REMARKS ON SENTENTIAL NEGATION IN FRENCH

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The goal of this article is to present a brief overview of the main arguments used (i.e., in Rowlett 1992a/b, 1993a/b/c) to cast doubt on an aspect of Pollock's (1989) analysis of sentential negation in French, namely his claim that the element *pas* is generated in the SpecNeg position in the base. It is argued that Pollock's analysis creates something of a theory-internal impasse since it is unable to satisfy **both** Haegeman and Zanuttini's (1991) Neg Criterion **and** the constraint on operator/variable pairings simultaneously, at the relevant level, i.e., LF. An alternative analysis, in which *pas* is generated in a position lower than SpecNeg and subsequently raised into SpecNeg, not only avoids the impasse, it also allows for a logical account of a number of empirical matters, namely the partitive/pseudo-partitive alternation in indefinite direct objects, the impossibility of associating sentential negation with a PP-embedded *pas* and certain aspects of the syntax of imperatives.

1. Introduction

Pollock (1989:414) suggests that the two elements *ne* and *pas* used in sentential negation in standard French are generated as the head and specifier respectively of a functional projection NegP, as in (1):

(1) $[_{NegP}$ pas $[_{Neg'}$ ne ...]]

In this configuration the negative head *ne* and the negative operator *pas* can satisfy Haegeman and Zanuttini's (1991:244) Neg Criterion in (2) which, it is argued, applies at LF —in parallel with Rizzi's (1991:2) *wh*-criterion in (3).

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(2) *The Neg Criterion*

a. Each Neg^0 must be in a spec-head relationship with a negative operator;

b. Each negative operator must be in a spec-head relationship with Neg^0.

(3) *The wh-criterion*

a. Each $[+WH]X^0$ must be in a spec-head relationship with a *wh*-operator;

b. Each *wh*-operator must be in a spec-head relationship with a $[+WH]X^0$.

Belletti (1990:28) suggests that, in French and other Romance varieties, NegP is the complement of Agr while Neg selects TP as its complement, as in (4):

(4) $[_{CP}\ [_{AgrP}\ [_{NegP}\ [_{TP} \cdots\ ]]]]$

As a clitic, *ne* incorporates into Agr and, consequently, precedes *pas*. A number of theoretical and empirical problems arise from this analysis. These will be outlined in the following sections. In the proposed alternative analysis, it will be argued that instead of being the underlying specifier of NegP, *pas* is raised to SpecNeg in the derivation, and occupies this position at LF.

2. A theory-internal impasse

In section 1, the Neg Criterion and the *wh*-criterion were related to each other —in addition to the obvious structural parallel— in the sense that they both apply at LF. Of course, one might like to view the two criteria as instantiations of a unique principle of UG. If this view is valid, they should be maximally similar. It is therefore interesting to see how far the parallel can be taken by comparing the *wh*-criterion with the Neg Criterion on the basis of Pollock's analysis of sentential negation in French. The configuration in which the *wh*-criterion operates is between the specifier and head position of the functional projection, CP; the Neg Criterion operates similarly in NegP. Both operate at LF, as already noted. The negative operator is

sometimes a null element, as in sentential negation in numerous Romance languages, e.g., Italian and Spanish. The *wh*-operator is also sometimes null, as in English *yes-no* questions. (See Haegeman (1992:14).) So far, so good. There may well be grounds for considering the two criteria in (2) and (3) as subcases of a more general principle of UG. There is, however, at least one non-trivial difference between the two criteria. The *wh*-criterion is satisfied derivationally, i.e., by movement of a (possibly null) *wh*-operator into SpecC, for spec-head agreement with a *wh*-X^0 morpheme in C. In Pollock's proposal, in contrast, the Neg Criterion is satisfied in the base for, according to Pollock, *pas* and *ne* are base-generated in SpecNeg and Neg respectively. This difference alone should prompt us to reconsider Pollock's analysis of sentential negation in French. The fact that, in Pollock's model, the Neg Criterion is satisfied in the base is all the more strange when one considers how implausible it would be to claim that the *wh*-criterion could be satisfied in the base with an overt *wh*-operator base-generated in SpecC. One could, of course, argue that the level of representation at which the respective criterion is satisfied is irrelevant. Nevertheless, if it is to be maintained that the two criteria are indeed subcases of a more general principle of UG, then a difference of this nature must surely be an issue to be considered.

But perhaps the most serious theory-internal problem for Pollock's analysis, in particular his claim that *pas* is base-generated in SpecNeg, concerns the constraint (applicable at LF) which obliges all operators —negative operators as well as *wh*-operators, presumably— to bind a variable.

It has been argued that this constraint, in tandem with the ECP, has certain explanatory capacity, in that the ungrammatical status of certain strings (i.e., *wh*-in situ structures), which have what look like perfectly acceptable S-structure representations, has been accounted for by arguing that the *wh*-operator in situ has to move, at LF, in order to bind a variable, i.e., its trace, but that the *wh*-operator is unable to properly govern its trace following movement, leading to an ECP violation and ungrammaticality. (See Haegeman (1991:451-66) for a readily

accessible presentation.) It is concluded, then, that a (Neg) operator does indeed have to bind a variable at LF.

Returning to the issue at hand, consider the configuration in (5) which we assume to be a partial LF representation of (1).

(5) ne_i ... [$_{NegP}$ pas [$_{Neg'}$ e_i [$_{TP}$ ...]]]

Here, the Neg Criterion is satisfied since the operator *pas* is in a spec-head relationship with the trace of the clitic *ne*. However, the constraint which obliges an operator to bind a variable at LF is not satisfied —*pas* doesn't bind anything. If, alternatively, it had been necessary for *pas* to move into SpecNeg from a c-commanded extraction site in order to satisfy the Neg Criterion, the constraint on operators could have been satisfied at no extra cost, since *pas* would bind its trace which would function as a variable. To rescue the structure, it could be claimed that *pas* moves, at LF, out of its base position, SpecNeg, into some higher position, in order to satisfy the constraint on operators since it would then bind its trace. Were *pas* to do this, however, it would not satisfy the Neg Criterion since it would no longer be in the necessary configuration with Neg^0. In this respect, Pollock's analysis of sentential negation in French —or, more precisely, his claim that *pas* is base-generated in SpecNeg— creates something of an impasse.

To avoid this impasse, it will be argued that *pas* is generated in a position —yet to be determined— lower than SpecNeg and that it subsequently raises into SpecNeg. Quite apart from the theory-internal reasons why this modification to Pollock's analysis is desirable, a number of empirical issues suggest that *pas* is not the underlying specifier of NegP.

3. Partitive/pseudo-partitive alternations

The alternation illustrated by the data in (6) is well-known and has been discussed in prescriptive grammars of French, e.g., Grevisse (1986:914-7).

(6) a. Elle donna **de l'**argent.
she gave of the-money
'She gave some money.'

b. *Elle donna **d'**argent.
she gave of-money
'She gave some money.'

c. *Elle ne donna pas **de l'**argent.
she *ne* gave not of the-money
'She didn't give any money.'

d. Elle ne donna pas **d'**argent.
she *ne* gave not of-money
'She didn't give any money.'

In the positive (6a), the indefinite direct object of the transitive verb is realised as a partitive structure; in the negative (6d), a pseudo-partitive structure is needed. Ungrammaticality results if a pseudo-partitive structure is used in a positive string (6b), or a partitive structure is used in a negative string (6c). Since the only difference between (6a) and (6c) and between (6b) and (6d) is polarity, manifested syntactically by the presence of *ne...pas*, this must be the property which determines the structure of the indefinite direct object of the verb. Since, further, according to Pollock, *ne* and *pas* are located in the head and specifier position of NegP, it must be assumed that some relationship exists between SpecNeg and/or Neg, on the one hand, and the internal argument of VP, on the other, i.e., it must be assumed that the highlighted positions in (7) are syntactically related. It is difficult to see what form this syntactic relation might take, given the distance, in structural terms, between the elements involved.

(7) [NegP **pas** [Neg' **ne** [TP e [VP e [NP ...]]]]

If, alternatively, *pas* is base-generated in a position lower than SpecNeg, it might be possible to identify some local syntactic relation between *pas* and the indefinite direct object.

4. Base position of *pas*

Compare (6) above with (8):

(8) a. Elle donna **de** l'argent.

b. *Elle donna **d**'argent.

c. *Elle donna beaucoup **de** l'argent.

she gave lots of the-money

'She gave lots of money.'

d. Elle donna beaucoup **d**'argent.

she gave lots of-money

The data in (8) are identical to those in (6) apart from the fact that, in (8c/d), *beaucoup* replaces *pas* and, consequently, *ne* is absent. In (8), the structure of the indefinite direct object of the verb follows the same pattern as in (6). Data such as these have led a number of researchers, e.g., Obenauer (1983, 1984) and Battye (1990), to analyse *pas* and *beaucoup* as members of the same syntactic class of item which Battye calls 'nominal quantifier'. Other members of this class are *trop*, *peu*, *assez*.[1] In our attempts to determine the position in which the negative nominal quantifier *pas* is generated, it is useful to consider the distribution of the other members of the class. Particularly relevant is a construction, discussed by Obenauer (1983, 1984), called 'Quantification at a distance', henceforth QàD, illustrated in (9b):

[1] Battye's class of nominal quantifiers includes neither French *plusieurs* and *quelques* nor other Romance elements such as Catalan *molts/molles*.

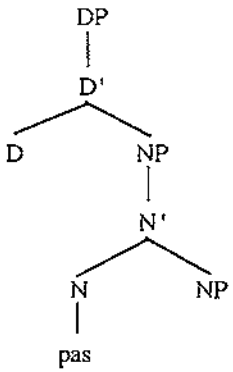
(9) a. Le bouquiniste a vendu [$_{NP}$ beaucoup de romans].
the bookseller has sold lots of novels

b. Le bouquiniste a beaucoup$_i$ vendu [$_{NP}$ e$_i$ de romans].
the bookseller has lots sold of novels
'The bookseller sold lots of novels.'

c. Le bouquiniste n'a pas vendu de romans.
the bookseller *ne*-has not sold of novels
'The bookseller hasn't sold any books.'

If a clause contains a compound verb form, i.e., an auxiliary and the past participle of a transitive verb (of a certain class), and a nominal quantifier is used to quantify an indefinite direct object, as in (9a), the nominal quantifier has the option of moving out of its containing NP/DP to a position located, in linear terms, between the auxiliary and the past participle, as illustrated in (9b), i.e., exactly the position occupied, necessarily, by *pas* in (9c). These two similarities, first, that nominal quantifiers can appear in the same linear position as *pas*, as illustrated in (6d) and (8d), and, second, that the indefinite direct object has the same structure in both (6d) and (8d), i.e., pseudo-partitive rather than partitive, lead us to conclude, with Obenauer (1993, 1984) and Battye (1990), that *pas* does indeed belong to the class of nominal quantifier and that, consequently, and more importantly, *pas* is generated in the same position as the other nominal quantifiers. In clauses like (9c), we assume that *pas* is generated within the direct object, as in (10), after Battye (1991:33) and Abney's (1987) DP-hypothesis.

(10)



Now, given that *pas* is generated within the indefinite direct object of a transitive verb, the nature of the syntactic relationship between the negative operator and the superficial structure of the direct object is clear: the alternation illustrated by (6a) and (6d) above can be accounted for in terms of the (strictly local) head-complement relationship of subcategorisation. Like *beaucoup*, *pas* subcategorises for an NP. (The prepositional Case-marker *de* is inserted to the left of the complement NP at S-structure for Case-theoretic reasons.) Thus, the pseudo-partitive structure in (6d) is a consequence of the lexical properties of the overt quantifier. In the positive (6a), we follow Battye (1991:38) in assuming that the partitive structure results from the presence of a null element which subcategorises for a PP headed by *de*.

Of course, the possibility of generating nominal quantifiers such as *beaucoup* and *pas* in this position is dependent upon the availability of a suitable DP. In clauses where no such DP is available, we assume that *pas* is generated adjoined to the predicate VP as an adverbial, as in (11):

(11) [VP pas [VP ...]]

Again, this allows us to claim that the syntax of *pas* runs parallel to that of the other nominal quantifiers which can also be used in this way, without being associated with an indefinite direct object, as illustrated in (12) and (13):

(12) a. Jean aime beaucoup le film.
Jean likes lots the film
'Jean likes the film a lot.'

b. Jean n'aime pas le film.
Jean *ne* -likes not the film
'Jean doesn't like the film.'

(13) a. Jean a beaucoup aimé le film.
Jean has lots liked the film
'Jean liked the film a lot.'

b. Jean n'a pas aimé le film.
Jean *ne*-has not liked the film
'Jean didn't like the film.'

From its underlying (NP-internal or VP-adjoined) position, it is assumed that move-α promotes the negative quantifier *pas* successive cyclically to SpecNeg. See Rowlett (1993a:56-66) and section 7 below for discussion of a proposed derivation. Once *pas* reaches SpecNeg, the Neg Criterion and the constraint on operator/variable pairings can be satisfied, thus avoiding the theory-internal impasse generated by Pollock's original analysis.[2]

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[2] By claiming that nominal quantifiers can be generated in two distinct positions, we predict that both possibilities can be realised simultaneously. This prediction is borne out in examples like (i):

(i) a. Le bouquiniste n'a pas vendu beucoup de romans.
the bookseller *ne*-has not sold lots of novels
'The bookseller hasn't sold many novels.'

b. Le bouquiniste n'a pas beaucoup vendu de romans.
the bookseller *ne*-has not lots sold of novels

In the next two sections, we discuss two other empirical issues which support the basic contention of this article, namely that *pas* is generated in a position lower than SpecNeg.

5. PP islands and the syntax of *pas*

Within the context of a movement approach to the syntax of *pas* such as is proposed here, we predict that it is impossible to promote *pas* from a base position *within* an 'island' to SpecNeg *outside* the island. Following the work of Ross (1967), there is a body of literature, e.g., Pollock (1991), suggesting that the PP is an island in French. To test the prediction, we need structures in which an indefinite DP and its closest dominating SpecNeg are separated by a PP node. Given that we are hoping to show ungrammaticality with examples containing *pas*, we shall first of all consider structures containing another nominal quantifier:

(14) Jean a tartiné son pain [$_{PP}$ avec [$_{DP}$ beaucoup de beurre et de confiture]].
Jean has spread his bread with lots of butter and of jam
'Jean spread lots of butter and jam on his bread.'

In (14), the indefinite DP containing the nominal quantifier *beaucoup* appears embedded within a PP headed by *avec* (with). As we would expect given the island status of the PP, a QàD-type structure derived from (14) is impossible:

(15) *Jean a beaucoup$_i$ tartiné son pain [$_{PP}$ avec [$_{DP}$ e$_i$ de beurre et de confiture]].
Jean has lots spread his bread with of butter and of jam
(=(14))

If we now replace *beaucoup* with *pas* which, in our analysis, can be generated within the PP-embedded indefinite DP, we find that the structure again results in ungrammaticality — totally inexplicable in Pollock's model, but perfectly predictable in our modified model: (16) is ungrammatical for the simple reason that *pas* cannot legitimately leave the PP island in order to

reach SpecNeg which it must do —unlike the non-negative *beaucoup*— in order to satisfy the Neg Criterion:

(16) *Jean n'a pas$_i$ tartiné son pain [$_{PP}$ avec [$_{DP}$ e$_i$ de beurre et de confiture]].
Jean *ne*-has not spread his bread with of butter and of jam
'Jean did not spread butter and jam on his bread.'

A similar structure which is grammatical is (17):

(17) Jean n'a pas tartiné son pain avec du beurre et de la confiture.
Jean *ne*-has not spread his bread with of-the butter and of the jam
(=(16))

In contrast to (16), the indefinite DP in (17) has a partitive structure. We conclude, therefore, that, in (17), *pas* does not originate within the indefinite DP. Rather, we assume that *pas* is generated in a VP-adjoined position, as in (12) and (13) above. Since the VP is not embedded within the PP, *pas* can be promoted to SpecNeg from its VP-adjoined position without leaving an island, hence the grammatical status of (17).

6. Negative imperatives

The apparently quirky behaviour of negative imperatives in some Romance and other varieties has been widely discussed in the prescriptive tradition, and has recently received attention from Zanuttini (1990) and Rivero (1993). Of relevance to French is the interaction between clitic placement and the distribution of *ne* and *pas*. Negative imperatives in French can appear with either tonic (post-verbal) or atonic (pre-verbal) pronominal complement clitics. See (18) and (19) for the distributions. (The grammaticality judgements are taken from Muller (1991, ch. 4).)

(18) *Post-verbal clitics*

a. Regarde-moi.
watch-me
'Look at me.'

b. Regarde-moi pas.
watch-me not
'Don't look at me.'

c. *Ne regarde-moi pas.
ne watch-me not
'Don't look at me.'

(19) *Pre-verbal clitics*

a. *Me regarde.
me watch
'Look at me.'

b. Me regarde pas.
me watch not
'Don't look at me.'

c. Ne me regarde pas.
ne me watch not
'Don't look at me.'

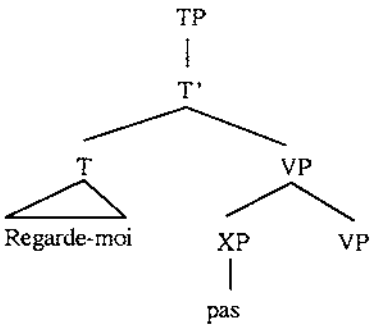
Exploiting the distinction drawn by Joseph and Philippaki-Warburton (1987) between 'true' (18) and 'surrogate' (19) imperatives, Zanuttini (1991) claims that the position occupied by the true imperatives in (18) is lower than Neg (possibly T) while the surrogate imperatives in (19) occupy a position higher than Neg (presumably Agr). Indeed, Zanuttini argues that true imperatives —unlike surrogate imperatives— are defective clauses in that TP, i.e., the projection headed by the verb, is the highest projection in the structure. That is to say, CP, AgrP and NegP are missing in (18). Under the generally accepted assumption that, in the varieties under consideration here, pre-verbal complement and negative clitics incorporate into

Agr, the absence of AgrP allows Zanuttini to explain why, in (18), the clitics are post-verbal and why, in (18c), *ne* cannot appear.

However, a problem is posed by (18b), namely the (acceptable) presence of *pas*. Zanuttini claims that the verb is in T and that Pollock's NegP (between AgrP and TP) is not generated. So where does *pas* come from? Pollock claims it appears in his SpecNeg. This cannot be the case if Zanuttini is right in claiming that NegP is absent in (18). Also, even if NegP were generated, given that the verb is in T, i.e., below Neg, *pas* would appear pre-verbally, which it doesn't. To circumvent this problem, Zanuttini claims that another NegP, call it NegP-2 in contrast to Pollock's NegP(-1), can appear in imperatives like (18b) between TP and VP instead of above TP, and that the *pas* in (18b) occupies the specifier position of NegP-2. Of course, such a claim is not needed for the surrogate imperatives in (19), in which the verb occupies Agr and the standard account of *ne* and *pas* using NegP(-1) can prevail.

If we consider how our modification to Pollock's account of sentential negation in French can deal with the negative imperatives in (18), we find that Zanuttini's NegP-2 is not needed. Since, in our model, *pas* is generated in the base in a position lower than SpecNeg and only moved into SpecNeg to satisfy the Neg Criterion, we can account for Zanuttini's problematic (18b) by arguing that, at S-structure, *pas* occupies its base position adjoined to the predicate VP, as in (20):

(20)



This is, of course, lower than T which explains why *pas* follows the imperative verb. If the constraint on operator/variable pairings needs to be satisfied in imperatives, *pas* can adjoin to TP at LF in order to bind its trace. In this way, the account of (18b) is straightforward, and no NegP-2 is needed.

7. A problem

Although the proposed syntactic account of *pas* in compatible with the data reviewed, and avoids some of the theoretical problems inherent in Pollock's original analysis, we would like to point out what we see as the major weakness of our account. Our problem lies in the syntactic derivation of *pas* when it is generated DP-internally. In section 4 above, we happily conclude that *pas* and other nominal quantifiers can be base-generated under an N node complete with a complement NP in the configuration in (10). The Neg Criterion obliges a negative operator to raise, presumably via successive cyclic adjunction to maximal projections like VP and TP, into SpecNeg. We have assumed that that negative operator is an XP headed by *pas*. The obvious problem is that, in (10), *pas* is not an XP, and only forms an XP together with its complement NP (and null specifier). However, we know from the QàD structures discussed above that nominal quantifiers can move independently of their NP complement. How can this be so? In Rowlett (1993a: 56-66), we suggest that the NP complement escapes from sisterhood with the nominal quantifier by first right-adjoining to VP, as in (21), leaving an XP (NP or DP) headed by *pas*, for example, to raise independently of its complement NP.

(21) $[_{VP}\ [_{VP}\ \ldots\ [_{DP}\ [_{NP}\ pas\ [_{NP}\ e_i\ ]]\ ]]\ [_{NPi}\ \ldots\ ]]$

The problem with this solution is that right VP-adjunction of the NP complement of the nominal quantifier is otherwise unmotivated and therefore suspicious to say the least. We do not intend to provide a solution to this problem here but we would like to mention an interesting proposal[3]

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[3] The proposal was made by David Adger 15 June 1993 at a seminar organized by the Centre for Cognitive Science, University of Edinburgh, UK.

according to which *pas* and the other nominal quantifiers might function, at D-structure, not as syntactic heads but rather as syntactic specifiers. Were *pas*, for example, to be base-generated as an XP in SpecD or SpecN in (10) instead of as the head N, successive cyclic movement into SpecNeg could take place without the need to right-VP-adjoin an NP first. We leave this issue on the table for further investigation.

8. Summary

We have tried to show that Pollock's claim that *pas* is characteristically *base-generated* as the specifier of NegP is untenable, both for theory-internal and empirical reasons. First, if Pollock's claim is true, there would be a major (undesirable) difference between the *wh*-criterion and the Neg Criterion which we would otherwise like to see maximally similar. Second, by claiming that *pas* is base-generated in SpecNeg, Pollock is unable to satisfy the constraint on operator/variable pairings. Third, an in situ analysis of *pas* allows no account whatsoever of the familiar partitive/pseudo-partitive alternations. Fourth, no account is possible of the fact that the partitive/pseudo-partitive alternation fails to operate across a PP node if no movement of *pas* is posited. Finally, if Pollock's claim is strictly adhered to, a subset of negative imperative constructions require us to posit an additional occurence of NegP which is totally arbitrary and avoidable, as are all the above problems, if, instead, *pas* is generated in a position lower than SpecNeg and subsequently raised to SpecNeg.

• Some of the material in this article has been presented to audiences in Catalonia (see Rowlett (1992b; 1993b)) and the UK. The article itself has benefited from the comments of an anonymous *CWPL* reviewer for which I am grateful. I shall doubtlessly regret not heeding all the advice given. The usual disclaimers apply.

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