

## Expletive Negation in Japanese and Korean

Formal/Semantics-Syntax

**1. Previous Studies: EN with ‘adversative’ predicates** The negative ‘ne’ in (1) is so-called Expletive Negation (EN) that falls outside the realm of canonical negation because it does not truth-conditionally negate a proposition, despite its overt presence. Though ample researches have attempted to solve the puzzle without ever reaching a consensus, one common assumption is that EN is triggered by ‘adversative’ predicates such as *prohibit*, *hinder*, *prevent*, *avoid*, *deny*, *refuse*, or *doubt*. Hence, these negative licensers has yielded negative-related analyses such as NPI or negative concord analyses (van der Wouden 1994; Brown 1999; Muller 1991; Meibauer 1990), negative element analyses (Tovena 1996; Abels 2002, 2005), and negative implicature analyses of EN (Brown and Franks 1997; Portner and Zanuttini 2000).

**2. New Data: EN with ‘non-adversative’ predicates in J/K** The current study, however, identifies another function of EN based on a novel set of data from Japanese (2) and Korean (3), in which EN occurs in broader contexts (i.e. not only an adversative predicate *fear* but also a non-adversative predicate *expect*) than Old/Middle English, French, Polish, Catalan, etc. The crucial common properties of EN-licensors here are: (i) a matrix clause employs a future-oriented predicate such as *fear* or *expect*, which is also manifested by the use of future tense *ul* in Korean (3); (ii) both Japanese and Korean EN-clauses take a Q-particle complementizer in contrast with a regular complementizer that necessity or high possibility operators take; (iii) EN is only used when a subject is uncertain as to whether the content of embedded proposition will be realized. As illustrated in (4a), EN is infelicitous in contexts with high likelihood.

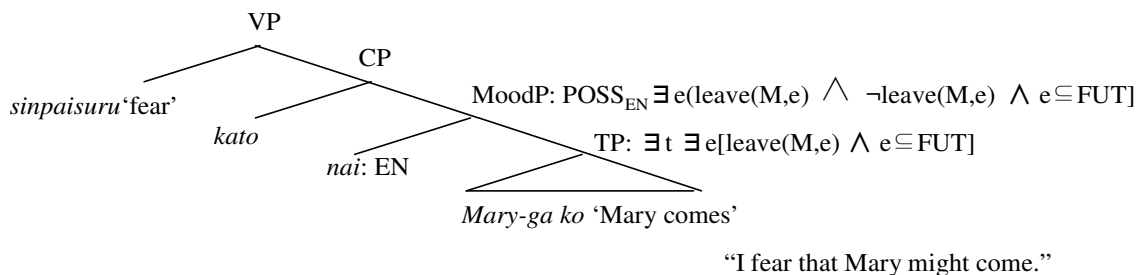
**Expletiveness of Negation** There are two pieces of evidence that the negative *nai/an* in (2)/(3) are truly pleonastic. First, they are not able to license NPIs such as *amwuto* (*anyone*) along with EN in other languages, as shown in ((5): \*under given interpretation). Second, EN can co-occur with real negation with the interpretation of only one logical negation, which is surprising because double negation in Korean is normally interpreted as positive. In (6), the negative force comes from Neg<sub>1</sub> (the real negation) while Neg<sub>2</sub> is logically vacuous.

**3. Analysis** We take these characteristics to reveal important properties of EN in Japanese and Korean. The use of EN is optional, i.e. ‘*John fears that Mary might come*’ can be expressed with or without EN in these languages; but when EN is used, the possibility of Mary’s coming is 50% or lower in a subject’s belief system (, marked by  $p \leq \neg p$  relation in (7a)). This is supported by the Q-complementizer and unavailability in high likelihood contexts (discussed in section 2). Therefore, we argue that EN lowers the level of certainty about the embedded proposition. The semantic effects induced by EN become thus intentionally vague (à la Powell 1985; Channell 1994; Moxey and Sanford 1997; Jucker et al. 2000), presupposing variation comprising positive and negative propositions (just like the semantics of a yes-no question, as the Q-particle alludes). Consequently, EN in (7) heightens an epistemic subject’s emotional state by expressing fear of an event despite its low likelihood. Unlike EN with negative implicature induced by adversative licensers in previous studies, we propose that EN here conveys (low) probability information, a subtype of possibility modality, which heavily depends on an epistemic subject’s model of doxastic modality,  $M_E(su)$ .

Given the semantic properties of EN, a syntactic operation is suggested in (8) in which EN is posited as a POSS(ibility) operator similar to what a subjunctive mood does in Modern Greek (Giannakidou to appear). The symmetric analysis between EN and subjunctive mood is supported by the following parallelism: (i) future-oriented EN-licensing verbs in Japanese and Korean correspond to subjunctive verbs proper (e.g. volitional verbs, verbs of fear, directives); (ii) a conditional marker *na(if)* is optionally present in a Korean EN clause (3); (iii) a subjunctive mood clause is interpreted as negative despite the absence of negative element in Greek (9); (iv) EN occurs in a subjunctive mood clause in Polish (10).

**Implications** Proposing that EN is a subtype of possibility operator that juxtaposes the very negative proposition with the positive one in a speaker’s doxastic model for emotional emphatic effects, the current study introduces another variant of negation function in natural languages. As such, EN in Japanese and Korean brings a fresh perspective into the expletive negation literature, which has concentrated on EN occurring in adversative environments. Furthermore, the continuum between EN and subjunctive mood is suggested in terms of possibility modality.

- (1) God **defended** her that she **ne** shold loke behynde her [Old English]  
 God forbade her that she Neg should look behind her  
 ‘God forbade her to look behind her’ (Caxton *Book of Knight of Tower* 79. 14)
- (2) John-wa Mary-ga ko-**nai-ka**-to **sinpaisi/kitaisi**-masu [Japanese]  
 John-Top Mary-Nom come-Neg-Q-Comp **fear/expect**-Decl  
 ‘John fears/expects that Mary might come.’
- (3) John-un Mary-ka oci(-na)-**an-ul-kka** **kekcengi/kitayhan**-ta [Korean]  
 John-Top Mary-Nom come(-if)-Neg-Fut-Q **fear/expect**-Decl  
 ‘John fears/expects that Mary might come.’
- (4) EN & Degrees of Certainty  
 a. High likelihood context (80-90%): *Mary loves parties, and she said she would certainly come to John’s party tonight.* → **Continuation by (2)/(3): #**  
 b. Medium likelihood context (50%): *John has no idea whether or not Mary comes to the party.* → **Continuation by (2)/(3): √**  
 c. Low likelihood context (10-20%): *Mary has an exam tomorrow, and she hates John. It is most likely that Mary will not come to the party.* → **Continuation by (2)/(3): √**
- (5)\* John-un **amwuto** oci-**an-ul-kka** kekcengi/kitayhan-ta [Korean]  
 John-Top **anyone** come-Neg-Fut-Q **fear/expect**-Decl  
 ‘\*John fears/expects that anyone might come.’
- (6) John-un Mary-ka **an-oci-an-ul-kka** kekcengi/kitayhan-ta  
 John-Top Mary-Nom **Neg<sub>1</sub>-come-Neg<sub>2</sub>-Fut-Q** **fear/expect**-Decl  
 ‘John fears/expects that Mary might not come.’
- (7)a. [[ John fears that Mary comes (**neg**)]]<sub>c</sub> = 1 if  
 $\exists w [w \in \text{Dox}_{\text{John}}(w) \wedge w \in \lambda w'. \text{Mary comes in } w'] \leq$   
 $\exists w [w \in \text{Dox}_{\text{John}}(w) \wedge w \in \lambda w'. \text{Mary does not come in } w']$   
 Where  $\text{Dox}_{\text{John}}(w)$  is John’s epistemic model  $M_E(\text{John})$
- b. [[ *sinpaisi / twuryep* (su, p) ]] = 1 → [[p]]<sub>ME(su)</sub> = 1 ‘fear’
- (8) syntactic derivation of Japanese sentence (2)



- (9) Éxo **na** ton dho íkosi xrónig [Greek]  
 have.1sg subj him.acc see.PNP twenty years  
 ‘I haven’t seen him for 20 years.’
- (10) Boję si.ę **że**bi ktoś **nie** przyszedł. [Polish]  
 Scare.1<sup>st</sup>.sg refl that.subj someone neg come.3<sup>rd</sup>.sg.past  
 ‘I am afraid that someone (might) come.’

#### SELECTED REFERENCES

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