

Non-local licensing of NPIs in Basque and English

Laka (1990) argues that NPIs in sentential complement clauses are licensed by a negative complementizer. In (1a) the NPI *anything* fails to be licensed by the negative verb *deny*, while in (1b) a negative complementizer is selected that in turn licenses *anything* in the embedded clause.

- (1) a. *The witnesses denied anything
b. I deny [that_N the witnesses denied anything]

Laka shows that in Basque, unlike English, negative complementizers differ morphologically from their declarative counterparts. In (2a) the declarative complementizer *ela* is present, while the negative complementizer *enik* appears under the negative verb *ukatu*. (2b) also shows that the NPI *inork* (*anyone*) is licensed interclausally, just like English *anything* in (1b).

- (2) a. [Galapagoak muskerrez beterik daudela] diote
Galapagos lizards-of full are-that say-they
'They say that the Galapagos are full of lizards'
b. Amaiak [inork gorrotoa dionik] ukatu du
Amaia anyone hatred has-that_N denied has
'Amaia denied that anybody hated her'

While at first blush Laka's analysis seems to cover the data, some problems arise when we look at more English data. First, complementizers are optional under bridge-verbs like *believe*. (3a) shows the NPI *slept a wink* unlicensed in the absence of negation, while in (3b) it is grammatical in the presence of matrix negation. The grammaticality of (3b) is not affected if the complementizer *that* is omitted. This would not be expected under Laka's analysis, as for her the negative complementizer (the English negative complementizer is homophonous with the non-negative one according to Laka) is the licenser of polarity items in embedded clauses.

- (3) a. *I believe [(that) Jim slept a wink last night]
b. I don't believe [(that) Jim slept a wink last night]

A second problem arises in the complements of factive verbs in English. The NPI licensing that seems to occur in sentences like (1b) and (3b) does not take place in their factive counterparts. Under a Laka-style analysis we would expect (4b) to be grammatical, with the NPI *slept a wink* licensed by a negative *that_N* selected by the negated matrix verb, as in (3b). The fact that (4b) is bad brings the negative complementizer analysis into further question.

- (4) a. *I regret [that Jim slept a wink last night]
b. *I don't regret [that Jim slept a wink last night]

In this paper I argue for a modification to the negative complementizer analysis that maintains the attractive points of Laka (1990) while accounting for the additional data presented in (3) and (4). I propose that there is an extra projection in the CP field under non-factive verbs like *deny* and *believe*, and that this projection is not present under factive verbs like *regret*. This projection is headed by an operator which licenses NPIs when embedded under a negative or negated non-factive, as in (1b) and (3b). The lack of this operator under factives, as in (4b) leaves the NPI without a local enough licenser, crashing the sentence.

In addition to licensing NPIs, I argue that the proposed operator serves the important function of separating the speaker from responsibility for the truth of the embedded clause. Only under non-factive verbs is it felicitous for a speaker to utter a sentence in which the embedded

sentence is not accepted as a true statement by the speaker. Assuming the speaker does not believe that there are WMDs in Iraq, (5a,b) are fine while (5c,d) are out. This semantic difference can be accounted for by the presence of the proposed operator shifting responsibility for the truth of the sentence to the assumed belief system of the subject of the matrix clause.

- (5) a. George believes [that there are WMDs in Iraq]
 b. George doesn't believe [that there are WMDs in Iraq]
 c. #George regrets [that there are WMDs in Iraq]
 d. #George doesn't regret [that there are WMDs in Iraq]

Basque shows a very interesting complementizer alternation with syntactic and semantic effects relevant to the present discussion. Laka (1990:211) presents a pair of sentences that are identical except for the choice of complementizer. In (6a) the declarative complementizer *ela* is present, while in (6b) the negative complementizer *enik* appears. Laka describes the semantic difference between the two in the following way: In (6a), *that the earth will explode* is taken to be a fact, one that *Iñigok* happens not to believe. In (6b), *that the earth will explode* is not taken to be a fact; it could be true or false. I argue that this is evidence of the optionality of the operator, and that when it is not present, even under a 'non-factive' verb like *believe*, a default factive reading results.

- (6) a. *Iñigok ez du sinisten [lurak eztanda egingo duela]*
Iñigok no has believed earth explode do will that
'Iñigok does not believe that the earth will explode'
 b. *Iñigok ez du sinisten [lurak eztanda egingo duenik]*
Iñigok no has believed earth explode do will that_N
'Iñigok does not believe that the earth will explode'

Syntactically, NPI licensing only takes place under the negative complementizer configuration, as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (7a). Under the present analysis, this difference in NPI licensing possibility results from the lack of an operator in (7a) and its presence in (7b). Two possible accounts for the morphological facts will be presented, accounting for the different complementizers in Basque as compared to the single complementizer in English. The possibility that the rich agreement system of Basque allows for complementizer agreement will be explored, as well as the possibility that Basque and English differ in that Basque replaces one CP type projection with another that houses the operator, while English simply adds a projection above the standard CP.

- (7) a. **Iñigok ez du sinisten [ezurk eztanda egingo duela]*
Iñigok no has believed anything explode do will that
'Iñigok does not believe that anything will explode'
 b. *Iñigok ez du sinisten [ezurk eztanda egingo duenik]*
Iñigok no has believed anything explode do will that_N
'Iñigok does not believe that anything will explode'

Reference:

Laka, Itziar 1990. Negation in syntax: On the nature of functional categories and projections.
 Doctoral Dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts.