

## Chamorro Possessives and the Syntax-Semantics of Subjects

Sandra Chung  
University of California, Santa Cruz

One of the recurring issues at the syntax-semantics interface concerns division of labor: should generalizations at this interface be explained in syntactic or semantic-pragmatic terms? Take, for instance, Milsark's (1977) generalization (MG) and what I call Horn's (1989) generalization (HG), which are stated below.

- (1) *Milsark's Generalization (MG)*: Subjects of individual-level predicates must be strong.
- (2) *Horn's Generalization (HG)*: Subjects tend to be interpreted outside the pragmatic scope of sentential negation.

Do these generalizations flow ultimately from the syntax of logical form, as Diesing (1992) claimed for MG? Or do they flow from a semantics-pragmatics enriched by the Brentano-Marty-Kuroda theory of judgement types—specifically, from the two-part nature of the categorical judgement—as proposed by Ladusaw (1994) for MG and by Horn (2001[1989]) and Ladusaw (1996) for HG?

In this case study, I investigate these questions for Chamorro, an Austronesian language of the Mariana Islands. My investigation focuses in particular on *bare possessives*. Possessive DP's in Chamorro have both a head determiner and a possessor; in bare possessives, the head determiner is the null indefinite article. After establishing that bare possessives are indeed a species of indefinite, I show that their ability to serve as subjects of individual-level predicates argues for a semantic account of MG, in the style of Ladusaw. I then show that the interaction of subjects with negation argues—perhaps surprisingly—for a syntactic account of HG.

### References

- Diesing, Molly. 1992. *Indefinites*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Horn, Laurence R. 2001[1989]. *A natural history of negation*. Stanford, Calif.: CSLI Publications.
- Ladusaw, William A. 1994. Thetic and categorical, stage and individual, strong and weak. In: *Proceedings of Semantics and Linguistic Theory IV*, ed. M. Harvey and L. Santelmann, 220-229. CLC Publications, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- Ladusaw, William A. 1996. Negative concord and 'mode of judgement'. In: *Negation: A notion in focus*, ed. Heinrich Wansing, 127-143. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.