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Marking and Interpretation of Negation
A Bidirectional Optimality Theory Approach

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1. Introduction
Languages generally have ways to express negation, that is, something that corresponds to the first-order logic connective $\neg$. In English, this would be *not*. Many languages also have nominal expressions negating the existence of individuals having a certain property, that is, something that corresponds to $\neg \exists x$. In English, this would be *nobody, nothing*. If we assume that knowledge of first-order logic is part of human cognition, we would seem to predict that negation and negative quantifiers behave alike across languages. From empirical research by typologists and theoretical linguists, we know that this is not the case. The key insight is that languages make use of the same underlying mechanisms but exploit the relation between form and meaning in different ways. Optimality Theory (OT) can capture this kind of generalization. I adopt a bidirectional version of OT that calculates the optimal form for a given meaning, and the optimal meaning for a given form, on the basis of a ranking of violable constraints. The constraints are universal but the ranking of the constraints is language specific, which accounts for typological variation.

The organization of the chapter is as follows. Propositional negation is discussed in section 2. Section 3 gives an overview of indefinites under negation and introduces the analysis of double negation and negative concord proposed by de Swart and Sag (2002). Section 4 develops a typology of double-negation and negative-concord languages in bidirectional OT. Section 5 extends the analysis to the occurrence, position, and interpretation of markers of sentential negation. Section 6 concludes the chapter.

2. Propositional Negation
The expression of propositional negation ($\neg p$) and negative quantifiers ($\neg \exists x$) takes various forms across languages (see Jespersen 1917/1962, 1933/1964; Dahl 1979; Payne 1985; Horn 1989; Ladusaw 1996; Bernini and Ramat 1996; and Haspelmath 1997 for overviews of the facts). This chapter does not aim at typological completeness, but it is in line with what typologists have observed. The aim of this section is to determine how languages express a meaning that could be written in first-order
logic as \(-p\) and how they interpret sentential negation. We treat this question in an OT syntax where the input is a meaning (a first-order formula), the set of candidates generated by GEN is a set of possible forms, and a ranked set of violable constraints selects the optimal form for the given meaning. Furthermore, we set up an interpretation mechanism in OT semantics, where the input is a form (a well-formed sentence), the set of candidates is a set of possible meanings (first-order formulae), and a ranked set of violable constraints selects the optimal interpretation for the given form.

Negative sentences are formally and interpretationally marked with respect to affirmative sentences. Now, negation is not a sentential force in the sense of Portner and Zanuttini (2003), because it is compatible with different clause types (declaratives, interrogatives, exclamatives). However, there are certain similarities. According to Portner and Zanuttini (2003), all exclamatives share the need to represent in the syntax two semantic properties, namely, that exclamatives are factive and that they denote a set of alternative propositions. Similarly, we require that the syntax reflect, in some way, the fact that negative sentences are not affirmative by means of the constraint that we call FaithNeg (Faith negation):

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\Box \text{FaithNeg} \\
\quad \text{Reflect the nonaffirmative nature of the input in the output.}
\end{array}
\]

FaithNeg is a faithfulness constraint, that is, a constraint that aims at a faithful reflection of input features in the output. Within a generation perspective (OT syntax), FaithNeg means that we reflect negation in the meaning (input) in the output (form). In OT, faithfulness constraints are usually balanced by markedness constraints, which are output oriented and aim at the reduction of structure in the output. The markedness constraint that plays a role in negative statements is *Neg:

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\Box \text{*Neg} \\
\quad \text{Avoid negation in the output.}
\end{array}
\]

*Neg is in conflict with FaithNeg, which requires a reflection in the output of negative features we find in the input. Such conflicting constraints are characteristic of OT-style analyses. The conflict is resolved by the ranking of constraints in terms of strength. If we rank FaithNeg higher than *Neg, making it a stronger, more important constraint, we can derive the fact that negative meanings are formally expressed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 1: Generation of negative sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\neg p)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| \(\neg \neg p\) | not S | | *

Note that the input in tableau 1 is a meaning, and the output candidates evaluated by the grammar are forms. All our generation tableaux will have this setup. The ranking FaithNeg \(\gg\) *Neg reflects the generally accepted view that negative statements are
crosslinguistically more marked in form than their affirmative counterparts (Payne 1985; Horn 1989; Haspelmath 1997). All the sentences in (1) express a negative proposition and contain a linguistic marker expressing negation (in italics):

(1) a. John is not sick. English
   b. Où petetai Sokrates not flies Sokrates. Ancient Greek
      ‘Socrates doesn’t fly.’
   c. Dokumenty ne obnaružilis. not were-found Russian
      ‘Documents were not found.’
   d. No vino Pedro. not came Pedro Spanish
      ‘Pedro did not come.’

We assume that there are no languages in which *Neg outranks FaithNeg. So negation is, in some sense, claimed to be a universal category (Dahl 1979).

The interpretation of negative sentences is a mirror image of their generation:

Table 2: Interpretation of negative sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>FaithNeg</th>
<th>*Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not S p</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¬p</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the input in tableau 2 is a form, and the output candidates evaluated by the grammar are meanings. All our interpretation tableaux will have this setup. For lack of time and space, we restrict ourselves in this paper to monoclausal examples, setting aside the problems of negation, Neg-raising, and NC in multiclausal constructions. For the expression of indefinites under negation, we need additional constraints.

3. Indefinites under Negation

Section 3.1 develops an empirical classification of the expression of indefinites under negation (¬∃x₁∃x₂...∃xₙ in first-order logic). We base our analysis of negative concord on de Swart and Sag (2002), which we discuss in section 3.2.

3.1 Empirical Classification

Haspelmath (1997, 193–4) and Corblin and Tovena (2003) describe how natural languages express the meaning ¬∃x₁∃x₂...∃xₙ. We roughly follow their classification and distinguish three main cases: indefinites, negative polarity items, and n-words.

Case 1: indefinites under negation

The simplest possible forms that express the meaning ¬∃x₁∃x₂...∃xₙ are markers of sentential negation or negative quantifiers with n/n-1 indefinites in its scope.
(2) a. Ik heb daar toen niet iets van durven zeggen. Dutch
   ‘I didn’t dare to say anything about that at that time.’
   b. Niemand heeft iets gezien.
   nobody has something seen.
   ‘Nobody saw anything.’

Haspelmath (1997, 193) gives an example from Turkish:

(3) Bir ey duy-ma-di-m.
   something hear-NEG-past-1.SG
   ‘I didn’t hear anything.’

So what seems to be the simplest possible formal combination from a (first-order) logical point of view is actually realized in several natural languages. However, not all languages allow this straightforward expression of indefinites under negation.

Case 2: negative polarity items

The simplest possible forms as in case 1 are blocked because indefinites are positive polarity items (PPIs) that are allergic to negative contexts. Instead, negative polarity items (NPIs) are used to express existential quantification in the scope of negation.

(4) a. #I did not buy something. English
   b. I did not buy anything.

(5) a. #Nobody saw something.
   b. Nobody saw anything.
   c. Nobody said anything to anyone.

Negative polarity items occur in a wider range of contexts than just negation:

(6) a. If you saw anything, please tell the police.
   b. Did anyone notice anything unusual?
   c. Few people wrote down anything.

The examples in (6) illustrate that NPIs such as anything do not inherently carry a negative meaning. Rather, they correspond to existential quantifiers with some additional meaning component (characterized as “widening” of alternatives by Kadmon and Landman 1993; or as indicating the bottom of a scale by Fauconnier 1975, 1979; Krifka 1995; Israel 1996; de Swart 1998).

Haspelmath (1997) gives the following example from Basque:

(7) Ez dut inor ikusi.
   NEG I.have.him anybody seen.
   ‘I haven’t seen anybody.’

Case 3: n-words

The simplest forms as in case 1 are blocked because indefinite pronouns are PPIs. Instead, existential quantification in the scope of negation is expressed by means of
“n-words.” N-words behave as negative quantifiers in isolation (8a) or in sentences in which they are the only expression of negation (8b), but they express a single negative statement in combination with sentential negation or other n-words (8c, d).

(8) a. A: Qué viste? B: Nada
    A: What did you see? B: Nothing

b. Nessuno mangia.
   ‘Nobody ate.’

b. No vino nadie.
   ‘Nobody came.’

d. Nadie miraba a nadie.
   ‘Nobody looked at anybody.’

N-words differ from negative polarity items in three ways, according to Ladusaw (1992), Vallduví (1994), Bernini and Ramat (1996), and Haspelmath (1997). First, they behave as negative quantifiers in isolation (8a, b), whereas negative polarity items behave as indefinites and contribute an existential quantifier  $\exists$ rather than a negative existential quantifier $\neg \exists$ (6). NPIs like *anything* do not mean ‘nothing’ as the elliptical answer to a question and do not occur in subject position, because they must be licensed by an operator with the right semantic properties (downward entailing, nonveridical or whatever; see Fauconnier 1975, 1979; Ladusaw 1979; Zwarts 1986; van der Wouden 1997; Giannakidou 1998; etc.). N-words can occur in the context of another antiadditive operator, but they don’t need a licenser; they are “self-licensing” (Ladusaw 1992). As a result, n-words can be used in sentences in which no other expression conveys a negative meaning (8b).

This chapter concentrates on n-words and does not provide an OT analysis of the generation and interpretation of NPIs.

Languages that use n-words express what is known as negative concord: a sequence of seemingly negative expressions gets a single negation reading. Negative concord (NC) raises major questions for semantics, because it seems to violate the principle of compositionality of meaning. Many existing proposals try to answer this question, for example, Zanuttini (1991), Ladusaw (1992), van der Wouden and Zwarts (1993), Corblin (1996), Déprez (1997, 2000), Giannakidou (2000), Herburger (2001), de Swart and Sag (2002), among others. For lack of space, I will not compare the different theories but refer the reader to Corblin et al. (2004) for a review. This paper builds on the proposals made by de Swart and Sag (2002), so we will only discuss this analysis.

### 3.2 An HPSG Analysis of Double Negation and Negative Concord

The main semantic claims made by de Swart and Sag (2002) are that n-words are inherently negative and that both double negation (DN) and NC involve polyadic
quantification. DN involves iteration (function application) and is first-order definable. Negative concord is interpreted in terms of resumption.

Resumption of a k-ary quantifier (Keenan and Westerståhl 1997).

\[ Q'_{E^k A_1, A_2, \ldots, A_k} (R) = Q_{E^k A_1 \times A_2 \times \ldots \times A_k} (R). \]

To put this in words, we have a sequence of \( k \) monadic quantifiers \( Q' \) binding just one variable each, interpreted on the universe of discourse \( E \), with a one-place predicate \( A \) as their restrictor, and taking a \( k \)-ary relation \( R \) as their scope. This sequence is interpreted as one polyadic quantifier \( Q \) binding \( k \) variables, interpreted in the universe of discourse \( E^k \), taking the subset \( A_1 \times A_2 \times \ldots \times A_k \) of \( E^k \) as its restrictor and the \( k \)-ary predicate \( R \) as its scope. So, a sequence of pronominal quantifiers \( \text{No } x, \text{No } y, \text{No } z \) \( R(x, y, z) \) is interpreted as \( \text{No}_x y, z \) \( R(x, y, z) \), indicating that there is no triple \( <x, y, z> \) satisfying the three-place relation \( R \). At the first-order level, the resumptive quantifier is equivalent to \( \neg \exists x \exists y \exists z R(x, y, z) \), so we obtain the NC reading as desired.

The syntax-semantics interface defines how we obtain the DN and NC readings from the syntax. HPSG uses a notion of Cooper storage in which all quantifiers are collected into a store and interpreted upon retrieval from the store (see Manning, Sag, and Iida 1999). This mechanism is generally used to account for scope ambiguities, but de Swart and Sag (2002) extend it to polyadic quantification. All negative (antiadditive) quantifiers are collected into a so-called N-store. Interpretation upon retrieval from the store is by means of iteration of monadic quantifiers (leading to DN) or by resumption, building a polyadic quantifier (leading to NC). We will not spell out the retrieval mechanism here but refer to de Swart and Sag (2002) for formal details. What is crucial for us here is that the grammar does not decide between DN and NC. This is what we need for a language like French, in which both readings are available. Consider the ambiguity of the following sentence in the HPSG analysis of de Swart and Sag (2002):

(9) Personne n’aime personne. French

a. Arg-St<[Store {NO_{x}{\{Person(x)\}}}, [Store {NO_{y}{\{Person(y)\}}}]>
   Content Quants <NO_{x}{\{Person(x)\}}, NO_{y}{\{Person(y)\}}>  
   Nucleus Love(x, y)  
   Semantic interpretation: NO(HUM, {x|NO(HUM, {y|x loves y})})
   In first-order logic: \( \neg \exists x \neg \exists x \text{Love}(x, y) \)  
   DN

b. Arg-St<[Store {NO_{x}{\{Person(x)\}}}, [Store {NO_{y}{\{Person(y)\}}}]>
   Content Quants <NO_{x,y}{\{Person(x), Person(y)\}}>  
   Nucleus Love(x, y)  
   Semantic interpretation: NO_{E^2HUMxHUM}(LOVE)
   In first-order logic: \( \neg \exists x \exists y \text{Love}(x, y) \) NC

Note that (9a) and (9b) are identical as far as the argument structure, the storing mechanism, and the interpretation of the love relation is concerned. The difference resides in the interpretation of the polyadic quantifier: iteration in (9a), resumption in (9b). The main insights of this analysis are the following. The HPSG grammar
assumes no lexical difference between negative quantifiers and n-words, so in the rest of this paper we use the term neg expression to generalize over both. The analysis works for n-words in argument and adjunct position alike (so nobody, nothing as well as never, nowhere). Finally, it does not involve empty elements or “hidden” negations in the syntactic structure. These are major advantages of this proposal.

The OT analysis comes in when we try to relate the HPSG analysis to languages that do not allow DN and NC as freely as French does. In general, the combination of two negative quantifiers in English leads to a DN reading, and resumption is only marginally available as an interpretive strategy. On the other hand, Spanish, Greek, Polish, and many other languages are typically NC languages, which hardly ever realize the iteration version of the polyadic quantifier analysis. In other words, the analysis proposed by de Swart and Sag (2002) does not predict crosslinguistic variation where it arises (Spanish vs. English, for example). The aim of this chapter is to extend the earlier analysis with a bidirectional OT component in order to define a typology of negation.

4. Marking and Interpretation of Negation in Bidirectional OT

In this section, we develop a bidirectional OT analysis of negation. We will do so in two steps, giving first the OT syntax (section 4.1) and then the combination with an interpretive mechanism (section 4.2). Section 4.3 discusses DN readings in NC languages. For now, we focus on indefinites and neg expressions. The interaction with sentential negation is taken up in section 5 below.

4.1 Generation of Double Negation and Negative Concord in OT

According to Corblin and Tovena (2003, 326), natural languages frequently have linguistic means to indicate that an argument must be interpreted within the scope of negation. They refer to this as marking of “negative variables.” Similarly, Haspelmath (1997, 231), building on Tanaka (1994), claims that the use of n-words is functionally motivated by the desire to mark the focus of negation, that is, the participants that are affected by the negation. In terms of OT syntax, the use of n-words constitutes a case of marking an input feature in the output: the negative variable is formally marked as such. In our OT setup, we express this by means of a Max constraint:

- MaxNeg
  Mark all negative variables.
  (i.e., mark all arguments that are interpreted in the scope of negation)

The functional approach explains why the use of n-words is widespread among natural languages. However, we know from section 3.1 above that the use of n-words is not universal: languages like Dutch, English, Basque, and so on do not use n-words. This suggests that MaxNeg is not a hard constraint and that its position in the constraint ranking is not the same for every language. We can account for the difference between languages with and without n-words by changing the position of MaxNeg.
relative to *Neg. MaxNeg and *Neg are conflicting constraints: MaxNeg wants to reflect an input feature concerning negation in the form, whereas *Neg wants to avoid negation in the form. If *Neg is ranked higher than MaxNeg, the optimal way to express the meaning $\neg \exists x_1 \exists x_2 \ldots \exists x_n$ is by means of indefinite pronouns. If MaxNeg is ranked higher than *Neg, n-words are used to express indefinites under negation. The following tableaux reflect this for the binding of two variables:

**Tableau 3: Generation of indefinite**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>FaithNeg</th>
<th>*Neg</th>
<th>MaxNeg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\neg \exists x_1 \exists x_2$</td>
<td>indef + indef</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\neg$</td>
<td>neg + indef</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tableau 4: Generation of n-word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>FaithNeg</th>
<th>MaxNeg</th>
<th>*Neg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\neg \exists x_1 \exists x_2$</td>
<td>indef + indef</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\neg$</td>
<td>neg + indef</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high ranking of FaithNeg (recall section 1) makes it impossible to express indefinites under negation by indefinites exclusively (in the absence of a marker of sentential negation). In tableaux 3 and 4, the candidates that we need to compare are those that somehow mark negation in the output. This invariably leads to a violation of *Neg. Two neg expressions are worse than one, so the combination of two neg expressions incurs two violations of *Neg.

As far as generation is concerned, we conclude that languages that allow indefinites under negation (e.g., Dutch), and languages that use n-words (e.g., Romance) differ in their ranking of the two constraints MaxNeg and *Neg. The question that immediately arises at this point concerns the interpretation of the expressions involved. A combination of a neg expression with a sequence of indefinites allows us to recover the meaning $\neg \exists x_1 \exists x_2 \ldots \exists x_n$ by application of the standard rules of first-order logic. However, for languages that mark negative variables by means of n-words, the issue of the interpretation of these structures is less trivial. We address this question in section 4.2.

### 4.2 Interpretation of Neg-Expressions

In isolation, we cannot determine whether a particular expression is a negative quantifier or an n-word, because they both contribute the meaning $\neg \exists$ (8a, b). Following de Swart and Sag (2002), I assume that this question is decided in the grammar, not in the lexicon. This is why I use the term neg expression to generalize over expressions that are formally marked for negation but are interpreted either as negative quantifiers or as n-words. The use of neg expressions in a generative OT system
means that we run into the recoverability problem: from the expressions generated, we can derive multiple interpretations, not only the intended one.

Recoverability is assured by the way the generation of negative sentences hangs together with their interpretation. In this section, we extend the OT syntax with an OT semantics. We need the familiar constraints FaithNeg and *Neg. These are double-edged constraints in the sense that they work in the generation as well as in the interpretation perspective. In the OT semantics, FaithNeg requires a reflection of the negative form in a nonaffirmative meaning. *Neg avoids a proliferation of negations in the semantics, preferring resumption over iteration. The third constraint we need is IntNeg:

\[ \square \text{IntNeg} \]

Force iteration (i.e., interpret every neg expression in the input form as contributing a semantic negation at the first-order level in the output).

MaxNeg and IntNeg both maximize the reflection of input features in the output, MaxNeg in the syntactic form, IntNeg in the semantic interpretation. As semantic constraints, both FaithNeg and IntNeg are instantiations of the general constraint FaithInt proposed by Zeevat (2000) and are defined as a principle that forces the hearer to interpret all that the speaker has said. The three constraints together account for DN and NC languages.

FaithNeg outranks all the other constraints, as usual. MaxNeg is a purely syntactic constraint that does not play a role in interpretation. So the constraints that need to be ordered are *Neg and IntNeg. If *Neg is ranked higher than IntNeg in the OT semantics, a sequence of multiple neg expressions leads to a single negation meaning by resumption. If IntNeg is ranked higher than *Neg, a series of neg expressions is interpreted as multiple negation by forcing iteration. The following tableaux illustrate the two possible rankings and their optimal output:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 5: Dual negation (interpretation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg + neg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 6: Negative concord (interpretation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg + neg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We cannot interpret a statement involving two neg expressions without a reflection of the nonaffirmative meaning because of the top ranking of FaithNeg. As a result, the relevant candidates we compare have at least one negation in the output and
always incur a violation of \( *\text{Neg} \). The combination of two neg expressions leads to a double negation reading in languages like Dutch and English, for the constraint IntNeg is ranked higher than \( *\text{Neg} \) in tableau 5. Because \( *\text{Neg} \) outranks IntNeg in tableau 6, single negation readings win over double negation readings in such languages as Spanish, Italian, Greek, Polish, and so forth.

Collapsing the generation and interpretation perspective, we derive the following two rankings for NC and DN languages:

**Bidirectional grammar**
- Negative concord languages: \( \text{FaithNeg} >> \text{MaxNeg} >> *\text{Neg} >> \text{IntNeg} \)
- Double negation languages: \( \text{FaithNeg} >> \text{IntNeg} >> *\text{Neg} >> \text{MaxNeg} \)

Even if we assume that FaithNeg outranks the other constraints across all languages under consideration, we need to consider more rankings than the two orders given above. Aside from FaithNeg, we are working with three constraints, and obviously, three constraints permit six rankings, at least in principle:

- \( \text{MaxNeg} >> *\text{Neg} >> \text{IntNeg} \) NC
- \( \text{MaxNeg} >> \text{IntNeg} >> *\text{Neg} \) unstable
- \( *\text{Neg} >> \text{MaxNeg} >> \text{IntNeg} \) unstable
- \( *\text{Neg} >> \text{IntNeg} >> \text{MaxNeg} \) unstable
- \( \text{IntNeg} >> \text{MaxNeg} >> *\text{Neg} \) DN

So far, we have established the top ranking and the bottom one as reflections of a particular family of languages. What about the other four possibilities? I claim that the other four rankings cannot represent stable linguistic systems because generation and production are not well balanced. Consider the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 7: MaxNeg &gt;&gt; IntNeg &gt;&gt; *Neg (original meaning not recovered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \neg \exists x_1 \exists x_2 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \neg \exists x_1 \exists x_2 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg + neg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neg + neg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This ranking generates two neg expressions as the optimal output for the single negation input. But the interpretation of two neg expressions leads to double, rather than single, negation. This means that the original meaning is not recovered. The ranking IntNeg >> MaxNeg >> *Neg is equally unstable. Given that there is no direct interaction between IntNeg and MaxNeg, the argumentation is the same. We conclude that MaxNeg and IntNeg cannot both be higher than *Neg.
Here we get the reverse problem. Indefinites are the optimal form for expressing indefinites under negation, but a neg expression also leads to an NC reading. However, the use of the n-word is not functionally motivated by the low ranking of MaxNeg. The same problems arise with the ranking *Neg >> MaxNeg >> IntNeg, because MaxNeg and IntNeg do not interact directly. This shows that MaxNeg and IntNeg cannot both be lower than *Neg either.

The conclusion must be that only rankings where MaxNeg and IntNeg are distributed on either side of *Neg reflect viable options for a linguistic system that balances generation and interpretation of negative statements. In sum:

- Negative Concord: if you mark negative variables (MaxNeg >> *Neg in syntax), then make sure you do not force iteration (*Neg >> IntNeg in semantics).
- Double Negation: if you force iteration, (IntNeg >> *Neg in semantics), then make sure you do not mark negative variables (*Neg >> MaxNeg in syntax).

### 4.3 Double Negation in Concord Languages

Although most languages clearly belong to either the DN class or the NC class, there are some intermediate cases. Corblin (1996), Corblin and Tovena (2003), and Corblin et al. (2004) argue that the French sentences in (10) and (11) are truly ambiguous:

(10) Personne n’a rien payé.  

*nobody ne* has *nothing* paid  
‘No one has paid anything.’  
NC

 ‘Everyone has paid something.’  
DN

(11) Personne n’est le fils de personne.  

*nobody ne* is *the son of nobody*  
‘No one is the son of anyone.’  
NC

 ‘Everyone is the son of someone.’  
DN

For (10), the two readings are equally available. The DN reading of (11) conforms to our world knowledge in ways that the NC reading of this sentence does not. Corblin argues that pragmatic factors may block the NC reading of examples like (11).

We can account for this situation by moving the constraints *Neg and IntNeg more closely together in a stochastic version of OT (see Boersma 1998; Boersma and...
Hayes 2001). In stochastic OT, constraints are ranked on a continuous scale. If adjacent constraints have an overlapping range, their order can be reversed in certain outputs. In modern French, we may assume that there is overlap between the range of *Neg and IntNeg in the interpretive system, so that in some contexts, the ranking can be reversed. Context plays an important role in disambiguation in general (de Hoop 2004), so cases like (10) and (11) would not be that unusual.

The stochastic view suggests that French occasionally switches to an unbalanced system in which both MaxNeg and IntNeg are ranked higher than *Neg. It is therefore quite likely that the ambiguities will be fairly restricted, unless the whole system is shifting towards a DN language in which n-words are reinterpreted as negative quantifiers (and MaxNeg is reranked below *Neg). This would obviously be the next step in terms of the Jespersen cycle (see Jespersen 1917/1962; de Swart and Sag 2002). French is assumed to be more advanced than other Romance languages in its stage of development in the Jespersen cycle (e.g., Haspelmath 1997), but there are some reports on similar ambiguities in Italian and Spanish. Zanuttini (1991, 144–45) claims that (12) exemplifies DN in Italian:

(12) Nessuno è rimasto con niente in mano.

(no one) is left with nothing in hand

‘No one was left with nothing.’

And Herburger (2001) reports that the Spanish example in (13) is ambiguous:

(13) Nadie nunca volvió a Cuba.

(nobody never) returned to Cuba

‘Nobody ever returned to Cuba.’

MaxNeg is currently still high in the ranking of Spanish, Italian, and even French, and there are no clear signs of it being demoted, so we are more on the side of a concord language than on the side of a DN language as far as generation is concerned. Because of the tension between the functional motivation for MaxNeg and the desire to respect IntNeg, it is impossible to predict if and when a complete rebalancing between form and meaning will take place in Romance. Possibly the system as it is (with just occasional outranking of *Neg by IntNeg in the interpretive system) is sufficiently stable to last.

5. Neg Expressions and Sentential Negation

Haspelmath (1997) distinguishes three subtypes of negative indefinites, depending on their relation to the marker of sentential negation. His classification is presented in section 5.1. Sections 5.2 and 5.3 implement the two main classes of NC languages in our bidirectional OT analysis. Section 5.4 treats Catalan as a mixed type.

5.1 Empirical Classification of Co-Occurrence Restrictions

Haspelmath’s classification serves as the starting point of our investigation, but see also the discussions in den Besten (1986), Hoeksema (1997), van der Wouden
Haspelmath (1997, 201) distinguishes three types of co-occurrence restrictions between neg expressions and markers of sentential negation.

**Type I: SNV-NEG**

Negative indefinites (NEG) always co-occur with verbal negation (SN), for example, the Polish n- series (nikt ‘nobody’, nic ‘nothing’, etc.). Similar examples are found in other Slavic languages, Greek, Hungarian, Romanian, and so forth. The examples in (14) are from Haspelmath (1997, 201); the examples in (15) from Corblin and Tovena (2003):

(14) a. Nikt nie przyszeda. Polish

   nobody SN came.
   ‘Nobody came.’
   b. Nie widziaa nikogo.

   SN saw nobody.
   ‘I saw nobody.’

(15) a. Nimeni *(nu) a venit. Rumanian

   nobody *(SN) has come.
   ‘Nobody came’
   b. *(Nu) a venit nimeni.

   *(SN) has come nobody.
   ‘Nobody came’

The type SNV-NEG is the most frequent type in Haspelmath’s (1997) language sample. He refers to Tanaka (1994) for evidence that this type is functionally motivated, because both the scope and the focus of negation are marked. The close connection between the verb and sentence negation is expected if Aristotle’s and Jespersen’s view of negation as predicate denial is adopted, as argued extensively in Horn (1989). Den Besten (1986), Hoeksema (1997), van der Wouden (1997), and Giannakidou (1998) refer to this type as negative doubling, proper or strict NC.

**Type II: V-NEG**

In this type, negative indefinites never co-occur with verbal negation, for example, the English no-series.


   b. I saw nobody.

According to Haspelmath (1997, 202), type II (V-NEG) is rare in crosslinguistic distribution. In his language sample, only European languages represent this type. He explains the relative rarity of type V-NEG as the result of a discrepancy between the semantics (which requires clausal scope of negation) and the surface expression of negation (which is on a participant, rather than on the verb in this type.)
Type III: (SN) V-NEG

This type includes negative indefinites (NEG) that sometimes co-occur with verbal negation (SN) and sometimes do not, for example, the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese n-series.

(17) a. Ninguém veio. European Portuguese
   nobody came ‘Nobody came.’
   b. Não veio ninguém.
   SN came nobody.
   ‘Nobody came.’

Type III ((SN)V-NEG) is strong in Romance, but rare elsewhere (Haspelmath 1997). According to Zanuttini (1991, 152–3) and Ladusaw (1992), the functional motivation for this type is that postverbal n-words are unable to take sentential scope. A preverbal expression of negation (n-word or SN) is thus motivated by the desire to express negation at the clausal (propositional) level.

In our terminology, type I and type III neg expressions are n-words, and type II neg expressions are negative quantifiers in DN languages. DN languages are captured by the bidirectional analysis of section 4 above and will not be discussed here. I propose two additional constraints for the class I and class III languages. These constraints are relevant for production only (OT syntax): the interpretation process is that of a concord language.

5.2 Class III Languages: Preverbal/ Postverbal Asymmetry

Class III languages are characterized by the general constraint ranking of NC languages in combination with the additional constraint NegFirst:

\[ \text{NegFirst} \]

Negation is preverbal.

Variants of NegFirst are discussed in the literature, for example, Jespersen (1917/1962, 1933/1964), Dahl (1979), Horn (1989), Haspelmath (1997), Corblin and Tovena (2003), Corblin et al. (2004). NegFirst is functionally motivated by the desire “to put the negative word or element as early as possible, so as to leave no doubt in the mind of the hearer as to the purport of what is said” (Jespersen 1933/1964, 297 as quoted by Horn 1989, 293, who dubs this principle NegFirst). Although NegFirst is found in many languages, Horn points out that it is not absolute. In OT, it works well as a violable constraint.

NegFirst is operative in several Romance languages, including Spanish, Italian, and Sardinian Portuguese (compare Posner 1984), but also in New Testament Greek and older varieties of several Slavic languages (which are class I languages in their modern varieties, see Haspelmath 1997, 212). Since Zanuttini (1991) and Ladusaw
(1992), it is well known that n-words in these languages can occur without negation in preverbal position but need the support of a marker of sentential negation to mark clausal scope when they occur in postverbal position and there is no preverbal n-word:

(18) a. Mario *(non) ha parlato di niente con nessuno. Italian
Mario *(SN) has talked about nothing to nobody.
‘Mario didn’t talk about anything to anyone.’

b. Nessuno (*?non) ha parlato con nessuno.
Nobody (*?SN) has talked with nobody.
‘Nobody talked to anybody.’

As these examples indicate, negation must be preverbal, but it does not matter whether it is expressed by a marker of sentential negation (18a), or by an n-word (18b). When the preverbal negation is expressed by a neg expression, a marker of sentential negation is excluded. Insertion of a preverbal marker of sentential negation in combination with a preverbal n-word generally leads to ungrammaticality and marginally to DN readings (in certain dialects only; see Zanuttini 1991).

In the OT analysis, we need to establish a distinction between preverbal and postverbal n-words as the correlation of clausal/VP scope. If we complement the usual constraint ranking for concord languages with a highly ranked constraint NegFirst, we obtain as a result that the sentence without preverbal sentential negation is an optimal output in the production direction when the indefinite under negation is postverbal (18a, tableau 9). This ranking also leads to the desired (concord) interpretation.

Table 9: Generation/interpretation of class III with postverbal n-word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>MaxNeg</th>
<th>NegFirst</th>
<th>*Neg</th>
<th>IntNeg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¬V∃x</td>
<td>V neg</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sn V neg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Form    | Meaning
| sn V neg | ¬V¬∃x | **      |          |      |        |
| sn     | ¬V¬∃x | *      |          |      |        |

These tableaux do not include candidates that violate MaxNeg, so we only consider neg expressions. Note further that NegFirst and MaxNeg are not in direct competition, so their mutual order is irrelevant, as long as they are both ranked above *Neg. In all potential constraint rankings in which NegFirst is ranked below *Neg, the constraint is inactive. The interpretation doesn’t care how many negations there are in the form: the ranking *Neg >> IntNeg implies that resumption applies. In the resumption process, the marker of sentential negation is simply absorbed. Given that it does not contribute a binding variable, it does not affect the resumptive quantifier (see de Swart and Sag 2002 for discussion). Accordingly, it is relevant to add
constraints like NegFirst to the OT syntax, but they do not affect the OT semantics. So from now on, we don’t need to spell out the NC interpretation anymore.

For sentences in which the postverbal indefinite is in the scope of a preverbal neg expression (18b), the optimal output on the production side is a sentence with a preverbal and a postverbal n-word but without a preverbal sentential negation. An additional preverbal sn incurs an extra violation of *Neg, which is not economical. In the semantics, there is no gain from an extra marker of sentential negation, either, because the meanings of the sentences with and without a marker of sentential negation are the same under the ranking *Neg >> IntNeg.

Tableau 10: Generation of class III with preverbal n-word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>MaxNeg</th>
<th>NegFirst</th>
<th>*Neg</th>
<th>IntNeg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¬∃x₁V∃x₂</td>
<td>neg V neg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neg sn V neg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The constraint ranking in tableau 10 accounts for the fact that class III languages do not insert a marker of sentential negation with preverbal n-words. The relevance of NegFirst is not restricted to NC languages. Horn (1989, 456–7) relates English do-support to the preference for preverbal negation.

5.3 Class I Languages: Obligatory Marker of Sentential Negation

Just like class III languages, class I languages require a marker of sentential negation with a postverbal n-word (14b, 15b). Unlike type III language, type I languages also require such a marker when the sentence contains a preverbal n-word (14a, 15a). NegFirst does not account for such a situation; the constraint that applies is MaxSN:

- MaxSN
  A negative clause must bear a marker of sentential negation.

Tableau 11: Generation of type I languages with preverbal n-word

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>MaxNeg</th>
<th>MaxSN</th>
<th>*Neg</th>
<th>IntNeg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>¬∃x₁V∃x₂</td>
<td>neg V neg</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neg sn V neg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
satisfy the constraint MaxSN with a postverbal marker of sn. Afrikaans nie provides an example:

(19) a. Jan het gehoop dat niks met hom sou gebeur nie.
    Jan has hoped that nothing with him would happen not
    ‘Jan hoped that nothing would happen to him.’

b. Sy hou nooit op met werk nie.
    she holds never up with work not
    ‘She never stops working.’

Type I and type III languages thus support the view put forward by de Swart and Sag (2002) that sentential negation does not affect the semantics of NC. Whether or not we find a (pre)verbal marker of sentential negation in concord languages depends on syntactic constraints like NegFirst or MaxSN.

5.4 Catalan: A Mixed Case

The constraints NegFirst and MaxSN interact in a language like Catalan, which exemplifies a mix of class I and class III properties (Ladusaw 1992; Vallduví 1994):

(20) a. En Pere *\((no)\) ha fet res.
    the Peter *\((not)\) has done nothing
    ‘Peter has not done anything.’

b. Ningú \((no)\) ha vist en Joan.
    nobody \((not)\) has seen John
    ‘Nobody has seen John.’

The data in (20) are accounted for by the following ranking: MaxNeg >> NegFirst >> MaxSN <<>> *Neg. Suppose that MaxSN and *Neg are ranked equally high (i.e., <<>> in ordinal OT) or have a strongly overlapping range (in stochastic OT). Given that NegFirst is higher than either one, we generate a preverbal marker of sentential negation with postverbal n-words, just like in a type III language (20a, tableau 12). With preverbal n-words (20b), the equal position of MaxSN and *Neg generates two optimal outputs. This is illustrated in tableau (13):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 12: Generation of Catalan with postverbal n-word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¬V∃x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tableau 13: Generation of Catalan with preverbal n-word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¬∃x₁V∃x₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The difference between preverbal and postverbal n-words is accounted for by the high ranking of NegFirst. However, Catalan is not a full type III language, because MaxSN is not ranked (strictly) below *Neg. It shares features with type I languages in allowing rankings in which MaxSN wins over *Neg. Thus a marker of sentential negation optionally shows up in outputs for the expression of preverbal n-words. As far as interpretation is concerned, we predict that the presence or absence of a marker of sentential negation is irrelevant. As long as *Neg is ranked above IntNeg, all negative meanings will be collapsed into a single negation. As pointed out by Vallduví (1994), the optionality of a preverbal marker of sentential negation in combination with a preverbal n-word does not have a semantic effect.

HASPelmanth (1997, 211, 213) observes that the pattern we find in Catalan is also found in Old Church Slavonic and in several (mostly African American) dialects of English. HASpelmath quotes the following examples from Labov (1972, 785–6):

(21) a. Nobody don’t know where it’s at. African American English
b. Nobody fights fair.

We conclude that these are mixed cases of type I and type III languages, which nevertheless represent balanced systems that reflect the interaction of NegFirst and MaxSN.

6. Conclusion
The conclusion I draw from this investigation of the marking and interpretation of negation is that a bidirectional version of Optimality Theory offers new perspectives on the range of variation we find in natural language for the expression and meaning of negation and negative indefinites. Patterns that are found frequently in natural language but that are not absolute can be fruitfully described in a framework that allows constraints to be violable. The bidirectionality is especially important to our analysis, because it relates the semantic compositionality problems raised by negative concord to the functional tendencies to formally mark the scope and focus of negation, in accordance with the view on compositionality advanced by Blutner (2000), and Blutner, Hendriks, and de Hoop (2003). Our OT analysis confirms the insight from de Swart and Sag (2002) that the position and distribution of the marker of sentential negation in negative concord are relevant for syntax but do not affect the semantics.

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NOTES
1. This observation holds modulo the observations about inverse scope made by de Swart (1998).
2. Obviously, this criterion is applicable only in languages that do not require the presence of a marker of sentential negation in all negative sentences. In such languages (labeled class I languages in section 5 below), this criterion is not falsified but cannot be tested.
REFERENCES


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