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Constituent negation meets focus

In Hungarian there can be a maximum of three negative items *nem* 'not' in front of the finite verb, that is, at the left periphery, in addition to possible constituent (or rather, lexical) negation occurring, among other contexts, inside DPs to the right of the finite verb. I will attempt to reduce this proliferation of negatives to a single negative operator in every clause.

Since the three preverbal negatives occupy different positions, it is possible to attribute two of them, focus negation and propositional negation, to different clauses (or phases), based on evidence from negative concord (Kenesei 2007). This time negated counting quantifiers are compared with negated universal quantifiers. Counting quantifiers, e.g. *kevés* 'few' and *ritkán* 'seldom', are obligatorily focussed, unless another constituent occurs in the designated focus position. Negated universal quantifiers cannot occur in postverbal positions under any circumstances. While none of these negated quantifiers can license negative concord, the two groups of quantifiers differ as to their options of stress patterns, and also with respect to the occurrence of possible clause-mate negation.

I will argue that both types of quantifiers arise through constituent (i.e., lexical) negation, but while negated universal quantifiers carry a negative force and therefore must move and be checked at the left periphery, negated counting quantifiers are like other instances of lexical negation: they have no negative force.