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Papers from the Salford negation conference: introduction

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INTRODUCTION

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The six articles in this special issue of the *Transactions* grew from papers read at a conference I organised on the theme of Negation: Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics, held in Salford, England, from 30 October to 1 November 1998.¹ The aim of the conference was to stimulate interaction between scholars working on negation across the syntax–semantics–pragmatics spectrum, within a variety of theoretical frameworks, and drawing on data from a range of languages. While pragmatics was underrepresented at the conference and is almost entirely absent from this volume, it is pleasing to see that, in syntax, Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar and Optimality Theory both appear here alongside Chomskyan syntax. Similarly, it is pleasing to see Celtic, Germanic, Italic and Hellenic represented, not to mention the non-Indo-European Finno-Ugric. In what follows, I attempt to give a flavour of each of the six articles. It seems to me that the selection offers an interesting overview of the diversity of work currently being done on negation.

Robert D. Borsley and Bob Morris Jones's article on the syntax of sentential negation in Welsh is of interest on both an empirical and a theoretical level. Empirically, it presents a unique survey of an

¹ This was the first annual conference of the North West Centre for Linguistics, and was hosted by the Centre for Language and Linguistics, part of the University of Salford's European Studies Research Institute. Some 25 papers were read at the conference, and the speakers were subsequently invited to submit written versions for publication. This thematic issue of the *Transactions* contains the survivors of peer review and publication deadlines. I take this opportunity to express my thanks to those who helped put the conference programme and this issue of the *Transactions* together. Keith Brown (Cambridge), editor of the *Transactions*, and Neil Smith (UCL) deserve my special thanks for their involvement and support throughout the project. I am also happy to record my gratitude to the British Academy, the Linguistics Association of Great Britain and the French Embassy in London for financial support. The second annual NWCL conference was held in November 1999 in Liverpool on the topic of Questions, and a third, on Anaphora, is planned for autumn 2000 in Lancaster.

intricate data set, distinguishing, on the one hand, literary from colloquial Welsh and, on the other, finite from non-finite contexts. In finite contexts in (*pro*-drop) literary Welsh, the preverbal particle *ni(d)* can mark sentential negation on its own, as in (1).

- (1) NI chaf sefyll yma. (Literary Welsh)
 NEG can stand here
 'I can't stand here.'

In (non-*pro*-drop) colloquial Welsh, in contrast, finite negative clauses require one or more n-phrases (i.e. negative XPs), for example, a bare n-word (e.g. *neb* 'no-one') in subject or object position, as in (2a), the adverbial *dim*, soft-mutated as *ddim* in (2b), or a complex n-phrase headed by the quantifier *dim* (e.g. *dim dyn* 'no man'), as in (2c).

- (2) a. Welsh i NEB. (Colloquial Welsh)
 saw-1SG I no-one
 'I saw no-one.'
 b. Cha' i DDIM sefyll yma.
 can I NEG stand here
 'I can't stand here.' (= (1))
 c. Does DIM DYN yn yr ystafell.
 is NEG man in the room
 'There is no man in the room.'

Non-finite negative clauses can be headed by the 'negative verb' *peidio*, soft-mutated as *beidio* in (3a, b), and n-phrases are only optionally present.

- (3) a. (Mi) geisiodd Gwyn BEIDIO (ag) ateb y cwestiwn.
 PRT tried G. NEG with answer the question
 'G. tried not to answer the question.'
 b. (Mi) geisiodd Gwyn BEIDIO (â) gweld NEB.
 PRT tried G. NEG with see no-one
 'G. tried not to see anyone.'

Of theoretical interest in Borsley and Jones's article is the analysis of the data from colloquial Welsh within HPSG (Pollard and Sag, 1994), following work on English *not* and French *pas* by Kim (1995), Kim and Sag (1996) and Warner (forthcoming). In HPSG,

the Head Feature Principle and the Valence Principle guarantee that phrases are appropriately headed and that heads have appropriate complements. Thus, in non-finite clauses the ‘negative verb’ *peidio* is deemed to bear lexical features (a) specifying its negative semantics and (b) guaranteeing its complement is a non-finite VP with a controlled subject. The authors account for the necessary presence, in finite negative clauses, of an n-phrase by positing a feature, [NC +] (NC = negative concord), borne by various negative verbs, which imposes a negative complement. Since the authors assume that postverbal subjects (see Borsley, 1989), as well as the negative adverbial *dim*, are additional complements, this mechanism allows them to cover the basic data with a single constraint. This contrasts with more traditional approaches to postverbal subjects (as specifiers) and negative adverbs (as left-VP-adjoined constituents).

Annabel Cormack and Neil Smith’s contribution – ‘Head movement and negation in English’ – is within Chomsky’s (1995) Minimalist Program, augmented by the authors’ own ‘Split Signs’ framework (Cormack and Smith, 1997) and the notion of ‘soft constraints’ (see the discussion of Payne and Chisarik’s article below). The authors’ empirical starting point is the familiar data in (4).

- (4) a. John often snores.
 b. *John not snores.
 c. John must not snore.
 d. *John snores not.

Cormack and Smith suggest that, in (4c, d), the PF-position of the auxiliary/verb is a head responsible for determining PF inflection, namely, the Infl checked by Tense, a position which is separated from the LF-position of the auxiliary/verb by the negative marker *not*, their Pol[NEG]. They account for the contrast between (4c) and (4d) by assuming that *not* is a [+V] category. Given a category-sensitive Checking mechanism, this will prevent verbs (4d) (but not auxiliaries (4c)) from ‘moving’ across *not* to the Infl head checked by Tense (or, within the Split Signs framework, from having their LF features merged under V and their PF features merged under Infl). The authors account for the contrast between (4a) and (4b) by

analysing *often* as an adverb adjoined between Tense itself and its associated Infl: [T [often [Infl . . . In (4a) *snores* appropriately PF-merges in Infl, while Tense still has scope over the adverb. In (4b), of course, the PF features of *snores* can't merge in Infl because of the intervening [+V] category *not*. However, PF-merging in V is ungrammatical, too, since this violates the soft (but possibly universal) constraint requiring a tensed element to precede negation.

Cormack and Smith go on to argue that an adequate account of negation in English, in particular the scope of modals and adverbs with respect to negation, requires three negation/polarity positions to be posited within clause structure. Hierarchically, these are Echo[NEG]–Pol[NEG]–Adv[NEG], with modal positions above (Modal₁, e.g. *should*) and below (Modal₂, e.g. *could*) Pol[NEG], to account for the contrasting scope relations of (5a, b).

- (5) a. Paula shouldn't be at home now. [SHOULD [NOT
 b. Gerry couldn't swim the channel. [NOT [COULD

While Pol[NEG] and Adv[NEG] correspond to the traditional notions of sentential and constituent negation, respectively, Echo[NEG] represents an innovation, appearing as it does within Rizzi's (1997) split-CP domain. Cormack and Smith use Echo[NEG] to account for 'echoic' contexts (in Relevance Theoretic terms), e.g. various types of questions, in which Modal₁ elements (like *should*), which are above Pol[NEG], are nevertheless within the scope of negation. In (6), for example, they claim that, rather than realising Pol[NEG], the negative morpheme realises a higher category, Echo[NEG], hence its scope over the modal (cf. (5a)).

- (6) Shouldn't you be at work? [? [NOT [SHOULD

Anastasia Giannakidou's 'Negative concord and the scope of universals', is firmly at the syntax–semantics interface. Empirically, Giannakidou's article concentrates on Modern Greek, but has clear relevance to current work on negative concord in other languages (e.g. Haegeman 1995, Zanuttini 1997). Negative concord is cross-linguistically very common, and illustrated in Modern Greek in (7a, b), where upper case indicates obligatory emphatic pronunciation.

- (7) a. *(Dhen) ipa TIPOTA.
 NEG said-1SG nothing
 ‘I didn’t say anything.’
- b. KANENAS *(dhen) ipe TIPOTA.
 no-one NEG said-3SG nothing
 ‘No-one said anything.’

Negative concord involves (what appear to be) inherently negative elements (negative markers and/or n-phrases) co-occurring within single clauses, without their negative features cancelling each other out, and obviously poses clear problems for the semantic principle of compositionality. However, Giannakidou argues that, for Modern Greek, at least, there is no reason to believe that n-phrases are inherently negative. (Further, she suggests that languages with unambiguously negative n-words, including Ancient Greek, do not exhibit negative concord.) As for contexts such as fragment answers and disjunction, in which n-phrases mark negation on their own (i.e. without the sentential negative marker associated with the verb), and which have been cited in the literature as evidence for the inherent negativity of n-phrases in negative concord languages, Giannakidou suggests that an appropriate analysis of these structures needs to take into account their elliptical nature. She observes that, when the ellipsis is reconstructed, the negative marker is obligatory, and reasons that this fact weakens any claim that these elliptical contexts suggest that n-phrases are inherently negative. In her alternative analysis, Giannakidou analyses n-phrases as universal quantifiers which, while polarity-sensitive, are nevertheless not inherently negative. She supports this view with the further observation that Modern Greek n-words behave like universal quantifiers with respect to *almost/absolutely* modification, *ke* modification and their unavailability as predicate nominals.

What is generally referred to as negative concord in Modern Greek is then deemed not to represent ‘concord’ at all, since the concordant n-phrases are crucially not negative (cf. my own analysis (Rowlett, 1998b: ch. 3) of negative concord in Modern French). Rather than a form of agreement, the relationship between the n-phrase(s) and the sentential negative marker is a dependency, i.e. a subcase of standard negative polarity item licensing. However, this

dependency is more restrictive than standard cases of NPI licensing, since the n-phrases require a licenser which is both local (clause-bounded) and antiveridical (that is, one which logically entails falsity, e.g. negative). More traditional cases of polarity licensing can cross clause boundaries and be triggered by operators which are merely non-veridical (that is, ones which don't logically entail truth). Giannakidou concludes that the more restrictive nature of the dependency is a consequence of the formal licensing mechanism involved, namely, quantifier movement to a position above the negation marker (rather than the unselective binding which she assumes to be involved in standard cases of NPI licensing), giving the interpretation $\forall x [P(x) \rightarrow \neg Q(x)]$.

Liliane Haegeman's and Javier Martín-González's contributions return us to more strictly syntactic issues, and concentrate on highly focused fragments of English and Spanish, respectively. Haegeman's 'Subject-auxiliary inversion, non-adjacent subject-auxiliary inversion and adjuncts in CP' deals with the inversion phenomenon (SAI) triggered in English by sentence-initial WH-/NEG-XP's, as in (8).

- (8) a. UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES *would* you go into the office during the vacation?
 b. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES *would* I go into the office during the vacation.

In previous work, Haegeman has offered analyses of adjacent SAI in terms of a wellformedness condition, the wh-/Neg Criterion, obliging interrogative/negative heads and operators to appear in a spec-head configuration. In the current paper, Haegeman considers a marginal kind of non-adjacent SAI, illustrated in (9), in which an inversion-triggering, fronted WH-/NEG-adjunct (in small capitals) is separated from the inverted auxiliary (in italics) by an intervening sentential adjunct (underlined). (The percentage symbol indicates that these examples are accepted by some, but not all speakers.)

- (9) a. %UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES during the vacation *would* you go into the office?
 b. %UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES during the vacation *would* I go into the office.

On the face of things, the data in (9) seem incompatible with an

approach to SAI based on spec-head configurations triggered by wellformedness criteria. This is because, under the assumption that adjunction to X-bar projections is barred (Chomsky, 1986), spec-head configurations are necessarily adjacent. Nevertheless, the SAI in (9) is clearly triggered by the fronted adjunct. The question, then, is why this does not result in adjacency. Haegeman addresses the question by exploiting Rizzi's (1997) Split-CP hypothesis. She claims that, rather than being satisfied by a regular spec-head configuration, the wellformedness criteria are satisfied in the case of non-adjacent inversion by the fronted WH-/NEG-adjunct and a representational head chain, whereby, for the relevant speakers, the intervening adjunct is 'transparent'. Using an idea from Poletto (1997), Haegeman proposes that, in (9), the fronted, inversion-triggering WH-/NEG-adjuncts in small capitals and the underlined intervening adjuncts are each associated with a functional projection structurally high in the CP level, namely, a recursive scene-setting projection, ScP. Each ScP provides a distinct deictic coordinate of the sentence; in the presence of multiple ScPs, they undergo merger via head-to-head movement to jointly define the scene. The non-adjacent SAI in (9) is then due to the fronted WH-/NEG-adjunct first moving to SpecFocP, which is where inversion is triggered, then to a higher SpecScP. Merger of the two ScPs via Sc-to-Sc movement means that the fronted adjunct still counts as a specifier of FocP, and the wellformedness criterion is satisfied. Speakers who reject non-adjacent SAI, Haegeman conjectures, do not allow the WH-/NEG-adjunct to raise out of SpecFocP once the criterion has been satisfied.

Turning now to Martín-González's '(Non-)occurrence of sentential *no* in Spanish negative sentences', the author addresses counterexamples to the straightforward descriptive generalisation that the occurrence of Spanish *no* in negative sentences is sensitive to the presence-versus-absence of a preverbal n-phrase, illustrated by the contrast in (10a, b).

- (10) a. *(No) fueron (a ningún sitio con nadie).
 NEG went-3PL to no place with no-one
 'They didn't go anywhere with anyone.'

- b. Nada (*no) pudimos hacer.
 nothing NEG could-1PL do
 ‘We couldn’t do anything.’

First, *no* is optional with preverbal Topic n-phrases in clitic left-dislocated constructions, as in (11).

- (11) A ninguna de estas personas (no) las vi en la fiesta.
 PREP none of these people NEG them saw-1SG in the party
 ‘I didn’t see any of these people at the party.’

Second, contra the generalisation illustrated in (10), *no* is compulsory where a preverbal Topic n-phrase precedes a *wh*-complementiser, as in (12a), or where a preverbal Topic n-phrase occurs, parenthetically, between a non-*wh*-complementiser and its doubled form, as in (12b).

- (12) a. A ninguno de ellos, dime por qué *(no) lo(s)
 PREP none of them tell-me why NEG him/them
 invitaste a la fiesta.
 invited-2SG to the party
 ‘Tell me why you didn’t invite any of them to the party.’
 b. Me dijeron que # a ninguno de ellos # que Juan *(no)
 me told-3PL that PREP none of them that J. NEG
 lo(s) invitó al final.
 him/them invited-3SG at-the end
 ‘They told me that J. didn’t invite any of them in the end.’

Martín-González uses Chomsky’s (1995) Minimalist Program, in particular, the distinction between Move and Merge, to offer a unified explanation of the behaviour of *no*. He suggests that Spanish negative sentences contain a NegP projection whose head bears an interpretable negative feature (marking negative sentence polarity), as well as an *un*interpretable feature which needs to be checked pre-Spell-Out, either by an n-phrase transiting through SpecNegP, or by realising Neg° as *no*. This approach straightforwardly accounts for the ‘standard’ pattern in (10). As for the optional presence of *no* in (11), this hinges on the two possible derivations of sentences with a preverbal Topic (here, a Topic n-phrase). The first is for the n-phrase to be merged within VP and raised into the specifier of Topic

Phrase (Rizzi, 1997). In this scenario it transits through SpecNegP, checks the uninterpretable feature on Neg^o, and *no* is not needed. Alternatively, the n-phrase is merged directly in its surface position. Here, no n-phrase transits through SpecNegP, and *no* is needed to check the uninterpretable feature on Neg^o.

We turn finally to the compulsory presence of *no* in (12), in which the n-phrase precedes the complementiser. For (12a), Martín-González suggests that the presence of the *wh*-XP *por qué* in the specifier of Focus Phrase prevents movement of the Topic from within VP to sentence-initial position. The only way for the Topic then to appear in its surface position is for it to be directly merged there. Of course, this means that it does not transit through SpecNegP to check the uninterpretable feature on Neg^o, and *no* is needed. As for (12b), in which there is no *wh*-XP in SpecFocP, but rather a non-*wh*-complementiser in Foc^o, the author conjectures that an assertive operator occupies SpecFocP, with the same consequences as the *wh*-XP in (12a). That is, the Topic cannot move across FocP and must be merged directly in sentence-initial position; consequently, *no* is needed to check the uninterpretable feature on Neg^o.

In the final paper in this collection – ‘Negation and focus in Hungarian: an Optimality Theory account’ by John Payne and Erika Chisarik – we stay with syntax but shift theoretical framework and leave Indo-European behind. As was the case with Borsley and Jones’s paper within HPSG, Payne and Chisarik are distinctly austere in their assumptions about predicate structure. In stark contrast to the proliferation of functional categories seen in the papers within Chomskyan syntax, Payne and Chisarik ultimately conclude that the empirical facts can be dealt with on the basis of verbal projections (albeit one which projects to V³). Consequently, the authors do not assume that negation and focus head separate projections, neither do they assume Neg or Focus criteria. Instead, and as is the hallmark of work in OT, they account for the surface ordering of negative and focused phrases in terms of a language-particular ranking of universal but violable constraints. Empirically, Payne and Chisarik start from the familiar observation that in Hungarian the position to the immediate left of the verb (or to the immediate left of the negative marker *nem* if this element itself

precedes the verb) has a special status, and can be occupied by one (but not more than one) focused (FOC), interrogative (INT) or negative (NEG) phrase, as in (13).

- (13) a. JÁNOS (nem) olvasta el a könyvet. (FOC)
 J. NEG read PERF ART book-ACC
 ‘It was J. who read/didn’t read the book.’
 b. Ki (nem) olvasta el a könyvet. (INT)
 who NEG read PERF ART book-ACC
 ‘Who read/didn’t read the book?’
 c. Senki nem olvasta el a könyvet. (NEG)
 no-one NEG read PERF ART book-ACC
 ‘No-one read the book.’

The position occupied by the relevant phrase in (13) is called the verb-adjacent position. Given that no more than one of these phrases can occupy the verb-adjacent position, the co-occurrence of more than one in the same predicate means that the additional one(s) must be postverbal. The question of which phrase occupies the verb-adjacent position and which is postverbal is determined by the hierarchy INT > FOC > NEG, as in (14).

- (14) a. Melyik könyvet olvasta el CSAK JÁNOS?
 which book-ACC read PERF only J.
 ‘Which book did only J. read?’ (INT-FOC)
 b. CSAK EZT A KÖNYVET nem olvasta el senki.
 only this-ACC ART book-ACC NEG read PERF anyone
 ‘It was only this book that no-one read.’ (FOC-NEG)

Payne and Chisarik reject two classes of accounts for these data. The first class (e.g. É.Kiss, 1994) treats the verb-adjacent position as being VP-internal, e.g. SpecVP, an idea which (on one view of specifiers, at least) explains why it can contain no more than one phrase. However, this approach is unable to account for the INT > FOC > NEG hierarchy. The second class of analyses treats the verb-adjacent position as VP-external, namely, as the specifier of some functional projection, FP (cf. Pollock, 1989), to which the relevant phrase moves to satisfy the Focus Criterion (the verb moves to F°). Of course, if the three types of phrase which can occupy the verb-adjacent position move to the same SpecFP (Brody, 1990, 1995), the

INT > FOC > NEG hierarchy remains unexplained. In contrast, if each type of fronted phrase is associated with the specifier of a distinct FP, the hierarchy can be addressed.

Yet, despite the potential power of such an analysis to account for the INT > FOC > NEG hierarchy, Payne and Chisarik point out its inadequacies, among other things, regarding the predictions it makes about the postverbal phrases. If the focused phrases all raise to the specifier position of their dedicated FP (with the verb moving to the head of the highest F°), they are expected to be strictly ordered, reflecting the order of the FPs to which they are attracted. However, this prediction is not borne out by the data; postverbal constituents are essentially freely ordered. The authors therefore conclude that a multiple-FP analysis is untenable, and that, consequently, an alternative account of the INT > FOC > NEG hierarchy is needed.

Such an alternative account is offered within OT and a VP approach to the Hungarian predicate. Payne and Chisarik assume that the verb (together with preverbal *nem*) form V° , the sisters of which are freely ordered XPs in a flat V^1 structure. A fronted XP in verb-adjacent position merges with V^1 to form V^2 . At a final level, and irrelevantly to the authors' concerns here, other XPs can merge with V^2 to form V^3 . In order to explain why focused phrases are drawn to the verb-adjacent position at all, Payne and Chisarik first propose three constraints requiring INT, FOC and NEG phrases to be aligned to the left of V° . To account for the INT > FOC > NEG hierarchy, they rank these three constraints in the relevant order. A further constraint, IN-SITU, ensures that, in the presence of a focused phrase with a higher ranking, the lower ranked phrases remain in their (freely ordered) postverbal position.

While these six articles offer a variety of perspectives and approaches to the study of negation, a number of commonalities also emerge. One distinction which is generally drawn is between head negative markers and negative XPs (n-words and negative adverbs) (Rowlett, 1999, Zanuttini, 1997), e.g. in the distinction between literary Welsh and colloquial Welsh in Borsley and Jones's contribution, in the distinction between *no* and n-phrases in Spanish in Martín-González's article and even in Payne and

Chisarik's analysis of the behaviour in Hungarian of *nem* as a preverbal negative marker and *nem* as a negative universal quantifier.

In contrast, various approaches are adopted to negative concord, a fact which reflects current polarised views on the question whether n-words are negative or not (cf. the workshop on negation in Romance organised as part of *Going Romance*, Leiden, December 1999, where the papers dealt almost exclusively with the issue of negative concord). In their discussion of the relationship between their 'negative verbs' and n-words, Borsley and Jones do not commit themselves and, therefore, avoid the question whether negative concord is involved in colloquial Welsh. Giannakidou, in contrast, faces the issue head on and denies that n-words in Modern Greek are in fact negative. While the issue is orthogonal to the concerns of her article here, Haegeman has, in previous work (e.g. Haegeman, 1995), argued that, in some languages, at least, co-occurring n-words are indeed negative, and has proposed the Neg Criterion to account for their behaviour. It seems that semanticists and syntacticians are as far away from consensus on this point as they have ever been.

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