

# Negation in Oneida

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- In a morphologically rich language like Oneida (Northern Iroquoian), much of the grammatical action is in the morphology.
- Negation is no exception:
  1. Negation has both a syntactic and *morphological* component.
  2. The inflectional system sometimes makes the morphological part “invisible.” (Section 3)
  3. The syntactic part serves as a scope marker for referential expressions/quantifiers/variable denoting expressions (henceforth “referential expressions”). (Section 5)
- But first, a description of standard negation.

## 1 Standard negation

- Negation has two parts: *yah ...[<sub>V</sub> te?X ] ...* = negative particle + negative verb, except imperatives and prohibitives.
- Mood of negative verbs is restricted.
- A set of NPIS/variable denoting expressions frequently occur between *yah* and the verb.

- There is only sentential negation in Oneida; the “standard” structure for negative sentences is negative particle + prefix on the verb.

(1) **Yah** ki?    **te?**-t-yuk-ihnúks-u.  
not in fact NEG-CISLOC-3>1SG-fetch-STV  
'they didn't come after me.'

- By far the most common negative particle is *yah*, glossed ‘not’ in the examples, but *áhsu* ‘not yet’ also occurs.

- The “standard” negative structure occurs in main and dependent clauses, questions (2), predicative possessives (3), existential clauses<sup>1</sup> (4), equatives (5) including negative possessive equatives (6). (Note that punctuation and capitalization in examples is as in the original transcriptions of recorded texts. Underlined segments are devoiced.)

(2) **Yah** k<sub>Λ</sub>      **te?**-s-atkáth-u      n      aké·slet.  
not question NEG-2SG.P-see-STV DEF my car  
‘You haven’t seen my car?’

(3) **yah te?**-yukni-?sléht-a-y<sub>Λ</sub>-?      ne? thó·ne?,  
not NEG-1DU.P.-car-JOINER-have-STV at that time  
‘we didn’t have a car at that time,’

(4) **yah** né·      **te?**-ka-nák<sub>le</sub>-hkwe? n      welfare núwa?      latina?túkhwa? k<sub>Λ</sub>,  
not assertion NEG-3Z/N.SG.A-reside-STV.PAST welfare nowadays they call it      y’know  
‘what they call welfare nowadays wasn’t around then,’

(5) ókhale? n<sub>Λ</sub>      s<sub>Λ</sub>      wa?káttoke? tsi? **yah** se?      kóskos **té·k<sub>Λ</sub>**.  
and then too I noticed that not for sure pig it’s not  
‘and then I noticed that this was no pig.’

(6) **yah** né·      í·      **te?**-wak-awá      thi·**k<sub>Λ</sub>**.  
not assertion FIRST.PERSON NEG-1SG.P-belonging that  
‘That’s not mine, not my belonging.’

- While in the positive the punctual aspect co-occurs with the future, optative or factual mood prefixes, only the optative occurs in the negative, and then the contrastive (CONTR) prefix occurs instead of the negative (7). (We will say more about the forms of the prefix in Section 4.)

(7) nále? **yah th-**a·-ke-?nya·k<sub>Λ</sub>-ne?.  
then not CONTR-OPT-1SG.A-run.away-PNC  
‘when I wouldn’t run away (from school).’

- The negative particle and the negative verb very frequently are not adjacent (8).

(8) **yah** ki?      kwahotoká·u óksa? ok      **te?**-yo-tú-·u      a·khey<sub>Λ</sub>-télene?  
not actually just really right away NEG-3Z/N.SG.P-be.possible-STV that I recognize  
úhka? náhohte?.  
who  
‘I couldn’t really make out right away who.’

- And very frequently, intervening between the negative particle and negative verb are a set of words used in questions and irrealis contexts (variable denoting NPIS): *náhte?* ‘anything, what?’, *úhka?* ‘anyone, who?’ (9), *kátsha?* or *kánike?* ‘anywhere, where?’ (10), *núwatu* ‘ever’ (11); frequently more than one occurs (12).

<sup>1</sup>Existential clauses are expressed with the verbs *-e-* ‘go, walk’, *-y<sub>Λ</sub>(t)-* ‘put, have, be available’, *-ot-* ‘stand, have’, *-nakle-* ‘reside, be plentiful’.

- Interestingly, some of these, *náhte?* ‘anything, what?’, *úhka?* ‘anyone, who?’, and *kátsha?* ‘anywhere, where?’, co-occur with another particle *ok* to derive indefinite pronouns, e.g. *úhka? ok* ‘someone’.

- (9) **Yah**  $\kappa\Lambda$       **úhka** **te?**-yako-tsíst-a-y $\Lambda$ -?.      Tak-tsíst-u.  
not question anyone NEG-3FI.P-light-JN-have-STV 2SG>1SG.IMP-light-give  
‘No one has a light? Give me a light!’
- (10) *né·n*    **yah kánike?** **te?**-ka-?sléht-a-y $\Lambda$ -?.  
so then not anywhere NEG-3Z/N.SG.A-vehicle-JN-lie-STV  
‘and now there’s no car anywhere.’
- (11) *wakatla?swiyó kwí· tsi?* **áhsu nuwátú th**-a-ukw-atye·lú·s-e?.  
I’m lucky                      that not yet ever      CONTR-OPT-1SG.P-have.an.accident-PNC  
‘I’m lucky I never had a (car) accident.’
- (12) **Yah** *ki?*      *ní·*      **nuwátú náhte?** **te?**-yuky-atkáth-u *í·*      *khále?* Masyha,  
not actually 1ST PERS ever      anything NEG-1DU.P-see-STV 1ST PERS and      Mercy  
‘But the two of us never ever saw anything, me and Mercy.’

- Imperatives/prohibitives have a different structure from the “standard” structure, with the particle *ták $\Lambda$ ?* ‘don’t, shouldn’t’ and the future (13) or optative (14) prefix instead of the negative.

- (13) **ták $\Lambda$ ?** **nuwátú úhka?**  $\Lambda$ -she-hlolí      *tsi?*      *nukyá·taw $\Lambda$ ?*  
don’t ever      anyone FUT-2SG>3-tell what has happened to me  
‘don’t ever tell anyone what happened to me!’
- (14) *Se·nhotú kwí·*      **ták $\Lambda$ ?** **uta**-hu-taáyaht                      *tsí·ks.*  
2SG.A-close.door don’t      OPT:CISLOC-3M.PL.A-come/go.in flies  
‘Close the door (so) the flies won’t come in!’

## 2 Negative concord and “spread”

- Oneida is an obligatory concord language.
- With a set of “classificatory” verbs, Oneida is an example of a “triple obligatory” negative concord language.

- We analyze the “double/triple” negative structure as obligatory Negative Concord.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The negative particle *yah* is from *yáht $\Lambda$ ?*, the word for ‘no’ in the Wisconsin variety of Oneida, and nowadays a kind of pro-form in Ontario Oneida (e.g. *Tá·t yáht $\Lambda$ ?  $\Lambda$ hotiná·khw $\Lambda$ ? ki?* ‘If not (if you don’t give them money) they will get mad actually’). The word for ‘no’ in Ontario Oneida is *tah*.

- “Triple” negation occurs when the sentence includes a “classificatory” verb (sometimes now a frozen form) that specifies quantity (*nikú/té·ku*) (15), extent (*niyo·lé·/te?yo·lé·*) (16), or manner (*ni·yót/té·yot*) (17): both the classificatory verb and the verb of the main clause are negative.
- “Triple” negation occurs also with some verbs whose meaning involve quantity (19)–(20).

- (15) né·        **yah** tho **té·-ku**        **te**-ho-tnutó·tsl-a-yΛ-?        tsi? ná·lelhe?.  
 assertion not    thus NEG-amount NEG-3M.SG.P-box-JN-have-STV as    so he thought  
 ‘he didn’t have as many boxes as he thought.’
- (16) **Yah** tho **te?**-yo·lé· **th**-y-ae-sá·-sle-?        tsi? ni·yót Buffalo.  
 not thus NEG-far    CONTR-TRL-OPT-2SG.P-drive-PNC as    how    Buffalo  
 ‘you don’t drive as far as you would for Buffalo.’
- (17) **yah** tho **té·**-yot    tsi? **te?**-wak-atat-lihuny-Λ·ní.  
 not thus NEG-how that NEG-1SG.P-REFL-teach-BEN[STV]  
 ‘that’s not the way I taught myself [to tell stories].’
- (18) wahá·lu? “**yah** ki?        isé· **te?**-t-yotyeláhtu        ka?iká tho  
 he said    not    actually you NEG-CISLOC-3Z/N.SG.P-first:STV this    thus  
**te?**-sa-ya?tawá·-u.”  
 NEG-2SG.P-befall-STV  
 ‘he said, “you are not the first one to have this happen to you”.’
- (19) Kwáh **yah** **th**-y-a?te-ka-?sléh-ta-ke        **te**-ho·-yá·.  
 just    not    CONTR-TRL-DL-3Z/N.SG.A-vehicle-JN-amount.to[STV] NEG-3M.SG.P-have:STV  
 ‘he doesn’t have all different kinds of car’
- (20) **Yah** **te?**-yaw-e?t-owaná        **te?**-ka-hnana?t-i·yó.  
 not    NEG-3Z/N.SG.P-pile-big[STV] NEG-3Z/N.SG.A-potato-good[STV]  
 ‘Not too many potatoes are good.’

### 3 Realization of the negative prefix

- Negative verbs always carry a NEGATIVE morphosyntactic feature
- Sometimes there is no apparent exponent of the NEGATIVE feature
  1. The exponent for the CONTRASTIVE prefix substitutes for *te?*-
  2. The exponent for the COINCIDENT realizes the feature combination COINCIDENT + NEGATIVE

- We use NEGATIVE, COINCIDENT to refer to morphosyntactic features (Stump, 2001; Crysmann & Bonami, 2016) as opposed to the forms or realizations of the feature.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Negative	Translocative	Dualic	Factual	Cislocative	Factual	Pronominal	Stem
Contrastive	Factual		Optative	Repetitive	Optative	Factual	
Coincident			Future			Optative	
Partitive							

Figure 1: Position classes of Oneida inflectional prefixes

- The negative prefix occurs in the same “slot” (verb initial) as three other prefixes: partitive *n-/ni-*, coincident *tsh-/tshi-*, and contrastive *th-/thi-*.
- The distribution of the negative prefix forms *te?-/th-* corresponds to the distribution of the partitive, coincident and contrastive prefix forms with and without the vowel *i*. Thus *te?* occurs where *ni-*, *tshi-*, *thi-* occur, and the contrastive form *th-* occurs where *n-*, *tsh-*, *th-* occur.
- *Exponence competition* for the verb-initial slot resolves as COINCIDENT > CONTRASTIVE > NEGATIVE > PARTITIVE. Example (21) shows NEGATIVE > PARTITIVE, and (22) (with the negative particle *ahsuhká* ‘not yet’) shows the COINCIDENT > NEGATIVE.

(21) tshiwahu·níse? **yah** né· tho **té**·-yot. (cf. **ni**·-y-ót)  
 long ago not it’s that’s NEG-3Z/N.SG.A-how[STV] (cf. PART-3Z/N.SG.A-how[STV])  
 ‘long time ago that’s not how it was.’

(22) Khále? **ahsuhká tshi**-yukwa·-yá· wí· n hydro.  
 and not yet COIN-1PL.P-have:STV hydro  
 ‘And it’s when we didn’t have hydro(-electricity) yet; i.e. it was before we had hydro.’

- We distinguish between morphosyntactic features (NEGATIVE, PARTITIVE, ...) and their exponents or realizations.
- The negative feature (NEGATIVE) can be present in a verb entry even if the COINCIDENT exponent preempts the occurrence of the NEGATIVE exponent.

(23) a. NEGATIVE → *te?*  
 b. COINCIDENT,NEGATIVE → *tsh-*

## 4 Typological classification

- Oneida is asymmetric because of the restriction on the mood of the negative verb in the punctual aspect (only the optative occurs, and not the future or factual).
- The “symmetry” of Oneida’s negation is a complicated inflectional issue.

- According to the classification proposed in Miestamo (2003, 2005) Oneida is symmetric and asymmetric. It is asymmetric A/Cat/TAM/Neutr because of the non-occurrence of negation with the future or factual mood prefixes. The symmetric classification is complicated.
- To review the realizations of the prefix:
  - *teʔ-* with verbs in the habitual and stative aspects, directly before a pronominal prefix or before the cislocative or repetitive prefixes. See example (1) with the cislocative.
  - *t...eʔ-* or *th...eʔ* (depending on the speaker) with verbs in the habitual and stative aspects, whenever the translocative prefix occurs directly before a pronominal prefix or before the repetitive prefix. See example (24) with the translocative and repetitive prefixes.
  - *th-* with verbs in the punctual aspect and optative mood; also whenever the dualic prefix occurs regardless of aspect. See example (7) or (11).

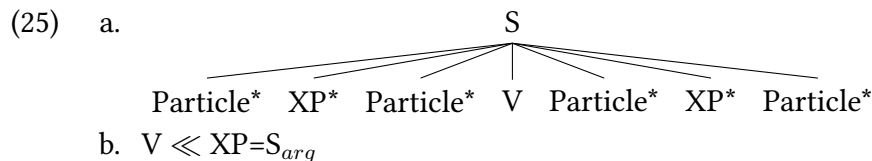
(24) Na kwí· **yah th**<y>**eʔ**-wak-yel-á            yahá·ksane?            waʔkatáyahteʔ.  
 so then not NEG<TRL>NEG-1SG.P-do-STV I would finish out I went to school  
 ‘I couldn’t help it (but) I had to finish school.’

- The last realization, *th-*, is usually described as the contrastive *th-* “substituting” for the negative *teʔ-* whenever the negative *teʔ-* cannot occur.
- When the only difference between a positive and negative is the negative particle and the prefix *teʔ-*, negation is symmetric. When the only difference between a positive and negative is the negative particle, which is the case when the contrastive form *th-* occurs, negation is *apparently* again symmetric. But this assumes, as does Miestamo, that a verb with the contrastive prefix can occur both with and without the negative particle.
- However there are no attestations of the negative particle *yah* with a verb that, outside of negation, has the contrastive prefix (e.g. *th-aʔkatye·lÍ·* ‘to my surprise, I suddenly encountered’ is not attested in the negative, \**yah th-a·katye·lÍ·*), and attempts at eliciting such examples were fruitless.  
 ⇒ There is no data that supports positing a symmetric structure between *yah* + “contrastive” and contrastive without *yah*.
- Furthermore, negation of a contrastive verb (even if it did exist) as evidence for a symmetric classification would miss the distinction between morphosyntactic features and their exponents, in particular:
  1. In the negative, the contrastive prefix is not the exponent of the CONTRASTIVE morphosyntactic feature; rather it is an exponent of the NEGATIVE morphosyntactic feature.
  2. *Only* and *always* in the positive, the contrastive prefix is an exponent of the CONTRASTIVE feature.

## 5 Scope

- The negative particle serves as a scope marker for “referential expressions” but not for questions, iterative particles, ...
- Particular “referential expressions” have a strong preference to outscope negation or, conversely, to occur within the scope of negation.

- Iroquoian word order is syntactically “free” and is governed by pragmatic considerations (“newsworthiness”, Mithun 1987).



- Interaction of negation and scope is *not* free for referential expressions/quantifiers:
  1. Order of “referential expressions” w.r.t. to the verb is “free”.
  2. Semantic scope is isomorphic to linear order (no inverse scope).

### 5.1 Scope of “referential expressions”

- There can be lexical preferences for a particular semantic scope.

*yah < akwekú*

- *Akwekú* is frequently used to encode universal quantification (26) and exceptives (27).

- (26) **Akwekú** tho s-a-hoti-ké-toht-e?  
 all there REP-FACT-3M.PL.P-appear-PNC  
 ‘All of them showed up again.’
- (27) **Akwekú** wa-hu-tekhu-ní kwah nók Só-s.  
 all FACT-3M.PL.A-eat:PNC just but Susan  
 ‘Everyone ate except/but Susan.’

- *Akwekú* ‘all’ (28) prefers to have narrow scope with respect to negation. So do *oyá* ‘another, other’, *e-só* ‘many, a lot’, and *só-tsi?* ‘too much’. When elicited, the order *akwekú yah* (‘all not’) is rejected in favor of *yah úhka?* ‘not anyone, no one’ or *yah náhte?* ‘not anything, nothing’ (29). But wide scope *akwekú yah* is attested (30).

- (28) **Yah akwekú te-hon-ek-ú** ohnekákeli?.  
not all NEG-3M.PL.P-eat-STV soup  
'Not all of them ate the soup.'
- (29) **Yah úhka? te-hon-ek-ú** ohnekákeli?.  
not anyone NEG-3M.PL.P-eat-STV soup  
'No one ate the soup.'
- (30) Nók k<sub>AS</sub> thiká Jake khále? Enoch, Gordon, n<sub>A</sub> kyuni? wí· né· **akwekú**  
Only habitually that Jake and Enoch Gordon now in fact too assertion all  
**yah kánike? te?-s-h<sub>A</sub>·n-é-·se?**  
not anywhere NEG-REP-3M.PL.A-walk-HAB  
'Just Jake and Enoch, Gordon, they're all not around anymore.'

*tetsyalú < yah*

- In contrast, *tetsyalú* 'both,' *ótyahke?* 'others, some,' *tehnyáshe* 'two (m.),' *tóhka? níkú* 'a few,' *kwáh tsi? níkú* 'however many' or "all", and specific numbers of entities precede *yah+verb*.

*tsyo?k náhte? < yah*

- Some (quasi-)universal quantifiers prefer to outscope negation.
- (31) **Tsyo?k náhte? yah te-hoti·yá·**  
all kinds of things not NEG-3M.PL.P-have:STV  
'All kinds of things they don't have.'
- (32) **tsyo?k nahté·shu? yah te?-t-ka-ye·lí·** tsi? nihatyélha?.  
all kinds of things not NEG-CISLOC-3Z/N.SG.A-be.right:STV what he is doing  
'all kinds of things aren't right that he's doing.'
- In some cases, the order of the NPI and the verb (governed by 'newsworthiness') interacts with negation to lead to two distinct interpretations.
- (33) **Yah náhte? th-au·tú·** n-a·-k-átyel-e?.  
not anything CONTR-OPT:3Z/N.SG.A:possible:PNC PART-OPT-1SG.A-do-PNC  
'I can't do anything, there's nothing for me to do.'
- (34) **Yah th-au·tú·** **náhte?** n-a·-k-átyel-e?.  
not CONTR-OPT:3Z/N.SG.A:possible:PNC anything PART-OPT-1SG.A-do-PNC  
'I can't (e.g. am not allowed to) do anything.'



## 5.2 Scope of verbal adjuncts

- Usually negative+repetitive prefixes = ‘not anymore’.
- Sometimes an iterative interpretation of the repetitive is possible, and both NEG (AGAIN ...) and AGAIN (NEG ...) interpretations are possible. See (35a) vs. (35b)
- The iterative particle *ále?* can receive an inverse scope interpretation.

- (35) a. **yah th-a?**te-s-ho-tʌʔʌhlawʌhla·t-ú.  
 not CONTR-DL-REP-3M.SG.P-go.over.a.fence-STV  
 ‘he didn’t go over the fence again’ (he has before)
- b. tahnú· kwí· **yah úhka?** th<y>**e?**-s-huwa-hʌl-ú,  
 and not anyone NEG<TRL>NEG-REP-3>3M.SG-summon-STV  
 ‘and nobody called over to him again,’ (again, nobody called over to him)
- (36) **yah ále?** th-a?te-ho-tʌʔʌhlawʌhla·t-ú.  
 not again CONTR-DL-3M.SG.P-go.over.a.fence-STV  
 ‘again he didn’t go over the fence’ (again he failed to do it, maybe he was afraid to)

## 6 A special pattern for negative existentials?

- Nominals are not, in general, predicative in Oneida (Mithun, 2000) (...but we have found exceptions).
- There is an interesting pattern for (some) negative existentials where the negative particle *seems* to negate a noun.

- There seems to be a pattern, attested in conversations, where *yah* negates “directly” to convey negative existentials (37) and negative equatives (38). Examples with negative existentials also include an NPI.

- (37) **yah** ki? né· **úhka?**,  
 not actually assertion anyone  
 ‘there was no one (there),’

- (38) Ok ne? thikʌ, **yah** nʌ? né.  
 And it that not as for it  
 ‘And as for that one, not that one.’

- This pattern of “direct” negation with *yah* plus NPI occurs in a few attestations with a verb that has the optative mood prefix rather than the negative prefix.

- (39) *nók tsi? yah ki? ní· nuwátú náhte? a·-yaky-atkátho-?*  
 but not actually 1ST PERS ever anything OPT-1EX.DU.A-see-PNC  
 ‘but there was ever ever anything for the two of us to see.’
- (40) *Yah ki? nuwátú náhte? thiká a?nyóh wí· oyá· a·-hon-atst-ú-hak-e? wí·*  
 not actually ever anything that seems like other OPT-3M.PL.P-use-STV-CONT-PNC  
*tsi? lati-kalatúnyu-he?*  
 as 3M.PL.A-tell.stories-HAB  
 ‘There was never anything else it seems like for them to use [other than coffee or tea] as they were telling stories.’

## 7 Conclusion

- Oneida is an obligatory negative concord language; negation consists of a negative particle and negative prefix. Sometimes, negation is required to be expressed three times.
- What happens when negation runs through the mill of heavy inflectional morphology: Sometimes you have negation but you do not see it!
- The syntactic component of negative concord can be used as a scope marker ...except when you have entrenchment of particle order or when the two operators are morphologically realized.

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