Turning the Tables in Negative Polarity Item Licensing: The Implications of NPI *-sika* in Japanese

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Negation c-commands and 'licenses' NPIs. Really? Since negation does not select or subcategorize for NPIs, in cases like (1a) the NPI-NEG relationship should simply be lexical selection from an NPI towards negativity of various sorts/strengths (Zwarts 1998, Hoeksema 2000)—the concept of licensing is superfluous.

(1) a. Taroo-sika {utawa-nai/*uta-u}. (Taroo-FOC.NPI {sing-neg-pres/sing-pres})
'Nobody but Taroo sings.' [Japanese]
b. Taroo-dake {utawa-nai/uta-u}. (Taroo-FOC {sing-neg-pres/sing-pres})
'Only Taroo does not sing/sings.' [Japanese]

Unlike *-dake* in (1b), *-sika* (a GQ builder) is a combination of focus and NPI. After Fukushima (1998), (2a) accomplishes: (i) lexical selection of a negative predicate, (ii) polarity flipping (note double negation after conversion), and (iii) exclusivity of the subject NP as the sole member of the polarity flipped predicate.

(2) a. *-sika*: $\lambda x \lambda P.(\neg P(x) \,\&\, \forall y(y =\!\models x \rightarrow P(y)))$ [where POLARITY(P) = 0]
[Based on Modus Tollens and De Morgan's Laws, POLARITY returns 0 or 1.]
b. *Taroo-sika*: $\lambda P.(\neg P(\text{taroo}) \,\&\, \forall y(y =\!\models \text{taroo} \rightarrow P(y)))$
c. *utawa-nai*: $\lambda x.\neg \mathbf{sing'}(x)$
d. conversion: $\neg\, \neg \mathbf{sing'}(\text{taroo}) \,\&\, \forall y(y =\!\models \text{taroo} \rightarrow \neg \mathbf{sing'}(y))$

As demonstrated in the talk, (2a) also solves a problem for a c-command approach. In (3) GQ-*sika* is wide-scope exclusively, giving rise to a paradox: NEG has to be wide-scope to license the NPI but the GQ must be wide-scope as well.

(3) Dare-ka(-kare-ka)-sika utawa-nai (someone-FOC.NPI sing-neg.pres)
'Nobody but someone sings' (unambiguously wide-scope GQ-*sika*)

Psycholinguistically, polarity-flipping should make the parser to backtrack at the NEG region in real-time processing, giving rise to the LOCALITY EFFECT. Nakatani's (2024) experimental findings confirm this prediction in that better readers (with respect to comprehension accuracy) indeed exhibited such an effect for a NP-*sika* subject but not for NP-*dake*.

References: • Fukushima, K. (1998). Negation in the lexicon, not in NegP. *CLS* 34, 171–184. • Hoeksema, J. (2000). Negative polarity items: triggering scope, and c-command. In L. Horn & Y. Kato (eds.), *Negation and Polarity*. Oxford: OUP, 115–146. • Nakatani, K. (2024). Locality-based retrieval effects are dependent on dependency type: A case study of a negative polarity dependency in Japanese. In M. Koizumi (ed.) *Issues in Japanese Psycholinguistics from Comparative Perspectives, Volume 2: Interaction Between Linguistic and Nonlinguistic Factors*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 31–54. • Zwarts, F. (1998). Three types of polarity. In F. Hamm & E. W. Hinrichs (eds.), *Plurality and Quantification*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 177–238.