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Negation, Scope and Negative Polarity Items in Korean

In this talk I will present the basic facts of the licensing of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) in Korean. The surface position of negation in Korean seems to be structurally quite low, but there is no subject-object asymmetry of the licensing of NPIs, as is found in English. However, this lack of asymmetry does not indicate that there is a high abstract position for negation regardless of its surface expression (an account proposed for German, for example, by Penka 2007). Rather, the scope of negation is relatively low in Korean, and NPIs are licensed by taking negation in their scope. Moreover, we can show that the scope of negation is somewhat tied to the surface position of negation, as different expressions of negation show different scopal properties. Hence in terms of abstract properties of interpretation, which we might consider to be the "dark matter" of linguistic structures, Korean is fairly transparent in its syntax-semantics mapping.