Doubling of negation

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1. Introduction

Doubling of negation, where a declarative is initiated and finished with negation as shown in (1) below, consists of two different structures: clause-initial negation and clause-final negation, and these need not be related.

(1)   **Inte**   har   jag   sett   honom   **inte**.   (Fenno-Swedish)

     not   *has*   *I*   *seen*   *him*   *not*

     'I have certainly not seen him' (Bergroth 1928: 159)

Clause-initial negation, which contributes with the negative semantics in the clause, can be divided into three subcategories according to Lindström (2009:168): (i) responsive negation, (ii) interrogative negation, and (iii) additive negation. Out of these three subtypes, the responsive negation, which is prosodically unstressed and primarily used in dialogues, is possible with clause-final negation yielding thus doubling of negation. Clause-final negation does not contribute with independent negative semantics and it is as such dependent on the presence of a negative element in the clause proper.

2. Results

2.1 Nordic Syntax Database (NSD)

Clause-final doubling of negation has been tested in the NSD with one sentence for both Swedish (2a) and Norwegian (2b).

(2)   a.   **Inte**   har   jag   smakat   på   maten   **inte.**   (#863) (Swedish)

         not   *have*   *I*   *tasted*   *on*   *food.DEF*   *Not*

     b.   **Ikke**   har   jeg   smakt   på   maten   **ikke.**   (#863) (Norwegian)

         not   *have*   *I*   *tasted*   *on*   *food.DEF*   *Not*

         'I haven't tasted the food.'

The Swedish variant (2a) is judged as grammatical in almost all locations in Finland, and, more occasionally in a number of Swedish locations in the northern provinces of Norrbotten (Kalix), Västerbotten (Burträsk and Vilhelmina), in the western proince of Dalarna (Leksand), and in the central and southern provinces of Närke (Viby), Östergötland (St. Anna), Västergötland (Floby), and Småland

(Ankarsrum). The Norwegian variant (2b) is always rejected by all Norwegian informants with the exception of two: a younger woman in Trondheim, who judges #863 as possible, and an older woman in Oppdal, who judges it as marginally possible.

Map 1: Acceptance of clause-final doubling of negation.
(#863: Inte har jag smakat på maten inte. 'I haven't tasted the food.')
(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score)

2.2 Nordic Dialect Corpus (NDC)

There are no spontaneous examples of clause-final doubling of negation in the NDC; it may however depend on the small size of the Swedish part of the corpus, as such examples are easily found on the Internet, see Section 3.1 below.

3. Discussion

3.1 Theoretical issues

The responsive negation is in particular common in the Northern Swedish and Fenno-Swedish varieties, cf. (3), but it is also known from standard Swedish (4), as well as from Faroese (5) and Icelandic (6) (Lindström 2009:165). Responsive negation is further attested in Norwegian (Faarlund et al. 1997:874), see (7), whereas in Danish it is claimed not to be possible at all (Hulthén 1947:143; Christensen 2005:173).

(3)   **int**   va   de   nåt   fel   på   di   där   tacosana   (Fenno-Swedish)

      not   was   it   any   foult   on   these   here   tacos.DEF

      'There is really no problem with these tacos' (Lindström 2009:168)

(4)   **Inte**   har   Lindgren   skrivit   det   där!   (Swedish)

      not   has   Lindgren   written   it   here

      'I can't belive Lindgren has written this.' (Teleman et al. 1999:IV:175)

(5)   **Ekki**   held   ég   það.   (Icelandic)

      not   think   I   it

      'I don't think so.' (Svavarsdóttir & Jónsdóttir 1993:89)

(6)   **Ikki**   ljóðar   tað   væl.   (Faroese)

      not   sounds   it   well

      'It doesn't sound good.' (Lockwood 1964:155)

(7)   **Ikkje**   kan   ho   skrike   og   bere   seg   for   det!   (Norwegian)

      not   can   she   shout   and   behave   self   for   it

      'She can't shout and behave badly because of that.' (Faarlund et al. 1997:874)

Clause-final negation can be realized with different negative elements such as the negative marker, the negative interjection *nej*/*nei* 'no' and local varieties such as the element *e* in the Swedish dialect of Delsbo (Munther 2007). The negative interjection is possible and common in certain varieties of Norwegian, and it is also used in Swedish, see (8). It is occasionally used in Danish (Østbø to appear).

(8)   a.   e   ha   itj   aktivt   dativbruk   e   Hell   **næi**   (Norwegian)

        I   have   not   active   dative.use   I   either   no

        'I don't use dative actively' (oppdal_03gm)

b.   men   inte   fann   de   björn   **nej**   (Swedish)

      but   *not*   *found*   *they*   *bear*   *no*

      'But they didn't find a bear' (indal_om3)

The realization of clause-final negation as the negative marker is in contemporary North Germanic restricted to Swedish, and Huldén (1995) suggests that it enforces the negative reading. Important to note is that its presence is not obligatory in the sense that it yields ungrammaticality, if absent. According to Teleman et al. (1999) the clause-final negation can be present in declaratives, imperatives and interrogatives, see the imperative example in (9).

(9)   Forsök   **inte**   med   mig,   **inte**.   (Swedish)

     try   *not*   *with*   *me*   *not*

     'Don't try with me' (Teleman et al. 1999:IV:451)

Such doubling of negation was also possible in the 19th century varieties of Afrikaans (Roberge 2000), see (10a) below. The doubled negative element was later reanalyzed as an obligatory element of a negated clause, (10b), such that contemporary Afrikaans displays Negative Concord (Biberauer 2008).

(10) a. O   ik   is   **nie**   bang   voor   zoo   een   kat   **nie,**   sieur.   (Cape Dutch 1832)

       Oh   *I*   *am*   *not*   *afraid*   *for*   *so*   *a*   *cat*   *not*   *sir*

       'Oh, I am not afraid of such a cat, no sir!' (Roberge 2000: 148)

   b.   Ek   keen   **nie**   daardie   man   **nie**.   (Afrikaans)

      I   *know*   *not*   *that*   *man*   *not*

      'I don't know that man' (Biberauer 2008: 236)

It seems that the clause-final replication of the negative marker is dependent on a clause-initial negation in certain Scandinavian varieties, for instance in the Nyland dialect in Finland as described by Lundström (1939). The examples with a clause-final negation found in her work, begin with a clause-initial negation, cf. (11).

(11)   **it**   va   e   bara   dom   där   andelsmändren   där   **it**   (Swedish)

     not   *was*   *it*   *only*   *they*   *there*   *co-operation.men*   *there*   *not*

     'It wasn't only the two co-operation men there, wasn't it.' (Lundström 1939:144)

3.1. Other data sources

The examples of clause final negation doubling are easily found on the Internet, as a number of examples in (12) show. This is not surprising, as the construction is known from both literary and colloquial Swedish, cf. section 1 above.

(12) a. **Inte** ska jag sova, **inte**.[1]   (Swedish)

        not   shall   I   smoke   not

        'I shall certainly not smoke."

    b. **Inte** ska jag det, **inte**.[2]   (Swedish)

        not   shall   I   it   not

        'I shall certainly not do it."

    c. **Inte** vill jag det, **inte**.[3]   (Swedish)

        not   want.to   I   it   not

        'I certainly don't want it."

    d. **Inte** vill jag sova, **inte**.[4] (Swedish)

        not   want.to   I   sleep   not

        'I certainly don't want to sleep."

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[1] http://liiiiinda89.blogg.se/2007/september/

[2] http://andrasidanfagersta.blogspot.no/2010_01_01_archive.html

[3] http://metrobloggen.se/jaghorroster/john-locke-och-naturtillstandet/

[4] http://hem.passagen.se/nina.ollashed/pask.html

3.2 Age variation

There is a certain differences in acceptance of clause-final negation doubling between younger and older informants in the NSD. Older informants are more likely to accept the construction compared to the younger informants. This is shown in Map 2 and Map 3.

Map 2: Acceptance of clause-final doubling of negation among older informants.

(#863: Inte har jag smakat på maten inte. 'I haven't tasted the food.')

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score)

Map 3: Acceptance of clause-final doubling of negation among younger informants.

(#863: Inte har jag smakat på maten inte. 'I haven't tasted the food.')

(White = high score, grey = medium score, black = low score)

On the other hand, one finds places like Våxtorp in the Western Swedish province of Halland, where the construction is accepted by younger, but not by older informants, see Map 3 above.

3.3 Historical development

Clause-initial and clause-final negation was previously more widespread across the Scandinavian varieties than the contemporary picture shows. They seem to occur independently of each other. Clause-initial negation is well known from Old Norse, and an example of this is given in (13). However, Old Norse is not known to have clause-final negation of the modern North-Germanic type.

(13) **Eigi**   vil   ek drepa börn   þín.   (Old Norse)

      not   *want.to* *I* *kill*   *children* *your*

      'I don't want to kill your childern.' (Völsunga saga)

According to Lindström (2009) clause-initial negation was more common in Swedish spoken in Sweden around 1900 than today. It could also be the case of Norwegian dialects, cf. Aasen (1864), and see the

examples taken from Heggstad (1931:202), (14), and Haugen (1982:155), (15). Teinnæs (1929:49f) gives examples of it for the traditional Bornholm dialect, cf. (16)

(14)   **Ikkje**   er   den   mannen   so   fatig   som   han   er   fillut   til   (Norwegian)

      not   *is*   *that*   *man*   *so*   *poor*   *that*   *he*   *Is*   *ragged*   *to*

      'That man is not as poor as he looks like' (Heggstad 1931:202)

(15)   **Itj**   kjennje   annj   o.   (Norwegian)

      not   *knows*   *he*   *her*

      'He doesn't know her' (Haugen 1982:155)

(16)   **inte**   ska   hajnj   få   nâd   å   vidda   uda   maj   (Bornholm dialect of Danish)

      not   *shall*   *he*   *get*   *anything*   *to*   *know*   *out*   *me*

      (Teinnæs 1929:49)

Although the initial negation could have been more common in Scandinavian dialects in the past, there are just a few examples in these traditional dialects of the clause-final doubling of negation. Still, the phenomenon is reported to exist in traditional Danish and Norwegian dialects. Haislund (1933:131ff) reports that it existed in the traditional dialects of Bornholm, cf. an example in Teinnæs (1929) in (17), as well as in Zeeland and Middle Schleswig (now a part of Germany) in the 1930's. Heggstad (1931:151) notes that negation can appear in clause-final position, and so does Haugen (1982:153). The online dictionary *Norsk ordbok* gives examples of the clause-final doubling for other traditional Norwegian dialects such as the ones of Nordmøre (18) and Telemark (19), but also in the dialects in Trøndelag and Gudbrandsdalen, according to Leiv Inge Aa (p.c.).

(17)   di   få   **inte**   lâu   å   gå   å   driva   **inte**   (Bornholm dialect of Danish)

      they   *get*   *not*   *permission*   *to*   *got*   *to*   *loaf*   *not*

      'They are not allowed to wander around' (Teinnæs 1929:50)

(18)   Han   var   så   gud   **ingen**   tosk,   **ikkje**   (Norwegian)

      he   *was*   *so*   *god*   *no*   *fool*   *not*

      'God, he was certainly not a fool.' (Norsk Ordbok)

(19)   Du   plar   **kje**   vera   den   som   ligg   på   latesida   du   **ikkje**   (Norwegian)

      you   *use*   *not*   *be*   *that*   *who*   *lays*   *on*   *lazy.side*   *you*   *not*

      'You are not the one that is lazy.' (Norsk Ordbok)

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