *Frontiers in Psychology* 8, art. 2370. **Etxeberría, Urtzi, Tubau, Susagna, Borràs-Comes, Joan and M.Teresa Espinal. 2021.** Polarity items in Basque. Experimental evidence for their existential reading. CNRS & UAB. **Etxepare, Ricardo. 2003.** Negation. In *A Grammar of Basque*, eds José Ignacio Hualde and Jon Ortiz de Urbina, 387–421. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. **Giannakidou, Anastasia. 1998.** *Polarity Sensitivity as (Non) Veridical Dependency*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. **Zeijlstra, Hedde. 2004.** *Sentential Negation and Negative Concord*. Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam.