THE PRAGMATICS OF NEGATION

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Abstract

In this article the consideration is given to the phenomenon of negation. Studies of negation have been in the field of view of logicians, philosophers, linguists and psychologists for centuries. This pragmatic universal, which is reflected in languages, albeit by different means – a syntactic and a morphosyntactic phenomenon that is studied interdisciplinary. Through this the multifacetedness and multifunctionality of negation belongs to such language categories that are always in the field of view of scientific circles of humanitarian sphere of knowledge. Despite the fact that a thorough analysis of negation began within the framework of formal logic, however later this pragmatic universal has become one of the fundamentals in various scientific fields of knowledge. It (negation) is also one of the most basic human concepts (meanings) and its presence is one of the criteria that reveals human nature and its expression in the humanitarian sphere of knowledge. Still, the discussions concerning this issue are of great value for understanding the functions of negation, and the analyses carried out in the following pages clearly and mainly gain arguments from the asymmetry hypothesis to explain phenomena about negatives' meanings. That, the ability to deny is natural, which means a natural phenomenon. We analyze its various forms in the corpus and discourse of English in an interlinguistic perspective.

Key words: negation, pragmatics, pragmatic universal, philosophers, linguists, psychologists.

Introduction

Negation is one of the most complex phenomena in language, seen from a formal linguistic perspective as well as from a functional, pragmatic perspective. Still, it triggers many questions about its nature, its forms of expression, and its contextual meanings. Being one of the semantic universals reveals negation's deep importance in human expression (Wierzbicka, 1996). In natural languages, there is a range of unities expressing negative meaning on morphological, lexicological, and syntactical levels; they combine with other operators, of modality and quantity, in a way that we are far from considering the negation only in the light of the truth-false dichotomy in logics. Negation – as a logic operator – is part of its complexity, although semantic, syntactic, and conceptual aspects need certainly to be taken into account when studying the use of negation. This article treats expressions of the concept 'NEGATION': what forms – explicitly or implicitly negative – express negativity in language and what pragmatic functions are conveyed through different negative forms and meanings. The author deals with negative forms and negative functions from many theoretical aspects and study

these phenomena in various socio-cultural contexts, each of them dealing with the interface between linguistic features and pragmatic meanings in English. The questions dealt with are related to numerous linguistic fields, notably sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, neurolinguistics, syntax, semantics, rhetoric, and discourse analysis. Negative forms have, within linguistics, been analysed from an evolutionary perspective and synchronically, as a modal, syntactical, and logic operator, as a linguistic unit in itself and as one that conveys different discursive meanings of refutation, rejection, denial, contradiction, and irony (Neveu, 2013; de Swartz, 2010). The negative morpheme interacts, on a syntactic level, with other operators such as quantifiers, adverbs, scope, and polarity items as well as with principles of logic, semantics, syntax, and pragmatics such that it has played an important role in the development of linguistic theories of all spectra (Tottie, 1991). The Pragmatics of Negation Regarding the research areas and linguistic levels, negation studies focus on quite different phenomena. In syntax and classical semantics most studies concern questions of negative scope, grammaticalisation, contrariety and polarity (Dahl, 1979; Jespersen, 1917; Larrivée, 2001; Muller, 1991). Within cognitive linguistics and language acquisition, there are interesting findings on the complexity and the (apparent) time-consuming process of interpreting and learning negative forms, in relation to other phenomena. From another cognitive linguistic perspective, Fauconnier (1979 and 1994) has described negation in terms of an opener of mental spaces in human mind, which means he promotes an idea of negation as one of the linguistic unities that cognitively connect – creates intersections between – different competing values and ideas housed in the human consciousness. In pragmatics, negation has been a highly relevant research object, since it conveys a great many implicit meanings in forms of attenuations, reinforcements, presuppositions, irony, polyphony, and manipulation (Ducrot, 1984; Horn, 1989; Moeschler, 1997). These implicit meanings mostly need a context to be fully interpreted, and the analyses in this reserach are carried from observations of the uses of negation in speech and text in authentic communication. In discourse, argumentation, and stylistic analyses eventually, there are studies on the expressions of power relations and their connection to negatives. Negation is here considered a hierarchical linguistic operator mapping relations of dominance (refusals, rejections, refutations) in society (Apothéloz, 1993; Bacha et al., 2011; Fairclough, 1995 and 2003; Hidalgo-Downing, 2000; Roitman, 2006, 2015; Windish, 1987 among others). Some ideas in this article are more theory-based while others are more empirically oriented, though all are methodically oriented towards demonstration and reasoning through authentic excerpts from media, publicity, daily conversation, scientific discourse, political debate, and so forth. The pragmatics of negation is on the one hand a question of meanings, often implicit, in sentences containing negative adverbs and other negative forms, and on the other hand a question of negative meanings from an ontological perspective, meanings conveyed from the use of linguistic units other than those of explicit negation and that are used to express refutations and Biber (1999) has shown from big text data and within a genre-theoretical framework that negation appears with high frequency in informal and interactive spoken genres. Each of the findings contributes thus in different ways to disclose some of the mechanisms at stake when it comes to the use of negative forms or negative meanings in discourse. This open-minded perspective, to gather all these different approaches, contributes to the originality of this article. This reserach offers a very broad view of actual studies on the pragmatics of negation in human languages, and it will hopefully contribute to enlarging our acquaintances in the field. Negation being a core unity in

constructions of human expressions and in all types of discourses and genres, there is a large potential readership for anyone interested in dimensions of negation in a broad sense and within a large variety of domains such as semantics, media discourse, pragmatics, literature, discourse analyses, ethnography of communication, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguists. This quotation from Laurence Horn's large volume Natural History of Negation (1989) resumes negation's incontestable importance for understanding linguistic interaction between people: 'All human systems of communication contain a representation of negation. No animal communication system includes negative utterances, and consequently, none possesses a means for assigning truth-value, for lying, for irony, or for coping with false or contradictory statements'.

The Nature of Negation

The meanings of linguistic negation can basically be set in three categories: non-existence, rejection, and denial; negations declare no-existence – *There is no X*, reject – *We don't want*, and deny relations and propositions – *The toys aren't ours*; it's not true. These significations all come into play when we speak about negation's nature, its meaning and the use made of it. Negation has been analysed as a truth-functional operator of its own, and maintain as such a dualistic relation to the affirmation. It also has been dealt with as a modality: a propositional attitude or a judgement of the content of a proposition like '*I don't agree*'. (Segerberg, 1971; Chellas, 1980). Within these frames, negation is qualified an epistemic modal operator at the very end of the scale true-false (Hegarty, 2016; Kratzer, 1991). When it comes to pragmatics, which is a framework beyond truth conditions parameters, negation is often studied as a speech act of denial maintaining a more complex relation to affirmation. To get the full picture of the pragmatics of negation, one needs to consider the base assumptions within propositional logic where negative and affirmative propositions are considered to have equal linguistic status, both declaring a state of affair: *The dog is here – the dog isn't here* (Frege, 1918). According to the 'law of non-contradiction', affirmatives and negatives cannot, in propositional logic, both be true at the same time. Thus, phrases are either true or false, and there is, consequently, according to the 'law of the excluded middle', no room for intermediate meanings between them. The first question should then be: Why do we communicate using negatives, instead of affirmatives, when we want state something? Is negation merely a reversed signification of the correspondent affirmation? The core issues concern whether negation is a truth-value operator – or not, but even more, whether this postulate would be of any importance within pragmatics. In view of the paradigm shift that took place in linguistics, from propositional logic towards functionally orientated theories during the first decades of last century, Russell (1905) argued negation may in some cases be and in others not be a truth-value operator. Russell shows how negation may enter conflict with the existential presupposition when the finite noun phrase lacks referent: '*The present king of France is not bald*'. (The finite noun phrase is '*The present king of France*'.) The ambiguity of negation lies here, according to Russell, in its scope; large scope does not affect the truth-value (sentence negation) whereas narrow scope (constituent negation) does. These are relevant statements for the following discussions on metalinguistic negation. The spark lit by Russell, functionalism and the naissance of pragmatics threw new light on negation and

other traditional truth-value operators in language. Researchers within pragmatics are based on the postulate that negative clauses are linguistically asymmetric to affirmatives and that negatives are marked structures in relation to their counterparts. Within the speech act theory, Searle made a general distinction between the two-folded nature of speech acts: propositional content and illocutionary force (Searle, 1969). This allows him to distinguish and illustrate the complex relation between negation as truth-value operator and negation as linguistic operator – a marker of an illocutionary force, which indicates an illocutionary act: *I promised not to come* (propositional negation) *I don't promise to come* (illocutionary negation) Moeschler (Moeschler, 1982) approaches negation's ambiguous nature in a similar way and resumes: 'negation is certainly the most spectacular example to show the divergence between the truth-conditional meaning of the connector and the pragmatic non-truth-conditional meaning of the connector' (my translation). Moeschler (Moeschler, 1982; 2013) notably distinguishes truth-value and assertability of negatives and argue that negation does not affect the truth of the proposition, but rather what may be asserted, which generally speaking qualifies negation (in their vocabulary) to become a metalinguistic operator. Horn sees negation as semantically unambiguous and prefers to speak of the different pragmatic uses, a descriptive (truth-conditional) use and a metalinguistic (non-truth-conditional) use (Horn, 1989). This joins the description of negation in the French enunciation theories, in particular the one called *la pragmatique intégrée* within the *Argumentation dans la langue framework* (Anscombre and Ducrot, 1983; Ducrot 1984) and the Scandinavian theory of linguistic polyphony (Nolke et al., 2004) that will be discussed below.

The Asymmetry of Negation

The pragmatics of sentence negation in discourse thus mainly connects to the linguistic aspect of negation as an operator on a sentence level. Parallel and interwoven with the discussion of whether sentence negation is a truth-value operator, or an illocutionary force, there is, since ancient times, a cleft between the views on negation having a symmetric or asymmetric relation to affirmation (Horn, 1989). According to the symmetric hypothesis, negation is considered linguistically equal to affirmation and, according to the asymmetric hypothesis, negation is considered to be a more complex operator than just a reversed assertion. In theories treating negation as an asymmetric operator, as in most pragmatic studies, negatives are considered to differ from assertive sentences on a morphological, semantic and syntactical level. The differing features converge in a sense that they all point at negatives' morpho-syntactic structure and semantic composition as more complex than those of assertions. The formal complexity of negatives is consequently claimed to support the asymmetric hypothesis and to explain, considering Grice's principle of manner, prescribing unambiguity and straightforwardness, that using negation is often motivated by special semantic and pragmatic functions that may not be attained through other structures (Miestamo, 2005). There is, in other words, no need to negate if you can communicate the same information at less cost and with less effort, by using an affirmation. Many studies (including Miestamo's) leaning on the asymmetric hypothesis show however that negatives are not exactly the semantic opposite of their correspondent affirmatives. Different phrasal elements – on morphological, syntactical, and semantic levels – such as, for example, negations' lexical variety, the semantic nature of negated items, scope,

double negation, but also differences regarding affirmations' and negations' relations to linguistic presuppositions – blur this dichotomy and give way to far more complex relations between negations and affirmations. Thus, the adding of a negative particle to an affirmation may oppose it to the correspondent affirmation, but also convey other meanings such that the elements of the couple *this is north – this is not north* are not opposed in the same way as *this is north – this is south*. This issue has as a matter of fact been dealt with since Aristotle outlined the squares on syllogisms of contraries and contradictions (1938, 1939). The syllogisms illustrating the system of semantic oppositions were successfully retaken in Horn where he discusses negatives' semantic and syntactic asymmetries in relation to their function in pragmatics (Horn, 1989). He disqualifies here 'the law of double negation' according to which a negation of a negation equalises the corresponding positive counterpart. Thus, from a pragmatic perspective, the double negation *I don't dislike art* does not exactly equalise *I like art*. The opposite of *I don't dislike art* actually appears more difficult to decipher than the opposite of the simple negation *I don't like art*, whose opposite is likely to be interpreted as *I like art*. Similarly, the double negation *I don't refuse* is not the same as saying *I want* whereas the negative *I don't want* is more likely to correspond to *I refuse* (Horn, 1989). Horn profoundly goes into the law of non-contradiction (if *P* is true, then *not-P* is false) and the law of the excluded middle, which refers to the Western logical principle that a proposition is either true or false and that there is nothing – no "middle" – in between them. According to this view, a phrase such as *He is happy* and *he isn't happy* or *He is either happy or not happy* would not be possible, although we may actually use these sentences and understand them. The consequence of the logic laws is, however, that the negated content may never be fully uncovered nor problematised; the range and number of linguistic units operating in a negative sentence amplifies the complexity of its semantic and syntactic patterns (quantifiers, scalarity, double negation, questions of scope and focalisation), although even simple negatives such as *He didn't come home* always seem to leave a grain of uncertainty when it comes to deciphering the negated content, which again brings up the dilemma of the famous "excluded middle". The semantic nature of the negated item is consequently highly involved in this discussion. The negation of a lexical item belonging to an extensive semantic paradigm enhances more interpretations than negations of a lexicon in a smaller semantic paradigm, like scalar words for example (Muller, 1991; Nolke, 1993; Katz, 1972 and 1979). Consequently, the phrase *This is not a pizzeria* offers a larger range of possible interpretations (*This is a café/a bar/a fancy restaurant/bowling hall…* etc.) than the phrase where a scalar word is negated: *It isn't late*, where there is a semantic (but not an absolute) fusion between negation and the item in its scope, resulting in interpretations such as: *It is somewhat/rather/very early*. Scalar items establish as a matter of fact a more semantically complex relation with negation than no-scalar-words (*pizzeria*) when it comes to interpreting the opposite corresponding affirmation, since the scalar words seem to modify sentence meaning differently. Between the negatives and affirmatives in the just mentioned example, as well in *She is happy – She is not happy*, there is actually no clear semantic opposition. This is particularly true for negative scalar items like *unhappy*, *impossible*, *dishonest*, and so forth. Thus *She is not unhappy*, a double negation, does not seem to correspond to the affirmative *She is happy* (Horn, 1989; Muller, 1991), which was also just mentioned above in the discussion on the excluded middle. This may also be applied to modal verbs expressing scalarity (possibility): *He can say yes* does not correspond to *He can't say no* since the first phrase implies that he

may as well say no. The difference between affirmation and negation regarding their reaction to negative scalar words, in particular, is thus something that clashes with the law of double negation and the law of non-contradiction; this is consequently strong evidence for the asymmetric hypothesis of negation. In discourse, negations of scalar words are often used as attenuations of the negative judgements: *His behaviour is not OK*! (means '*terrible*'), *It wasn't my best choice*! (means '*the worst choice*'), *She is not as young as she was* (means '*old*') or to regulate one's ethos expressing modesty: *I don't look all that bad in this dress*. These are often described as litotes within.

Besides propositional logic Hegelian dialectics has formed the Western dualistic conception within ontology (Russon, 1993) and constitute what in pragmatics is called a face-saving acts (Ducrot, 1980; Blutner, 2004; Postal, 2004). Negative polarity items also expose the asymmetry between affirmations and negations in natural languages (Dahl, 1979). Thus the correspondent affirmation to the phrase *He didn't lift a finger to help me* cannot be used without losing its meaning. Many of the negative polarity expressions have also developed into lexicalised formulaic expressions with proverbial status, such as expressions like: *All that glitters is not gold*. On the same kind of examples, but within psycho- and neurolinguistics, Gioras uses informants to study empirically the interpretations of negation in expressions such as *He is not the smartest guy in town* (Gioras, 2006). The results of her studies show that the positive counterpart *He is the smartest guy in town* is interpreted literally and loses the intended ironical and sarcastic meaning carried out in the negative. When it comes to the syntactic complexity, topologist studies have shown that the syntactical structures in negatives often differ from those of affirmatives, in addition to the presence of the negative markers. Morphological distinctions in the verb phrase – tense, aspect, and mood – and in the noun phrase – number and gender – are often lost in negatives (cf. in English: *She goes – She does not go*) (Dahl, 1979 and Gaatone, 1971). The question of negatives' scope is a syntactic issue involved in the symmetric-asymmetric discussion (Heldner, 1981). Negations with narrow scope, also described in terms of focalisation on one lexical item, have a tendency to enhance meanings that overrule the symmetric hypothesis. This issue is discussed in Nolke (1993) and Larrivée (2001) who differentiate the act of focalisation in negatives from the focalised item, which is the result of the act of focalisation. The act of focalisation in negatives, on one item, is normally enhanced by the contrastive elements in a juxtaposed proposition, or it may be a result of a specific contrastive prosodic pattern in spoken language, which does not need contextual reinforcements to be simply identified, but does need such (contextual) reinforcements to be fully interpreted: *He didn't talk for two minutes, he gave a whole speech*. This type of phrase generally overthrows presuppositions and consequently annuls the default downward interpretation of a negative sentence; according to 'the law of reduction' for negatives, the sentence *He doesn't have 1,000 bonds* infers by default he has fewer than 1,000 bonds. This inference of negation's decreasing value is, however, annulled or even reverted in the sentence: *He doesn't have 1,000 bonds, he has one million bonds!* The contrastive contextual element '*one million bonds*' reverses the expected (presupposed) decreasing meaning and overrules the opposition between affirmation and negation. We shall return to this problem in the below.

The main counter argument in favour of the symmetry hypothesis, equalising the status of negation and affirmation, is the apparent need of context for interpreting the meaning of the negative sentences (Muller, 1991; Horn, 1989). The argument raised is that two phrases such *It's Tuesday today* and *It isn't Tuesday today* are as they stand

likely to be oppositions. Muller (1991) argues for qualifying negatives as negative utterances ('*énoncés négatifs*') thus always framing negatives in a communicative situation. One could also argue that even an affirmation may turn to its opposite, a negative, within a special context. For example, if during a sunny picnic lunch a harsh rain comes suddenly, the comment *Oh, what nice weather we have today*! would immediately be interpreted (ironically) as the opposite of its literal meaning, that is, as a negation of the propositional content and interpreted as: *The weather today is anything but nice*. However, negative sentences engender, as has been shown here, many formal complexities in comparison to affirmations. The question regarding the asymmetry versus the symmetry of negation is multifaceted when it comes to natural languages. Since this article deals with the pragmatics of negation and its focus lies in speakers' uses of negatives – negative utterances – there is no need to exclusively take sides for either of the hypotheses. Still, the discussions concerning this issue are of great value for understanding the functions of negation, and the analyses carried out in the following pages clearly and mainly gain arguments from the asymmetry hypothesis to explain phenomena about negatives' meanings.

The Markedness of Negation

The informational inferiority of negation, in rapport with affirmation, was first argued by Plato and Aristotle and has been discussed thereafter within different frameworks dealing with the use of negation. The acquisition of negation also seems to be a somewhat complex process since it appears later than affirmation in language learning (Bardel, 2000; Leech, 1983; Sanell, 2005). Cognitive studies on comprehension have also shown that negation is linguistically more difficult and time-consuming to conceive, process, understand and learn and that it is, at the same time, semantically less informative than its positive counterpart (Clark and Clark, 1977; Bacri and Boysson-Bardies, 1977). It has been postulated that negations' early appearance in a phrase, which is very often the case in the languages of the world, in particular before the finite verb, can be explained by the fact that they are somewhat unexpected and need to be signalled. Their syntactic complexity and cognitively demanding structure motivate thus their early appearance in the phrase (Dryer, 2011). This is also Jespersen's (1917) argument when he discusses the reinforcements and the grammaticalisation of negation in different languages. Affirmations are, on the other hand, rather unmarked structures since they are more frequent and thus expected speech acts in human language. States of affairs are, as a matter of fact, more commonly communicated than non-states of affairs in natural languages; negations or refutation speech act seem thus to require some reinforcement to be fully interpreted (Miestamo, 2005; Haspelmaths, 2006; Dahl, 1979). Various pragmatic and semantic studies maintain that negative sentences often contain suppositions of their contrary, which is to say that the phrase *This isn't the north* would probably occur when there is a supposition of *This is the north*. Givon underlines the non-referential nature of negative sentences, which means they are generally not used for introducing new referents in discourse, but supposedly present already definite information that he calls a 'pragmatic presupposition' (Givon, 1978). Miestamo resumes: 'Negatives need a special context to be plausibly used in discourse, and this context is provided by the supposition of the corresponding affirmative, which gives higher information value for negatives' (Miestamo, 2005). From a somewhat different

perspective and within his framework "*les univers de croyance*" where negation's dualistic nature is one pillar, Martin (1983), who combines classic semantic logic and Guillaume's theory (1973) on mental operations involved in speech, refers to the almost equal but never erased gap between the affirmation and the negation and argues that: 'this is all the difference between *the door isn't open* and *the door is closed*'. Negation is, once more, in pragmatics and other linguistic theories, postulated to be asymmetric; Ducrot (1984) as well as Horn (1989) argue that the speech act involved, when negation is used, is predominately a denial or refutation of previous utterances rather than a declaration of the state of affairs.

This discussion needs, however, to be refined since the complex relations between negations and other phrase units – operators – engender negations with very different functions. Some negatives seem to be more marked than others in discourse. Some seem to be more affirmative-like and thus describe a 'state of affairs' as, for example, '*There is no post office in the village*' from a tourist guidebook. Other negations expose, on the contrary, an 'informative break' or 'rupture' with what is expected. These different degrees of markedness of negations have been related to scope, to semantic features of the negated predicate, and also to contextual elements. When it comes to negation's pragmatic functions, it seems as if markedness comes down to being more than anything else an effect of the contrastive contextual element in the coordinated, juxtaposed, or subordinated clauses, in more textually remote features or in the common ground knowledge. These readings of sentence negation are referred to as descriptive versus metalinguistic (Horn, 1989; Moeschler, 1982, 1993) or polemic (Ducrot, 1984; Muller, 1991) negation. The descriptive negations are more "affirmative-like" while the polemic negations clearly negate, refuse, reject, or refute previous information, and thus maintain a relation to their affirmative counterpart. Various scholars, amongst them Nolke (1993), consider the descriptive and polemic negation as the outermost poles of a continuum from descriptive negations where the negative morpheme almost emerges with its predicate and becomes a mere 'description of the world' to polemic negation where certain semantic features cause the rupture with the preceding context in a sense that the negation rather refutes, denies, or questions an expected point of view. Whether negation never fully seems to merge with its predicate in a way that it becomes equivalent with an affirmation is an interesting question. The common criteria for explaining the potential meanings of negative clauses is thus, from our pragmatic perspective, the involvement and the recycling of what may be considered 'the common ground' when explaining phrases such as *It's not bad! This is not a restaurant* or *I can't blame her*, and so forth. The answers to the question concerning what is negated must, to sum up, be led back to Aristotle's model of differences between contraries and contradictions, the excluded middle, the question of restricted and wide scope, the semantic nature of the predicate and, eventually, the triggering elements in the context. Givon (1978), Carston (1996), and Clark (1974) discuss, as already mentionned, this underlying meaning in terms of pragmatic presuppositions. The conveyed meaning in sentence negation is thus unarticulated and therefore undetermined, which is the reason why this implicit meaning might be subject to interpretations and, of course, disputes.

Although the ideas in this reserach present rather different aspects of the pragmatics of negation, the asymmetrical nature of negatives is the base assumption we generally confront, problematise, and use while trying to explain different pragmatic effects of negation. In different ways, we accept that meanings and pragmatic effects of

the sentence negation are best explained by taking into account the presence of the implicit pragmatic presupposition, which is the negated item that operates and implicitly attributes meanings to the negated sentences. The analyses in the different sections also consider the features of the co-textual element – the entailments – but also context in the larger sense of background knowledge. In Bonnie Fonseca's investigation on French negation dealing with the discourse-pragmatic emphasis and communicative saliency of the preverbal negative adverb *ne*, she suggests that negation, a speech act of "rupture" from the expected in the given context, may be reinforced by using the *ne* in discourse. Thus, Freud profoundly discussed the function of negation in his patients speech and he found that in negations, mostly denials, repressed feelings and thought would come to light. Studying negation for Freud thus meant studying the side of the conscious or unconscious and often forbidden desires, thoughts and dreams (Freud 1937 quoted in Lewkowicz and Bokanowski, 2011). The pragmatic presupposition seems to be emphasised by *ne*. The form *ne* has been described as the unmarked form of French negation, but Fonseca-Gerber proposes that the evolution towards a large dominance of the post-verbal negation in spoken French seems to enhance an emphatic function to *ne* and to restart Jespersen's cycle of negative forms, that is, the cross-linguistic tendency to reinforce negation by adding linguistic elements to the utterance. The pragmatic presupposition is also what is at stake in the negative wh-questions, *How didn't John play*, that Larrivée deals with and that supposedly explain the 'intervention effects' of these questions. The interpretation of these questions involves a tension between what is, on the one hand, known and shared knowledge and, on the other, the request for knowledge, which turn them into something more than a request for information; a wh-question becomes thus a rhetorical figure of speech for reinforcing statements. Nolke shows, in his theoretical oriented chapter on negation as a marker of linguistic polyphony, how different syntactic and semantic operators may enhance or block the interpretation of a 'pragmatic presupposition' in negative utterances. There appears to be a continuum between descriptive negations, affirming a 'state of affairs', and polemic negations, presupposing an affirmative counterpart.

Metalinguistic Negation

In pragmatics, most theories distinguish, as already mentioned, the polemic and metalinguistic uses of negation. There is however research aiming to setting up linguistic criteria for distinguishing them (Larrivée, 2011b; Moeschler, 2013). The latter is thus reserved for a certain kind of polemic negation (in Nolke's and Ducrot's definitions among others), notably the type of negation that overrules the presupposition and the decreasing effect that is otherwise one of the negation's semantic operative features by default. A polemic negation can thus be exemplified as – *Drink the coffee while it is still warm! – This coffee isn't warm!* while the metalinguistic negation would be *This coffee isn't WARM* (with strong intonation on '*warm*') or *This coffee isn't warm, it is burning hot!* (with or without intonation on '*warm*'), or to take one of Horn's (1989) examples '*He didn't eat THREE of the cakes, he ate FOUR of them*'. This type of negation naturally appears in situations with two defined interlocutors in interaction where the one refutes the pragmatic presupposition set up by the other. This kind of echoic effect in discourse has interested the behaviourists, although it has also been dealt with in linguistics, not the least in negation studies (Carston, 1996). These issues are discussed

here in Lee's reserach where the phonetic patterns of metalinguistic negation are contrasted to those of descriptive negations and affirmatives, in order to measure the cognitive impact of negations' markedness. Olza analyses from another perspective how an echoic – recycled – discourse turns into the opposite of its original meaning, how it becomes a meta-pragmatic negation – a refutative speech act – of the previous identical utterance, reinforced and intensified by idiomatic expressions. In her chapter on metalinguistic negations, Garcia Negroni problematises the truth-value of negatives and introduces evidentiality to the pragmatics of negation. In slightly the same direction as Olza, she shows how Spanish discourse markers expressing refusals – '*Minga*', '*Otra que*', and others – are semantically parented with metalinguistic negation since they both are used for refuting explicit utterances or utterances that through distinguished intonation are presented as echoes of a direct quote. According to Garcia Negroni's results, evidential meaning seems to be equally encoded in discursive markers and metalinguistic negation since the interpretation of these two types of sentences cannot be fully attained without revitalising the enunciation behind, the act of saying.

Negation as Marker of Polyphony and a Tool for Argumentation

It may be that pragmatic effects are buried in the linguistic structure, in '*la langue*' – the instructions of sentence negation itself, and that may be activated in certain contexts. This was claimed in Anscombre and Ducrot (1983) and Ducrot (1972, 1984) whose models "*la pragmatique int*égr*ée*" and "*la linguistique de l'*énonciation" – rooted in Bally (1932) and Benveniste (1966 and 1974) – have had a profound impact on French pragmatics. Their model of linguistic polyphony was further elaborated in Nolke et al. (2004) and constitutes part of the theoretical frameworks in Birkelund, in Flottum and Gjerstad, and in Roitman. These studies problematise however different aspects of negation's pragmatic meanings and functions. The linguistic polyphony model postulates that negation carries a polyphonic structure by default, which means negation has semantic instructions that stratify the utterance in two hierarchically organised layers, one affirmative subjacent and one negative, superposed. These layers will hereafter be mentioned as points of views. Ducrot (1984) and in particular Nolke et al. (2004) present different findings enhancing the negation's by default polyphonic value, for instance, the anaphoric relation created in sentences such as the following: *Pierre is not nice. On the contrary, he's despicable* (Flottum and Gjerstad's example), where the cohesion created by on the contrary is bound to the underlying point of view *Pierre is nice*. Others anaphoric entailments may in the same way be formally bound, not to the explicit point of view, but to the subjacent point of view: *Pierre is not nice, although my brother said that, Pierre is not nice, which is what we all first thought*. Thus, according to the theory of polyphony, the inherent semantic instructions of sentence negation, consisting of a positive and negative point of view may thus be 'activated' in language and create pragmatic effects. Nolke shows different textual elements are either triggers or blockers of a descriptive meaning of negation. Concessive or adversative connectors like, for example, *on the contrary, certainly…but, however*, are blockers of the derivation and reinforce the polemic reading of sentence negation. Thus, negation has primarily a polemic value that may be reinforced or weakened, but never erased. Birkelund also departs from the postulate of the sentential negation's inherent polemic value in her analysis of internal versus external negation in relation to other polyphonic

structures: concessions and deontic modal verbs. These two elements, which are also by default polyphonic, reinforce the external negation opposing two discursive voices. There are however different views on whether negation has a polemic value by default or if there is a pure pragmatic aspect to it. Some scholars dismiss the default polyphony hypothesis and claim instead that negation has potential to be interpreted and used as a marker of polyphony in discourse (Larrivée and Perrin, 2010). In Flottum and Gjerstad and in Roitman, however, the analysis operates on a discursive level and the interest lies in however negation reveals a polyphonic reading, what this interpretation says about the overall character and structure of the specific corpora. The discourse analytic focus is very much on the parameters: text type, function, and genre. Within this frame, Flottum and Gjerstad as well as Roitman explore somewhat differently how negation, through the polyphonic reading, reflects society's oppositions, whether it concerns political views or scientific standpoints. These studies marry French enunciation linguistics, linguistic polyphony, Kerbrat-Orecchioni's (1999) interaction theories – and discourse analysis (Maingueneau, 2016; Roulet, 2001). One of the central issues in linguistic polyphony is the relation between 'the act of saying' *énonciation* and 'the said' *énoncé*, and the division of the speaking subject in an in-the-world existing-speaker and a textual constructed speaker, the first being responsible for the "saying" and the second for the "said". Apart from the speaking subject, the model also takes into account textual units tracing the presence of other discourse entities like allocator and third person (Ducrot, 1984; Nolke et al., 2004; Kronning, 2006). Negation is, within this framework, simultaneously treated as an expression of modality, a unity leaving traces of the speaking subject's propositional attitude in discourse, and as a marker of linguistic polyphony. The 'split' of the speaking subject is used to explain how linguistic polyphony markers, one of which is negation, enhance a multi-voiced discourse where the question of responsibility of the discursive 'voices' is a central discussion. The notions for the different avatars of the speaking subjects, as well as for the other discourse entities vary within polyphony theory, depending on how each researcher conceptualises and frames the "voices" in discourse. (Ducrot, 1984; Kronning, 2006; N?lke et al., 2004; Roitman, 2006).

Conclusion

We enjoyed exploring the phenomenon of negation across English, finding patterns, and being surprised by unexpected and fascinating complications. We have long been puzzled by the cross-linguistic variation we find in the semantics of negation and negative indefinites, and we were glad to discover optimality theory as a tool that can account for such patterns. One thing leads to another, so many extensions of the proposals outlined in this article can be conceived. The typological validity of our claims would benefit from more empirical work on negation and negative indefinites, especially outside the family of Indo-European languages. More research on diachronic patterns, and the relation between polarity and concord could improve the tentative description of the Jespersen cycle. An extension to positive polarity items would also be attractive. All in all, we hope the reader will find some inspiration in the views and ideas developed here, and will carry on where this research ends.

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