

Niti – real negative coordination inside strict Negative Concord?

Serbo-Croatian neg-words (Negative Concord elements) are marked by the morpheme *ni*-(wh), of the same form as the marker of negative coordination (*ni...*)*ni* (Arsenijević 2011, Gajić 2016). But Serbo-Croatian has another negative coordination marker, (*niti...*)*niti*, which has gone unnoticed in the literature. *Niti* seems to be partly interchangeable with *ni*. However, it is incompatible with a negated verb in the clause which it introduces. Furthermore, only (weak) *i*-NPIs are licensed inside a *niti*-constituent, the neg-words (*ni*-wh) are not grammatical here, which means that *niti* does not participate in the system of NC. In presence of a verbal marker of negation (*ne/ni*-_{AUX}), *niti* yields an interpretation of double negation (both coordinated clauses are interpreted positively). This makes *niti* the only inherently negative element in a strict NC language such as S-C – *niti* can induce sentential negation, but it is incompatible with NC. An analysis along the lines of Zeijlstra's (2009) account for French negative adverbial *pas* could be suitable for *niti*. *Niti* would be the overt realization of the semantic negative operator. It does not carry any formal features ([iNEG] or [uNEG]), which prevents it from participating in NC through agreement. This also explains the possibility of having a double negation reading (unexpected for strict NC): under Zeijlstra's (2004, 2008) approach, in each of the two *niti*-coordinated clauses, one overt (*niti*) and one covert negative operator would have to be present, the latter being necessary to check the [uNEG] features on the verbal marker of negation and the neg-word. *Niti* is a clausal coordinator, like (*neither...*)*nor* in English. The parallel between *niti* and *neither...nor* is reinforced by the fact that such coordinations in both languages display subject-auxiliary inversion, also known as Negative Inversion (Büring 2004, Collins & Postal 2014). In the case of *neither...nor*, the [NEG] feature inside their feature bundles is usually identified as the trigger of inversion (Hendriks 2004, den Dikken 2006). We conclude that it is, in fact, the absence of formal [i/uNEG] features in the case of *niti* that triggers the inversion, as the phrase containing the negative operator must raise to SpecCP.

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