

English Negative Concord and Double Negation in the Framework of Collins and Postal (2014)

This paper addresses three English sentence types: Negative Concord (NC) constructions, Double Negation (DN) constructions, and constructions with Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). The three types are exemplified here (with **negatives** in bold and NPIs underlined):

- (1) John didn't paint the house with **no brush**. (NC)
'It is not the case that John used a brush to paint the house.' (He painted it with a spray can.)
- (2) John didn't paint the house with **no windows**. (DN)
'It is not the case that John painted the house that doesn't have windows.'
- (3) John didn't paint any houses except the blue one. (NPI)
'John painted no houses except the blue one.'

The NC sentence in (1) has two syntactic negations but only one semantic negation. Sentence two is nearly string-identical to (1), but each syntactic negation contributes to the semantics, yielding a DN interpretation. The sentence in (3) contains a negative marker and the NPI 'any houses', and like the NC sentence in (1), the meaning of (3) has a single negation.

NC sentences like (1) are a puzzle assuming the principle of compositionality, under which each part of a sentence contributes to its meaning. If there are two negations in (1), then why does the sentence's meaning have only one negation? Zeijlstra (2004) proposes a solution in which sentences like (1) and (2) are generated by two different grammars, hypothesizing that UG has NC grammars and DN grammars. This paper offers an alternative view that accounts for the coexistence of the sentence types in (1) through (3). Using data from the *Audio-Aligned and Parsed Corpus of Appalachian English* (AAPCAppE; Tortora et al. In Progress), I show that speakers who use NC also use DN and NPI constructions, and articulate a model in which the three sentence types are generated by the same grammar. This model is built on the theory of NPIs put forth in Postal (2005) and extended in Collins and Postal (C&P; 2014).

Postal (2005) asserts that 'any X' NPIs come in two forms, unary NEG and binary NEG:

- (4) Unary NEG NPI: [DP [D NEG SOME] X]
- (5) Binary NEG NPI: [DP [D NEG [D NEG SOME]] X]

C&P (2014) further propose that Unary NEG NPIs are equivalent to strict or strong NPIs in the sense of Zwart (1998). Binary NEG NPIs can appear in non-negative contexts including interrogatives and conditionals.

Postal (2005) proposes a structure for unary NEG NPI constructions in which the negation is contributed by the unary NEG NPI, and raises in the syntax, as follows:

- (6a) Base: [...[z...[Q NEGx + Y]...]] (e.g. 'I ate nothing.')
- (6b) Raised: [...[z... NEGx... [Q Y]...]] (e.g. 'I didn't eat anything.')

C&P (2014:21) propose a set of morpho-phonological mapping rules to derive the correct surface patterns for sentences with unary NEG 'any X' NPIs:

- (7) SOME → 'any' Mapping:
 - a. SOME → *any*, in the context [<NEG> __] (NEG unpronounced)
 - b. SOME → null, in the context [NEG __] (NEG pronounced)

The rule in (7a) states that when NEG raises from the unary NEG DP, abstract SOME maps to 'any', and the NEG is unpronounced in its base position. (7b) states that when NEG does not raise, SOME is unpronounced, and NEG is pronounced.

In this paper I show that the AAPCAppE contains NC, DN, and NPI constructions with 'any X' forms. The following sentences illustrate how NC and 'any X' NPI constructions can have similar distribution:

- (8) I didn't have **no lice**, and I didn't have any itch.
 'I didn't have any lice, and I didn't have any itch. (AAPCAppE: SKCTC-EA)

In prototypical binary NEG contexts such as interrogatives, only the 'any X' form yields the correct (non-negative) meaning:

- (9) Have you ever tasted any quinine? (AAPCAppE; AOHP-ASU-MMH-WH)

On the basis of facts such as these, I assume that in the Englishes represented in the AAPCAppE, 'no X' constituents have the unary NEG structure in (4), whereas 'any X' constituents may have either unary or binary NEG structures. In NC constructions with a negative marker and a negative object (e.g. (1) and the first conjunct in (8); Den Besten's (1986) NC proper), I hypothesize that the negative marker has raised from a unary NEG constituent as in (6b), and that the lower negation spells out as a resumptive NEG, in a fashion similar to Collins et al.'s (2015) analysis of NPI constructions in Ewe. This resumption blocks the SOME to 'any' mapping rule in (7a). In sum, I propose a theory in which NC proper involves syntactic NEG raising and resumption. The structure for a sentence like (8) would be roughly as follows:

- (10) I didNEG₁ have [NEG₁ SOME lice]_k
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The structure in (10) observes compositionality in that it contains only one semantic negation. The theory further predicts that in configurations where syntactic NEG raising is not possible (e.g. across finite clause boundaries under non NEG-raising verbs), DN should obtain. The following example shows that this prediction is borne out:

- (11) (Regarding appendicitis, and the fact that it was a treatable disease that killed many people:)
 Yeah that's killed a many a one, and they didn't know it was **nothing**.
 (AAPCAppE: AOHP-ASU-SJ)

I propose a structure for DN sentences like (11) that contains two semantic negations, and involves no syntactic NEG raising:

- (12) They didNEG₃ [know it was [NEG₁ SOME thing]]

I further show that the range of contexts C&P (2014) provide for unary NEG NPI constructions are also possible NC contexts in the AAPCAppE. These include finite clauses under NEG-raising verbs and non-finite clause boundaries. The AAPCAppE data thus support the NC as syntactic NEG raising and resumption hypothesis, as well as Postal (2005) and C&P's (2014) theory of NPI constructions.

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