

Two scopes of negation in Swedish declarative questions

Negative polar questions are classified into outer negation polar questions (ONPQs) and inner negation polar questions (INPQs) (e.g. Romero & Han 2004). In ONPQs, the negation is not part of the proposition, whereas in INPQs it is. INPQs double-check a negative proposition, while ONPQs double-check a positive proposition, i.e. the negation is non-propositional. Declarative questions (DQs) express the speaker's contingent commitment to the expressed proposition, i.e. the speaker only asserts the proposition on the condition that the addressee first does so as well (Gunlogson 2008). In a negative declarative question (NDQ), this is contingent commitment to a negated proposition – the negation is always obligatorily part of the proposition.

I present evidence from Swedish that shows that a certain subset of NDQs have two readings that differ in the scope of negation in the way that NPQs in English do. Negation in Swedish canonically occurs in the IP, usually directly before the VP. In some contexts, it can also be fronted to the preverbal, sentence-initial position, i.e. SpecCP. As only declarative main clauses have a SpecCP position, whereas syntactic questions do not, fronted negation (FN) only occurs in declarative clauses. Three types of contextual restrictions on FN have been posited in earlier literature (e.g. Lindström 2007, Brandtler & Håkansson 2012, Østbø 2013): additive FN, which occurs in coordinated negative propositions (1); responsive FN, which occurs in reactions to previous (positive) assertions (2); and interrogative FN, which occurs in declarative questions where there is evidence in the context for the positive proposition *p* being true, (3). These questions thus have context conditions opposite from those on DQs with a low negation in Swedish or NDQs in English, which require that there is some evidence that the addressee would commit to the *negative* proposition in question. (3) is uttered in a context that is biased towards *p* and double-checks *p*.

- (1) Inte har jag städat rummet och inte kommer jag göra det heller.
 Not have I cleaned room.the and not will I do it either
 'I have not cleaned the room and I will not do it, either.'

- (2) A: You have cleaned the room.
 B: Inte har jag städat rummet.
 Not have I cleaned room.the
 'I haven't cleaned the room (as you should know)/(as should be obvious).'

- (3) A: I have cleaned the whole house.
 B: Inte har du städat källaren också? Det ville jag göra!
 Not have you cleaned basement.the too that wanted I do
 'You haven't also cleaned the basement, have you? I was going to do that!'

Interrogative FN is usually considered a special instance of responsive FN as it also 'reacts to' a positive proposition *p*. I propose that interrogative FN is not a useful category, since we also find questions like (4), which is a variant of (3) without contextual evidence for *p* and a parallel proposition $\neg q$ in the context (the material in brackets improves acceptability by emphasising this parallel), and the question double-checks $\neg p$. Another difference is the occurrence of the negative polarity item (NPI) 'heller' ('either') instead of the positive polarity item (PPI) 'också' ('too'). Thus, it behaves like regular NDQs in terms of contextual restrictions and NPI licensing.

- (4) A: I haven't cleaned your study. Don't worry.
 B: (Och) inte har du städat källaren heller? Det vill jag göra!
 And not have you cleaned basement.the either that want I do
 '(And) you haven't cleaned the basement either? (Because) I want to do that.'

The fact that we are dealing with declarative questions means that we cannot explain this ambiguity via scope differences between VERUM and the question operator in the vein of

Romero & Han (2004), since no question operator is present in declarative questions, as they are assertions (Gunlogson 2008). Crucially, the discourse in (3) is only felicitous with FN. With low negation, acceptability is significantly reduced unless the modal particle ‘vål’ is also present. ‘Vål’ marks a lack of certainty on the part of the speaker and is used to ask the addressee to agree with the proposition it takes scope over, which with in-situ negation would be the negated proposition. We find no such effect in (4): the negation can occur fronted or in-situ, independently of the presence of a particle. This same difference between low negation and FN obtains in assertions like (1) and (2): (1) can be paraphrased using low negation without any change in meaning or speaker attitude, while (2) with low negation does not express that the speaker considered $\neg p$ to be self-evident or previously known to the addressee. This speaker attitude can also be expressed by the modal particle ‘ju’, which would have to be added. Thus, both (2) and (3) require modal particles if they are rephrased to use low negation without changing their communicative effect.

On this basis, I argue that the contexts in which FN occurs fall into only two types: *parallel* (the former additive type) and *speaker-oriented* (the former responsive type), with interrogative FN occurring in both types of context. (4) shares with cases with parallel FN like (1) that there is a negative proposition in the immediate (left or right) context, and then either asserts or double-checks another negative proposition. Speaker-oriented FN reacts to positive propositions that have either been overtly asserted or implicated/entailed within the context, like in (2) and (3). Parallel FN is, under this analysis, only distinguishable from regular negative assertions or NDQs by requiring another salient negative proposition within the context. I analyze questions with parallel negation as requesting the addressee to assert a negated proposition, i.e. the same as all NDQs (e.g. Gunlogson 2008, Krifka 2012). Speaker-oriented FN marks that the speaker considers p to not be a part of the common ground (CG). The fact that a positive proposition is at issue explains why PPIs can occur in sentences with speaker-oriented negation. The negative force is non-propositional. This CG operation can be thought of as Repp’s (2013) FALSUM negation (5), where x is the speaker, $\text{Epi}_x(w)$ their knowledge in world w , and $\text{Conv}_x(w')$ their conversational goals in w' .

(5) $[[\text{FALSUM}]]^x = \lambda p_{\langle s, t \rangle} \lambda w. \forall w' \in \text{Epi}_x(w) [\forall w'' \in \text{Conv}_x(w') [p \notin \text{CG}_{w''}]]$

In assertions, speaker-oriented negation usually has a contradicting or rejecting effect, since it usually reacts to an immediately preceding addition of p to CG by another interlocutor like in (2). In questions, speaker-oriented FN exhorts the addressee to assert FALSUM(p). This is generally the case in contexts where the speaker assumed $p \notin \text{CG}$, has received evidence to the contrary, and has less epistemic authority to assert FALSUM(p) than the addressee does. Definitions are given in (6).

- (6) a. **Parallel FN, assertion:** ASSERT($\neg p$). Presupposition: $\neg q \in \text{CG}$.
- b. **Parallel FN, question:** REQUEST(ASSERT($\neg p$)). Presupposition: $\neg q \in \text{CG}$.
- c. **Speaker-oriented FN, assertion:** ASSERT(FALSUM(p)). Context implies or entails p .
- d. **Speaker-oriented FN, question:** REQUEST(ASSERT(FALSUM(p))). Context implies or entails p .

It is not possible to derive the correct interpretation of questions like (3) using VERUM instead of FALSUM. If VERUM outscopes negation, we would expect NPIs to be licensed. If negation outscopes VERUM, we get the meaning “please assert that p is not for sure in CG”, but the speaker uses a question like (3) to get confirmation for their assumption “that p is for sure not in CG”, i.e. for FALSUM(p).

References: Brandtler, J. & D. Håkansson 2012. *Negation, Contrast, and the Swedish Prefield*. Gunlogson, C. 2008. *A Question of Commitment*. Krifka, M. 2012. *Negated Polarity Questions as Denegations of Assertions*. Lindström, J. 2007. *Initial clausal negation – an areal feature*. Østbø, C. 2013. *North Germanic Negation*. Repp, S. 2013. *Common Ground Management: Modal particles, Illocutionary Negation and VERUM*. Romero, M. & C. Han 2004. *On Negative Yes/No Questions*.