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# A Review on Negation in Positive Sentences

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## 1. Introduction

The contrast between positive and negative is frequently thought to be fixed and static, but it is possible to propose a suggestive view that the relationship between positive and negative is not fixed but dynamically changeable.

There are many kinds of negation, and some of the varieties have not been fully explored yet. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss some aspects of negation which has not given enough attention. Actually, this paper will focus on the positive sentences which contain negativeness in them. Negation in positive sentences can be seen by showing its relationship with such configurations as "Figure-Ground Reversion" and "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness." The reflection how people recognize the world is found in this kind of linguistic usage.

### 1.1 Contrast between positive and negative

The most common contrast between positive sentence and negative sentences may be the example such as following:

- (1) a. He is happy.
- b. He is not happy.

However, there are varieties of negation, and the contrast between a positive sentence and a negative sentence is not stable. Sometimes an explicit negative word, "not," is not necessary to be a negative sentence. Some sentences can convey the meaning of negation without using explicit negative words. This paper will particularly focus on the negation which appears with implicit negativeness.

### 1.2 Unnecessity of explicit negative words in negative sentences

The opposite of a positive sentence is a negative sentence. In English, people generally think of negative sentences as sentences with explicit negative words such as "not." However, various factors convey the meaning of negation. Besides explicit negative words, morphological negative words and implicit negative words, etc. can express negativeness.

- (1) a. He is happy.

- b. He is not happy.
- c. He is unhappy.
- d. He is miserable.
- e. He is rich, intelligent and handsome, but...

In other words, the concept against positive is not fixed. If the sentence (1a) is given, the negation of (1a) may generally be thought as (1b). However, sentences such as (1c) and (1d) can be the negation of (1a), and they are in the opposite position of (1a). Moreover, the sentence like (1e) has the negative conjunction "but," and it is clear that the part after the negative conjunction "but" expresses something contrary and reverses the former part. Even the sentence (1e) seems to have some negativeness. This paper will first shed the light on the sentences which has explicit negative words and is clearly thought as negative sentences because of their form, and next on the sentences which has implicit negative words and is generally thought as positive sentences because of their form. Especially, various implicit negative is found in positive sentences, and their negativeness is generally overlooked, and therefore special attention will be paid on this aspect of negation in this paper.

### 1.3 Some adverbs suggesting the negativeness in positive sentences

In this paper, some English adverbs will be examined to discuss other aspects of negation in positive sentences. Adverbs can be classified in three groups from the negation research point of view. They are:

1. adverbs used only in positive sentences
2. adverbs used only in explicit negative sentences
3. adverbs used both in positive and negative sentences

This is an example of English adverb which is used only in positive sentence.

- (2) a. He is pretty handsome.
- b. \*He isn't pretty handsome.

English adverb "pretty" is used only in positive sentences. and when it is used in negative sentence. that sentence becomes ungrammatical as in (2b).

Next example is the sentence with the adverb which is only used in explicit negative sentence.

- (3) a. He doesn't bat an eye in the daytime.
- b. \*He bats an eye in the daytime.

Generally, adverbs "yet" and "at all " are thought to appear only in explicit negative sentences, but actually, they sometimes appear in the following sentences:

- (4) a. The old dog is not dead yet.  
 b. The old dog is alive yet. (Otsuka 1969: 764)
- (5) a. He doesn't watch television at all.  
 b. I was surprised at her success at all.

(4a) and (5a) can be called explicit negative sentences since they have the explicit negative word "not" in them. On the other hand, in sentences (4b) and (5b) no explicit negative words can be found. Superficially, both (4b) and (5b) seems to be positive sentences. However, this paper will show that sentences such as (4b) and (5b) have some negativeness in them.

First, in sentence (4), both (4a) and (4b) relates the fact that the old dog is not dead, but their exact meanings are different. (4a) is purely telling the fact that the old dog is not dead, and the (4b) implies the meaning that the old dog is old enough to be dead but surprisingly he is still alive.

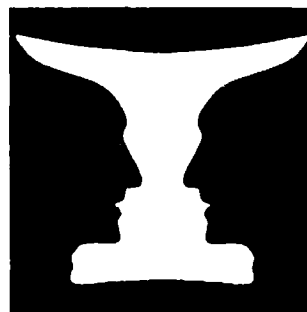
Also, sentence (5a) is an explicit negative sentence which tells that he doesn't watch television, and "at all" is used just for emphasizing the negative. On the other hand, (5b) seems to be a pure positive sentence on its surface. This sentence tells the fact that "I was surprised at her success" and its noteworthy aspect is that this sentence has the unexpectedness behind its sentence. The speaker of this sentence needs to have the unexpectedness such as "I didn't even think that she would have succeeded though." The next section will focus on the aspect that some adverbs appear in positive sentences, and discuss what is the negation in those environment of the positive sentences.

## 2. Figure-Ground Reversal and linguistic phenomena

### 2.1 Figure-Ground Reversal

Cognitive psychology has paid attention to the point that same thing can be perceived differently depending on which part will be thought as a figure and the other as a ground.

"Rubin's vase" (Fig.1) is seen both as a glass and as a profile of two people. In other words, the interpretation differs when the subjective perception is different. This phenomena can be adapted to human linguistic activity. The meaning of the word is not decided only by the fixed word-meaning relationship, but also by the perception of the speaker and how the speaker perceives and understand the target. The cognition of the speaker has an important role in determining the meaning of the words.



(Fig.1)

Figure-Ground Reversal can be adapted to many aspects of linguistic phenomena, and the contrast between positive and negative sentences is just exact case. The main characteristic of the Figure-Ground Reversal is that both figure and ground are indispensable, and the existence of ground helps the figure to express its meaning and vice

versa. There will be no expression of meaning only with the existence of figure. Ground is essential to be a figure.

"He isn't happy" may become a figure, but this negative sentence as a figure is made by having the ground sentence such as "He is happy."

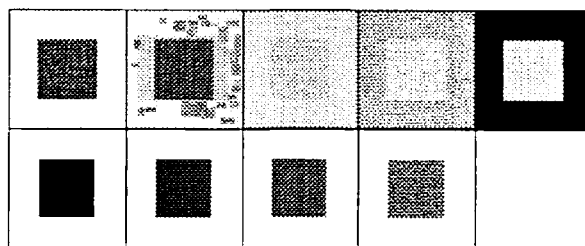
It should be remembered that a negative sentence exists not only by itself, but within the contrast with a positive sentence.

## 2.2 Ambiguous figures

There are many other figure-ground configurations. "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" (Fig.2) suggests an important point that the contrast between clearness and darkness is unfixed, and the clearness is decided by its environment. "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" tells that in very dark environment black can not be seen very clear, and the clearness is decided within the relationship around it.

This figure, "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" has a similar aspect with "Rubin's vase" figure. When people recognize the world, they try to grasp the meaning of the target word in the relationship with its background. "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" has an interesting point in that the background phenomena has some kind of gradience, and their environment changes, or the environment of the target changes.

When people decide the meaning of the word, sentence or language, this kind of richness of relativity exists. "Rubin's vase" figure, "Necker's cube" figure and "Rabbit-Duck" figure are the just two-value contrast between figure and ground, but "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" is unique since this figure illustrates well the human cognition of the world and language.



(Fig.2)

- (6) a. He is happy. (=1)  
 b. He is not happy.  
 c. He is unhappy.  
 d. He is miserable.  
 e. He is rich, intelligent and handsome, but...

For example, when (6a) is compared with (6b) to (6e), the relationships between (6a) and (6b), (6a) and (6c), (6a) and (6d), (6a) and (6e) are all different. Sentences from (6b) to (6e) have some negativeness, but their character of negation are different, and their contrasts with positive sentences are not the same.

Negativeness always exists in the contrast with positiveness, and the aspects of negation

is varied. This variety of negation suggests that the relationship between negative and positive is not a fixed two-value contrast.

### 2.3 Figure-Ground Reversal and negativeness of language

#### 2.3.1 Markedness of negation

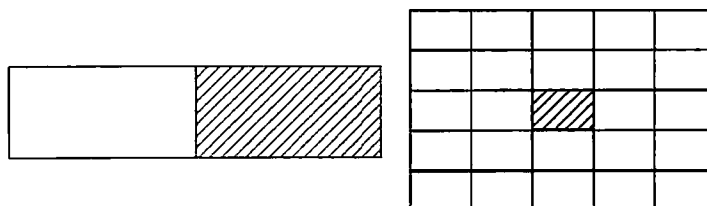
Ota (1980: 272) suggests that positive sentences are used to give purely new information to the hearer, and on the other hand, negative sentences are used when the hearer believes some wrong information, and the negative sentences correct the hearer's mistaken belief.

Therefore using negative sentences at the beginning is odd when the negated topic is quite unknown by the hearer. Ota says that positive affirmation is unmarked, and negation is marked.

Also Givón (1979) pointed out that the relationship between positive and negative is parallel to that of figure-ground reversal figure. In many cases, based on the recognition of human being, the situation that no changes are happening and no special characteristic exists is a situation of ground.

On the contrary, the situation that some changes happen, some event happen, or some special characteristic is seen is the situation of figure.

Givón (1979: 132) illustrates the relationship between positive and negative as following:



(Fig.3)

Givón suggests two kinds of negation. They are: the negative which one possessed that distinguishing property and the other did not, and the negative which a single individual was marked by one of its antonyms, while twenty-four individuals were marked by the opposite antonym.

The latter type of negative implies that negativeness against positiveness is not a single and fixed thing. Remember that "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" had a gradience character. Givón's suggestion does not include the gradience in the contrast, but actual contrast seems to have more complexity and diversity.

#### 2.3.2 Cognitive aspects of negation and Figure-Ground Reversal

Yamanashi (1995: 14) pointed out the relationship between cognitive aspects of negative expression and figure-ground reversal as followings:

- (a) the part composing new information is figure, the part composing old information is ground.
- (b) asserted part is figure, preposition part is ground.

- (c) place or location which has a role to locating some existence is ground, and the located existence is figure.
- (d) the expression which illustrates the moving existence is figure, its background is ground.
- (e) omitted part is ground, symbolized part is figure.

Figure-ground relationship is strongly reflected in the process of understanding language in everyday life. Also, the contrast of negativeness toward positiveness has its base on this relationship.

Langacker (1990: 61) also suggests that the existence of background is essential to understand the negation. He discusses this point in regarding the importance of distinction between base and profile. He says that the most important thing in the level of imagery is the distinction between base and profile. Base is a domain of linguistic expression. Profile is the part that puts prominence in the base. At the same time, he gives some examples of other dimensions of imagery. They are the level of specificity, the impact of explicit mention on the relative prominence of substructures, figure/ground organization, the vantage point (eg. come vs. go), construal relative to different background assumptions and expectations, and the subjective directionality manifested in contrasting sentences. In particular, figure/ground organization, construal relative to different background assumptions and expectations, and the subjective directionality manifested in contrasting sentences is given paid special attention in the later section of this paper. Langacker gives the example of "red spot" topic, and discusses how people recognize the red stimulus.

"Suppose, first, that I am looking at a white wall some 30 feet away, and that painted on this wall is a solid-red circle about 5 feet in diameter. In this context I can felicitously say *I see a red spot*, for I see not only the region painted red but also the background of white that defines its boundaries. The fact that these boundaries are included within the scope of predication (i.e. the visual field) is responsible for my construing the red sensation as a bounded region (rather than simply a region); the count noun *spot* is thus appropriate. But suppose, now, that I stand right up against the wall and stare at the middle of the red-painted region, so that I can see no white at all--the red sensation totally fills my visual field. In this situation I cannot felicitously say *I see a red spot*. Instead I would say *I see* (nothing but) *red* (where red functions as a mass noun.)" (*ibid.*: 65)

Langacker's suggestion is also important in this aspect. He points out the necessity of the salience in relation with the red spot painting on the wall.

"Crucially, when I describe something as an entity I do not thereby imply that it is discrete, that it is separately recognized, or that it achieves any substantial cognitive salience. Consider again a red spot painted on a white wall. The entities that constitute the spot are color sensations associated with various locations in the visual field, but it is not suggested that the viewer perceives an array of individual red dots at any stage or level of processing. I merely claim that input from throughout the visual field is coordinated in some fashion to yield the spatially extended color sensation. (*ibid.*: 68)

Based on the suggestion of Langacker, it is possible to develop the idea on what is happening in human when we go to skiing.

At the ski slope, we generally feel that the ground is dazzling white with snow, and we can express it linguistically as "It's dazzling here!" However, in this kind of condition, what is the background and what is the salient part? It is dazzling everywhere. Even the background part is dazzling. If we remember the suggestion of Langacker, it is odd to say "It's dazzling here!" in the dazzling background situation, but it normally happen. It seems to be incompatible with the idea that the contrast between clearness and darkness is decided by its environment as "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" (Fig.2) suggested.

However, even in this kind of environment, the background exists. At the ski slopes, the present condition that a man coming to a slope covered with bright snow is the figure. And the background is his everyday life, in other words his ordinary days away from the snow.

This point is that in linguistic phenomena, actual object does not always necessarily exist physically in order to be a background. It is sometimes sufficient if there is a contrast inside of the memory, mind, or knowledge. At the ski slopes, there is no boundary of the entity as a stimulus for dazzling, but we perceive it as dazzling when we compare that environment with our everyday life. Therefore, the contrast of figure and background is not only influenced by the present view just before us, but also by our knowledge of everyday life.

This aspect of contrast is essential when we think of the relationship between positiveness and negativeness since in this relationship, we always find some contrasts, and their contrast is varied.

### 2.3.3 Assymetricity of negation

Horn points out the assymetricity of negation. "If something is *not right*, it is (assumed to be) wrong, but if something is *not wrong*, it is not ipso facto (assumed to be) *right*-only, more weakly, that it is *all right*. Not nice may amount to *nasty* or *naughty*, but *not nasty* and *not naughty* never quite make it up to *nice*." (Horn 1989: 334).

In other words, he says that the contrast of some estimate is not always fixed. Negating A is B, but negating B is not always equal to A.

The negation of "right" is "wrong," and the negation of "nice" is "nasty or naughty." However, "not wrong" is not equal to "right" and it means less than "right." Similarly, "not nasty" and "not naughty" cannot reach the level of "nice."

This is important to note that seeing this phenomena it is possible to say that at least three levels are possible to emerge when we use the negation. Again, it is clear that there is a gradience in the contrast of positive and negative. Remember the suggestion of "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" (Fig.2). This figure has much richer aspect than Givón's figure (Fig.3). Givón's nicely tells us the plural possibilities in the contrast relationship, but it does not include the idea of gradience in it, and in the relationship of positiveness and negativeness, contrast and gradience are the indispensable factors.

## 3. Positiveness against negativeness

### 3.1 Negation as a linguistic phenomena



### 3.1.1 Inside and outside of the category

Johnson (1987: 40) thinks objects, events, states, properties, relations are abstract containers. And he says that negating some category of experience is equal to seeing it as an outside part of the category.

"We understand our experience as broken up according to basic categories (of objects, events, states, properties, relations, etc.) We understand these categories as abstract containers, so that whatever is *within* the category is *in* the appropriate container. Thus, a negation of some type (or category) of experience is understood as characterizing what is *outside* the category. It makes perfectly good sense, therefore, that model-theoretic semantics should analyze the *not* operator as a set complementation, that is, not-X is interpreted as all those falling "outside" the set X."

When we think the idea of negation along with Johnson's suggestion "not-X is interpreted as all those falling "outside" the set X." we can clearly see the varieties of negation. For example:

- (7) a. He always watches television for a long time.  
b. He always doesn't watch television for a long time.

There is a clear contrast between (7a) and (7b), since (7b) has an explicit negative word "not" in the sentence. Similarly, we can apparently observe that the sentence (8) also has negativeness since it has an explicit negative word "not."

- (8) a. He doesn't watch television at all. (=5a)

However, in (8b) we see something different from (7a), (7b) and (8a).

- (8) b. I was surprised at her success at all. (=5b)

There is no obvious negative word like "not" in sentence (8b). Both (8a) and (8b) seem to be a positive sentence on their surface, but their negativeness are different. (8a) has explicit negativeness. (8b) does not.

We can find the negativeness of the sentence (8b) by using the idea of Johnson which says that "not-X is interpreted as all those falling "outside" the set X."

When we say "I was surprised at her success at all.", there is a kind of expectation such as "She will fail" or "She will never to be success" behind that words. (8b) says that the reality was contrary to expectation.

This kind of expectation, thought or wish is one kind of Johnson type of abstract containers. Expectation, thought or wish is an abstract container and one category of X, and what happened as illustrated in the sentence (8b) was a real world which is outside of abstract containers and outside of that category X.

Unexpectedness such as "I never imagined that she would have success" or "I expected that she will not have success" leads to the negativeness. There is no explicit negativeness

in unexpectedness. but from the point of view of container X, even (8b) has an aspect of negative though it seems like a positive sentence on its surface.

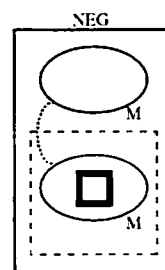
### 3.1.2 Background conception

Langacker (1991: 132) points out that negation needs some kind of interdependence relationship.

"In the terminology of cognitive grammar, NEG is conceptually dependent, for it makes salient (though schematic) internal reference to the situation whose existence it denies. Also relevant is the dictum that existence is always existence in some location, which suggests the corollary that non-existence is always non-existence in some location."

He shows the example of there-construction, and illustrates the relationship between mental space and negation. "If the there-construction introduces some entity into a mental space, perhaps the function of negation is to specify its absence from such a space (e.g. from present reality,)" (*ibid.*: 133) Langacker explains what is happening when we express negation by using the figure right (Fig.4). (*ibid.*: 134)

"With respect to a background conception in which some entity occupies a mental space, M, it portrays as the actual situation in which that entity fails to appear in M."



(Fig.4)

This Langacker's assertion is not incompatible with Johnson's idea as in the section 3.1.1. There is a contrast between mental space and real world, and the mental space is the background knowledge and the real world is the figure. When some entity is expected to exist or appear in the mental space, and it does not actually exist or appear in that mental space, the function of negation works in order to express that condition.

This point is quite similar to the essence of the section 3.1.1 and also the section 2.3.2, which revealed the importance of our everyday life knowledge as a background information to form the linguistic activities.

## 3.2 Characteristics of negation against positive sentence

### 3.2.1 The unformativeness and indirectness of negation

Generally, positive sentences are preferred to negative sentences. There are some reasons for this preference.

First, negative sentences has an uninformative aspect. As Givón (1979) showed sometimes the negative facts are much more than positive things when we think the contrast between positive and negative. This unformativeness of negation should be avoided along with the Maxim of Quantity which Grice (1975) says.

- (9) a. Abraham Lincoln was not shot by Iwan Mazeppa.  
 b. Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth. (Leech 1983: 100)

(9a) has less information than (9b). (9a) only says "Abraham Lincoln was not shot by

Iwan Mazeppa." and this sentence remains many other possibilities. Reading only this sentence, everybody except Mazeppa possibly shot Abraham Lincoln.

(9a) is useful only when everyone believes that Mazeppa shot Abraham Lincoln. In that usage, (9a) will correct the mistaken belief of the hearer. If there is no particular condition and suddenly (9a) is used, it sounds odd.

A second reason to avoid negative sentence is that negative sentence requires greater cost and time to process, and the way to process the sentence is more complicated than positive sentence. It means that negative sentence is generally indirect and difficult to process more than the hearer wishes. This aspect violates the Grice's Maxim of Manner. For example:

- (10) a. Our cat is male.  
 b. Our cat is not male.  
 c. Our cat is female. (*ibid.*: 101)

(10c) is easier to process than (10b). The sentence (10b) needs some special purpose to use it. If we just want to express that "Our cat is female," (10c) should be chosen to (10b). If you intentionally use (10b), we found some background such as "Maybe you may think this cat is male. Yes, this cat seems like male, but actually..."

### 3.2.2 The background condition of negative sentences

To make the background condition of negative sentences clear, next example can be given.

- (11) a. Exactly, our cat is male.  
 b. Exactly, our cat is not male.  
 c. Exactly, our cat is female.

Next example is also helpful.

- (12) a. Actually, our cat is male.  
 b. Actually, our cat is not male.  
 c. Actually, our cat is female.

When we (11a) and (11c), (12a) and (12c) are contrasted, it is clear that the adverbs "exactly" and "actually" are focusing on the word "not."

It is quite common to use (11c) and (12c) instead of using (11b) or (12b) in some circumstances. For example, it sounds natural when a female cat's face is really male like, or actually when the male cat has done the castration surgery.

Adverbs "exactly" and "actually" implies the presupposition such as "(from the general view, it may seem as you see now.) but exactly..." or "(in your expectation, it may seem as you see now,) but actually..." This existence of presupposition in these adverbs makes negative sentence sound natural.

In expressing the subjective judgement or emotional assertion, negative sentences are well used. It will lead to express the politeness of the speaker.

(13) a. I hate Greek. / b. I don't like Greek.

There is a clear contrast between "like" and "hate." Both verbs have subjective judgement. (13b) uses the indirectness of the negative sentence. Here it should be noted that "hate" and "don't like" are not the same, and "don't like" never reach to the meaning of "hate."

From the pragmatic point of view, negative sentences are the negation of the positive proposition in the context. The most obvious purpose of using the negative sentence is that to negate the corresponding positive sentence of it. Therefore, when there is a clear contrast in the context, negative sentence works well. When the background is obvious, the figure is seen obviously. When the positive proposition is clear, the purpose and meaning of negative sentence are clear.

#### 4. Forms of negation

##### 4.1 Explicit negative sentence

###### 4.1.1 Explicit negative sentence---word level---

In this paper, explicit negative sentence is the sentence which has explicit negative words such as "no," "not," "never," "neither," "none," "nobody" and "nothing."

(14) a. He has some friends. / b. He has no friends.

(15) a. He is happy. / b. He is not happy.

(16) a. He speaks English. / b. He never speaks English.

(17) a. He is gentle and honest. / b. He is neither gentle nor honest.

(18) a. Everybody knows this news. / b. Nobody knows this news.

(19) a. He has something to drink today. / b. He has nothing to drink today.

In the above examples, every (b) sentence is the explicit negative sentence of the sentence (a). Also, it is important to note that the explicit negative words such as "no," "never," "nobody" and "nothing" has stronger negative meaning than "not."

###### 4.1.2 Multiple negation

Double negation is also the explicit negative sentence. There are two types of double negation.

One type is to negate the negativeness and express the meaning of positiveness. Another type is to negate the negativeness and express the meaning of strong negativeness.

(20) a. It is common. / b. It is not common. / c. It is uncommon.

d. It is not uncommon.

Both (20b) and (20c) has negativeness in contrast with (20a). (20d) is the combination of the two negativeness in (20b) and (20c). It is interesting that (20d) is not equal to (20a). (20d) never reach to the positive meaning of (20a), though (20d) is a double negative sentence negating the negativeness and express the meaning of positiveness. (20d) is more indirect and euphemistic than (20a). This point becomes clearer if we look back the section 3.2.1. There, the unformativeness and indirectness of the negative sentence was pointed out.

Next example is the double negation sentence which expresses the stronger meaning of negativeness.

(21) a. I don't want to see any blood. / b. I don't want to see no blood.

(22) Don't try to fight it. There ain't nothing that you can do.

(23) Nobody never gave me nothing.

This way of using is colloquial and sometimes emotional. (24) is a triple negation sentence, and this sentence succeeds to express very strong negativeness.

(24) a. Nobody never gave me nothing. / b. Nobody never gave me anything.

Comparing the strength of negativeness in (24a) and (24b), (24a) is stronger than (24b).

Multiple negation and the processing cost of the linguistic phenomena can be well illustrated on the above mentioned figure "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" (Fig.2). Multiple negation has the background which already expresses the negation. And it is not easy to find the contrast between figure sentence and ground sentence.

#### 4.1.3 Explicit negation---morphological level---

There are another kind of explicit negation, and it is the negativeness at the morphological level. Morphological levels explicit negation also negates nouns, adjectives and adverbs etc., and they sometimes have a difference in their strength of negation.

"Un-," "in-," "non-," "dis-," "an-," and "no-" are the typical morphological level explicit negative expressions. In this section, the strength of negativeness is the primary focus.

(25) a. happy  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  not happy

b. happy  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$  unhappy  $\rightarrow$  miserable

It should be noted that "unhappy" is just going in the direction of "miserable," and "unhappy" is less unhappy than "miserable," though both "unhappy" and "miserable" is in the opposite direction of "happy."

- (26) a. I think she's unhappy.
- b. I think she's not happy.
- c. I don't think she's happy. (Horn 1989: 316)

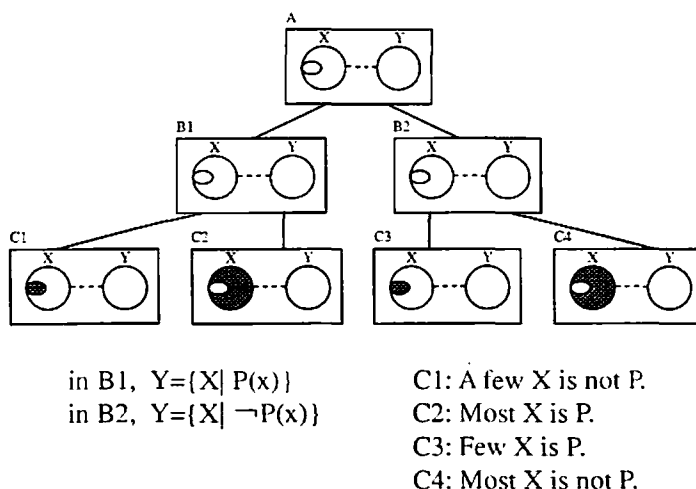
In example (26) . there is a level of negative strength. It is  $a > b > c$ . Particularly, the contrast between (26a) and (26b) suggests the difference of morphological negation and explicit negation in word level.

## 4.2 Implicit negation

### 4.2.1 Implicit negation---word level---

As typical implicit negation in word level, "hardly," "scarcely," "seldom," "rarely," "few" and "little" etc. can be given. Here, the implicit negative word "few" will be focused on.

First of all, in the figure below it is important to notice that both C3 and C4's "few" has the negativeness from the beginning, though C1 and C2's "a few" does not.



(Fig.5)

Following sentences can be compared by using this figure5.

- (27) C1: A few people don't know the news.
- C2: Most people know the news.
- C3: Few people know the news.
- C4: Most people don't know the news.

In A, X and Y is a contrast region. In B, there are two conditions. B1 is a positive condition which can be expressed as  $Y = \{X | P(x)\}$ . B2 is a negative condition which can be expressed as  $Y = \{X | \neg P(x)\}$ . In other words, Y in B1 is "to know the news." and Y in B2 is "not to know the news." In the last step, in C, C1 and C3, C2 and C4 are corresponded each other. It is now clear that both are illustrating the same condition, but only their expressions are different.

Particular attention should be paid to the condition of C1 and C3. In both C1 and C3, the number of the people who do not know the news is the same. In C1, Y is positive, and in C3 Y is negative. Therefore even though C3 does not have an explicit negative word, this sentence has the negativeness in total.

#### 4.2.2 Contrast and opposite meaning

(28) a. He is a bachelor. / b. She is a spinster.

It is one traditional way of expressing that "bachelor" is [+male, -married], and "spinster" is [+female, -married]. There is no explicit negative words here, but there is some kind of negativeness in these words.

To give the feature checking, it is important to decide where to put the focus on. For example, "grandmother" can be expressed both [+female, +old] and [-male, -young].

#### 4.2.3 Negative contexts

Ota (1980: 281-285) suggests that NPIs such as "any," "yet," "lift a finger," and "until" etc. appear characteristic in negative context.

Ota classifies seven groups of negative context. The last six contexts should be given special attention.

Context of Explicit Negation---He hasn't come yet.

Context of Implicit Negation---He is afraid to see anybody yet.

---I object to anybody (ever) doing anything like that.

---He was too busy to lift a finger to help anybody.

Comparison ---He is taller than anybody in his class.

---He is as tall as anybody in his class.

Interrogative ---Has anybody come?

---I wonder if he lifted a finger to help the old lady.

If-clause, before-clause ---If anybody will lift a finger, ...

---Before anybody could lift a finger, ...

Presupposition against Fact---If you had ever done a thing like that, ...

(English translation mine)

The aim of this paper is the variety of negation, and it is not the purpose to observe the NPI's licensing conditions. However, NPIs are extremely helpful to find where the negativeness of the linguistic phenomena exist.

#### 4.2.4 Pragmatic negativeness

(28) a. (Boy A fails to catch a ball. Two girls speak in a low voice.)

He's smart!

b. (An odd-tasty dish was served, and the maker of the food asked about the taste.)

I've never tasted anything so good like it in my life!

It is not the main objectives of this paper to discuss the mechanism of sarcasm, but in the examples above, both "He's smart!" and "so good" are the opposite meaning in reality. This kind of subjective judgement such as "smart" and "good" are positive meaning on the surface level. However, by using the some ways of utterances, the sentence changes into a sarcastic sense. Accents and intonations are the important factors to make a sarcastic meaning.

## 5. Negation and adverbs

### 5.1 Negation in a positiveness and the adverb "yet"

#### 5.1.1 Explicit negation and "yet"

- (29) a. He is not married yet.  
 b. I've met nobody yet today.  
 c. He has no friends yet in this country.  
 d. He never speaks a word yet.  
 e. Nobody knows this news yet.  
 f. He has eaten nothing yet today.

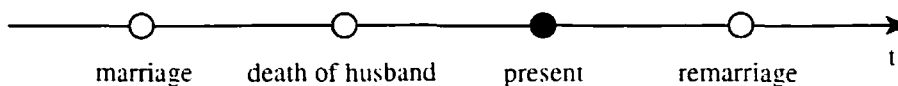
In this section, an adverb "yet" attracts attention. Generally "yet" is used in the circumstance of explicit negativeness. And that sentence expresses the un-reached condition in some situations. However, "yet" is not always used in the explicit negative sentences. Sometimes it is used in the superficial positive condition which has implicit negativeness.

#### 5.1.2 Implicit negation and "yet"

##### 5.1.2.1 Acceptability of "yet" in positive sentences

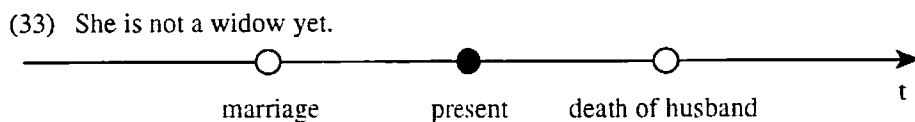
- (30) He is yet a bachelor.  
 (31) a. She is yet a single. / b. She is yet a spinster. / c. She is yet a widow.  
 (32) a. He is yet unmarried.  
 b. He is rich, intelligent and gentle, and he is yet unmarried.  
 c. He is rich, intelligent and gentle, and he is yet a single.

All (30), (31) and (32) are possible, but "still" instead of "yet" is more natural and ideal. For example, (30) is more natural and common, if it is said "He is still single." or "He is still not married." If "yet" is used in positive sentences, it sounds like poetic, classical and literal works. In other words, when "yet" is used in positive sentences, some special effect seems to be expected for the hearer.





This sentence (32c), her remarriage is expected, and therefore the adverb "yet" is used in the positive sentence such as "She is yet a widow." It is the significant point that the situation of the remarriage has not come yet, and at present the remarriage situation is un-reached. Sentences such as (33) expects the death of the husband.



It is quite rare to expect the death of husband, however, if the sentence (33) is used, the expected situation is the death of her husband. And at present, she wishes her husband to die, but he is still alive, or her husband's condition is not good, but he is not dead yet.

In other words, "yet" needs to make the target of the negation clear. The background knowledge has to show what the adverb "yet" negate, what situation the adverb "yet" negate, what situation is un-reached at the moment, and what is expected in the future.

Native English speakers say that (31a) has higher acceptability than (31c). However, this is the case when the single tends to be thought around twenty-five years old, and the widow tends to be thought around seventy-five years old. Surely, if the widow is twenty-five years old, the acceptability of the sentence (31c) becomes higher.

Besides, (32c) has the highest acceptability in (32). (32c) has a clear context before the "yet" sentence, and it is much easier than other sentences to lead the meaning of "not-yet."

Here, it is interesting to look back "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" (Fig.2) again. Firstly, adapt this figure not with the negations but with the general linguistic phenomena.

(34) Today. I saw a four-legged dog.

(35) Today. I met a high-heeled, cowboy hat on and yukata-wearing woman.

(36) Today, I met a Japanese person.

Compare the situations of (34), (35) and (36) with their explicit negative sentences, and adapt them to the figure "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness" (Fig.2).

First, (34) is the most right condition in the figure "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness," since it is quite natural that dogs have four legs in almost any environment. Therefore this sentence will never have high impact on the hearer, and this sentence has difficulty becoming a figure. In this example, the contrast of positive and negative sentences will be unclear.

On the contrary, the situation of (35) is very rare and extraordinary. In this case, the figure is very salient. This sentence will fall on the most left part of the figure "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness."

Lastly, seeing the sentence (36), it can be thought that the contrast between figure and ground may vary depending on the environment where this sentence is uttered. If the speaker is in Japan, and the hearer is also in Japan, the sentence (36) is too ordinary, and it almost has no sense. However, if the speaker and the hearer are in the small village in some foreign country, and when they believed that they are the only Japanese people in

that village, the sentence (36) will sound surprising and very informative. In the figure "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness," such utterance (36) approximates the situation of the furthest to the left box.

Even in the foreign country, if the speaker and the hearer are in the city where many Japanese are found such as in New York, the utterance of sentence (36) becomes less clear contrast and less informative.

Many research were done on the topic of figure-ground contrast, and this contrast is said to have something to do with the human linguistic phenomena. However, this paper always tries to develop those fixed and two-valued contrast of figure and ground. Human recognize the world in a gradience scale in relation with his environment, and this recognition appear in the behavior of language.

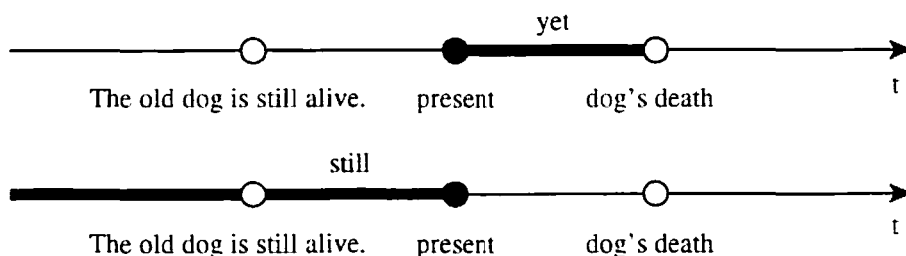
### 5.1.2.2 Yet (negation) and still (continuance)

"Yet" and "still" seem to be similar. "yet" asks or deny the time when some event happened to some time period." And "still " expresses the continuance of some event. Some times they are used as if they have an equivalent meaning, but they clearly have difference.

- (37) a. The old dog is still alive. / b. The old dog is alive yet.  
 c. The old dog is not dead yet.

"Yet" has a kind of implication such as "the dog is not dead at this moment, but nobody knows what will happen on this dog in the future, and it is expected that the dog might die soon." If the speaker does not have any intention of implying the above things, it is more common and natural to use (37c). Section 5.1.2.1 helps us to compare" yet" and "still."

Both (37a) and (37b) are expressing the same situation, but their expressions are different. "yet" focuses on the un-reached situation for the future.



On the other hand, "still" focuses on the continuance of the event to the present time. Heine et. al. suggested that "not yet" is one of the counter expectation markers, and other similar markers are "too," "nevertheless," "only," "already," "still" and "no longer" etc. They say "Attention should also be drawn to the fact that the marking of the counter expectation may involve extremely divergent morphosyntactic or phonological expressions" (Heine et al. 1991). This suggestion of counter expectation marker and its relationships between the varieties of negatives is as pointed out in section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

### 5.3 Other unfixed negativeness and adverbs

### 5.3.1 Accent, intonation, adverbs and negativeness

Bolinger (1977: 35) pointed out the importance of the accent in the usage of "yet". He made a pair of "yet-already", and compared them. From Bolinger's point of view, "yet" is not negative in itself. When the speaker uses "yet" in a positive sentence, he needs the accent on that adverb. That adverb will give the focus on "yet".

Related phenomena can be found in other adverbs. Accents and intonations have important role on negation.

- (38) a. Well, she isn't beautiful.  
b. Well, she isn't exactly beautiful.

In the sentence (38b), the negation seem to be lightened by using the partial negation. However, the real meaning of the speaker is the irony. The speaker sometimes wants to express "She is not beautiful at all." by uttering this sentence.

Ota (1980: 441) gave the examples of adverb which change the meaning both in the direction of positive and negative when it has intonation on it.

"Slightest" and "not a bit" are the adverbs to emphasize the negation when it is uttered without any accent or intonation.

- (39) a. They don't praise him in the slightest. (down ↓)  
b. We don't like it a bit. (down ↓)

"Slightly" and "not--a little" are the adverbs to lighten the negation when it is uttered with accent or intonation.

- (40) a. They didn't praise him slightly. (up ↑) (They praised him quite a lot.)  
b. We don't like it a little. (up ↑) (We like it quite a lot.)

As Bolinger says the accents and intonations give the focus on the adverb, and help to change the direction from positive to negative, and sometimes from negative to positive.

### 5.3.2 Negative subjective judgement and adverbs

In this section, irony, negation and subjective judgement are discussed through the example of the adverb "quite." "Quite" is deeply dependent on the subjective judgement and the context of the utterance.

- (41) a. I was quite by myself. / b. The work was quite finished.  
c. He has quite recovered. /d. I quite understood.

"Quite" in (41) is the emphaser of the positiveness, and its meaning is "entirely" or "totally."

Next type of "quite" is different from that in (41). Its degree less than "entirely" or "totally," and close to "rather," "fairly" and "so so," and on its utterance, an accent is frequently put on it.

- (42) a. You look quite well.  
 b. You are quite a big boy.  
 c. Why, you're quite rich.  
 d. He is quite polite. but I don't like his manner.  
 e. It is quite harmless in another place. but not here.

Also, when the accent is put on the word after the adverb "quite," its meaning becomes "very" or "extremely." Therefore the position of the accent is also important.

- (43) a. This book was quite interesting. / b. That's quite all right.

If the sentences like (43) appears without any presupposition, it has many possibilities to find the intended meaning. It may be "really interesting," "better than expected" and "so so" etc. In the case of (43), subjective judgement has an important role to make a negative context, and many factors except accent and intonation, for example, gestures and facial expressions will greatly help to convey the intended meaning. These factors are unfixed and changeable depending on the environment that utterance is used.

## 6. Concluding remarks

In this paper, I discussed that the contrast between positive and negative is not fixed and dynamically changeable. Traditionally, this contrast has been thought as fixed and static, but there are variety of negation, and variety of contrast. Negativeness in the positive sentences are particularly focused on in this research. Negativeness in positive sentences can be well characterized through the relationship with such configurations as "Figure-Ground Reversion" and "Simultaneous Contrast of Clearness." Cognition of human beings is found in this kind of usage of language. And now it is clearer than before that a part of the reflection of the human recognition in their environment is seen in their linguistic phenomena. Usually, negative sentence is thought to be the sentence which was here introduced as an explicit negative sentences. However, there are many varieties of negation of implicit type negativeness. Also, some polarity sensitive adverbs were given to discuss the unknown aspects of implicit negation. For the use of these adverbs, context, presupposition and the idea of unexpectation etc. are important.

In the past research many things have been said for direct negation. This paper shows various aspects of negation which has not been sufficiently investigated so far. From the cognitive and pragmatics point of view, negation in positive sentences are now more rich, systematized and motivated by the human recognition based approach.

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