

Negative particles and negative pronominals in Hungarian

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In this paper, I will discuss the structural and interpretational behavior of negative particles and negative pronominals in Hungarian. In Hungarian, negation is expressed by the negative particle *nem* ‘not’, that can appear at three places: (i) right before the verbal complex, (ii) right before the preverbal (identificational) focus, and (iii) right before the universal quantifier (É. Kiss 2004). We refer to (i) as ‘predicate negation’ and to (ii) as ‘focus negation’. I will argue, that (iii) is a special case of ‘focus negation’, and consequently there are two types of negation. The initial proposal is that these two types of negation operate on different levels: predicate negation at the NUCLEUS, while focus negation at the CORE. Semantically, both types operate on the ‘main assertion’, which is the predication in type (i) and the identification in type (ii). These in turn correspond to the AFD and the AFD-ID respectively, which illustrate that the scope of negation is tied to the actual focus domain. In all cases, *nem* ‘not’ operates to the right, which rules out its postverbal occurrences.

When the negative particle cooccurs with quantification, we must examine their scope relations. This extends the discussion to negative pronominals and the occurrence of the special negative particle *sem*. According to the scope principle in Hungarian, the surface order of two scope taking elements determines their semantic scope (Szabolcsi 1997, É. Kiss 2004). This suggests that the word order variations are determined by the linking from semantics to syntax. This holds for the scope orders $\exists > \text{NEG}$ (1a) and $\text{NEG} > \forall$ (1b). (1b) has an extra peculiarity: the inverse verb-particle order, which is not triggered by the universal.

- (1) a. Peti valaki-t nem hívott fel. b. Peti nem mindenki-t hívott fel.
Pete someone-ACC not called VPRT Pete not everyone-ACC called VPRT
‘Pete did not call someone.’ ($\exists > \text{NEG}$) ‘Pete did not call everyone.’ ($\text{NEG} > \forall$)

To express the meaning with scope relations $\forall > \text{NEG}$ and $\text{NEG} > \exists$, a special construction is used, where the quantifier is replaced by a negative pronominal (2). The simple surface ordering of *nem* and the respective quantifier is not possible (3).

- (2) Peti senki-t nem hívott fel.
Pete nobody-ACC not called VPRT
‘Pete did not call anyone.’ (both: $\forall > \text{NEG}$ and $\text{NEG} > \exists$)
- (3) a. *Peti mindenki-t nem hívott fel. b. *Peti nem valaki-t hívott fel.
Pete everyone-ACC not called VPRT Pete not someone-ACC called VPRT
(intended: $\forall > \text{NEG}$) (intended: $\text{NEG} > \exists$)

Negative pronominals must cooccur with negation (i.e., they are NPIs). Furthermore, they are considered as the negative counterparts of indefinites and universals. Hence, in (2), there are two negative elements in the sentence, which suggests a split coding of negation. Since (2) is compatible with both scope orders $\forall > \text{NEG}$ and $\text{NEG} > \exists$, surface order and semantic scope does not necessary correspond in these cases. Example (2) raises several issues to discuss from the syntactic position of the negative pronominal to the derivation of its semantics.

The utterance in (2) can also be expressed using the particle *sem* (4a), which is not a mere alternative of *nem* as shown in (4b). In (4b), there are three elements coding negation: two negative particles and the negative pronominal.

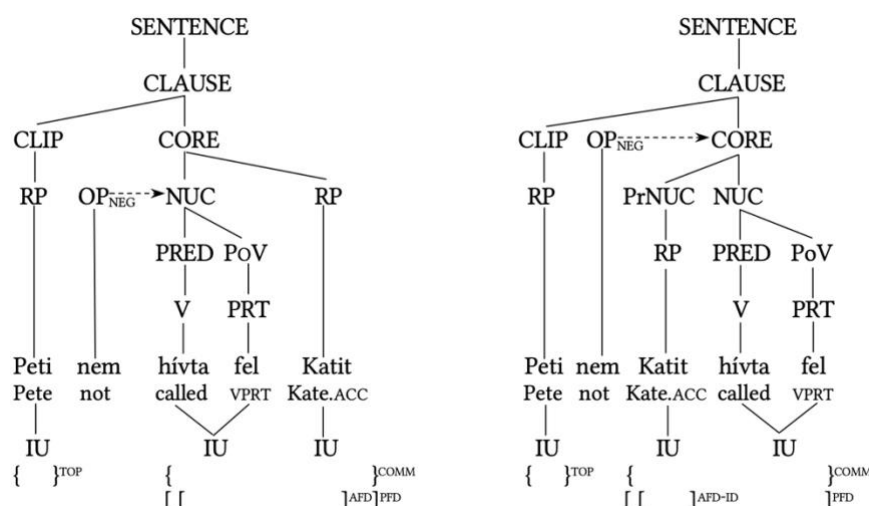
- (4) a. Peti senki-t sem hívott fel. b. Peti nem hívott fel senki-t sem.
Pete nobody-ACC SEM called VPRT Pete not called VPRT nobody-ACC SEM
‘Pete did not call anyone.’ ‘Pete did not call anyone.’

In the analysis of negative particles and negative pronominals in Hungarian, various aspects play a key role: different focus types, word order variations and semantic scope, split coding and the inverse order of the verb and its particle. In this talk, I will address these aspects, and I will propose an analysis that reflects the interplay of them within the linking of the corresponding projections. This will also illustrate the representational and explanatory strength of the RRG framework in the analysis of the interfaces.

References

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Appendix: Figures*



*For reasons of visual representation of three projections at once, the Syntactic Projection and the Operator Projection is collapsed in the trees below. The positions, CLIP and PrNUC, are language specific and proposed in close relation to information structure considerations in Hungarian.

Figure 1. Sentential negation and focus negation

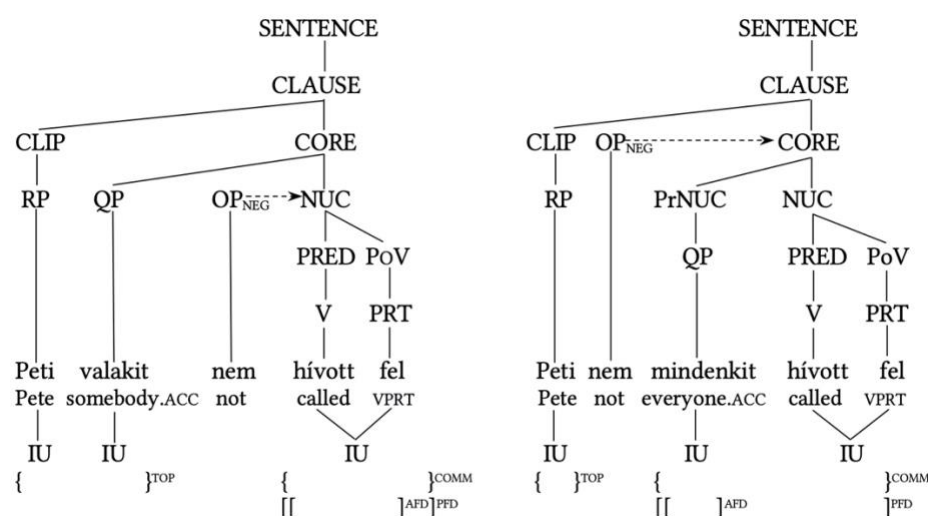


Figure 2. Analysis of (1a) and (1b)