

The interpretation of French embedded *non*: preserving scope-relations

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INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of the Polar Response Particle *non* depends not only on the polarity of the utterance it responds to, but also on the scope of negation w.r.t other Scope-Bearing (SB) operators in it

PUZZLE

- In response to the negative question (1A), the *non* response (1B) asserts its antecedent without further negating it (*non_{agree}* in Roelofsen & Farkas 2014's terminology)

(1) A: Est-ce qu' Éva n' est pas là du tout ?

Q Éva NEG is NEG there at all

Is Eva not there at all? ($\neg p$)

B: Je crois que non.

I think that no

non_{agree}: I think that she is not there at all. ($\neg p$)

%*non_{rev}*: I think that \neg (she is not there at all). ($\neg\neg p$)

- In contrast, the response to the negative question (2A) only has the reversal reading (*non_{rev}* in Roelofsen & Farkas 2014)

(2) A: Est-ce qu' Éva n' est souvent pas là du tout ?

Q Éva NEG is often NEG there at all

Is Éva often not there at all? (svt \neg)

B: Je crois que non.

**non_{agree}*: I think that she is often not there at all. (svt \neg)

non_{rev}: I think that \neg (she is often not there at all). (\neg (svt \neg))

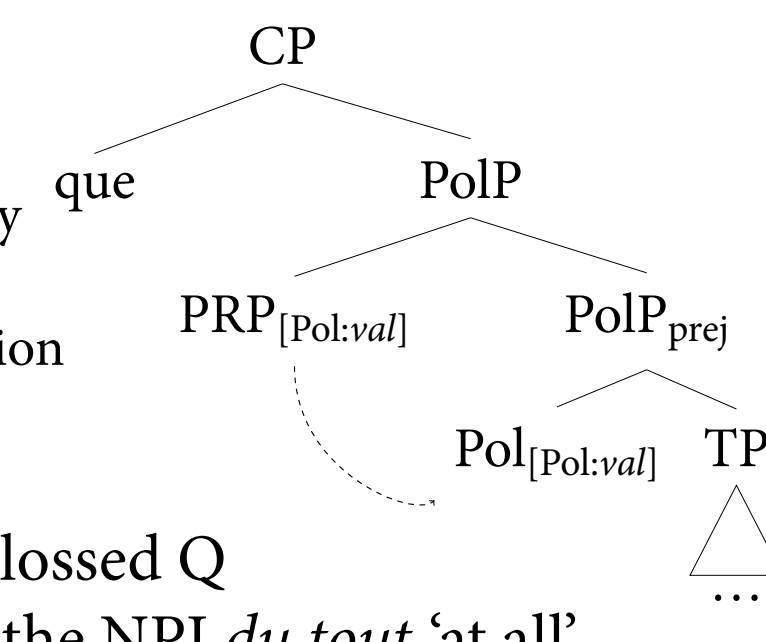
- Effect is reported in Brasoveanu et al. 2013 for English

- Why can *non_{agree}* be used in (1) but not in (2)?

BACKGROUND AND ASSUMPTIONS

- About polar responses:

- European French has 3 Polar Response Particles: *oui*, *non*, *si*
- Focus on embedded bare *non* in this poster (also clause-peripheral *non* and emphasized *NON* with descending-rising tones)
- Following Pasquereau 2018, I assume that embedded bare *non*:
 - spells out a negative Pol head with interpretable polarity feature valued negatively
 - takes an elided PolP as its complement
 - PolP, the antecedent, is copied from the question



- About questions:

- I only look at questions with *est-ce que* glossed Q
- I control for the height of negation with the NPI *du tout* 'at all'
- Q takes a PolP as its complement, which is the 'antecedent' of PRPs

SKETCH OF THE ANALYTICAL PROPOSAL

- Generalization: at LF, if negation is the outermost scope-bearing operator in the preadjacent of embedded *non*, *non* does not contribute (additional) semantic negation (3a), otherwise it does (3b).

(3) (a) $\llbracket \text{que } non \llbracket_{prej} NEG (\exists/\forall) p \rrbracket \rrbracket = \neg(\exists/\forall)p$
(b) $\llbracket \text{que } non \llbracket_{prej} \exists/\forall NEG p \rrbracket \rrbracket = \neg\exists/\forall\neg p$

- Key idea: *non* cancels clausal negation in its scope (*non_{agree}*) unless doing so would change the scope relations in it (*non_{reversal}*)

- I explore an analysis with just one embedded *non* and review some challenges for it

REFERENCES

Brasoveanu, Farkas, Roelofsen. 2013. N-words and sentential negation: Evidence from polarity particles and VP ellipsis. Fălăuş & Nicolae 2016. Fragment answers and double negation in strict negative concord languages. Holmberg 2013. The syntax of answers to polar questions in English and Swedish. Pasquereau 2018. Responding to Questions and Assertions: embedded Polar Response Particles, ellipsis, and contrast. Roelofsen & Farkas 2014. Polar Particle responses as a window onto the interpretation of questions and assertions. Zeijlstra 2004. Sentential negation and negative concord.

EMPIRICAL LANDSCAPE

NON RESPONSE TO POSITIVE QUESTIONS

- In response to a positive question, only *non_{rev}* can be used

(4) A: Est-ce qu' Éva est (souvent) là ?

Q Éva is (often) there

Is Éva (often) there?

B: Je crois que non.

non_{agree}: not applicable

non_{rev}: I believe that \neg (she is (often) there).

- Generalization: the antecedent PolP of *non* does not contain a negation, so *non* contributes one

NEG-RAISING: SYNTACTIC NEGATION MATTERS

- In the neg-raising construction (5), negation has syntactic scope over *vouloir* 'want' but semantic scope under it

(5) Est -ce qu' elle ne veut pas commencer du tout ?

is it that she NEG want NEG start at all

Does she not want to start at all? (\neg want)

a. LF: [Q [NEG [elle veut commencer]]]

b. $\llbracket Q \rrbracket = \{ \forall w' \in \text{BOUL}_{w,x} \neg x \text{ starts}_{w'} \}$, $\forall w' \in \text{BOUL}_{w,x} x \text{ starts}_{w'} \}$

- If syntactic neg matters, *non* is expected to mean *she wants not to come* (excluded-middle presupposition)
- If semantic neg matters, *non* is expected to mean *it is not the case that she wants not to come*

(6) Je crois que non.

LF neg: I think that she wants not to

*sem neg: I think that \neg (she wants not to)

- Generalization: syntactic negation (at LF) matters

NON RESPONSE TO (LOW) NEGATIVE QUESTIONS

- If a SB op. – e.g. the PPI *quelqu'un* 'someone' – scopes above negation, only *non_{rev}* can be used

(7) A: Est-ce que quelqu'un n' a pas commencé du tout ?

Q someone NEG has NEG started at all

Has someone not started at all? ($\exists\neg$)

B: Je crois que non.

**non_{agree}*: I think that someone has not started at all. ($\exists\neg$)

non_{rev}: I think that everyone has started. ($\neg\exists\neg = \forall$)

- If an SB op. – e.g. the N-word *personne* 'no one' – scopes below negation, *non_{agree}* is used

(8) A: Est-ce que personne n' a commencé du tout ?

Q nobody NEG has started at all

Has no one started at all? ($\neg\exists$)

B: Je crois que non.

non_{agree}: I think that no one has started at all. ($\neg\exists$)

%*non_{rev}*: I think that everyone has started. ($\neg\neg\exists$)

- It does not matter what syntactic category or role the SB op. is – e.g. verbs: when $\text{NEG} \gg \text{être obligé}$ 'must', *non_{agree}* must be used, but if $\text{être obligé} \gg \text{NEG}$, *non_{rev}* is

(9) A: Est-ce qu' Éva n' est pas obligée d' être là du tout ?

Q Éva NEG is NEG obliged to be there at all

Does Éva not have to be there at all? (\neg must)

B: Je crois que non.

non_{agree}: I think that Éva doesn't have to be there at all.

%*non_{rev}*: I think that \neg (Éva doesn't have to be there at all).

ANALYTICAL PROPOSAL

ANALYSIS I (SHORT VERSION)

- This analysis is adapted from Holmberg 2013
- There is only one embedded *non* and it is subject to 2 conditions

(10) a. A constituent of $\llbracket \text{non } XP_{prej} \rrbracket$ must be identical to $\llbracket \text{PolP}_{ant} \rrbracket$
b. LFs in which *non* establishes concord are preferred.

- NEG is the outermost SB op – e.g. (1) derived in (11) \rightarrow *non_{agree}*
 - The $\llbracket \text{PolP} \rrbracket$ in A is copied next to *non* with a uPol (B1) or iPol (B2). (as long as meaning identity holds (Johnson 2001).)
 - non* assigns negative value to the lower uPol (Zeijlstra 2004)
 - Since the lower Pol is unint. (B1), it is deleted,
 - The only constituent that is identical to the PolP in the question is the (remaining) $\llbracket \text{PolP} \rrbracket$ in the LF of B1, or the smallest PolP in B2

(11) A: Est-ce qu' $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{Pol}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } \text{Éva est là du tout } \rrbracket \rrbracket$?

B1: ... que $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{non}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } \text{Éva est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket$.

$\llbracket \text{B1} \rrbracket$ = I believe that \neg (Éva is there).

%B2: que $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{NON}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{Pol}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } \text{Éva est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$.

$\llbracket \text{B2} \rrbracket$ = I believe that $\neg\neg$ (Éva is there).

- NEG is not the outermost SB op – e.g. (12), \rightarrow *non_{rev}*
 - No PolP in B1 satisfies the identity condition. Therefore, to satisfy identity, concord must not occur. Only B2 is a satisfactory structure.

(12) A: Est-ce que $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{qqn}_i \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{Pol}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } t_i \text{ est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$?

*B1: $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{non}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{qqn}_i \llbracket \text{TP } t_i \text{ est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$.

B2: $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{non}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{qqn}_i \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{Pol}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } t_i \text{ est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$.

$\llbracket \text{B2} \rrbracket$ = I believe that $\neg(\exists x \neg(x \text{ is there}))$

CHALLENGES FOR THIS ANALYSIS

- It requires adverbs to raise to take scope
- Even assuming that adverbs do raise at LF, this analysis makes a false prediction
- Negative questions with PPI non-quantificational *toujours* 'still'

(13) Est-ce qu'Éva n'est toujours pas là? (Homer p.c.) ($\text{still}\neg$)

B: Je crois que non.

non_{agree}: I think that Éva is still not there ($\text{still}\neg$)

**non_{rev}*: I think that \neg (Éva is still not there) ($\neg\text{still}\neg$)

- Analysis I incorrectly predicts *non_{rev}* must be used

(14) A: Est-ce que $\llbracket \text{PolP } t_{js_i} \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{Pol}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } \text{Éva } t_i \text{ est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$?

*B1: $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{non}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{PolP } t_{js_i} \llbracket \text{TP } t_i \text{ est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$.

B2: $\llbracket \text{PolP } \text{non}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{PolP } t_{js_i} \llbracket \text{PolP } \text{Pol}_{i\text{Pol:neg}} \llbracket \text{TP } t_i \text{ est là } \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket \rrbracket$.

$\llbracket \text{B2} \rrbracket$ = I believe that \neg (Éva is still not there)

TOWARDS ANALYSIS II

- toujours* 'still' does not intervene in negative concord because its scope w.r.t. NEG does not create a truth-conditional ambiguity
- All and only quantificational elements intervene

(15) (a) $\llbracket \text{que } non \llbracket_{prej} NEG (\exists/\forall) p \rrbracket \rrbracket = \neg(\exists)p$

(b) $\llbracket \text{que } non \llbracket_{prej} \exists/\forall NEG p \rrbracket \rrbracket = \neg\exists\neg p$

- Challenge: *non* response to focused/clefted neg. questions

RELATED PHENOMENA

- Three phenomena seem amenable to the same generalization

JE CROIS PAS/I DON'T THINK SO

- Je crois pas* 'I don't think so' in (16) can be used to agree with the bias of the question

(16) A: Est-ce qu' Éva n' a pas terminé ? B: Je crois pas

Q Éva NEG has NEG finished I think NEG

Has Éva not finished? B: I don't think so.

a. agree: I think she has not finished.

b. reversal: I think she has finished.

- If the subject is a SB op, *I don't think so* cannot agree

(17) A: Est-ce que qqn n' a pas terminé ? B: Je crois pas

Q so NEG has NEG finished I think NEG

Has someone not finished? B: I don't think so.

a. *agree: I think someone has not finished.

b. reversal: I don't think someone has not finished.

N-WORDS AS FRAGMENTS ANSWERS

- N-word fragment answers to neg. Q only do reversal (Espinal & Tubau 2016, Fălăuş & Nicolae 2016)

(18) A: Qui n' est pas venu ? B: Personne.

who NEG is NEG come nobody

Who didn't come? Nobody.

a. agree: *Nobody came.

b. reversal: Nobody didn't come.

- This follows from our generalization under the assumption that the LF of B is $\neg\exists x\{\neg(x \text{ came})\}$ and \exists prevents concord

Q-TAGS IN ENGLISH

- Generalization: the tag must have opposite polarity to the preceding sentence (19a)
- The adverb *often* makes the sentence less negative (19b) if the generalization is correct

(19) a. By the way, John doesn't pay taxes, does he?

b? By the way, John often doesn't pay taxes, does he?

CONCLUSION

- The embedded PRP *non* is always *non_{agree}* if the highest SB op. in its (elided) preadjacent is neg, otherwise it is *non_{rev}*
- This generalization seems to target a larger set of phenomena

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