

How Negation Scopes in Japanese and Korean

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In this talk, I will consider the scope of negation in Japanese and Korean (J/K) with regard to its interaction with the licensing and interpretation of two types of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs)—simple indefinite NPIs and minimizer-type NPIs. The earliest generative work on this topic (e.g. McGloin 1976) took the position that negation scope in J/K is rather low, and that NPIs immediately outscope negation. I will provide further evidence that this view is correct. This means that these J/K NPIs are of the "universal" type, in contrast to the typical case argued for European languages where most, but not all, NPIs are taken to be of the "existential" type, and are immediately outscoped by negation. I will further argue that a designated category like NegP cannot be involved in the structures or licensing of J/K NPIs.

The J/K data provides an interesting perspective on the general issue of how NPIs are licensed, why they have the properties they have, and how negation scopes upwards from an inherently low structural position.