

A STUDY OF NEGATIVE POLARITY ITEMS

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In this report, I first point out that so-called Negative Polarity Items (henceforce, NPI) are divided into two types. They are exemplified in (1) below:

- (1) a. I don't want *any* sandwiches.
- b. Do you have *any* money?

One type of NPI, which necessarily appears in a negative scope, is shown in (1a), while the other type, which does not appear in a negative scope, is shown in (1b).

Then, I examine several sentences with NPIs from a semantic point of view.

- (2) a. Why do *anything* this morning?
- b. * Why not do *anything* this morning? (Lakoff, 1992)

The pair shows that an NPI does occur in a syntactically positive sentence (2a), while it does not occur in a syntactically negative one. (2b). There is obviously no way of explaining the pair from a syntactic point of view. However, the pair could be explained in the Hierarchical Semantics Model of Nakau (1992), which I make crucial use of in the discussion. Based on this model, I represent the semantic structure of each sentence as follows:

- (3) a. [_{MOD} I SUGGEST]
[_{P1} NOT [_{P2} YOU DO ANYTHING THIS MORNING]]
- b. [_{MOD} I SUGGEST]
[_{P1} POS [_{P2} YOU DO ANYTHING THIS MORNING]]

The representations indicate that the NPI appears in a negative scope in (3a), while it is not the case in (3b). This pair indicates that the distribution of an

NPI is explained properly not on the syntactic but rather on the semantic level.

I also examine several sentences with NPIs from a pragmatic viewpoint.

(4) a. If you *contribute one red cent* to the Moonies, I'll hit you.

b. * If you *contribute one red cent* to the Moonies, I'll reward you.

(Cf. Linebarger 1980)

(4a) implies "*Don't contribute one red cent to the Moonies.*" This suggests that the NPI appears in the scope of the negative the implied sentence contains.

I consider another example from a pragmatic viewpoint, where a negative sense occurs in the presupposition of a sentence.

(5) a. You can't make me believe that he lifted a finger to help.

b. * You shouldn't make me believe that he lifted a finger to help.

(Horn 1978)

The speaker of (5a) has the presupposition "*John didn't lift a finger*" in his mind. This suggests that the NPI appears in the negative scope of the speaker's presupposition.

The above examples indicate that, in order to explain the distribution of an NPI properly, we must consider the pragmatic levels as well as syntactic and semantic levels.

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