

Expletive Negation in Exclamatives - Evidence from Hungarian

Anna Huszár¹ & Tamás Halm^{1,2}

1: Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Budapest)

2: Research Institute for Linguistics (Budapest)

SinFonIJA 13

September 24-26, 2020

Research Institute for Linguistics,

Budapest, Hungary

1. Introduction
2. General Overview of Data
3. Surprise Negation Sentences
4. Wh-Exclamatives
5. Theoretical Implications

Introduction

What is Expletive Negation?

- Expletive Negation: negative marker seems to have no truth-conditional effect on interpretation:

(1) *Je crains qu'elle **ne** vienne.*

I fear that'she not come.SUBJ.3SG

'I am afraid that she comes.'

(2) *Che cosa **non** mi a detto Gianni!*

what thing not to.me has told John

'What (surprising) things John told me!'

(3) *Gianni è più alto di quanto **non** sia Maria.*

Gianni is taller than of how.much not be.SUBJ.3SG Maria.

'John is taller than Mary.'

Expletive Negation: The Big Questions

- Is expletive negation really negation?
- If so, what is being negated?
- If not, what is going on?
- Does the negative marker occupy the same syntactic position in expletive negation and in standard negation?
- Is there some mapping between the syntactic position of the negative marker and its interpretation (standard negation vs. expletive negation vs. metalinguistic negation)?

- Expletive negation in wh-exclamatives:

(4) *(hogy) János miket el **nem** olvasott!*

that John what.PL PRT not read

'What (surprising, unexpected) things John has read!'

- Expletive negation in surprise negation sentences:

(5) *(hát) **nem** el felejtettem a PIN-kódomat!?*

well not PRT forgot.1SG the PIN-code.my

'I forgot my PIN-code! (unexpectedly)'

- Provide a syntactic (and semantic-pragmatic) account for Expletive Negation in wh-exclamatives and in surprise negation sentences in Hungarian
- Fill an empirical gap by looking at both syntax and semantics/pragmatics and by looking at various types of expletive negation
- See if this gets us closer to an answer to the Big Questions
- Spell out how our findings fit with current claims in the literature

Espinal (2000)

The negative marker occupies the same syntactic position in Standard as well as Expletive Negation (Neg⁰ of NegP above TP)

Greco (2019)

Negator merged in v*P phase gets us Standard Negation, negator merged in CP phase gets us Expletive Negation. (Caveat: only examined Surprise Negation Sentences.)

Delfitto, Melloni and Vender (2019)

Expletive negation is a truth-value reversal operation just like Standard Negation, with the difference that it operates on presuppositions and implicatures, not the assertion itself. (Caveat: syntactic analysis left for later work.)

Hungarian has 3 negation positions:

[TopP* ... [SDP nem ... [NegP nem ... [TP [nem+T⁰ ...]]]]]

EN (SNEGs) SN

EN (wh-excl. a.o.)

There is a mapping between syntax and semantics:

- High Neg position (Spec,SDP): negation at the level of presuppositions
(Expletive Negation in surprise negation sentences)
- Middle Neg position (Spec,NegP): negation at the level of propositions
(Standard Negation)
- Low Neg position (head-adjunction to T⁰): negation at the level of implicatures
(Expletive Negation in wh-exclamatives a.o.)

General Overview of Data

Verb – verbal particle inversion: negation-induced movement of V to Neg⁰
(Surányi 2002) or NN⁰ (Olsvay 2000, É. Kiss 2008):

(6) a. *János el olvasott sok könyvet.*

John PRT read many book

'John read many books.'

b. *János **nem** olvasott el sok könyvet.*

John not read PRT many book

'John did not read many books.'

(7) [**TopP** János [**NegP** nem [**NNP** olvasott [**TP** el olvasott János sok könyvet]]]]]

(8) *(hogy) János miket el (nem) olvasott!*

that John what.PL PRT not read

'What (surprising, unexpected) things John has read!'

- optionally introduced by the complementizer *hogy* 'that'
- no verb – verbal particle inversion
- negator wedged between the verbal particle and the verb

Expletive Negation in Surprise Negation Sentences (SNEGs)

(9) *(hát) János nem el olvasott egy könyvet!?*

well John not PRT read a book

'John read a book! (surprisingly, as no one expected him to read a book)'

- the complementizer *hogy* 'that' is not allowed, only the discourse particle *hát* 'well' expressing surprise/hesitation
- no verb – verbal particle inversion, negator precedes verbal particle

Interim summary:

- **Standard Negation: Neg V PRT**
- **Expletive Negation (wh-excl.): PRT Neg V**
- **Expletive Negation (SNEGs): Neg PRT V**

Surprise Negation Sentences

Surprise Negation Sentences - A Detailed Look I.

(10) *(hát) János nem otthon felejtette a kulcsát!?*

well John not at.home left the key.his

'John left his keys at home! (surprisingly)'

(11) *(hát) János nem el felejtette nekem a találkozót!?*

well John not PRT forgot me the meeting

'John forgot the meeting on me! (surprisingly)'

(12) *(hát) János nem el ütött valakit/*senkit!?*

well John not PRT hit somebody/nobody

'John hit someone! (surprisingly)'

- particular intonational pattern: blend of exclamative and question
- Ethical Dative (11)
- the negation is propositionally inert, it does not allow NPIs (12)
- We adopt DMV's proposal: EN in SNEGs negates the presupposition that the proposition is a member of the set of propositions likely to be true.

Surprise Negation Sentences - A Detailed Look II.

Topicalization

- (13) a. *Hát nem el vesztette a kulcsát János!?*
well not PRT lost the key.his John
- b. *Hát János nem el vesztette a kulcsát!?*
well John not PRT lost the key.his
- c. **Hát nem János el vesztette a kulcsát!?*
well not John PRT lost the key.his
'John lost his keys! (surprisingly)'

Sentence adverbials

- (14) *Hát erre véletlenül nem le vertem a poharat!?*
well then accidentally not down beat the glass
'Then I accidentally smashed the glass! (surprisingly)'

Surprise Negation Sentences - A Detailed Look III.

Focusing

(15) *Hát nem pont a helyemre parkolt le!?*

well not exactly the place.my.unto parked PRT

'It was exactly in my spot that he parked his car! (surprisingly)'

Standard and Expletive Negation: evidence against a raising analysis

(16) *Csak azért jöttem ma be az intézetbe, hogy találkozzak*

just because came today PRT the institute.into that meet

a professzorral, hát erre nem (pont ma) nem jött be!?

the professor.with well then not exactly today not came PRT

'The only reason I came to the institute today was to meet the professor, and it was exactly today that she did not come! (surprisingly)'

The negator is above the quantifier field:

- (17) *Nyomatékosan meg kértem minden diákomat, hogy ma jöjjön*
Strongly PRT asked every student.my that today come
be az órára: Hát erre nem ketten is pont ma nem
PRT the class.onto well then not two too today not came
jöttek be!?
PRT

'I asked all my students emphatically that today they should visit the class: well as many as two of them skipped the class exactly today! (surprisingly)'

Position of expletive negator in surprise negation sentences:

- precedes standard negators (NegP)
- precedes focused elements (FocP)
- precedes preverbal quantifiers (QP)
- follows topics (TopP) and sentence adverbials (also in the topic field)

Stress-assignment: Neg in surprise negation sentences is predicate-external:

- (18) a. *Mari 'nem jött el.*
Mary not came PRT
'Mary did not come.'
- b. *(hát) Mari 'nem 'el jött!*
well Mary not PRT came
'Mary did come. (surprisingly)'

Proposed structure: [TopP* [XP nem [QP [FocP [NegP [TP ...]]]]]]

- **Similar** to Greco (2019)'s analysis: the negator is externally merged outside the extended VP (note though that this will turn out to be the correct analysis for surprise negation sentences only).
- **Different** from Greco (2019)'s analysis: focusing is perfectly OK in Hungarian surprise negation sentences, and there is no indication that the whole VP is focused.
- **Question:** What is X in XP?

... a dedicated functional projection?

Potential candidate: **Speaker Deixis Phrase** (Haegeman 2006, É. Kiss 2010)

(cf. also TypeP in Gyuris & Gärtner 2012). **Pros:**

- exactly the right position: {TopP*|sentence adverbial*} > **SDP** > Predicate
- EN in surprise negation sentences is closely connected to the point of view of the speaker and it has an evaluative function
- Abels (2005): Neg in EN is adjoined to an evaluative mood head: in SNEGs, EN might flip evaluation from likely to unlikely

... adjunction?

- **Pros:** might fit with Surányi (2002)'s analysis of Metalinguistic Neg.
- **Cons:** Expletive N \neq Metalinguistic N neither in SNEGs nor in general

Wh-Exclamatives

- (19) *(hogy) János miket el (nem) olvasott!*
that John what.PL.ACC PRT not read.PAST.3SG
'What (surprising, unexpected) things John has read!'

- optionally introduced by the complementizer *hogy* 'that'
- no verb – verbal particle inversion
- negator wedged between the verbal particle and the verb

Two conditions for the (optional) availability of EN:

- **Scalarity on an external level** (Nouwen & Chernilovskaya 2015): an event is compared to alternative events

External scalarity: event on a scale with alternative events (20)

Internal scalarity: wh-referent on a scale wrt to property (21)

(20) *(Hogy) mik meg (nem) történnek!*

that what.PL PRT not happen

'What surprising things happen!'

(21) *(Hogy) milyen ügyesen (*nem) táncolsz!*

that how well not dance

'Just how well you are dancing!'

Availability of a non-episodic (possibly universal or generic) reading:

- (22) a. **?(hogy) mi meg **nem** történik!*
that what PRT not happens
'What a (surprising) thing happens!'
- b. *(hogy) mik meg **nem** történnek!*
that what.PL PRT not happens
'What (surprising) things happen!'
- c. *(hogy) mi minden meg **nem** történik! (cf. Bartos 2020)*
that what all PRT not happens
'What (surprising) things happen!'
- d. *(hogy) mi meg **nem** történik manapság!*
that what PRT not happens these.days
'What (surprising) things happen these days!'

Position of the wh-phrase:

- Following Lipták (2006), we assume that in wh-exclamatives the wh-expression is moved to a **quantifier position** (manyP / QP):
[CP [TopP [**QP wh** [TP]]]]
- This is in line with the observation that the wh-phrase has a **quantificational interpretation**: plural, universal or generic

Position of the negator:

- We argue that instead of heading its own projection, as it does in the case of standard negation, it is rather **adjoined to the T head**:
[CP hogy [TopP János [QP miket [TP el [T' [**T⁰ nem olvasott**]] [VP]]]]]]
that John what.PL PRT not read

- É. Kiss (2015) proposed the same structure to account for the word order properties of standard negation in **Old Hungarian**.
- Hungarian is in this respect similar to **French**, where in the course of **Negative Cycle**, the old, abandoned morphosyntactic configuration has been repurposed as the locus of EN:

(25) a. *Elle ne vient pas.*

she not comes not

'She does not come.' (SN)

b. *Je crains qu'elle ne vienne.*

I fear that'she not come.SUBJ.3SG

'I am afraid that she comes.' (EN)

- Exclamatives are **factive**: they cannot be embedded under non-factive predicates (26):

(26) **Úgy tudom, hogy hány filmet meg néztél!* (Lipták 2006)
so know.1SG that how.many film PRT watched
'I know that how many films you have watched!'

- Exclamatives convey a **conventional implicature** that the proposition is **on the top of a scale of alternative propositions** in terms of noteworthiness or surprise factor (Portner & Zanuttini 2000)
- We follow DMV (2019) in assuming that in wh-exclamatives (and in general – except surprise negation sentences), „EN corresponds to **pre-encoding implicature cancellation** syntactically.”

(27) *Mari miket meg (nem) tesz a diákjaiért!*

Mary what.PL PRT not does the student.3SG.PL.for

'What (extreme) things Mary does for her students!'

In (27) there is a **set of things** Mary might do for her students: {a, b, c, ... z}

Assertion: Mary does some things (e.g. {a,b,c}) for her students

Implicature: Mary does not do the other things {d, e, f...} and certainly not everything {a to z} for her students

EN cancels this implicature, giving us the quasi-universal reading: Mary does more things for her students than one would expect, potentially even everything

Theoretical Implications

Hungarian has 3 negation positions:

[TopP* ... [SDP nem ... [NegP nem ... [TP [nem+T⁰ ...]]]]]

EN (SNEGs) SN

EN (wh-excl. a.o.)

There is a mapping between syntax and semantics:

- High Neg position (Spec,SDP): negation at the level of presuppositions
(Expletive Negation in surprise negation sentences)
- Middle Neg position (Spec,NegP): negation at the level of propositions
(Standard Negation)
- Low Neg position (head-adjunction to T⁰): negation at the level of implicatures
(Expletive Negation in wh-exclamatives a.o.)

Implications of the Proposed Analysis

- Expletive Negation in Hungarian is not a case of raising (cf. Abels 2005 on Russian)
- Expletive Negation in surprise negation sentences involves the external merge of a negator in the topic field, but it does not involve focusing of the VP (cf. Greco 2019)
- Greco (2019)'s phase-theoretic account for surprise negation sentences does not carry over to expletive negation in general in Hungarian
- special negation sentences seem to be different from the other types of expletive negation (wh-excl., until-clauses etc.): different semantic-pragmatic effect (noted by DMV 2019) and different syntax (shown here)

- Abels, Klaus. 2005. 'Expletive negation' in Russian: A Conspiracy Theory. *Journal of Slavic Linguistics* 13. 5-74. | Delfitto, D., C. Melloni, M. Vender. 2019. The (en)rich(ed) Meaning of Expletive Negation. *Evolutionary Linguistic Theory* 1: 57 – 89. | Espinal, M. T. 2000. Expletive Negation, Negative Concord and Feature Checking. *Catalan Working Papers in Linguistics*; Vol.: 8. 8. | É. Kiss, K. 2008. Tagadás vagy egyeztetés? A senki, semmi típusú névmásokról [Negation or concord? On the senki 'nobody', semmi 'nothing' type pronouns]. *Magyar Nyelv* 104: 129-143. | É. Kiss, K. 2010. An Adjunction Analysis of Quantifiers and Adverbials in the Hungarian Sentence, *Lingua* 120 506-526. | É.Kiss, K. 2015. Negation in Hungarian. In: Matti, M., Tamm, A., Wagner-Nagy, B. (eds.). *Negation in Uralic Languages*. John Benjamins. Amsterdam. 219 – 238. | Gärtner, H-M., Gyuris, B. 2012. Pragmatic Markers in Hungarian: Some Introductory Remarks. *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*, 59 (4). pp. 387-426. | Greco, M. 2019. On the Syntax of Surprise Segation Sentences: A Case Study on Expletive Negation. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*. DOI: 10.1007/s11049-019-09459-6. | Gyuris, B. 2016. A magyar nyelv tagadószós eldöntendő kérdő mondatainak jelentéséhez. *Jelentés és Nyelvhasználat* 3: 169–190. | Haegeman, L., 2006. Conditionals, Factives, and the Left Periphery. *Lingua* 116, 1651–1669. | Horn, L. 1989. *A Natural History of Negation*. Chicago, IL. University of Chicago Press. | Kálmán, L. (ed.). 2001. *Magyar leíró nyelvtan: Mondattan I*. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest. | Lipták, A. 2006. Word Order in Hungarian Exclamatives. *Acta Linguistica Hungarica* 53: 343–391. | Nouwen, R., Chernilovskaya, A. 2015. Two Types of Exclamatives. *Linguistic Variation* 15:2, pp.201-224. | Olsvay, Cs. 2000. *A Syntactic Analysis of Negative Universal Quantifiers in Hungarian*. MA Thesis, ELTE, Budapest. | Simonyi, Zs. 1902. A magyar szórend VI.: A kirekesztő (tagadó) szórend. *Magyar Nyelvőr* 31:359 – 79. | Surányi, B. 2002. *Multiple Operator Movements in Hungarian*. PhD Dissertation, Utrecht: LOT. | Ürögdi, B. 2013. Adverbial clauses with-ig and the "Until-puzzle". *Acta Linguistica Hungarica*. 60. 303-363. 10.1556/ALing.60.2013.3.3. | Zanuttini, R., Portner, P. 2000. The Characterization of Exclamative Clauses in Paduan. *Language*. 76. 10.2307/417396.

Thank you for your kind attention!

Externally negated questions (Gyuris 2016) vs. SNEGs:

(28) a. *Hát 'János 'nem el utazott?*

well John not PRT travelled

'Was it not our common knowledge that John had travelled away?'

b. *Hát 'János 'nem 'el utazott!?*

well John not PRT travelled

'Well John travelled away! (surprisingly)'

- the neg particle occupies a **similar**, predicate-external **structural position** in both, but their **prosody is different**
- SNEGs **assert** p whereas questions do not
- **Ethical Dative**: SNEGs only, **-e** particle: questions only

Aside I. - Externally Negated Questions

- silent matrix clause hyp. (Gyuris 2016, Simonyi 1902) **untenable** in SNEGS:

(29) a. *Hát János nem (úgy volt, hogy) el utazott?*

well John not like was that PRT travelled

'Was it not supposed to be the case that John had travelled away?'

b. **?Hát János nem (az történt, hogy) el utazott?*

well John not that happened that PRT travelled

'Well what happened was that John had travelled away!

(surprisingly)'

Metalinguistic negation (Surányi 2002):

- (30) *János nem fel hívott valakit/*senkit, hanem föl hívott*
John not PRT called somebody/nobody but.rather PRT called
*valakit/*senkit.*
somebody/nobody

'John did not call somebody, he called somebody!'

- (31) **Nem János fel hívott valakit, hanem János föl hívott*
not John PRT called somebody but.rather John PRT called
valakit.
somebody

'John did not call somebody, he called somebody!'

- (32) *Nem **nem** jött el, hanem meg halt.* (Surányi 2003:116, fn.15)
not not came PRT but.rather PRT died
'He did not not come, he actually died!'

Similarities between EN and MN:

- lack of VM-V inversion
- non-licensing of NPIs and acceptability of PPIs (30)
- *nem* has to be below TopP (30 and 31)
- can be combined with SN (32)

Differences between EN and MN:

- SNEGS lack the **corrective-contrastive flavour** (Horn 1989: not X but Y) evident in MN
- In MN, the contrasted-corrected element is **focused** (either focused-moved or in-situ), no such obligatory focusing in SNEGS
- MN and SNEG-EN **cannot be present together**, but this may be due pragmatic reasons (corrective vs. surprise-exclamative)

(33) a. *Hát 'nem 'le ejtette a tányért!?*

well not PRT dropped the plate

'He dropped the plate! (surprisingly)'

b. *Nem LE EJTETTE a tányért, hanem FÖLDHÖZ VÁGTA.*

not PRT dropped the plate but.rather ground.to cut

'He did not drop the plate, he throw it to the ground.'

Minor remark I: Copula+Neg incorporation: Not just a matter of PF?

The 3rd person present tense indicative copula is **incorporated** into the Neg particle:

- (34) a. *János nem volt otthon.*
John not was at.home
'John was not at home.'
- b. **János nem van otthon.*
John not is at.home
'John is not at home.'
- c. *János nincs otthon.*
John not.is at.home
'John is not at home.'

Minor remark I: Copula+Neg incorporation: Not just a matter of PF?

Incorporation is **optional** in wh-exclamatives (35) and **impossible** in SNEGs (36):

(35) a. *(hogy) mik nincsenek!*

that what.PL not.are

What (surprising) things there are!

b. *(hogy) mik nem vannak!*

that what.PL not are

What (surprising) things there are!

(36) a. *Hát nem van egy testvérem!?* (*actually attested ex.*)

well not is a brother.1SG

'(It turns out) I have a brother! (unexpectedly)'

b. *#Hát nincs egy testvérem!?*

well not.is a brother.1SG

intended: '(It turns out) I have a brother! (unexpectedly)'

For some speakers of Hungarian, *nem* in the standard negation position (NegP) can also be interpreted as EN:

(37) a. *Hogy miket össze nem hordasz!* (EN, standard dialect)

well what.PL PRT not gather.2SG

'What (nonsensical) things you are saying!'

b. *Hogy miket nem hordasz össze!* (EN, innovative dialect)

well what.PL not gather.2SG PRT

'What (nonsensical) things you are saying!'

Minor remark II: An Innovation

- In many languages (e.g. Italian acc. to DMV (2019:80-81)), SN and EN occupy the **same morphosyntactic position** and the interpretation of the negator as either SN or EN is a function of context and pragmatics.
- Gugán (this conference) has argued that this was the case in Old H.
- Modern Hungarian seems similar to French (old abandoned Neg position repurposed for EN)
- Post-Modern Hungarian may represent a return to Italian-style shared syntactic position:

	<u>Old H.</u>	<u>Modern H.</u>	<u>Post-Modern H.</u>
lower Neg (head-adj. to V)	SN, EN	EN	
higher Neg (NegP)		SN	SN, EN

On Hungarian

- Kálmán (2001) gives a brief description of certain empirical facts (without analysis).
- Ürögdi (2013) discusses EN in *amíg* 'until' clauses but she does not discuss exclamatives.

Gaps in the literature

- Greco (2019) makes a general syntactic claim by looking only at SNEGS, but not any other types of EN.
- Delfitto, Melloni and Vender (2019) make a general semantic-pragmatic claim (encompassing all types of EN), but leave syntactic analysis for later work.