
Configurations of negative coordination

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Many languages make use of special coordination markers in negative contexts, such as (*neither...nor*) in English: *I have **neither** read the book **nor** seen the film*. The main question is whether they should be analyzed as conjunctions that scope over negation or as disjunctions in the scope of negation (Gonzalez & Demirdache 2015, Wurmbrand 2008, inter alia). I argue that both configurations are indeed attested in natural languages and that this is directly related to the Negative Concord (NC) status of a given language. Using data from English, Serbo-Croatian and French, I defend the claim that negative coordination markers in Double Negation languages are inherently negative and, in fact, represent the overt realization of the semantic operator, as the presence of subject-auxiliary inversion suggests. Although conjunction-based, they themselves do not represent the spell-out of the logical connective. In NC languages, the negative coordination markers are not inherently negative, including the peculiar case of French. This raises the issue of the mapping between the morphological forms and their interpretation, since languages have a choice between the overt realization of as many negative coordination markers as there are members of the coordination, or, alternatively, realizing only the marker on the last member. I show that this can only be handled under a disjunction-based analysis for negative coordination in NC languages, where the actual logical connective is not overtly realized in any of the occurrences of the marker (*ni*, in French and Serbo-Croatian), since it could not maintain its usual lexical entry. They represent non-*wh*-based neg-words, whose uninterpretable features must be checked by a c-commanding silent negative operator (Zeijlstra 2004).

References: • Gonzalez, A. and H. Demirdache (2015): Negative Coordination: *ni* vs. *ni...ni* in French. LSRL 44 Proceedings. • Wurmbrand, S. (2008): Nor: neither disjunction nor paradox. *Linguistic Inquiry* 39. 511-522 • Zeijlstra, H. (2004): Sentential Negation and Negative Concord. PhD Thesis, University of Amsterdam.