

ON NEGATIVE LICENSING CONTEXTS AND THE ROLE OF N-WORDS

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1. *Introduction**

This paper discusses some of the consequences of the assumption that Hungarian negative elements - or n-words - are not inherently negative. On the one hand, this assumption seems to raise potential problems, which I will argue can be solved under an analysis which resorts to ellipsis. On the other hand, given the restrictions on the licensing of n-words in Hungarian, namely the fact that despite the assumption just mentioned, they seem to depend somehow on strict negative contexts for their licensing, I propose an analysis of n-words which discriminates between licensing, interpretation and surface position.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 summarises the assumptions expressed above (see e.g. Giannakidou 1998, Puskás 1999), which presuppose that Hungarian *se*-elements (or n-words) are the only negative polarity items, and that they are not inherently negative, but depend on the negative marker *nem* for their licensing. Section 3 discusses the potential problems the assumptions seem to raise. These are divided into three types, the problems related to the possibility of having fragment answers and co-ordination structures with bare n-words (3.1), the behaviour of n-words in predicate nominal constructions (3.2) and the existence of double negation (3.3). It is argued that the first two problems can be explained under an analysis which involves the ellipsis of the part of the clause which actually contains the

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licensing negative marker, while the third one involves the presence of a second licenser within the clause. Section 4 briefly presents a residual morphological problem and section 5 discusses the syntactic properties of n-words. It is argued that n-words are syntactically licensed within a clause which contains a negative marker because they have an uninterpretable [neg] feature which agrees locally with the negative head. Finally section 6 gives a short summary of the paper.

2. *Preliminary Assumptions*

In this paper, I examine some of the consequences of the proposal initially defended in Giannakidou (1998, 2000) for Greek. Giannakidou argues that Greek Polarity Items are to be distinguished into Affective Polarity Items (APIs), which are sensitive to a whole range of licensing contexts, including conditionals, interrogatives and the like; and Negative Polarity Items proper, which are shown to be sensitive only to negative-like contexts. More precisely, APIs are licensed by nonveridical operators. The property of nonveridical operators is that they do not preserve the truth of the proposition they embed. Giannakidou argues that adverbs like *possibly* and modal verbs are typical nonveridical operators. In addition, negation, questions, imperatives, the scope of strong intensional verbs like *want* and *hope*, the restriction of universal quantifiers, among others, form nonveridical environments.

Contrasting with APIs, NPIs are licensed in only a subset of the nonveridical contexts, the antiveridical ones. Antiveridical operators, which form a subclass of the nonveridical operators, entail the falsity of the proposition they embed. Negation and *without* are typical antiveridical operators. So APIs are licensed in all the nonveridical contexts, including the antiveridical ones, whereas NPIs are licensed only in antiveridical contexts. This short summary, which is meant to sketch the theoretical background of assumptions, does not do justice to the complexity of the arguments, and the reader is referred to Giannakidou (1998) for a detailed discussion of the licensing of Polarity Items.

2.1 *Only se-PIs are NPIs*

Hungarian negative words include two morphologically distinct sets of elements, identified in Tóth (1999) as 'NPIs', the *vala*-NPIs, morphologically

built from the prefix *vala* and the quantificational element *ki* (+human), *mi* (-human), etc, and the *se*-NPIs, composed of the prefix *se* and the same quantificational element.

Carrying over the theoretical assumptions laid out in the previous section to these Hungarian negative elements (or NPIs, as), one realises that they match exactly the pattern discussed in Giannakidou for Greek: *vala*-type Polarity Items can be equated with her APIs, as they are licensed in nonveridical contexts, as illustrated in (1), while *se*-type Polarity Items, exemplified in (2), resemble the Greek NPIs. The examples in (1) below show that *vala*-PIs are licensed in interrogative sentences (1a), conditionals (1b), so-called adversative predicates (1c). In addition, they are also licensed in the subclass of nonveridical environments formed by the antiveridical contexts, such as a *without*-clause (1d) and negation (1e).

- (1)a. Lát-ott Éva valaki-t is?
saw-PAS.3S Eva-NOM anyone-ACC
'Did Eva see anyone?'
- b. Ha valami-t is talál-t volna, el hoz-ta volna.
if anything-ACC found-PAS-3S aux-COND part brought-PAS aux-COND
'If she had found anything, she would have brought it.'
- c. Kétl-em, hogy valaki-vel is beszél-t.
doubt-PRES.1S that anybody-INSTR spoke-PAS.3S
'I doubt that she spoke with anybody.'
- d. ...anélkül hogy valami-t is mond-ott volna.
without that anything-ACC say-PAS.3S aux-COND
'...without having said anything.'
- e. Éva nem mond-t-a, hogy Anna lát-ott valaki-t is.
Eva not say-PAS-3S that Anna-NOM see-PAS.3S anybody-ACC
'Eva did not say that Anna saw anybody.'

In contrast, the *se*-PIs are ruled out from most nonveridical contexts. They are excluded from questions, conditionals, or adversative predicates:

- (2)a. *Lát-ott Éva senki-t?
saw-PAS.3S Eva-NOM nobody-ACC.

- b. *Ha semmi-t talál-t volna, el hoz-t-a volna.
 if nothing-ACC find-PAS.3S aux-COND part bring-pas-3s aux-COND
- c. *Kétl-em, hogy senki-vel beszél-t.
 doubt-PRES-1S that nobody-INSTR spoke-PAS.3S

Given this asymmetry in the licensing of *vala-* and *se-*Polarity Items, I conclude that they belong to different categories, in the sense that whereas the *vala-* type of elements are APIs, only the *se-* type are truly NPIs, i.e. *negative* polarity items.

However, in contrast with their Greek counterparts, the Hungarian *se-*NPIs resist licensing in most of the standard antiveridical contexts as well. As illustrated below, the *se-*NPI is ungrammatical in a *without* clause (2d) and in some of the negative contexts (2e):

- (2)d. *...anélkül hogy semmi-t mond-ott volna.
 without that nothing-ACC say-PAS.3S aux-COND
- e. *Éva nem mond-t-a, hogy Anna lát-ott senki-t.
 Eva neg say-PAS-3S that Anna-NOM see-PAS.3S nobody-ACC

It is well-known that the *se-*NPI is only licensed within a clause which contains the negative marker *nem* (see Tóth 1999):

- (3) Éva nem lát-ott senki-t.
 Eva neg see-PAS.3S nobody-ACC
 'Eva didn't see anybody.'

So the semantic licensing seems to tell the two forms apart as API versus NPI. But there is still an even stronger restriction on the NPI, as it can only be licensed by the clause-mate negative marker *nem*. I will propose that this restriction is a syntactic one: the presence of a NegP seems to be crucial in this respect. I assume that, in some sense to be developed in section 5, the *se-*NPI (which I will from now on call an *n-word*) must be syntactically licensed by NegP.

2.2. *Se-PIs (or N-words) are not inherently negative*

I also follow Giannakidou's analysis and conclusions for Greek and assume that the Hungarian n-words identified as the *se*-type in the previous section are not inherently negative. Rather, they are non-negative universally quantified elements which need to be licensed in the appropriate negative context (see Puskás 1999). I claim that the limited distribution of n-words (see (2e) and (3)), as well as the availability of Negative Concord in Hungarian constitute immediate clues as to this assumption.¹ Negative Concord is illustrated in (4) below:

- (4)a. Nem beszél-t Gyuri senki-vel semmi-ről.
neg speak-PAS-3S Gyuri-NOM nobody-INSTR nothing-DELAT
'Gyuri didn't speak with anybody about anything.'
- b. Senki nem lát-ott semmi-t.
nobody-nom neg see-PAS.3S nothing-acc
'Nobody saw anything.'

In the examples above, the n-words do not individually contribute negative force to the sentence. Rather, the interpretation of the sentence is that of a unique sentential negation, to which the various n-words do not seem to add additional negative force. Note that, as in the case of sentences with only one n-word, the presence of the negative marker *nem* is compulsory.

3. *Potential problems*

The assumptions made above, and especially the proposal that Hungarian n-words are not inherently negative, seem to be directly challenged by various other analyses that have been undertaken. Among others, Zanuttini (1991) contends that n-words are indeed universal quantifiers, but that they are negative *per se*. Zanuttini argues that Italian n-words are intrinsically negative on the basis of a number of observations, including on the one hand the

¹ Note that I follow Haegeman (1995)'s distinction with respect to Negative Concord: the relation between a negative head and an n-word is an expression of sentential negation, whereas the relation between several n-words as contributing to one negative meaning is NC.

possibility of having bare negative elements in fragment answers and in co-ordination, and on the other hand the existence of double negation readings involving n-words. The two types of arguments are discussed below.

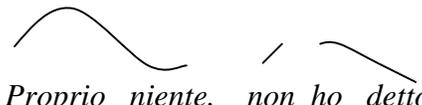
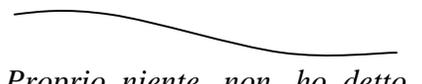
Italian n-words can occur without the negative marker and still convey a negative meaning:

- (5)a. Chi hai visto ? *Nessuno.*
 who have you seen ? Nobody.
 b. Voglio o te o *nessuno.*
 I want either you or noone.

As illustrated in (5), n-words can occur on their own in fragment answers and co-ordination structures. The n-word *nessuno* ('nobody') does not seem to be licensed by an overt negative marker (*non* in Italian) either in (5a) or in (5b). Zanuttini argues that this shows that n-words are intrinsically negative, and do not depend on a negative marker to contribute an independent negative meaning to the sentence.

In Italian, n-words can also contribute to a double negation reading. Note that this is possible only in preverbal contexts, and given some special intonation:

- (6) Proprio niente, non ho detto.
 'I haven't said NOTHING.'
 'I haven't said anything.'

- (7)a. 
 Proprio niente, non ho detto
 b. 
 Proprio niente non ho detto

Zanuttini claims that in (7a), where the negative element *proprio niente* ('nothing at all') appears with a rise-fall intonation contour and is separated from the negative marker by a pause, the double negation reading obtains. In

(7b), when the pause disappears and the sentence has an almost flat intonation, there is no double negation reading: only the negative concord reading is available.

The question has been discussed with respect to Greek (see Giannakidou 2000), and various answers have been proposed. I will in turn consider some of these problems for Hungarian, namely fragment answers, co-ordination /disjunction, and double negation and show how they can be explained under the assumption that Hungarian n-words are not negative.

3.1 *Fragment answers, co-ordination and disjunction*

The objections raised by Giannakidou as to the intrinsic negative component of n-words find extra evidence in Hungarian. Negative fragments answers typically show case morphology:

- (8)a. Ki-t lát-tál ? Senki-t/ *senki.
 who-ACC see-PAS.2S nobody-ACC/nobody-NOM
 ‘Who did you see ? Nobody.’
- b. Ki-vel beszél-t-él ? Senkivel/ *senki
 who-INSTR speak-PAS-2S nobody-INSTR/nobody-NOM
 ‘With who did you speak ? With nobody.’

The n-word in (8a) carries an accusative morpheme, whereas in (8b) it is marked for instrumental. This seems to confirm that these n-words do not appear on their own, but are part of some elided sentence. The structure and the nature of the elided sentence will be discussed below.

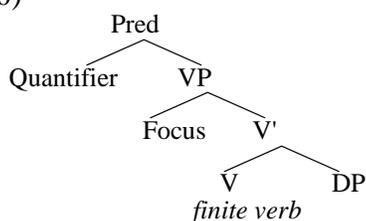
Similarly, I want to argue that co-ordination structures reveal that n-words cannot really appear on their own, and that they must be part of an elided structure. Consider the following example. The first conjunct contains the verb *beszéllek* (‘I speak’) and its instrumental complement *Évával* (‘with Eva’). The second conjunct contains only the instrumental n-word *senkivel* (‘with nobody’).

- (9)a. Vagy Évával beszél-ek vagy senki-vel.
 or Eva-INSTR speak-PRES-1S or nobody-INSTR
 ‘I speak either with Eva or with nobody.’

Despite the apparent lack of negative marker (in the first or in the second conjunct), the n-word is licensed.

As observed by Bánréti (1994), ellipsis in co-ordinated structures exhibits a certain number of properties, and involves sentences with filled operator positions preceding the verb. In other words, verbal ellipsis, that is the elision of material which contains the verb, is possible if the pre-verbal operator positions are filled: "Ellipsis, that is, the omission of the whole projection of V after the filled operator position, spreads to the end of the clause. It has corrective/contrastive intonation because of the focus stress" (1994:359). The 'filled operator positions' Bánréti refers to are the Focus position, which immediately precedes the finite verb, and the Quantified DP position, which itself precedes the Focus position. Below is a schematic representation of these positions, as adapted from Bánréti (1994):²

(10)



I assume that in (9a) *Évával* and *senkivel* occupy the Focus position which precedes the verb.

Bánréti distinguishes two types of ellipsis, namely *forward* ellipsis and *backward* ellipsis. In forward ellipsis, a right branch in the left clause (i.e. first clause) comes under elision. In backward ellipsis, it is a left branch of the right

² Analyses diverge as to the exact structure of a Focus sentence. Bánréti (1994) assumes that focused constituents appear in the specifier of VP, and are hence adjacent to the finite verb in V. Other analyses assign the sentence a structure with a functional projection FP, whose specifier hosts the focused constituent. See also note 5.

clause that undergoes elision, following the directionality constraint as given in Ross (1967).³

Bánréti observes that forward ellipsis needs to respect the directionality constraint (i.e. only a right-branch constituent can be omitted in the left clause). It must, among other things, show syntactic parallelism with the base. On the other hand, backward ellipsis need not respect the directionality constraint. This means that a right branch constituent can be omitted in a right clause. But if it does violate the directionality constraint, ellipsis can only apply to sentences with a filled Focus or Quantifier position. Among other properties, this type of elliptic construction does not require syntactic parallelism of the clauses:

In sentences with filled Quantifier or Focus positions, in backward ellipsis the elided VP or V' need not be syntactically parallel with the overt (explicit) VP or V' of the (complete) base clause. For forward ellipsis, however, such parallelism is a necessary condition. (1994:398).

We will use this approach to ellipsis in our discussion here. I would like to show that the two clauses of the co-ordinate structure in (9a) are not parallel. Given the discussion above, we expect that parallel structures to which we apply forward ellipsis are interchangeable. This is exemplified in (11) below:

- (11)a. János "Marinak adott könyveket, viszont Robert "Erzsinek.
John Mary-to gave books-acc on the other hand Robert Liz-to
'John gave books to MARY, but Robert to LIZ.'
- b. János "Marinak, viszont Robert "Erzsinek adott könyveket.
John Mary-to on the other hand Robert Liz-to gave books-acc
'id.'
- [Bánréti:362]

In the sentences above, the fact that forward ellipsis is possible (in (11b), a right branch constituent, which contains the verb *adott* ('gave') and its complement *könyveket* ('books')) is elided in the left clause) suggests that the two clauses have the same structure.

³ Bánréti refers to the directionality constraint to explain why, in Hungarian neutral sentences, a verb can only be omitted in the second clause and not in the first one: the verb is on a left branch, and hence can only be deleted in a right clause.

Using the same reasoning, we deduce that if the structures of the two clauses in (9a) are parallel (that is, neither of the conjoined clauses contains a negative marker), the prediction is that they should be interchangeable.⁴ Example (12) shows that it is not the case:

- (12) *Vagy senki-vel vagy Évával beszél-e-k.
 or nobody-INSTR or Eva-INSTR speak-PRES-1S

In (12), the elided sequence, which must be parallel to the base clause, includes the verb *beszéllek*. However, as opposed to the examples in (11), the construction with the forward ellipsis is ungrammatical. This confirms that the two conjuncts do not exhibit an exact parallelism.

A reviewer notes that as monotone decreasing quantifiers behave like negatives without being formally licensed by a negative marker, the prediction, if the analysis above is on the right track, is that the first conjunct should be able to contain a monotone decreasing quantifier - like English *few* - while the second conjunct would contain the full base. It turns out that the equivalent Hungarian sentence is totally acceptable:

- (13) Vagy kevés lány-al vagy Évával beszél-e-k.
 or few girl-INSTR or Eva-INSTR speak-PRES-1S
 'Either I speak with few girls, or with Eva.'

So backward ellipsis is fine in this case as the requirement of the parallel structure is met. This corroborates the proposal that the ungrammaticality of (12) is due to the absence of *nem* as a licenser for the n-word. I propose that the

⁴ Note that stripping, in the sense of Neijt 1979 -i.e. an operation which takes everything away but a negated constituent- does not need total parallelism either. However, examples of stripping in Hungarian may not necessary involve a sentential negative marker. Consider the following (from Bánréti 1994):

- (i) Erzsi "angolul tanult, de nem "Londonban.
 Liz English learned but not London-in
 'Liz learned English, but not in London'

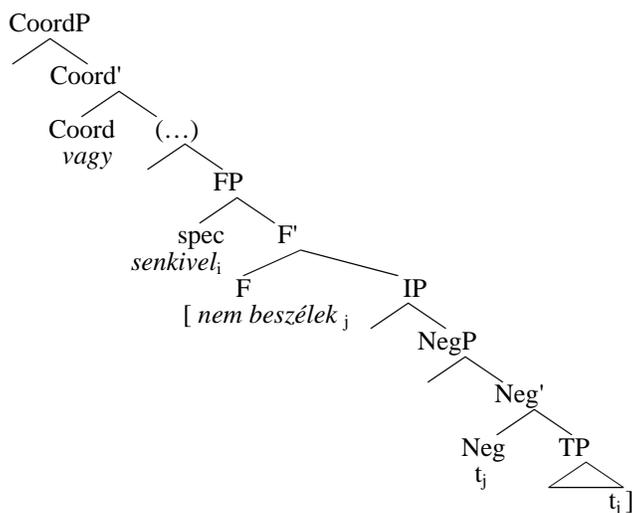
I assume that the parallel negated constituent *nem Londonban* ('not in London') does not involve sentential negation at all. This is a case of constituent negation. Therefore, I will consider the cases under study here as (XP) ellipsis rather than stripping.

structural difference is precisely the presence of a negative head and marker in the second conjunct in (9a): the elided sequence is given between brackets in (14) below:

- (14) Vagy Évával beszélek vagy senki-vel [nem beszélek]
 or Eva-INSTR speak-PRES-1s or nobody-INSTR neg speak-PRES-1s

Leaving aside the discussion of the exact nature of the element in the ellipsis site (see Bánréti 1994), I give a representation of the elided clause:⁵

(9) b.



This ellipsis analysis is easily extensible to fragment answers. The existence of covert structure which contains and licenses the fragment answers

⁵ The exact representation of the co-ordinating structure is irrelevant. I am assuming that the co-ordinating conjunction heads a CoordP whose complement is the co-ordinated phrase (see also e.g. Kayne 1994, as well as Lipták 2001, who proposes that *vagy* is base-generated as the head of a CTopP, a Contrastive Topic Phrase). As for the focused constituent, I adopt the structure proposed in Brody 1990 and developed in more recent work by several authors, a structure which includes a projection FP whose specifier hosts the focused constituent and whose head contains the finite verb. I also assume that the negative marker *nem* is the head of a NegP (see section 5 below).

is also discussed in Wilder (1995), on the basis of the appearance of anaphors and polarity items in the answers. The fact that these elements are licensed suggests that the structure contains a whole sentence into which the element is inserted.

- (15)a. Who did John reward? - Himself.
 b. What did he forget? - To give me any money.

Coming back then to the fragment answer constructions discussed above, I will propose that they also contain a sentential negative marker *nem*, and that the elided constituent contains not only the verb, but also the negative marker attached to it.⁶ The n-word itself appears, as in the case of co-ordinate structures, in the Focus position:

- (16)a. Ki-t lát-tál? Senki-t (nem láttam).
 who-ACC see-PAS-2S Nobody-ACC (neg see-PAS-1S)
 b. [_{FP} Senkit_i [_F ~~nem láttam~~_j [_{IP} [_{NegP} t_j [_{TP} t_j t_i]]]]]

⁶ A reviewer notes that not all cases of fragment answers can be saved by ellipsis. Consider:

(i) Do you know what I want? *Them to be happy.

Although the purpose of this paper is not a discussion of ellipsis as such, it is quite clear that the whole problem deserves more attention. I am only focusing on the licensing of n-words. The same reviewer also notes that Italian, e.g., does not allow fragment answers with restricted negatives. The same is true of Hungarian:

- (ii) Ki-t lát-tál? *Semmilyen diák-ot.
 who-ACC see-PAS-2S ? no student-ACC

Note that the same constraint applies to English:

(iii) Who did you see? Nobody /*No student.

It seems that this ban on restricted n-words is related to the properties of *wh*-questions, rather than of ellipsis as such. Without going into the complexity of the required analysis, it is worth noting that a bare *wh*-word of the kind *who* induces some presupposition of existence. In the light of this observation, we can account for the contrast in the examples above: a bare n-word might then have the property (within its licensed environment) of negating the presupposition of existence, whereas a restricted n-word negates a subset of a pre-existing entity: it breaks down the presupposed entity and operates only on part of it. This is not possible without some predefined specific context.

3.2 *Predicate nominals*

The second problem I would like to examine is that of predicate nominals. Giannakidou (2000) discusses predicate nominal constructions, and recalls that whereas existential quantifiers are licensed in predicate nominal constructions, universal quantifiers are not:

- (17)a. Frank is a friend of mine
- b. *Frank is every friend of mine

Giannakidou shows that Greek n-words pattern with universal quantifiers in that they cannot appear in predicate nominals. This is taken as additional proof of the fact that Greek n-words are universal quantifiers:

- (18) *Dhen ine KANENAS idhikos
 not be.3s any specialist

Similarly, she shows a contrast between Italian, in which the n-word cannot appear as a predicate nominal, and Polish, in which an n-word can. This is evidence for the fact that Italian n-words are also universal quantifiers, whereas, Giannakidou proposes, Polish ones may belong to the class of existentials.⁷

The first observation is that in predicate nominal constructions, Hungarian quantifiers show a distribution which is similar to that observed for other languages: whereas existential quantifiers are licit, universal quantifiers are not:⁸

⁷ Giannakidou also mentions De Swart's (1996) counter-arguments, which suggest that the possibility of appearing in a predicate nominal does not necessarily tie with an existential component.

⁸ I show here, contra Puskás (1999), that universal quantifiers cannot appear in predicate nominals. The choice of the example appears to be crucial: *minden* ('every') seems to have a distribution which overlaps, for some speakers, with that of *every* and *all* in English (thanks to Eszter Varga for this observation). And in English, although *every* cannot usually appear in predicate nominals (modulo special cases, see Partee 1987), *all* seems more flexible:

- (19)a. Gyuri valami író.
 Gyuri-NOM some-NOM writer-NOM
 'Gyuri is some writer.'
- b. *Gyuri minden barát-om.
 Gyuri-NOM every-NOM friend-POSS-NOM

Let us now consider n-words. On the surface, the test cannot apply to Hungarian, mainly because of the structure of predicate nominals. Thus, although a sentence like (19c) is ungrammatical, it might not be for the reasons advocated by Giannakidou:

- (19)c. *Gyuri semmi-féle író.
 Gyuri-NOM no-sort writer-NOM
 (=‘Gyuri is no writer.’)

In Hungarian, as can be seen from other, non-negative and non-quantified examples, predicate nominals do not surface with an overt copula:

- (20)a. Gyuri okos fiú.
 Gyuri-NOM intelligent boy-NOM
 'Gyuri is an intelligent boy.'
- b. Anna Musetta ma.
 Anna-NOM Musetta-NOM today
 'Anna is Musetta today.'

In all these examples, the temporal (and inflectional) material is covert. Note that the recoverability of the semantic content is very restricted. Only third person singular and plural license the covert copula:

- (21)a. A gyerek-ek nagyon csendesek.

(i) These are all the books we have
 Clearly, the distributive property of *every* versus *all*, as well as the restriction on *all the books* (Compare with ' ?These are all the books.') contribute to the distinction. I will not go into further discussion here.

- the children-PLUR-NOM very quiet-PLUR
 'The children are very quiet.'
 b. *Én Musetta ma.
 I-NOM Musetta-NOM today

When the copula has extra inflectional material, such as person, or past tense features, it has to be expressed overtly:

- (22)a. Én Musetta vagyok ma.
 I-NOM Musetta-NOM be-PRES-1S today
 'I am Musetta today.'
 b. Anna Musetta volt
 Anna-NOM Musetta-NOM be-PAS.3S
 'Anna was Musetta.'

Comparing the ungrammatical (19c) above with example (23) below, we note that when the copula is present, as is required in the past tense form, the negative marker *nem* has to be expressed:

- (23) Gyuri semmi-féle író *(nem) volt.
 Gyuri-NOM no-sort writer-NOM neg be-PAS.3S
 'Gyuri was no writer.'

The overt copula forces the negative marker *nem* to surface as well. Therefore, to the extent that the negative marker has to appear on an overt tense marker (see Puskás 2000 for arguments), the presence of an n-word is licensed under the condition that the negative marker is present. This again speaks in favour of a strict licensing of the n-word by the negative marker *nem*.

The licensing context discussed above seems to be challenged by the following data (I. Kenesei, p.c.)

- (24)a. Gyuri micsoda?
 Gyuri-NOM what-nom?
 'What is Gyuri?' (= what is his job?)
 b. Gyuri semmi se.

- Gyuri-NOM nothing-NOM *se*
 'Gyuri is nothing.'
 c. *Gyuri semmi nem.
 Gyuri-NOM nothing-NOM neg

The ungrammaticality of (24c) is easily accounted for, as the negative marker - which is required to license the n-word - needs to appear on an overt tense marker. However, (24b) poses a problem from this point of view. The morpheme *se*, which appears to the right of *semmi* seems to be enough to license the n-word. On the other hand, if it does, this is in strong contradiction with what excluded (24c). One answer to the problem could be that *se-XP-se* sequences form one constituent. In this case, *se* is not a negative marker of the same kind as *nem*. Although the question needs to be elaborated on, I would like to propose that *semmi se* constituents need not be licensed by the negative marker *nem*, as opposed to the bare *semmi* n-words discussed here. Such a proposal could also account for the acceptability of (24d) below:

- (24) d. Gyuri semmi se volt.
 Gyuri-NOM nothing-NOM *se* be-PAS.3S
 'Gyuri was nothing.'

The negative marker *nem* need not be present, as it is not required for the licensing of the negative expression.⁹

Example (23), on the other hand, raises the question of the nature of n-words. I have assumed, following Giannakidou (2000), and on the basis of some of the tests discussed in her work, that Hungarian n-words are universal quantifiers. The licensing of n-words in predicate nominal constructions casts a doubt on this proposal. However, as observed in Puskás (1999), Hungarian n-words exhibit a mixed behaviour with respect to the characteristic properties assigned to universal quantifiers. And, as mentioned in footnote 8 above, the picture of the licensing patterns of universal quantifiers in predicate nominal constructions might be blurred by additional phenomena related to individual

⁹ Some authors (see e.g. É-Kiss 1994) propose that the sequence *se(m) nem* is excluded by a phonological rule of *nem* deletion.

properties of quantifiers. Although this question is of importance, I have to leave it aside in this paper, which focuses on the questions inherent to the negativity of n-words.

3.2. *Double negation*

Another puzzling piece is the fact that although Hungarian has been claimed a ‘strictly’ NC language, there are cases where double negation (DN) readings are possible. One of Giannakidou’s arguments against the inherent negative property of n-words is precisely the absence of DN readings. Consider the following data:

- (25) Senki-vel nem beszél-t-em semmi-ről.
 nobody-INSTR neg speak-PAS-1S nothing-DELAT
 ‘I didn’t speak with anyone about anything.’
 ‘I didn’t speak with anyone about nothing.’ (=DN)

The standard claim is that this sentence is unambiguously NC. A claim which, in normal circumstances, is true. However, as pointed out by Katalin É-Kiss (p.c.), different intonational patterns yield different readings:

- (26) a. 
 senkivel nem beszéltem semmiről
- b. 
 senkivel nem beszéltem semmiről

In the first case, illustrated in (26a), the two n-words get some sort of emphatic stress, possibly similar, and this seems to be a condition on the negative concord reading. Brody (1990) notes that n-words always bear a stress in post-verbal position. On the other hand, the second interpretation is possible if the lower n-word has a flat or slightly fall-rise intonation. The fact that double negation is possible seems to show that Hungarian n-words have some kind of negative component, contrary to what has been assumed above. I will argue that this need not be the case.

The discussion of Double Negation raises two types of issues. The first one is related to the semantic properties of Double Negation constructions. And the second one pertains to their phonological properties. Let us consider each one of them in turn. In Hungarian, DN does not obtain in contexts in which the negative marker is the only expression of sentential negation. In other words, if the sentence contains only one n-word, the DN reading, already marginal for many speakers, becomes impossible to access:

- (27) Nem lát-ta-m semmi-t.
 neg see-PAS-1S nothing-ACC
 'I didn't see anything/*nothing'

Only in the cases exemplified in (25) above is it possible to construct a DN reading. So the DN is, in some way, 'parasitic' on the relation between the negative marker and an n-word. The interpretation of the element contributing to the DN also reveals the parasitic nature of DN. In a sentence containing several n-words, we observe a contrast between the behaviour of n-words in NC and n-words in a DN configuration. N-words which enter into NC can felicitously answer a multiple question. In (28) below, the multiple question bears on both the direct object and the indirect object of the verb *ad* ('give'): ¹⁰

- (28)a. Ki-nek mi-t ad-t-ál?
 who-DAT what-ACC give-PAS-2S
 'What did you give to whom?'
 b. Senki-nek nem ad-t-am 'semmi-t.
 nobody-DAT neg give-PAS-1S nothing-ACC
 'I didn't give anything to anybody.'
 c. Senki-nek semmi-t nem ad-t-am.

¹⁰ The variant which has the two n-words in a reverse order is less acceptable:

- (i) ?Semmi-t nem ad-t-am senki-nek.
 nothing-ACC neg give-PAS-1S nobody-DAT

This restriction is probably due to the scope properties exhibited by the fronted n-words, which require a parallel order in the answer. On scope, ordering and fronted *wh*-phrases, see e.g. É-Kiss (1993). Note that the order in (i) is fine if it is not as answer to the question in (28a).

nobody-DAT nothing-ACC neg give-PAS-1S
'id.'

In such a context, an answer containing an n-word with a DN reading is awkward (the fall-rise intonation is signalled with a \checkmark):

(28)d. #Senkinek nem adtam \checkmark semmit.

On the other hand, the DN reading is most readily available if the question already contains an n-word:

- (29)a. Ki-nek nem ad-t-ál semmi-t?
 who-DAT neg give-PAS-2S nothing-ACC
 To whom did you give nothing?
 b. Senki-nek nem ad-t-am \checkmark semmi-t.

It appears that the n-word which contributes the DN reading has some kind of echoic interpretation. As opposed to n-words in regular sentential negation (in NC) it cannot answer real *wh*-questions, but only echo some previous statement which has already assessed the negativity of this n-word. So the DN n-word does indeed seem to enter into a secondary -or parasitic- predication relation with the predicate/the sentential negation. It is not licensed 'freely'.

The echoic flavour of DN is related to the parasitic nature of the construction on regular sentential negation. Such a dependency is discussed in Ladusaw (1996). Ladusaw argues that negation is a mode of predication. Consider sentence in (30) below:

(30) Nobody talked to John

The negative interpretation consists of the denial of the existence of an event of 'someone talking to John', rather than an interpretation in which the property of having talked to John is denied of *nobody*. Ladusaw argues that this negative interpretation can be expressed through the fact that *nobody*, the subject, is able

to license a negative mode of predication.¹¹ On the other hand, a sentence like (31) below has a negative concord interpretation:

(31) Nobody didn't talk to John

This means that the sentence contains multiple indications that there is a negative mode of predication. In other words, if we interpret this sentence as negative concord, then we do not generate different negative expressors. Simply, "the language cooperates in doubly marking the use of a negative mode of predication" (Ladusaw 1996:143).

Following this line of reasoning, we might say that if there are two true negations expressed in a double negation environment, each instance of a negation should correspond to a mode of predication. In the case of negations with modals, we are forced to interpret the various instances of negation as separate instances of predication. So (32a) must be interpreted as (32b):

- (32)a. He can't not attend the meeting, so I guess he'll have to go
- b. It is not possible that he not attend the meeting
[B.Ladusaw, p.c.]

As becomes clear from (32b), there are two 'propositional objects' in the interpretation of this sentence. This appears in the paraphrase (32b), although it is not transparent from the syntactic structure in (32a).

Ladusaw further proposes that the same can be argued for cases of double negation in standard English as in (33a):

(33)a. John didn't talk to nobody.

The interpretation involves two negative modes of predication. However, given the lack of a modal, the syntactic parallel is not as obvious as in the previous case. We can envisage that the *didn't* expresses the top level predication of the clause; the interpretation of *nobody* as negative will then come from deriving a

¹¹ I leave aside the discussion of how a non-negative quantifier is able to perform this licensing. The reader is referred to Ladusaw (1996) for a more complete discussion.

VP with an additional predication in it. The meaning of the sentence is that there is:

- a) a denial of the existence of an eventuality of talking to somebody, and that
- b) the existence of an instance of the eventuality of John performing a) is denied. Thus the interpretation can be paraphrased somehow as in (33b) below:

(33)b. John did not do the act of talking to nobody.

So double negation readings appear as constructed on top of a primary negative mode of predication: they seem to be licensed only as a phenomenon dependent on sentential negation.

The second point is the intonational pattern associated with Double Negation. It is quite clear that the DN reading is somehow an unnatural reading. As was discussed above, it always comes with a special intonation, which suggests that there is some sort of 'contrastive' phenomenon going on. A reviewer notes that an n-word can also yield a DN reading in a preverbal position if it is pronounced "with a contrastive intonation". This is illustrated in (34) below:

(34) · √ Semmiről 'nem beszéltem 'senkivel.

The "contrastive intonation" is the fall-rise intonation, which is similar to the post-verbal fall-rise pattern. The n-word appears in a sentence-initial contrastive topic position, which dominates the preverbal Focus position (on contrastive topics, see Szabolcsi 1981, Kenesei et al. 1998, Lipták 2001). Whether in post-verbal or in pre-verbal position, the contrastive intonation associated with the DN reading corresponds to an echoic answer to some previous statement, or is meant to suggest that something else still needs to be stated.¹²

Double Negation thus appears to be correlated to two distinct properties. It is the result of some parasitic secondary predication relation building on the sentential negation. And it is phonologically signalled with some contrastive

¹² Similarly, Vinet (1998) observes that in French, "a contrastive context of repair with the same negative terms infers automatically a DN reading" (1998:123).

intonation. I will propose that these two phenomena are linked to the semantic and syntactic properties of DN readings.

If DN readings are somehow parasitic on sentential negation, they are conveyed by n-words which are not licensed as such by the negative marker *nem*. This indeed would make them absolutely indistinguishable from n-words entering into NC. The question which arises is that of the licensing of such n-words, under the present assumption that they are not intrinsically negative. Therefore, in order to convey a negative meaning distinct from that of the negative marker, an n-word needs another licenser. I will propose that the licenser is a secondary negative operator. It is secondary, because it is itself somehow dependent on the existence of a previous sentential negation marker, and it is an operator which will license n-words in a 'chain' distinct from that of the sentential negative marker.¹³ This operator is silent in Hungarian.

However, as we have noticed, not any n-word in the sentence can yield a DN reading. The surface manifestation, aside from the interpretation itself, is the intonation. So although the secondary operator is itself silent, the fact that it licenses an n-word is signalled by a stress. The exact stress assignment mechanism is not altogether clear, but I will propose that it is a surface signal of the secondary negative licensing present in Double Negation. The position of the operator in question has yet to be specified, but minimally, it seems reasonable to assume that this operator c-commands the n-word it licenses. Recall that the configurations in which DN readings obtain are either when the relevant n-word appears post-verbally, or when it appears in the Contrastive Topic position. It is also well-known that universal quantifiers can appear pre-verbally in a Contrastive Topic position, but that they cannot have wide scope. The occurrence of the DN n-word in such a position suggests that it has to be within the scope of a lower operator. Note that the double negation reading does not obtain if the second n-word appears in a preverbal position which is not assigned contrastive stress:

- (35) Senki-vel semmi-ről nem beszél-t-em.
nobody-INSTR nothing-DELAT neg speak-PAS-1S

¹³ By 'chain', I do not necessarily imply anything like a syntactic chain, but rather a network of semantic relation, a licensing context.

'I didn't speak about anything with anyone'
* 'I didn't speak about anything with nobody.'

In addition, since DN is parasitic on sentential negation, it also seems reasonable to assume that its presence is linked to the presence of the negative marker which is the head of NegP. I will therefore propose that this negative operator is syntactically linked to NegP.¹⁴ The presence of the covert secondary negative operator is not straightforwardly deducible, since it is not visible. However, additional evidence for the requirement that a negative operator bind independently the n-word entering into DN can be found in French, another NC language. Consider the following pair:

- (36)a. Je n'ai vu personne
I ne-have seen nobody
'I haven't seen anybody.'
b. Je n'ai **pas** vu personne.
I ne-have *pas* seen nobody
'I haven't seen nobody.' (=DN)

As mentioned above (see footnote 12), the DN reading in (36b) is not just an accidental alternative to the NC reading: it is signalled by stress. But in addition, the marker *pas* is present. Compare with (36a). Even if the n-word *personne* ('nobody') was stressed, the DN reading would not obtain. Similarly, the proposed n-word with a DN reading is also signalled by a stress. In (37) below, the DN n-word appears in a cleft construction and receives contrastive stress:

- (37) Ce n'est pas **PERSONNE** qu'elle cherche, c'est son mari.
'It is not nobody that she is looking for, it's her husband.'
[Vinet 1998:129]

¹⁴ Whether the negative operator is in spec NegP or in some adjoined position remains to be examined. This is left for future research.

Semantically, double negation can be argued to express two independent negative predication relations in all languages. The underlying syntactic structure, on the other hand, may not be identical. This is obviously due to the nature of the n-words the language has. As Hungarian n-words are not intrinsically negative, they need a semantic licenser. But again, because of the properties of the n-word, I claim that they also need to be syntactically licensed. Therefore, a secondary negative predication needs to be syntactically licensed as well. I propose that the secondary licenser is a null operator which is itself dependent on the sentential negation marker.

4. *The morphology of Hungarian n-words*

In section 3, we have discussed potential problems for a non-negative treatment of n-words and we have seen that they can be accounted for. But we are left with one residual puzzling fact. The paradigm of n-words patterns nicely with other quantifiers, but exhibits a characteristic *se-* morphology:

(38)a.	vala-ki	minden-ki	sen-ki
	‘somebody’	‘everybody’	‘nobody’
b.	vala-mi	minden	sem-mi
	‘something’	‘everything’	‘nothing’
c.	vala-hol	minden-hol	se-hol
	‘somewhere’	‘everywhere’	‘nowhere’
d.	vala-hova	minden-hova	se-hova
	‘(to) somewhere’	‘(to) everywhere’	‘(to) nowhere’
e.	vala-mi-ért	minden-ért	sem-mi-ért
	‘for some reason’	‘for every reason’	‘for no reason’

The paradigm shows that quantificational elements have the same morphological make-up. Existentials are composed of the morpheme *ki* for person, *mi* for thing, *hol* for place, etc, with the morpheme *vala*. Similarly, universals take the same bare quantificational elements *ki*, *mi*, etc with the morpheme *minden*; n-words again result from the combination of the bare quantificational morphemes and the identical morpheme *se(m)*. Thus, it seems

that the morphology reflects some property of these n-words. Given these data, we might wonder whether this morpheme *se* could be a morphological sign of negativity

As it was pointed out, Hungarian n-words have the property of being licensed only by the negative marker *nem*, and only in a strictly local domain. Recall that as opposed to Greek n-words (emphatics), they are not even licensed in a *without*-clause. I will propose that the negative morphology is related to the fact that these n-words are negative-sensitive *stricto sensu*. This restriction can be taken as a syntactic restriction (as a semantic restriction, it does not seem to be justified). This syntactic dependency is developed in the following section.

5. *The Syntax of n-words*

As it was discussed in the previous sections, Hungarian n-words are not inherently negative. From that point of view, they behave like polarity items. On the other hand, they cannot appear outside a clause which contains a negative marker. From this respect, they differ from their Greek counterparts. They are not only semantically, but also syntactically dependent on a negative marker.

I will propose that Hungarian n-words have an uninterpretable neg-feature. Crucially, uninterpretable features get marked for deletion when they reach the C-I interface. Therefore, this is consistent with the observation that n-words do not contribute as individual negative elements to the *semantics* of sentential negation, while they display syntactic properties which require a relation with Neg.

Following the framework of Chomsky (1998), I assume that syntactic dependency is established by a mechanism which is distinct from movement. The Agree relation can hold independently of movement. In order for a syntactic object to agree, it must bear an uninterpretable feature which makes it active. An n-word bears an uninterpretable [neg] feature, hence it is active, that is, available for Agree. The agreement relation is established with Neg⁰, the head with which it shares a [+neg] feature. Thus the syntactic dependency is triggered by the requirements of the uninterpretable [neg] feature on the n-word, and obtains through the operation Agree.

With this proposal in mind, let us come back to some of the main properties of n-words. Recall that n-words need to stand in a strictly local relation with the negative marker *nem* (see e.g. Tóth 1999):

- (39) *Pál nem mond-t-a, hogy Éva lát-ott senki-t.
 Pal-NOM neg say-PAS-3S that Eva-NOM see-PAS.3S nobody-ACC

The locality requirement on the licensing can be accounted for in the following way. The checking of the [neg] feature obtains through Agree, an operation which I assume to be strictly local (see e.g. Adger and Ramchand 2001). In a multi-clausal structure, if the Neg⁰ head is merged in the lower clause, the [neg] feature on the n-word enters into Agree within the phase, is checked locally and marked for deletion. If there is no Neg head, I assume the [neg] feature cannot enter into an Agree relation in another clause: in the absence of another feature which triggers movement, the derivation crashes.

Therefore, non-local relations can only be of a Move type. I would like to propose that the Move operation of Hungarian n-words is not motivated by the checking of the [neg] feature. As opposed to the obligatory preposing of *wh*-phrases, for example, the movement of n-words to a pre-verbal position is optional. In other words, they can appear overtly in a 'high' scope position, or not:

- (40)a. Senki-vel nem beszél-t a vendég.
 nobody-INSTR neg speak-PAS.3S the guest-NOM
 'The guest didn't talk with anybody.'
 b. Nem beszél-t a vendég 'senki-vel.
 neg speak-PAS.3S the guest-NOM nobody-INSTR
 'id.'

In (40a), the n-word *senkivel* ('with nobody') appears in the preverbal scope domain (see Olsvay 2000, Puskás 2000,). In (40b), the same n-word appears in a post-verbal position. Although the interpretation may differ, both orders are grammatical (on word order and scope properties of quantifiers, see e.g. Brody and Szabolcsi 2001). Similarly, binding relations show that n-words can reach their scope position either before Spellout or at LF:

- (41)a. *Senki_i nem volt büszke semelyik könyv-é-re_i.*
 nobody-NOM neg be-PAS.3S proud no book-POSS-SUBL
 'Nobody was proud of any of his books.'
- b. *Senki_i semelyik könyv-é-re_i nem volt büszke.*
 nobody-NOM no book-POSS-SUBL neg be-PAS.3S proud
 'id.'
- c. *Semelyik könyv-é-re_i nem volt büszke 'senki_i.*
 no book-POSS-SUBL neg be-PAS.3S proud nobody-NOM
 'Nobody was proud of any of his books.'

In (41a), *semelyik könyvére* ('on no book of his') is c-commanded by *senki* ('nobody'), its antecedent. Whereas in (41b), both n-words appear in the preverbal operator/scope domain, (41c) shows a case of inverse scope, where the antecedent does not c-command the pronominal n-phrase overtly. The above facts show that movement of an n-phrase is motivated by some sort of scope requirement. I would like to propose that, Move being distinct from Agree, Move is motivated by the overt checking of a feature distinct from the one which triggers Agree, namely [neg]. I have proposed in earlier work that this feature is [+focus]. Although I have no reasonable alternative to this claim for the moment (see Olsvay 2000, and Surányi 2001 for an alternative proposal), one might consider the possibility of some [+q(uantificational)] feature.¹⁵ Whatever the feature we identify as triggering Move, it is different from the feature which triggers the local Agree. That overt movement is

¹⁵ Note that some n-words in the preverbal field (or scope field) can precede focused constituents:

- (i) *Senki-t se/nem ANNA hív-ott meg.*
 nobody-ACC se/neg Anna-NOM call-PAST.3S part.
 'ANNA didn't invite anybody'.

This could be taken as evidence that n-words do not appear in the Focus position. However, the distribution of n-words without the *se* is different.

- (ii) **Senki-t ANNA nem hív-ott meg.* .
 nobody-ACC Anna-NOM neg call-PAST.3S part.

I have not considered *senki se* n-words in this paper, and it might be that they are different from bare n-words (see also the discussion of examples (37) in the text).

triggered by a mechanism different from the one which checks the (local) [neg] feature relation is attested by the following:

- (42)a. *Nem mond-t-am semmi-t_i, hogy el-felejt-et-tem t_i.
 neg say-PAS-1S nothing-ACC, that part-forget-PAS-1S
- b. Semmi-t_i nem mond-t-am, hogy el-felejt-et-tem t_i.
 nothing-ACC neg say-PAS-1S that part-forget-PAS-1S
 'I didn't say that I forgot anything'
 (=there is nothing that I said I forgot)
- c. *Nem mond-t-am, hogy semmi-t_i felejt-et-tem el t_i
 neg say-PAS-1S, that nothing-ACC forget-PAS-1S part

In (42a), the higher clause contains a negative marker which carries the [neg] feature entering into an Agree relation with an n-word in the local domain.¹⁶ However, (42a) is ruled out because the n-word is not licensed in a post-verbal position, as the relevant feature (+f or +q), which triggers Move, is a feature which needs to be checked in the preverbal operator/scope domain. This is illustrated in (42b). Example (42c) shows that the [+f/+q] feature could not be checked in the Focus or scope position of the lower clause, as, in the absence of a negative head, the [neg] feature is not checked. Scope/focus features need somehow to be visible at LF, and stripping them off before further movement seems to render them totally invisible.

I propose that the movement of n-words is motivated by scope/focus requirements, that is by the checking of a feature which is not related to the negative component. N-words thus come with a bundle of features, which enable them to enter into different relations with different heads.

7. *Conclusion*

The goal of this talk was to explore the consequences of the idea that Hungarian n-words are universal quantifiers which are not inherently negative.

¹⁶ The definition of local domain is far from straightforward. Since NegP and its head are involved in the Agree relation, one would minimally expect NegP to be part of this domain. I assume that NegP dominated TP, and is the highest 'extended verb projection' in the clause (see Puskás 2000 for arguments). If TP delimits the predicational domain and CP the propositional domain, one could consider that in fact, the domain delimitation extends to NegP.

I have examined various questions raised by this assumption, namely the problems of fragment answer, negative predicate nominals and double negation. I have shown that all these facts can be accounted for under an analysis which involves covert licensing material for which there is evidence from the case system, the inflection system, the recoverability restrictions on elided material as well as semantic and phonological reflexes.

As n-words are argued to be non-negative, the major question is the locality restriction on their licensing. I have proposed an analysis in terms of uninterpretable feature, following the notion, introduced in Chomsky (1998), that the mechanisms which trigger Agree and Move are dissociated. Therefore, I propose that whereas the licensing of n-words is a matter of -local- Agree, the presence of n-words in sentence-initial positions is attributable to an instance of Move, triggered by a different feature. This enables to explain the two syntactic properties without having to resort to multiple Neg positions.

This proposal solves the problem of the multiple surface positions of n-words in Hungarian, a problem raised by the application of the Neg-criterion to n-words in Hungarian. To the extent that n-words are not intrinsically negative, the Neg-criterion appears to have no useful role to play in the licensing of Hungarian n-words.

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