Negative concord is multiple agreement: sentential and phrasal negation in Washo

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Intro. Washo, a Native American SOV isolate, displays negative concord (NC) morphology on possibly many elements in the context of negation. For example, the NC suffix -ŋa may appear below only in (1).1

(1) Adél-ŋa wááŋ-ŋa ?-áŋalí?-é:s-i
Adèle-NC here-NC 3-reside-NEG-IND
‘Adele doesn’t reside here.’

The suffix -ŋa occurs multiple times in (1), but crucially does not contribute any semantic negation on its own. Building on Hanink’s (2019) preliminary claims that NC in Washo is syntactic, we argue that this morphology is best analyzed as the result of multiple agreement between a negative operator in Spec, NegP bearing iNEG, and elements in its c-command domain bearing uNEG (Zeijlstra 2004). Evidence for this analysis comes from the existence of true negative imperatives in the language (Zanuttini 1994) and from quantifier-internal negative concord in cases of phrasal negation. More broadly, the Washo data contribute to our understanding of the range of negative agreement phenomena and provide novel data for an agreement-based account of negative concord that applies uniformly across sentential and phrasal negation.

Negative concord as agreement. Evidence that NC in Washo is a syntactic phenomenon comes from the fact that -ŋa-licensing is local. For instance, it is disallowed on the embedded argument in (3) despite the presence of upstairs negation, indicating that it is clause-bound. Further, the fact that this marker may occur on non-indefinites rules out semantic accounts that rely solely on the interaction of negation with universal/existential quantification (Ladusaw 1992; Giannakidou 1997, i.a.):

(3) [sísu([-ŋa] ʃéšim-a?) di-hámu?]-é:s-i
bird-NC 3.sing.PL-DEP 1-think-NEG-IND
‘I don’t think the birds are singing.’

The presence of NC-morphology in Washo crucially has no effect on scope relations (Hanink 2019).

Proposal. We argue that Washo lends novel evidence to Zeijlstra’s (2004) proposal that NC is the result of agreement between an interpretable NEG feature and the items it c-commands bearing uNEG (via Upward Agree, i.a. Adger 2003). This agreement is crucially multiple (Hiraiwa 2001) – necessary for Washo, as many elements may bear -ŋa in a single clause. Further, Zeijlstra argues that languages may vary according to whether iNEG is encoded by Neg itself or by a negative operator in Spec, NegP. We argue that the latter holds for Washo, and that -é:s does not introduce a semantic negation on its own, but itself enters an Agree relation with the negative operator in Spec, NegP. In an example like (1), OP→ then also checks the uNEG features hosted by ‘Adele’ and ‘here,’ as schematized above in (4). We note that tense morphology systematically appears below negation in Washo, as reflected in the order of projections above.

True negative imperatives. Zeijlstra (2006) argues that the presence of true negative imperatives (TNIs) in a language implies that semantic negation is encoded by a negative operator, rather than by Neg itself. This is because the imperative feature hosted on the verb may not be c-commanded by negation for semantic reasons (Han 2001). In a language where Neg hosts iNEG like Spanish, this restriction leads to the use of the subjunctive in negative imperatives (5), but can be obviated by consecutive head movement of V+Neg to C in languages where semantic negation is encoded by OP→, as Zeijlstra argues for, e.g., Polish (6).

(5) No leas/*lee
NEG read.2.SG.SUBJ/read.2.SG.IMP
‘Don’t read!’

(6) Nie pracuj
NEG work.2.SG.IMP
‘Don’t work!’

1Glosses: DEP: dependent mood; IMP: imperative; IND: independent mood; NC: negative concord; NEG: negation. Symbols deviating from the IPA are: s: [ʃ]. Unless stated otherwise the data come from the authors’ fieldwork in California/Nevada.
If V(+T)+Neg necessarily move to C, argued to be triggered by an imperative feature due to the force of C, negation no longer c-commands the imperative. Note that TNIs are only allowed in this way if negation is semantically encoded by OP←: if the morpheme realizing negation at PF semantically encodes negation, it is impossible for the verb to out-scope negation after head movement to C has occurred. Crucially, Washo is a language with TNIs: the normal negation suffix -é:s (7) is also able to form negative imperatives, as in (8).

(7) l-é:šim[-é:s]-i
    l-sleep-NEG-1ND
    ‘I’m not sleeping.’

(8) ga-báŋkuš[-é:s]
    IMP-smoke-NEG
    ‘Don’t smoke!’

Negation in Washo is expressed by the same morpheme as in sentential negation: the suffix -é:s. While its distribution is limited, it may occur on certain modifiers such as all and many, e.g. (10), in which case it licenses the NC suffix -ya on the noun it modifies. Crucially, the presence of negation in such cases does not license the NC suffix outside of the QP (11), where sentential negation otherwise would.

(10) t’ánu[ŋa] mǐːle-w[-é:s] baŋja-y-a-é:i
    person-NC all-PL-NEG outside 3-be-IND
    ‘Not everyone is outside.’ (¬ > ∀; *∀ > ¬)

(11) mǐːle-w-é:s baŋja-y-a-ya[-ŋa]-gap’il-i
    all-PL-NEG outside-NC 3-be-around-IND
    ‘Not everyone is around outside.’

Such examples can be accounted for if this type of negation projects its own phrase in which OP← again occupies a specifier position, in accordance with with the Neg Criterion (Rizzi 1991). In this way, the operator’s iNEG feature is able to check all uNEG-features phrase-internally, as schematized in (12).

(12) \[
\left[\text{NegP OP\textsuperscript{−}[uNEG]} \right] \left[\text{Neg'} \left[\text{QP t’ánu[uNEG]} \text{ mǐːlew} \right] \left[\text{Neg \ -é:s[uNEG]} \right] \right]
\]

**Conclusion.** The presented data lend evidence to a multiple-agreement based account of negative concord in Washo, specifically in which semantic negation is introduced in Spec, NegP and in which morphological negation is realized multiply within its c-command domain. The proposal offers a unified account of sentential and phrasal negation in the language, both of which exhibit local negative concord effects.

**References**