

### Negative Concord is not Multiple Agree

Liliane Haegeman (Lille III) and Terje Lohndal (University of Maryland)

West Flemish (WF) is a language that exhibits Negative Concord (NC), that is, multiple negative expressions that together convey a single negation (1). In an influential thesis, Zeijlstra (2004) proposed to analyze NC in WF and other languages as Multiple Agree (MA) (2). He proposes that negative expressions are semantically non-negative indefinites which are associated with an [*u*NEG] feature (2004: 245). The negative marker *too* is associated with an [*u*NEG] feature. The very existence of the [*u*NEG] features triggers the projection of NegP. Sentential negation as such is introduced by a covert negative operator *OP*<sub>¬</sub> in SpecNegP, associated with an [*i*NEG] feature. ‘*OP*<sub>¬</sub> (i) introduces a negation at LF, and (ii) unselectively binds all free variables under existential closure.’ (2004: 247). In Zeijlstra's system *OP*<sub>¬</sub> [*i*NEG] in SpecNegP c-commands the (multiple) [*u*NEG] negative constituents on the *v*P edge. [*i*NEG] is the probe and the [*u*NEG] constituents are the goals. NC is then the result of MA. An application onto WF using Zeijlstra's system is shown in (3).

Several empirical problems emerge for Zeijlstra's account. One is that on his assumption that WF *en* encodes [*u*NEG], it is not clear why (4) is ungrammatical. We argue that *en* and negative markers like *nie* ‘not’ clearly must have a different status. Specifically, we propose that *en* is a spell-out of a polarity phrase (cf. Breitbarth and Haegeman 2008).

A more serious empirical problem, which is the main focus of this paper, is the fact that Zeijlstra's implementation of MA gives the wrong empirical predictions for WF. After the merger/move of the individual negative constituents to the edge of *v*P, each with its uninterpretable NEG feature, the abstract negative operator, *OP*<sub>¬</sub>, is merged in SpecNegP. This operator carries an interpretable NEG feature and gives rise to an across the board type of agreement. Since Zeijlstra (2004) assumes that *en* is also endowed with [*u*NEG], it will also participate in Multiple Agree. In (5), based on Hiraiwa's own formulation (“AGREE applies to all matched features”) we assume that Multiple Agree, like binary Agree, is a two step process which first matches the features and then leads to checking. The problem with this implementation is that there are several cases where NC as across-the-board-agreement is not available. Haegeman and Zanuttini (1996) observed that in WF NC sentences the nature of the negative element plays a role in generating NC. The examples in (6) illustrate the application of NC in WF: in (6a) *niemand* ‘no one’ enters into an NC relation with *nie* ‘not’, in (6b) *niemand* enters into an NC with *nie vele studenten* ‘not many students’. Examples such as these can be multiplied. However, though *niemand* can enter into NC with the negative marker *nie* (6a) and can also enter into an NC relation with *nie vele studenten* (6b), *nie vele studenten* cannot enter into an NC relation with the negative marker *nie*. (7a) becomes grammatical if the ‘simple’ negative marker *nie* is replaced by the more complex *nie meer* ‘no more’ (7b).

We conclude that NC is sensitive to the type of negative constituent involved and to their relative positions. Since all relevant constituents (*niemand*, *nie vele*, *nie dikkerst niet*, *nie*, *nie meer*, etc) apparently can undergo NC in some types of combinations, an MA analysis would lead us to expect that they will *all* enter into an Agree relation with the relevant negative feature on Neg<sup>o</sup> and it is by no means clear how the application of MA as formulated as a one time across the board procedure can “distinguish” acceptable combinations from unacceptable ones.

Given the problems raised here we will outline an alternative where we accommodate the co-occurrence restrictions on negative constituents in WF. Specifically, building on Pesetsky and Torrego (2007), we suggest a revised version of Agree, given in (8). The crucial difference between our definition of Agree and the usual definitions in the literature is the maximization condition on matching (‘that the feature sets on  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are identical’) (see e.g. Chomsky 2001). Observe that (8) allows for  $\alpha$  to be either valued or unvalued, (cf. Adger 2003, Baker 2008). Two uninterpretable/unvalued features are able to agree, as in Pesetsky and Torrego (2007), since they are still ‘active’ in terms of agreeing with an interpretable feature. Our definition of Agree allows Agree to be sensitive to the two adjacent negative constituents.

Assuming that the negative constituents in WF have a [*u*NEG] feature and that in some cases they also have a [Q] feature (cf. Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996 on the quantificational nature of these *n*-words), we are able to derive the co-occurrence restrictions as in (9) and (10).

Time permitting we will show that our analysis also offers an account of DP internal NC (11) (cf. Haegeman & Zanuttini 1996, Haegeman 2002), a point not dealt with by Zeijlstra.

- (1) K'(en)-een *nooit niets* *nie* gezien.  
I *en* have never nothing not seen  
'I have never seen anything.'
- (2) MULTIPLE AGREE (multiple feature checking) with a single probe is a *single simultaneous syntactic operation*; *AGREE applies to all matched goals at the same derivational point derivationally simultaneously*. (Hiraiwa 2001: 69, our italics)
- (3) a. da Valère nie en klaapt  
that Valère not *en* talks  
'that Valère doesn't talk'
- b. [<sub>NegP</sub> OP  $\neg$  [<sub>i</sub>NEG] [<sub>VP</sub> *nie* [<sub>u</sub>NEG] Valère [<sub>V'</sub> *en*-klaapt [<sub>u</sub>NEG]]]] (Zeijlstra 2004: 255)
- (4) \*<sub>NegP</sub> OP  $\neg$  [<sub>i</sub>NEG] [<sub>VP</sub> Valère [<sub>V'</sub> *en*-klaapt [<sub>u</sub>NEG]]]] (Zeijlstra 2004: 255)
- (5) a. [<sub>NegP</sub> OP  $\neg$  [<sub>i</sub>NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> [B *u*NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> [C *u*NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> D *u*NEG]]  $\Rightarrow$  Match  
b. [<sub>NegP</sub> OP  $\neg$  [<sub>i</sub>NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> [B *u*NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> [C *u*NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> D *u*NEG]]  $\Rightarrow$  Multiple Agree
- 
- c. [<sub>NegP</sub> OP  $\neg$  [<sub>i</sub>NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> [B *u*NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> [C *u*NEG]] [<sub>VP</sub> D *u*NEG]]
- (6) a. dank ik niemand nie gezien een  
that I no one not seen have  
'that I didn't see anyone'
- b. dat ter niemand nie vele studenten gezien eet  
that there no one not many students seen has  
'that no one saw many students'
- (7) a. \*dat ter niemand nie vele studenten nie gezien eet  
that there no one not many students not seen has  
b. dat ter niemand nie vele studenten nie meer gezien eet  
that there no one not many students no more seen has  
'that no one any longer saw many students'
- (8) *Agree*: Given that  $\alpha$  c-commands  $\beta$  and that the feature sets on  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are identical,  $\alpha$  agrees with  $\beta$  if  $\beta$  has either an interpretable or an uninterpretable feature.
- (9) \*da Jan [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>i</sub>NEG, *i*Q] nie dikkerst [<sub>u</sub>NEG] tegen Valère nie [<sub>u</sub>NEG, *u*Q] geklaapt eet
- 
- (10) da Jan [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>i</sub>NEG, *i*Q] nie dikkerst [<sub>u</sub>NEG] tegen Valère nie mee [<sub>u</sub>NEG] geklaapt ...
- 
- (11) Valère ee [*nie vee geen werk*].  
Valère has [not much no work] 'Valère doesn't have much work.'

## References

- Adger, David. 2003. *Core Syntax*. Oxford: OUP.
- Baker, Mark C. 2008. *The Syntax of Agreement and Concord*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Breitbarth, Anne and Liliane Haegeman. 2008. Not continuity, but change: stable stage II in Jespersen's cycle. Ms., University of Cambridge & STL Lille III.
- Haegeman, Liliane. 2002. Some notes on DP-internal negative doubling. *Syntactic Microvariation*, Sjef Barbiers (ed.). Available at: <http://www.meertens.nl/books/synmic>
- Haegeman, Liliane and Raffaella Zanuttini. 1996. Negative Concord in West Flemish. *Parameters and Functional Heads. Essays in Comparative Syntax*, Adriana Belletti and Luigi Rizzi (eds.), 117-179. Oxford-New York: OUP.
- Hiraiwa, Ken. 2001. Multiple Agree and the Defective Intervention Constraint in Japanese. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 40: 67-80. Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, MIT, Cambridge, Mass.
- Pesetsky, David and Esther Torrego. 2007. The syntax of valuation and the interpretability of features. *Phrasal and Clausal Architecture: Syntactic derivation and interpretation. In honor of Joseph E. Emonds*, Simin Karimi, Vida Samiian and Wendy K. Wilkins, 262-294. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Zeijlstra, Hedde. 2004. *Sentential Negation and Negative Concord*. Doctoral dissertation, U. Amsterdam.