Amele is one of several Trans-New Guinean languages spoken in Papua New Guinea, which Foley (2000) describes as all having complicated verbal morphology. The grammar of Amele was first described by Roberts (1987), and central to which are its conspicuous use of negators. Amele contains a negator ‘qee’ (‘q’ indicates voiced dorso-labiovelar plosive), which follows the element negated. Amele exhibits verbal conjugations for persons and numbers, but no negative conjugation in the present tense. That Amele has negative conjugations in past and future tenses quite differs from English and other major languages. Furthermore, Amele contains many types of past tenses—today’s past, yesterday’s past, the remote past, the negative past—and each of which has inflection. Typologically, other languages (Finnish, Finno-Ugric) exhibit negative conjugations of verbs (cf. Miestamo (2007) and Payne (1985)). However, the behaviors require elaboration.

Following an extended ethnography of Amele communities, this study examines negative particles and negative verb conjugations in Amele, and attempts to clarify its morphological behaviors. As such, this study observes the functionalism of Amele grammar, and describes Amele’s grammatical positive-negative and present/past distinctions, as well as its functional markedness in past tenses.

**Keywords:** Key Words: Negation, Morphology, Amele, Papua New Guinea, Finnish
Introduction

The Trans-New Guinean set of languages exhibits a complex verbal morphology (Foley, 2000), allowing for a facile use of tense, person, and number (cf. Roberts, 1987), and thus, rendering communication in these languages adroit. In one such language, Amele, according to Roberts (1987), the verbal ergative form ‘fri-diga’ (am surprised) is an inflected conjugation of the root ‘iga’ (surprise) that contains both 1st person singular and present tense forms. The verbal form ‘fri-itiga’ (was surprised (earlier today)) contains 1st person singular and today’s past tense forms. The forms ‘-diga’ and ‘-itiga’ thus become portmanteau morphemes with respect to persons, numbers, and tenses, in order to construct a complicated verb morphology as an inflectional form.

Amele grammar was first described by Roberts (1987), in his extensive linguistic work in Papua New Guinea, publishing several volumes on the grammatical phenomena of Amele. Following Roberts, Elliott (2000) conducted important work on the language. Yet, these studies have not provided an adequately deep analysis of functions in Amele, such as negation. With the exception of work such as that by Elliott (2000) and Foley (2000), few in-depth scholarly efforts have emerged on negation in New Guinean languages. Consequently, gaps in the understanding of communication in Amele remain, and there is a significant need for the exploration and exhaustive description of the language. For this purpose, I have worked on the language since 2006, that is, on the sociolinguistics, communication, morphology, and syntax, of Amele communities in Papua New Guinea. This work has intended to create pathways for a wider understanding and visibility of the language, subsequently and hopefully motivating other scholars to contribute to this research.

The specific behaviors of the negative verbs differ in Amele and Finnish. Amele is morphologically complex, whereas Finnish has simpler inflections of verbs and negators. In Amele, negative expressions exhibit a somewhat complex grammar (in particular, it is related to its verb morphology), the complexity of which this study examines sociolinguistically. This negation as a grammatical phenomenon is invariably used in many languages, and differs across the languages of the world, while having been studied extensively by Payne (1985) and Miestamo (2007).

This paper presents a contrastive study between the two languages, Amele, of Papua New Guinea, and Finnish, the national language of Finland. The study seeks to describe negation in expressions in the Amele language, by clarifying the morphological behaviors of these negations, during oral interaction by speakers in Amele communities. More precisely, the study contrasts negations in both Amele and Finnish (Finno-Ugric). The data is thus grounded in my fieldwork and empirical work on negative expressions in Amele communities (cf. Nose, 2020a, 2020b).

In this study, I will primarily attempt to describe the communicative functions that Amele speakers assume when using the negative form in communication. I organize the paper as follows: In Section 2, I review a cross-linguistic study of negation, I analyze work by several authors, and present studies of
negation globally, so as to effectively prime my work in Amele. I then summarize work on Amele up to the present time, constructing a theoretical base with which to subsequently ground my empirical data and analysis. In Section 3, I present my empirical and other data containing negative expressions during communication in Amele, and analyze this through a framework of morphological inflection (Payne, 1985; Kroeger, 2005). I draw on data I collected on the Huar dialect, which is estimated to have less than 2,000 speakers, mainly in the village of Sein, the site of my data collection and study. In Section 4, I present a comparison between the two languages, Amele, of Papua New Guinea, and Finnish, a Finno-Ugric language. This comparison is significant in that it seeks to clarify conceptions of morphological complexity in Amele, and also in Finnish. Such a contrastive study, which observes the grammar of multiple languages (Kroeger, 2005; Nose, 2020a), and which draws on elements of linguistic typology, allows for a clearer observation and analysis of Amele. Concurrently, the value of this research lies in successfully describing the features that are not found in mainstream languages such as English and Japanese, and thus in clarifying the mechanisms behind such non-mainstream languages. In Section 5, I conclude the study and offer suggestions for further work, while reflecting back on the current study and its boundaries and possibilities.

It is also my hope that by clarifying the morphology of negative expressions, this study will expose features that are unique to Amele, and that can hence shed light on the worldviews of Amele speakers. An investigation of negative expressions can reveal the use of the grammatical expressions as they appear in general communication and hence interaction, reflexively exposing sociolinguistic patterns, which constitutes a subsequent aim of the study. This need to expand on understandings of Amele social influences is also motivated by the fact that the Amele language is transmitted almost solely through oral means, as the Amele community does not practice literacy in Amele.

Negation and the Amele Language

In General

Melanesia houses more than 1000 languages, such as Trans-New Guinea languages, Austronesian languages, and other genera, such as the creole languages Tok Pisin and Bislama. This language population has created an intensified and highly extensive linguistic diversity. In Figure 1 below, I map the locations of respective languages throughout New Guinea and neighboring islands (cf. Foley, 2000). As one of approximately 400 Trans-New Guinea languages, as the biggest language family in Melanesia (West Papua, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia), Amele is spoken by approximately 5,300 people, in the hills of Astrolabe Bay between the Gum and Gogol Rivers in the Madang Province of Papua New Guinea (Figure 2). Amele communities are also bilinguals of Amele and Tok Pisin, who freely code-switch between the two languages. As largely a Christian community, Amele church services integrate code-switching between these two languages. These communities have now limited their use of other native languages, and have switched to using
mostly Tok Pisin, although they still maintain their Amele language. Some of the Amele community continue to preserve an agriculture-based lifestyle, that is, without electricity and water, and opt to grow yam and betel nuts, as well as livestock. Others work in shops and offices, in towns such as Madang, and keep up with new technologies (smartphones and cars).

The Amele language, spoken in the Madang Province of Papua New Guinea, has more than 5000 speakers. As the language is well maintained, it is unlikely that Amele will become extinct in the near future. The Amele language is divided into four dialects; Amele, Huar, Jagahala, and Haia, first described by Roberts (1987), who grounded most of his work on the Haia dialect. These four dialects exist within an approximately 30 km radius of the bush area on the southern outskirts of the city of Madang, where more than 5000 Amele speakers reside.

It is interesting to note that speakers in various parts of this region, and hence across the dialects, differ in their verb inflections. As such, Amele has no related language: Neighboring languages such as Nobnobo, Siroi, and Bel, appear in the same geographical region as Amele, yet differ grammatically and lexically. Therefore, the languages in the area are not mutually comprehensible, other than Tok Pisin, which has emerged as a language for mutual communication.
Currently, in Papua New Guinea, the conservation of local languages is not considered to be of great importance. Amele speakers also do not consider their language to be significant and worth revitalizing, as I have found in my ethnographic fieldwork. Further disenfranchising Amele, English is taught in elementary school, and Tok Pisin, the more common language, is spoken in Papua New Guinea's towns and cities. English and Tok Pisin are necessary in order for people to survive outside of the Amele village and speech community. However, Amele, at least 3,000 years old, is of the most well-maintained and well-spoken languages throughout the whole of the Trans-New Guinea family. Tok Pisin was established in the late 19th to early 20th centuries, and was spoken throughout Papua New Guinea by the time of World War II. Tok Pisin has influenced the grammar and vocabulary of many local languages throughout Papua New Guinea, which have borrowed heavily from Tok Pisin. However, Amele is believed to have had little grammatical influence from Tok Pisin, despite the significant amount of language contact Amele speakers have had with Tok Pisin.

The Structure of Amele

Negative sentences and negative verbs appear in most languages (see, for example, Miestamo, 2007). These negative expressions play an essential role in communication, the semantics (formal and lexical), anthropological understandings (signification), and of course the syntax (functional and generative) of a language.

Drawing on both Roberts' (1987) data and the empirical data I have collected between 2006 and the present, I have found that Amele dialects differ in several ways. Roberts's descriptive data collection in the 1980s differs significantly to my own descriptive data collection; my data suggests that communication in Amele has been facilitated by the fact that Amele morphology has become increasingly simplified. Recent Amele speakers do not appear to be using the complicated morphological forms observed in Roberts's texts four decades ago. As such, current Amele speakers are apparently less likely to use these morphologically complex forms. This context has furthered my interest to describe the details of Amele grammar after the year 2000.

Amele exhibits fixed SOV order (intransitive sentence in Example 1a, possessive in Example 1b, and transitive sentence in Example 1c, together with noun-adjective, noun-demonstrative, and noun-numeral sequences, in Examples 1d, 1e, and 1f, but exhibits no voice system (Examples 1c and 1g). Examples 1a and 1c present a fixed SV and SOV word orders, respectively. Example 1b presents a possessive sentence, with no tense indication. Example 1d indicates noun-adjective order. Here, ‘girl beautiful’ and the head ‘melait’ (girl) precede the dependent ‘mebahic’ (beautiful). The noun-demonstrative order appears in Example 1e, and noun-numeral order appears in Example 1f. There is no passive voice in Amele. Rather, the direct object ‘mala’ (chicken) appears first in word order, as I show in Example 1g.
Example Set 1:

a. Dana  ho-ia.
   man  come-1sg.today’s past tense
   “The man came.”

b. Ija  jo  ac.
   I    house  have
   “I have a house.”

c. Ija  mala  baga-dugan.
   I    chicken  kill-1sg.yesterday’s past tense
   “I killed a chicken yesterday.”

d. Melait  mebahic
   girl  good
   “beautiful girl”

e. Melait  iji
   girl  this
   “this girl”

f. melait  leis
   girl  two
   “two girls”

g. no passive voice
   Mala,  ija  baga-dugan.
   chicken  I    kill-1sg.yesterday’s past tense
   “The chicken, I killed yesterday” or “The chicken was killed by me.”

Amele contains the present tense, past tense forms (today’s past, yesterday’s past, the remote past), and the future tense form (cf. Nose, 2020a, 2020b), and exhibits a complex verb morphology, including several-person, and complex number forms. Typically, grammar mediates the style and efficiency of communication, where some languages have reduced efficiency and hence disperse communicative requirements over an extended grammar, whereas other languages are quite packed and hence efficient for communication. In Amele, the morphology of verbs is such that they ‘pack’ extensive information, such as persons, numbers and tenses, and hence Amele is a highly efficient language for communication. As a result, we cannot split the verb forms into respective grammatical elements. Many languages exhibit grammar that is more complex than Amele from a typological perspective (for example, many agglutinative and synthetic languages). To discuss this structural complexity would be difficult without a comparison with another language. In order to investigate this complexity in Amele’s verb structure, I comparatively draw on Finnish, which also has negative verbs, as a contrast.
As an increasing number of languages in New Guinea area are being described, and also studied by drawing on electronic corpora (particularly major languages), the amount of learning by contrastive analysis of traditional languages is limited. Though traditional contrastive research may already seem obsolete, for several languages, including Amele, which are still poorly described and for which little to no corpus exists, contrastive research still has value. In addition, many studies have been conducted on Ethnosyntax (Enfield, 2002), a method of examining the relationship between language grammar and culture, some elements of which I draw on in this study.

Finnish as a member of the Finno-Ugric language family, has been written and studied extensively (Abondolo, 2015; Karlsson, 2008). In Example 2 below, Finnish exhibits subject-verb-object order, as it does case markings. Direct objects are marked by the accusative case (for overall interpretation in Examples 2a and 3a) or the partitive case (for partial interpretation or negative sentences in (2b, 3b); “I drink milk, but it doesn’t mean that I drink a cup of milk thoroughly”).

Example Set 2: Finnish (Finno-Ugric)

a. Minä juo-n maito-n.
   I drink-1sg.present milk-accusative
   "I drink milk."

b. Minä en juo maito-a.
   I negator drink-negative milk-partitive
   "I don't drink milk."

Example Set 3:

a. Minä jo-in maito-n.
   I drink-1sg.past milk-accusative
   "I drank milk."

   I negator drink-1sg.past/negative milk-partitive

In Finnish, the negator ‘en’ and negative verb form (‘juo-’ in present tense, and ‘juo-nut’ in past tense) are used. In addition, the direct object is changed to contain a partitive marking, as in Examples 2a and 2b.

Methodological Framework

Negation is a necessary element in communication in any language. By clarifying the grammatical structure of negation, we can consider the extent to which negative sentences are possible during communication in that language, and similarly, the language or speech community (cf. Meyerhoff,
2015). As negation is related to tense, describing tense would assist in describing negation, and hence how the two are positioned in relation to each other. This study aims to describe negation in Amele and to analyze the usage of negative verbs morphologically, during communication, from the perspective of contrastive and anthropological linguistics, while also considering sociolinguistic aspects.

In order to clarify negation in Amele, I draw on a linguistic classification of negation in verbs (Payne, 1985; Miestamo, 2007), while falling back on descriptions of Amele by Roberts (1987), as the only other available source of grammar in Amele, to support claims and my own empirical work. Payne (1985) and Miestamo (2007) discuss negative verbs in languages other than Amele (e.g., negative verbs in Finnish). Following this, and aligning with Roberts' methodology (1987), I collected original empirical data, which includes negated sentences, from conversations with speakers of Amele, during my extensive tenure in the field.

However, in this study, I ultimately present both a focus on Amele and a comparison of Amele with the Finnish and other languages. I have pursued this comparative framework as both languages contain negative verbs in similar morphological states (by using negator and negative verb). Though Finnish may not offer an optimum comparison, my own fluency and hence adroitness with the Finnish language allows for a strong comparison with Amele, in which I am also fluent. Furthermore, these two languages are distinctly different, and allow for a comparison of two languages which are in distinctly different environments, i.e., geographically, culturally, and linguistically.

Thus, the central intention of this study is the investigation of tenses, aspects, temporal expressions, and information structures of the Amele language (cf. Nose, 2020a, 2020b) so as to contribute to understandings of the ways in which speakers effect communication in modern Amele. For this, I thus also pay attention to the cultural characteristics of the Amele grammar and its speakers. Moreover, this study will try to contrast the negation in Amele with the negation in Finnish and to clarify the morphological mechanism of the negation.

Data

Negation

Negation in grammar can be analyzed through morphological, semantic, and syntactic frameworks. Typological studies, for example, Payne (1985), Elliott (2000), Kroeger (2005), and Miestamo (2007), have discussed this negation. According to these typological studies, negation exhibits two types of grammar; standard and non-standard negation. Standard negation suggests that every language has the means to express clausal negation: “This is not my book.” Non-standard negation includes the negative imperative, existential sentences, and other non-verbal clauses, such as the English ‘un-necessary’ or ‘im-possible.’ Additionally, standard and non-standard negations differ.
Elliott (2000) has described and analyzed the negation of several New Guinea languages through a semantic framework, claiming that Muna and Maung (both New Guinea languages) incorporate negation. In this section I introduce several Examples 4-6 of negation in languages, and in Amele, so as to compare this negation.

Example 4 Tok Pisin:

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
\text{Mi} & \text{no} & \text{kaikai} \\
\text{I} & \text{neg} & \text{eat} \\
\end{array}
\]

“I don’t eat bread.”

Example 5 Finnish:

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Minä} & \text{en} & \text{syö} & \text{leipä-ä} \\
\text{I} & \text{neg} & \text{eat-negative verb} & \text{bread-partitive} \\
\end{array}
\]

“I don’t eat bread.”

Example 6 Amele:

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Ija} & \text{frawa} & \text{qee} & \text{je-rim} \\
\text{I} & \text{bread} & \text{neg} & \text{eat-negative past} \\
\end{array}
\]

“I don’t eat bread.”

Tok Pisin uses the negator ‘no,’ which is borrowed from English ‘no/not,’ and which I present in Example 4. Finnish (Example 5) and Amele (Example 6) have a more complicated negation, that is, a combination of negator and negative verb. For instance, Finnish uses a combination of the negator ‘en’ and negative verb form ‘syö’ (Example 5). Similarly, Amele has a combination of negator ‘qee’ and negative verb form ‘je-rim,’ including inflections of person, number, and negation, as in Example 6. Negative verb forms are not rare phenomena typologically (cf. Payne, 1985); nevertheless, this study needs to consider the effects of negative verbs, namely, those that contrast Finnish and Amele. Moreover, this study explores the basic semantics of the negative particle ‘qee’ in communication in Amele and as such describes negative verb inflections. Amele has complicated verb inflections with negation, which, throughout this paper, I contrast with those in Finnish (Finno-Ugric).

Amele contains the negator ‘qee’ (‘q’ here a dorso-labiovelar), positioned after the negated element, as presented in Example 7. In Example 7 below, the adjective ‘mehabic’ (good) can be denied through the use of ‘mehabic qee’ (good not / not good). The exact word ‘bad’ in Amele does not exist, and the negator is used to form and signify an opposite adjective.
Example 7

a. Mebahic Mebahic qee
good good Neg
“good/bad”

Example 8a presents an affirmative voice, where Example 8b presents its negative sentence voice. The negator arrives after the NP, and hence, we see the order NP-Neg (Amele does not contact a copula).

Example Set 8

a. Ija school meel.
I school boy
“I am a student.”

b. Ija school meel qee.
I school boy Neg
“I am not a student.”

Below, Table 1 presents negative past and negative future verb tense conjugations. Amele has the negator ‘qee’ in past and future tenses, while also having the verbal conjugation of negation, as there are negative past and negative future conjugations. In the present tense, no difference between affirmative and negative sentences exists. Table 1 presents today’s past tense, yesterday’s past tense, the remote past tense, and future tenses in Amele (see also, Nose 2020a, 2020b). Table 1 also presents a morphology of negative verbs in Amele, similar to conjugations of negated verbs in other languages. These conjugations are complex and have not found morphological regularity. Nevertheless, the negative present verb form does not exist in Amele, yet by contrast, unique inflections in negative past and negative future tense forms emerge (‘oborin qee’ in negative past 1st person singular and ‘obigin qee’ in negative future 1st person singular).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Yesterday’s past</th>
<th>Negative past</th>
<th>Future</th>
<th>Negative future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>Obiga</td>
<td>Obigan</td>
<td>Oborin qee</td>
<td>Obig on</td>
<td>Obigin qee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>Oboga</td>
<td>Obogan</td>
<td>Oboron qee</td>
<td>Obog on</td>
<td>Obogon qee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>Oboya</td>
<td>Obeyan</td>
<td>Obor qee</td>
<td>Obigi on</td>
<td>Obini qee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>Obonba</td>
<td>Obonban</td>
<td>Oborom qee</td>
<td>Obo-nu</td>
<td>Obonban qee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2and3PL</td>
<td>Oboiga</td>
<td>Oboigan</td>
<td>Oboron qee</td>
<td>Obobaig on</td>
<td>Obowain qee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SG: singular, PL: plural, 1,2,3: first person, second person, and third person)

Table 1: Affirmative and negative inflections in Amele (“oboga” to walk)
Negative expressions in Amele are not limited to the use of negatives alone but also extend to verb inflections, although only in the past and future tenses. The use of special forms for negative expressions suggests that negative expressions are regarded as meaningful by Amele speakers. As such, there is a communicative significance to the use of complex negative verbs in the past and future tenses. As I aim to explore forms of Amele negation that seem to function in Amele speakers' conversations, through morphological and sociolinguistic perspectives, I include a discussion of Finnish, which, like Amele, has negative verbal inflections (Table 2). Finnish also uses negators and negative verbs, and exhibits a particular grammatical form for negative forms. By contrasting the structure of negative verbs in Amele and Finnish, I clarify the functional aspect of negation. Table 2 also presents Finnish inflections in the present and past tenses, with affirmative and negative forms in each tense. In addition, the negative ‘en’ (1st person singular) is also inflected in person and number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Negative present</th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Negative past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1SG</td>
<td>Sano-n</td>
<td>En sano</td>
<td>Sano-i-n</td>
<td>En sano-nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2SG</td>
<td>Sano-t</td>
<td>Et sano</td>
<td>Sano-i-t</td>
<td>Et sano-nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3SG</td>
<td>Sano-o</td>
<td>Ei sano</td>
<td>Sano-i</td>
<td>Ei sano-nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1PL</td>
<td>Sano-mme</td>
<td>Emme sano</td>
<td>Sano-i-mme</td>
<td>Emme sano-neet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2PL</td>
<td>Sano-tte</td>
<td>Ette sano</td>
<td>Sano-i-tte</td>
<td>Ette sano-neet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3PL</td>
<td>Sano-vat</td>
<td>Eivat sano</td>
<td>Sano-i-vat</td>
<td>Eivat sano-neet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Negative verb inflections in Finnish (“sanoa” to say)

Payne (1985) exemplified negative verbs in a variety of languages; Tongan, Fijian, and in Finno-Ugric languages such as Permic and Udmurt. For example, Finnish (Finno-Ugric) exhibits negative verb forms (Table 2), such as with he negator ‘ei,’ which inflects in the use of person and number, e.g. ‘en,’ ‘et,’ ‘ei,’ ‘emme,’ ‘ette,’ ‘eivat.’

In observing negative verbs in Amele (Table 1) and Finnish (Table 2), the following points emerge. In Amele, negative verbs do not exist in the present tense, but rather, exist in the past and future tenses. Negative verbs in Amele are morphologically longer than affirmative verbs. However, Finnish contains negative verbs in the present and past tenses, and the negator itself is inflected. In addition, negative verbs are shorter and more concise morphologically.

Larger Expressions in Amele

This section presents negative expressions in Amele, in order to describe the forms and meanings of the use of negative verbs. In Amele, the negator ‘qee’ is placed after the element to be negated, as shown in Examples (9a, 9b, 9c).
Example Set 9

   I negator go-negative past.1sg town-to
   “I didn’t go to town/ I don’t go to town”

   I you book negator give-negative past.1sg
   “I didn’t give a book to you.”

   I you book neg give (“-gin” negative future inflection)
   “I will not give a book to you.”

d. affirmative future form: ihig-on
   ihoc qee enough negator
   “not enough”

In Examples 9a and 9b, we see that Amele exhibits verbal conjugations through the use of persons, numbers, and tenses, yet does not exhibit negative conjugation in the present tense. In Example 9c, an affirmative future is realized in ‘ihig on’ (will give), where the negative future form ‘ihi-gin’ is used in a negative situation. Negative verbs in past and future tenses have special inflectional forms, as their formation is incorporated in person/number/negative elements, and as such, they cannot be morphologically analyzed (i.e., portmanteau forms). For example, in Example 9c, we find morphological difference between negative and affirmative future tense forms; ‘ihi-gin’ (negative future, 1st person singular) and ‘ihig-on’ (affirmative future, 1st person singular). This negation inflectional form ‘-gin’ in Example 11c cannot be morphologically analyzed in terms of person, number, negation, and tense.

In larger expressions, Amele also exhibits distinctions between the present and past tenses. Example 10a has present tense form, and Example 10b represents today’s past tense. Example 10c is the negative past form of ‘jerim,’ but the text in Example 10c can indicate either a negative present or a negative past. Therefore, the negative past form is used even in the present tense. Additionally, the negator ‘qee’ can be located both before the verb (Example 10c) and after the verb (Example 10d). The ‘Verb-Negator’ order in Example 10d is preferred for negating ‘I eat rice.’

Example Set 10

a. Ija rais jigina.
   I rice eat-present tense
   “I eat rice.”
b. Ija rais jiga on.
   I rice eat-today’s past
   “I ate rice (today).”

c. Ija rais qee je-rim
   I rice neg eat-negative past
   “I did not eat rice/I do not eat rice.”

d. Ija rais jerim qee.
   I rice eat-negative past neg
   “I did not eat rice/I do not eat rice.”

The negator ‘qee’ can be used in copula sentences, as in Examples 11a and 11b. Amele omits the copula (Example 11a), where the negator appears after the adjective, achieving adjective-negator order (Example 11b). Examples 11c to 11g provide a brief usage of the adjective and negator ‘qee.’

Example Set 11

a. Dana mebahic
   man good
   “The man is good.”

b. Dana mebahic qee
   man good neg
   “The man is not good.” also “the man is bad.”

c. ihoc/ihoc qee
   “possible/impossible”

d. mebec/mebec qee
   “necessary/unnecessary”

e. garea/garea qee
   interesting/ tiring, terrible

f. tin ac/tin ac qee
   “sweet/ sour”

g. muug/muug ac qee
   spicy, salty/ light taste

   English contains the two adjective words ‘good’ and ‘bad.’ However, Amele uses one word, ‘mebahic’ (good), and the opposite word, ‘mebahic qee’ (good neg; bad). Examples 11c-g evidence the fact that Amele generally exhibits such a contrast in adjective/not-adjective pairs. Therefore, the negator ‘qee’ indicates an ‘opposite’ meaning, which is frequently observed. Furthermore, in Example
The pair of opposites ‘ihoc’/‘ihoc qee,’ indicate ‘possible’ and ‘impossible.’ Example 11d shows the pair ‘mebec’/‘mebec qee’ (necessary/unnecessary). Example 11e shows the pair ‘garea’/‘garea qee’ (interesting/not interesting), whereas the pair ‘tin ac’/‘tin ac qee’ (sweet/sour) appear in Example 11f, and ‘muug’/‘muug qee’ (spicy/not spicy) in Example 11g. However, some word pairs do not use this negation ‘qee,’ such as ‘taura’/‘tauya’ (young/old), ‘uumu ac’/‘defurebe’ (fat/thin), and ‘erau’/‘gohi’ (tall/small). In many cases, the pair ‘mebahic’/‘mebahic qee’ is used, such in the following; (good/bad, beautiful/ugly, delicious/not delicious, pretty/not pretty).

The frequent use of the negator ‘qee’ reduces the number of necessary adjectives and yet simplifies oral communication. Therefore, Amele speakers use as few adjectives as possible, and use adjective/’qee’-adjective pairs in order to summon the vocabulary necessary for social functioning. This suggests that the negative ‘qee’ is used both with a verb and an adjective, and has an important role in daily communication. In addition, as I will present later, the negation ‘qee’ is not used in negation imperatives in Amele, but it can function as a polite negation command when used with an adjective, as in ‘mebahic qee’ ((it is) not good to do).

Negative existential sentences such as “I do not have X” (Example (12)) appear in Amele quite frequently. Amele uses the ‘ac qee’ (have neg) form, where the verb ‘ac’ has no inflectional marking, that is, person, number, or tense.

Example Set 12

a. Ija jo ac.
   I house have
   “I have a house.”

b. Ija jo ac qee.
   I house have neg
   “I don’t have a house.”

c. Ija jo ac qee moni ac qee.
   I house have not money have neg
   “I don’t have a house and money either.”

In Example 12, the negator sits after the verb ‘ac.’ The ‘have-Neg’-order and negative verb form are not used with the verb ‘ac,’ where the verb ‘ac’ does not contain an inflectional element. In this usage, Amele cannot inflect the verb ‘ac’ and is thus interpreted as a neutral tense. The usage of ‘never, without’ is also notable. The strong negation ‘never’ is indicated by only ‘qee’ in Example 13a, and ‘not at all’ is indicated by ‘qee bahic’ (bahic: very) in Example 13b.
Example Set 13

a. Ija buk qee siani-gina on.
   I book neg read (negative future inflection)
   “I never read the book.”

b. Ija buk qee bahic sian-erim.
   I book neg very read (negative past inflection)
   “I don’t read the book at all.”

The usage of ‘without X’ assumes the same form as ‘I don’t have/There is no,’ i.e., ‘ac qee’ (Examples 14, 15). Here, the order emerges as ‘noun ac qee.’

Example 14
tea sugar ac qee “tea without sugar”

Example 15
car gasoline ac qee “car without gasoline”

Finally, I present the negative imperative (or prohibitive) in Amele (Example Set 16).

Example Set 16

a. Ain jeg-an alcohol.
   Neg drink alcohol: positive future 2sg inflection
   “Don’t drink alcohol!”

b. Ain mado-gon.
   Neg speak: you (sg)”: positive future 2sg inflection
   “Don’t speak!”

In Examples 16a and 16b, another negator ‘ain/ain bahic’ (don’t, no) is used for the negative imperative, and as such, the verb takes an affirmative future inflection. The order thus becomes ‘Ain-Verb,’ as the ‘Verb-ain’ order is not possible. As such, the negator ‘qee’ is used for adjectives and normal negative sentences, and the other negator ‘ain’ is used for negative commands and prohibitives. When the negator ‘ain’ is used for prohibition, the negative verb does not appear in the verb form, as the situation is usually in the present tense. Furthermore, it is not possible to make a negative imperative sentence using the negative ‘qee’ (*’Qee jegan alcohol!’ ‘Do not drink alcohol!’). This observation suggests that when communicating in Amele, denying a normal situation and forbidding an action are interpreted differently.
Further Analysis

This study has thus far presented Roberts' (1987) work, and my own data, on negative expressions in Amele, and has observed the overall use of negation as a potential determinant for communicative interaction between Amele speakers. In particular, I have argued that Amele has a negative past tense and a negative future tense along with the negator ‘qee,’ which can be combined with negative verbs during interaction. However, I observed that negative verbs are not used in possessive sentences and negative imperative sentences, having specific implications in interaction.

In this section, I pursue a deeper morphological analysis of negation in Amele, and I discuss the functional motivations of this negation, as a contrast to negative verbs in Finnish (cf. Nose, 2020a, 2020b). As a result, this discussion will further contribute to subsequent discussions and to understandings of communication patterns in Amele communities.

The negator ‘qee’ is widely used in verbs, adjectives, and other speech in Amele, ordered as ‘Neg-Verb/Verb-Neg,’ ‘Adjective-Neg,’ ‘have-Neg,’ and ‘X (noun, verb, and adjective)-Neg.’ Overall, the ‘X-Neg’ order is preferable. The negator ‘qee’ thus becomes applicable to existential, non-verbal expressions, by including the verb ‘ac’ (to have). Another negator, ‘ain,’ becomes useful in negative imperatives (‘Ain V’: ‘don’t V!’). ‘Qee’ becomes widely usable with verbs and adjectives; by contrast, ‘ain’ is widely usable with the negative imperative. Negative verbs, observed together with ‘qee’ in Amele, are also observed in Finnish (Finno-Ugric) and other languages (cf. Payne, 1985). Therefore, negative verbs are not rare grammatical phenomena across languages. Yet, Amele exhibits a unique verb morphology in the negative past and negative future tenses (see Table 1). The negative past form is observed in the present tense, the existential verb ‘ac’ takes no inflection, and its negative form ‘ac qee’ is used in all tenses. Thus, negative verbs exhibit special features in past and future temporal references, but their usage is not always obligatory. In contrast, negative verbs in Finnish satisfy its grammatical rules (see Table 2).

Example Set 17: Finnish (affirmative and negative in the present and past tenses, and negative imperative):

a. Minä sano-n.
   I say-1sg, present
   “I say.”

b. Minä en sano.
   I neg say-1sg, present (negative verb)
   “I don’t say.”

c. Minä sano-in.
   I say-1sg,past tense
“I said.”

d. Minä en sano-
I neg say-1sg, past (negative verb)
“I didn’t say.”

e. Älä sano!
Neg say-2sg, present (negative verb)
“Don’t say!”

In Examples 17b, 17d, and 17e, Finnish always exhibits negative verb form with negators. The negator ‘en’ can inflect with persons and numbers, e.g., ‘en et ei emme, ette, eivat’ (no-1sg, no-2sg, no-3sg, no-1pl, no-2pl and no-3pl).

Amele and Finnish differ genealogically and typologically, but their negative verb phenomena are partly similar. Both languages exhibit another prohibitive negator; ‘ain’ and ‘älä’ (don’t) (Examples 16 and 17e). However, Amele has negative elements in verbs, including person/numbers; by contrast, yet in Finnish, negators inflect, and the negative verbs appear mainly in two forms: singular ‘sano-nut’ and plural ‘sano-neet’ (see Table 2 and Table 3). The negative verbs in Finnish are simpler than affirmative verbs. However, the negative verbs in Amele are more complex than affirmative present-tense verb forms. In any case, both languages place a functional burden on negative verb morphology. Altogether, Finnish exhibits clear rules of negative usages, whereas Amele exhibits irregular negative forms and usages, particularly in past and future tenses.

**Sociolinguistic Implications**

Social relationships between speakers and listeners are directly linked to language. For example, in the use of demonstratives and modalities, the subjective perspective of the speaker is reflected in grammar (Aikhenvald, 2014; Meyerhoff, 2015; Trudgill, 2011). As Amele is a spoken language with no written form deployed in Amele society, sociolinguistic factors between everyday chatter and grammar must be considered. In this way, the worldview embedded in the negative expressions of Amele speakers can be revealed.

Employing both a sociolinguistic and a contrastive linguistic perspective, I will now discuss three points. The first is the consideration of dialects and their usage. I have found grammatical differences between the four dialects of Amele, but no definite difference in the usage of negation between the two dialects (Haia and Huar). However, the behavior of negative verbs appears as more complex in my data than in Roberts’ (1987), as indicated in Table 4 and Table 5. For example, the first person singular inflections of the past negative and future forms of the verb ‘hoga’ (to come) in Table 4 are ‘qee holom’ and ‘qee hugaun’ in Roberts, but ‘qee holoi’m and ‘qee hugun’ in my data. Table 4 and Table 5 show that the negative past tense and negative future tense of the verbs ‘hoga’ (to come) and ‘figa’ (to see)
differ between Roberts’ data and this study's data. Morphological differences in the negative past tense between the two emerge, which dialectal differences may explain. However, the verb ‘figa’ (to see) inflects differently in Haia and Huar dialects. The negative future tense inflections well evidence this, particularly in 1st, 2nd and 3rd person singular forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Roberts’s data (Haia dialect) Negative past</th>
<th>Roberts’s data (Haia dialect) Negative future</th>
<th>Data of this study (Huar dialect) Negative past</th>
<th>Data of this study (Huar dialect) Negative future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>qee ho-lom</td>
<td>qee hu-gaun</td>
<td>qee ho-loim</td>
<td>qee hu-gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>qee ho-lom</td>
<td>qee ho-gaun</td>
<td>qee ho-lom</td>
<td>qee ho-gon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>qee ho-l</td>
<td>qee ho-iaun</td>
<td>qee ho-l</td>
<td>qee ho-dani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>qee ho-lom</td>
<td>qee ho-qaun</td>
<td>qee ho-lom</td>
<td>qee ho-qon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>qee ho-loin</td>
<td>qee ho-wain</td>
<td>qee ho-loin</td>
<td>qee ho-wain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>qee ho-loin</td>
<td>qee ho-wain</td>
<td>qee ho-loin</td>
<td>qee ho-wain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Negative verb inflections contrast between Haia dialect (Roberts 1987: 225-226) and Huar dialect (my data), ‘hoga’ (to come)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Roberts’s data (Haia dialect) Negative past</th>
<th>Roberts’s data (Haia dialect) Negative future</th>
<th>Data of this study (Huar dialect) Negative past</th>
<th>Data of this study (Huar dialect) Negative future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1sg</td>
<td>qee fe-lom</td>
<td>qee fi-gaun</td>
<td>qee fi-gina</td>
<td>qee fi-gin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2sg</td>
<td>qee fe-lom</td>
<td>qee fa-gaun</td>
<td>qee fa-gana</td>
<td>qee fe-gen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3sg</td>
<td>qee fe-l</td>
<td>qee fe-iaun</td>
<td>qee fe-na</td>
<td>qee fe-dani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl</td>
<td>qee fe-lom</td>
<td>qee fo-qaun</td>
<td>qee fo-gona</td>
<td>qee fo-qon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pl</td>
<td>qee fe-lein</td>
<td>qee fo-wain</td>
<td>qee fo-gina</td>
<td>qee fo-wain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3pl</td>
<td>qee fe-lein</td>
<td>qee fo-wain</td>
<td>qee fo-gina</td>
<td>qee fo-wain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Negative verb inflections contrast between Haia dialect (Roberts 1987: 225-226) and Huar dialect (my data), ‘figa’ (to see)

Factors influencing the differences in negative future verbs between Roberts’ and my work are probably not dialectal, but rather, longitudinal: Roberts (1987) conducted his work in the 1980s,
whereas I collected my data after 2010. During this period, Huar speakers of Amele may have changed to use more complex morphology, especially some negative past verbs (‘figa’ inflections) and future verb inflections (singular inflections). Negative verbs in Amele are complex to the extent that using a special form for negation would prove burdensome. Nevertheless, the fact that Amele speakers use negative verbs suggests that they have added a special function to negative expressions. Here, in communication, speakers deliberately use negative verbs in past and future tenses (not in present tense) so as to complexify speech.

When communicating in Amele, negative expressions have an essential significance in the way people refer to the past and the future. If we consider the social meaning in the use of negative verbs in contrast to Finnish, we see that Finnish also uses negative verbs, yet Finnish verb morphology is fundamentally complex (Karlsson, 2008), and verbs perform many communicative functions which appear to be quite inherent in the language system. Although this kind of complexity is also the case with Amele verbs, in Finnish, the negative verb is relatively simple, is shorter than the affirmative form, and its negators inflect with person and number. In Amele, with complex inflections with persons and numbers, the negative ‘qee’ is deployed as is. Whereas in Amele, the emphasis is on the negative verb, in Finnish, the negation adds more function to the negative. This addition complicates the verbal structure of Amele. Both structures (combination of negator and negative verb) may limit the use of negative expressions by complexifying their grammar. In addition, both Amele and Finnish use different forms for ordinary negative sentences and negative imperative sentences (prohibitive forms: ‘ain’ in Amele, ‘älä’ in Finnish). As such, both languages develop negative sentences for expressing oneself and prohibitive forms for encouraging others (not) to act. In the relationship with tense, in Finnish, negative verbs appear in the present and past tenses, while in Amele, negative verbs appear in the past and future tenses. In Amele, the negative verb present tense is negated either through the negative ‘qee’ in the present tense of the affirmative form or through the negative past tense. Here, a difference in the tense in which special negative verbs are used in the two languages emerges.

I now summarize aspects of negative expressions in Amele and Finnish, shown in Example 18. Both languages have a combination of negative expressions and negative verbs, but the tense in which the negative verb appears differs.

Example 18: Negation contrast between Amele and Finnish:

a. Amele:
qee + Negative verbs (past and future tenses)
ain + affirmative verb form

b. Finnish:
en/et/ei/emme/ette/eivat + Negative verbs (present and past tenses)
älä + Negative verbs
In Finnish, negative verbs appear in all negative situations, and are inflected in persons and numbers, resulting in several types of negative verbs. In Finnish, negatives such as ‘en/et/ei’ do not co-occur with adjectives. As such, Finnish negatives always co-occur with negative verbs. The negation of a verb sentence is the central role of negation in Finnish, and the use of such explicit expressions strengthens the contrast between affirmation and negation. In contrast, in Amele, negative verbs do not appear in the present tense, and negative verbs are not used even in negative imperatives. Negative verbs appear in the past tense, away from the present situation, and in the future tense, describing future events that have not yet been determined.

Therefore, the use of the negator ‘qee’ is sufficient to express negativity in Amele when the event is immediate or ongoing. For Amele speakers, negative verbs refer to events in the past (but which have not yet happened) or in the future (which have not yet happened). Here, in Amele, unreality and negative verbs are closely related. For Amele speakers, the social demands of daily chatter lead them to want to declare not what they do nor what they do not do in the present tense, but what they did not do in the past and what they will not do in the future. Thus, I suggest that there is a negative past and a negative future. In the present chatter, we can simply say ‘qee’ without using the negative verb. As such, the Amele negator ‘qee’ is effectively used by Amele speakers, who divide the meaning of adjectives according to the presence or absence of ‘qee,’ such as ‘mebahic/mebahic qee.’ These speakers also conflate actions and tenses in negative verbs. In this way, Amele speakers specifically tailor cultural meanings in their use of verbs such as ‘deny’ and ‘not deny.’

Conclusion

This study has argued that Amele has the negator ‘qee,’ widely used for negative expressions, with the exception of the negative imperative particle ‘ain.’ The negator ‘qee’ is usually located after the denied element and is widely used with adjectives, nouns and verbs, where negative verb inflections occur in the past and future tenses.

These findings indicate that negation is a functionally marked grammatical category in Amele; the negator ‘qee’ best translated has the meaning of ‘not, opposite, there is no, without;’ and the negator ‘ain’ best translated has the meaning of ‘don’t’ (negative imperative). Negative verb morphology is observed in Amele, and similar grammar is observed in Finnish (Finno-Ugric). Finnish has negative verbs similarly, but the negative verbs are simple negative verb forms and the negators inflect. In Amele and Finnish, this negative verb morphology is a cause of the complicated verb morphology. Still, this phenomenon suggests that both languages have marked functions in verb morphology, particularly in the tense category (negative past tense). Therefore, when indicating negative past situations, a functional burden emerges in both languages: In particular, Amele has negative future verbs, whose inflections turned out to be the most complex.
From a sociolinguistic standpoint, Amele has dialectal differences among its 5000 speakers and differs in negative inflections. The speakers of Amele use complex negative verbs only in the past and future tenses. In the past tense, it is important to deny events that occurred in the past, while in the future tense, it is necessary to describe events that will not be real in the future. In other words, the complexity of the negation forms is a reflection of Amele speakers' ideas of time. Their analysis and discussion constitute future work.

References