Properties of negation in Afrikaans and Italian

Karin Robbers

0. Introduction

Over the years negation in Afrikaans has been a popular topic in linguistics (e.g. Pauwels 1958, Uys 1962 and Heiberg 1974). The only study on this topic in a fairly modern version of GG that I know of is Waher (1978) which is extensively quoted by Ponelis (1978) and de Stadier (1989). Recent development in the research of negation, which was started by Pollock (1989), makes it interesting to have a fresh look at Afrikaans. It has a double negation as in for instance the Romance languages, but the positions of the negative elements differ from those in the latter languages. I will show on the basis of Zanuttini (1991) that negation in Afrikaans can be compared to that in Italian.

1. An overview of Zanuttini’s theory and the Afrikaans data

Zanuttini (1991) assumes that sentential negation markers, like Italian non and French pas, appear within a functional projection NegP. A NegP can be realized in two structurally distinct positions, namely above TP (NegP-1) and below TP (NegP-2). Within NegP’s there are two positions in which the negative marker can appear: the spec-position and the head-position. Italian non for instance is the head of NegP-1 and French pas is the specifier of NegP-2. We mainly concentrate on NegP-1. In languages with a NegP-1, n-words (i.e. words such as nobody and nothing) must be accompanied by a preverbal negative element when they appear postverbally. In Italian, if n-words are preverbal they occur on their own (all the Italian examples except the ones in section 3.2. are taken from Zanuttini):

1 I would like to thank Raffaella Zanuttini, Hans Broekhuis, Hans den Besten, Marcel den Dikken, Reineke Bok-Bennema and the audiences of the O.O.O. and the TIN-dag (Utrecht, January 1992) for their comments and my informants Marina Nespor, Laura v.d. Langenberg and Anita Jonker for their invaluable help. This research was supported by the Linguistic Research Foundation, which is funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, NWO.
Zanuttini reasons as follows: postverbal n-words take sentential scope only if they undergo LF-raising to spec-NegP; TP is a barrier for this movement; Neg selects TP and when it is lexically realized it is able to L-mark TP thus making LF-raising of n-words possible.

In Afrikaans n-words virtually always co-occur with a negative marker, namely *nie (from now on *nie-2). The n-words behave roughly like they do in Dutch. They preferably follow sentential adverbials like *waarskynlik ‘probably’ and precede VP adverbials like *vriendelik ‘friendly’ (2a). They can also, although sometimes with some difficulty, be scrambled (2b) or appear in subject-position (2c), and of course they can be topicalized (2d) (Afrikaans is a V-second language).

\[\text{(2)}\]
\[a\] dat Jan *waarskynlik niemand vriendelik aankyk nie
\text{that Jan probably nobody friendly looks-at Neg}
\text{'that Jan probably doesn't look friendly at anyone'}
\[b\] dat ek niemand daar *waarskynlik 'n guns mee
doen nie
dat I nobody there probably a favour with
do Neg
\text{'that I probably don't do anyone a favour with that'}
\[c\] dat niemand *waarskynlik langs hom wil sit nie
\text{that nobody probably next him wants sit Neg}
\text{'that probably noone wants to sit next to him'}
\[d\] Niemand het dit gedoen nie
\text{Noone has it done Neg 'Noone has done it'}

*Nie-2 follows V in sentence final position (Afrikaans is an OV-language), as can be seen in (2), and extraposed PP's and CP's:

\[\text{(3)}\]
\[a\] dat niemand glo dat hy dit gedoen het nie
\text{that noone believes that he it done has Neg}
\text{'that noone believes that he has done it'}
\[b\] dat ek nie bang is vir 'n spook nie
\text{that I not afraid am of a ghost Neg}
\text{'that I'm not afraid of a ghost'}

Unlike Italian *non, *nie-2 cannot express sentential negation on its own. It needs a second negative element and when there is no n-word in the sentence a second negative marker *nie appears (from now on *nie-1). This negative
marker behaves like niet in Dutch and nie in West-Flemish (Haegeman 1991). It always follows sentential adverbials (which I assume are adjuncts to TP; cf. Kayne (1989) and Haegeman (1991)) and precedes VP adverbials. This makes it plausible that this negative marker belongs to NegP-2.

(4) a Maria non ha telefonato a sua madre
   'Maria hasn’t called her mother'
   b Maria het haar moeder *(nie) opgebel nie
   Maria has her mother *(not) called-up Neg

When an n-word and nie-2 turn up next to each other at PF nie-2 can be deleted. When nie-2 and nie-1 are adjacent at PF nie-2-deletion is obligatory:

(5) a dat ek niemand sien *(nie)
    that I noone see *(Neg)
   b Ek sien niemand (nie)
    I see noone (Neg)
   c dat ek hom nie sien *(nie)
    that I him not see *(Neg)
   d Ek sien hom nie (*nie)
    I see him not (*Neg)

This phenomenon is of no importance to us because this a mere PF phenomenon. I will provisionally assume that an optional deletion-rule and a filter will account for these facts.

We have seen that Afrikaans has a negative marker (nie-2) that occurs with other negative elements and appears to have a high position in the tree. In this respect it resembles non. Therefore, I propose that nie-2 heads a NegP-1 as does Italian non. The languages have sentence-structures as in (6). In Italian the head of the NegP is on the left of TP and in Afrikaans it is on the right.

(6) a [CP .. C [NegP .. non [TP .. T XP]]] (Italian)
   b [CP .. C [NegP .. [TP .. XP T] nie]] (Afrikaans)

2. Arguments in favour of a NegP-1

2.1. Italian. Zanuttini argues that Neg selects TP as its complement. By assuming this, she is able to explain why negation cannot be found in contexts without a TP. In this way the impossibility of negation occurring with ‘true’• imperatives and past participles can be understood.
(7a) and (7b) show that the 'true' imperative form of the verb (that is the form of the verb which is uniquely used for expressing the imperative) cannot be combined with negation, whereas negation may occur with verbal forms that are borrowed from the paradigm of the indicative (7c) and (7d). The negation of (7a) is expressed by means of a suppletive form of the verb, the infinitive (7e).

(7)  

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Telefona!</td>
<td>'Call!' (2nd sg.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>*Non telefona!</td>
<td>'Don't call!' (2nd sg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Telefonate!</td>
<td>'Call!' (2nd pl.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Non telefonate!</td>
<td>'Don't call!' (2nd pl.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Non le telefonare!</td>
<td>'Don't call her' (2nd sg.)</td>
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In English the negative marker can appear either on the auxiliary, as in (8a), or on the past participle, as in (8b). In Italian only the equivalent of (8a) is grammatical. Non can precede the auxiliary but it cannot immediately precede the past participle as shown in (9).

(8)  

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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Mary hasn't always paid taxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Mary has always not paid taxes</td>
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(9)  

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<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Maria non ha sempre pagato le tasse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Maria ha sempre non pagato le tasse</td>
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2.2. Afrikaans. In Afrikaans we find the same facts as in Italian. I first discuss imperatives. Afrikaans has no distinct verbal form for the imperative but still the imperative cannot occur with negation, as can be seen in (10):

(10)  

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>*Gesels nie in die gange nie!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk not in the corridors Neg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Don't talk in the corridors!'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>*Slaan nie vir hom nie!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hit not ObjM him Neg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Don't hit him!'</td>
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In fact, Afrikaans has no verbal inflection except for a past participle inflection on all the verbs, a past tense inflection on modals, a past and present tense inflection on the verb wees 'to be' and a finite inflection on the verb hé 'to have'.
Afrikaans has two strategies for negating imperatives. There is an infinitival imperative (11a), as in Italian, and there is one with the modal moet 'must' (11b), which is comparable to the imperative in Paduan (12) (cf. Kayne 1991).

(11) a Nie in die gange gesels nie!
   b Moet nie in die gange gesels nie!

(12) Non sta parlare!

As for past participles, the following argument can be constructed. If nie-2 could be combined with past participles then (14a) would be a possible structure of sentence (13a). If that were correct then (13b) or (13c) should be possible subordinate clauses of Afrikaans. In (13b) we see the D-structure order and if there is raising without inversion (13c) is predicted. However, these sentences are ungrammatical. Only (13d) is a grammatical subordinate sentence. This sentence corresponds to structure (14b).

(13) a Ek het hom nie gesien nie
   I have him not seen Neg 'I haven't seen him'
   b *dat ek hom nie gesien nie het
   c *dat ek hom nie t_i (nie) gesien_t_i het
   d dat ek hom nie gesien het nie

(14) a [CP ek [C' het_t_i [TP [VP [NegP [XP hom nie gesien] nie] t_i]]]]
   b [CP ek [C' het_t_i [NegP [TP [VP [XP hom nie gesien] t_i]] nie]]]

Finally we can also illustrate the inability of nie-2 to occur without TP with the absolute with-construction. Beukema and Hoekstra (1983:533) argue for structures for the Dutch variant in which there is no TP present:

(15) a Met Piet in die doelhok wen ons seker
   with Piet in the goal win we surely
   'With Piet in the goal we are sure to win'
   b [PP met [PP Piet in die doelhok]]

In (16) we see that without nie-2 the sentences are grammatical and as predicted if nie-2 occurs inside the PP the sentences are ungrammatical:

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3 We know that we are dealing with an infinitive here because it has not undergone V-second.
It is also impossible to combine an n-word which occurs within the PP with nie-2 outside the PP, as (17) shows. This means that the n-word cannot undergo LF-raising to spec NegP. This is in accordance with the observation that at S-structure no extractions can take place out of the absolute with-construction. This can be seen in (18).

(17) a *Met niemand (*nie) in die doelhok (*nie) verloor ons nie
b *Met niks (*nie) in jou maag (*nie) sal jy weinig presteer nie

(18) *Daar sal jy mee in jou maag weinig presteer there will you with in your stomach little achieve

What we have here is an exception to the rule that n-words always occur with nie-2. This is, however, not a real problem because in this case the n-words cannot have sentential scope. These sentences are therefore comparable to the Italian example in (19):

(19) è rimasto con niente in mano
he-is left with nothing in hand
‘He was left with nothing’

3. Differences

Until now Afrikaans and Italian seem to behave alike. There are, however, important differences. I will discuss the Doubly Filled NegP phenomenon, the use of n-words in isolation and constituent negation.

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4 Smits and Vat (1985) mention that extraction out of the with-construction is sometimes possible. What is relevant at this moment is that in this case extraction is impossible.

5 This makes us wonder why the imperatives do not improve when we remove nie-2. So what is the difference between (16) and *Gesels nie in die gange! At this moment I have no answer to this problem.
3.1. The Doubly Filled NegP Filter. We have seen how Zanuttini explains the cooccurrence of non and postverbal n-words. Neg has to be lexical to be able to L-mark TP. However, she gives no explanation for the obligatory absence of non when the n-words occur preverbally (20). In that case non is not necessary because there is no LF-raising, but why is it prohibited? It is even more problematic in view of the fact that this is grammatical in other languages, like Catalan, as can be seen in (21).

(20) *Nessuno non ha visto Mario
Nobody Neg has seen Mario

(21) Res no us dirá
nothing Neg you will-he-say
‘He will not say anything to you’ (Bosque 1980:38)

This is not the only problem Zanuttini’s theory meets. Why, for instance, is TP a barrier at LF for n-words but not for other quantifiers that undergo LF-raising? Why is TP a barrier for movement of n-words at LF but not at S-structure (cf. a nessuno (22))? And finally why is TP not a barrier for LF-movement of niente in (22):

(22) A nessuno ho detto niente del genere
to nobody I-have said nothing of sort
‘To nobody have I said anything of the sort’

Zanuttini’s tentative answers to some of these questions do not seem to be entirely satisfactory.6

If we look at the sentences in (20) en (21), a solution to our questions presents itself. When n-words are in spec NegP in Italian Neg must remain empty but in Catalan it can be lexically filled. This is reminiscent of the Doubly Filled COMP phenomenon (Chomsky and Lasnik 1977). In English in a Wh-CP either the head- or the spec-position can be lexically filled, but not both (23), whereas in Dutch the three possibilities exist (24):

(23) a I wonder if Paul Sheldon is able to write another Misery-novel
b I wonder what Annie Wilkes will do to him if he fails
c *I wonder how if I will be able to sleep tonight

6 The consequences of Zanuttini’s theory for (Romance) languages with a single negation are left out of consideration.
I vraag me af of Paul Sheldon in staat is een nieuw Misery-verhaal te schrijven.

b Ik vraag me af wat Annie Wilkes met hem zal doen als het hem niet lukt.

c Ik vraag me af hoe of ik vannacht zal slapen.

What I would like to suggest is that in Italian there exists a Doubly filled NegP Filter like in (25):

\[(25)\] Doubly Filled NegP Filter: 
$^[\text{NegP n-word} \ [\text{Neg n-marker}] \ [\text{TP} \ldots]]$

This answers our first question. We may now dispense with the idea of TP being a barrier. In Italian the head of the NegP is filled either with a negative marker or with an empty operator. The empty operator has to be licensed by an n-word in the spec-position under head-spec agreement at S-structure. This answers the remaining questions as well. This analysis does not imply however that there is no LF-movement.

An additional argument in favour of this analysis is that it enables us to give an account of the use of n-words in isolation. Consider the examples in (26) and (27); in Italian non is obligatorily absent, whereas in Afrikaans nie-2 is optionally present:

\[(26)\] a Chi ha telefonato? (*non) nessuno
‘Who has called?’ ‘Nobody’

b Che cosa hai detto? (*non) niente
‘What did you say?’ ‘Nothing’

\[(27)\] a Vir wie het jy gesien? Niemand (nie)
‘Who did you see?’ ‘Nobody’

b Wat het jy gesê? Niks (nie)
‘What did you say?’ ‘Nothing’

The optionality of nie-2 is due to the fact that the n-word and nie-2 are adjacent and as we have seen before nie-2 can then be deleted. From the fact that nie-2 is present here we may conclude that we are dealing with at least a NegP. The n-words could then be in spec NegP. It is reasonable to assume that Afrikaans and Italian do not differ in this respect. Like niemand and niks, nessuno and niente are in spec NegP. Whereas in Afrikaans the head is filled with nie-2, Neg is empty in Italian. Consequently I assume a structure like in (28):
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(28) a \([\text{NegP} \text{ nessuno } [\text{Neg' 0 (XP)}]]\) (Italian)
b \([\text{NegP} \text{ niemand } [\text{Neg' (XP) nie}]]\) (Afrikaans)

Of course I have to assume that there is also a TP present here for I argued that Neg always selects TP. This may gain support from the fact that we do not interpret the answer as if it were carrying no tense-index, but we interpret it as carrying the same tense-index as the question. If a dangling NegP-TP-clause seems unattractive we can also assume that there is a full CP present. A reasonable theory of ellipsis must then account for the fact that the greater part of the sentence must be phonetically empty.

3.2. Constituent negation. Constituent negation is another phenomenon where Afrikaans and Italian differ. It is often mentioned in the literature on negation, but generally nothing else is said about it than that it differs from sentential negation. And I agree that at first sight it seems different. The negation markers turn up in an unexpected position and seem to have scope over one constituent only and not the whole sentence. But still I would like to argue that constituent negation and sentential negation are one and the same.

Italian as well as Afrikaans have different syntactic ways of expressing constituent negation. I will discuss the construction in (29) first. Here the negative marker is on the negated constituent and the second part of the coordination is at the end of the sentence.

(29) a Nie Jan het die werk gedoen nie, maar Piet
not Jan has the work done Neg, but Piet
‘Not Jan has done the work, but Piet’
b Non Gianni ha fatto il lavoro, ma Pietro
‘Not Gianni has done the work, but Pietro’

(30) a *Nie Jan nie het die werk gedoen
b *Jan nie het die werk nie gedoen

There is an important difference between (29a) and (29b). In Italian it is non that links up with the NP and in Afrikaans it is nie-1 instead of nie-2 as expected. As we can see in (30) it is even impossible for nie-2 to form one constituent with the NP in this construction. Nie-2 has to appear in the same position as with sentential negation. So, in Afrikaans it looks as if there is a normal sentential NegP-1. We can compare the construction in (29a) with the
one in (31a). The interpretations of (29) and (31) are the same, but in (31) there is no doubt that we are dealing with sentential negation.

(31) a Ek het Jan nie gesien nie, maar Piet
    I have Jan not seen Neg, but Piet
    'I have't seen Jan, but Piet'
b Non ho visto Maria a scuola, ma in biblioteca
    not have seen Maria at school, but at library
    'I haven't seen Maria at school, but at the library'

3.2.1. Focus movement in Italian. Suppose Italian has an ordinary sentential NegP in (29b) just like I suggested for Afrikaans. Gianni is the focused element in the sentence. It can remain in its D-structure position as in (31b) or it can move to spec NegP as in (29b). In spec NegP negative incorporation takes place. Because the spec position is now filled the Doubly Filled NegP Filter ensures that the head of NegP remains empty. So non Gianni can be compared to nessuno as we can see in (32):

(32) a Non Gianni ha fatto il lavoro, ma Pietro
    'Not Gianni has done the work, but Pietro'
b Nessuno ha fatto il lavoro
    'Nobody has done the work'

We can find evidence that this line of reasoning is on the right track in (33) through (35). Like nessuno, non Maria cannot occur postverbally without non (33). If it appears postverbally with non (34), Maria naturally does not carry the negative marker because it is not in spec NegP. In (35) the negative element is in spec NegP. The advantage of this analysis is that non heads a NegP that always occurs with TP, whereas in other analysis we have on the one hand sentential negation where non selects TP and on the other hand constituent negation where non has no selectional restrictions. So (35) has a structure as given in (36):

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7 Direct coordination of the negated constituent and its positive counterpart is also possible as we can see in (i). I do not have much to say about this construction, because coordination is a phenomenon we still know little about. For the moment I assume that this construction can be compared to the use of n-words in isolation.

(i) a Hy moet hom deur sy verstand en nie deur sy hart nie laat lei
    he must him by his mind and not by his hart Neg get guide
    'He should let his mind and not his hart be his guide'
b Non Gianni, ma Pietro ha fatto il lavoro
    'Not Gianni, but Pietro has done the work'
3.2.2. *Focus movement in Afrikaans*. I have argued that in the case of constituent negation in Afrikaans and Italian we are dealing with a 'normal' NegP-1. In Italian the focused constituent can be moved to spec NegP where the negative marker is incorporated under head-spec agreement. This analysis cannot immediately account for the Afrikaans' facts. Constituents with a negative marker can follow the sentential adverbials (which I assume are adjoined to TP) and therefore do not seem to be in spec NegP-1:

\[
\text{dat hy waarskynlik nie Jan gesien het, maar Marie}
\]

'that he probably hasn't seen Jan, but Marie'

As I have already mentioned, n-words also prefer a position lower than TP in Afrikaans. I also suggested, in section 1, that besides NegP-1 Afrikaans has a NegP-2. So n-words in Afrikaans prefer to be in spec NegP-2 (cf. Haegeman (1991) for the same facts in West-Flemish), but as we have seen in section 1 they can also appear in other positions. Focus movement can now be applied in Afrikaans as in Italian. In Italian it is movement to spec NegP-1 and in Afrikaans it is movement to spec NegP-2, where negative incorporation takes place. So in (37) *nie Jan* occupies spec Neg-2 and *nie-final* is the head of NegP-1.
4. Summary

In this article evidence has been provided by the imperative construction, the past participle construction and the absolute with-construction that like Italian non, nie-2 is the head of NegP-1. Further, I have argued that Zanuttini’s way of deriving the distribution of non from the fact that TP is a barrier for LF-raising of n-words should be replaced by the Doubly Filled NegP Filter. Preverbal n-words in Italian and n-words in isolation occur in spec NegP. While Neg is lexically filled in Afrikaans the Doubly Filled NegP Filter ensures that in Italian it is empty in this case. Finally I have argued that constituent negation is sentential negation plus focus movement and negative incorporation. In Afrikaans the focused element moves to spec NegP-2 and in Italian it moves to spec NegP-1.

References