

A New Type of NPI Licensing Context: Evidence from French Subjunctive and *NE Explétif* *

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Abstract. The purpose of this paper is to propose a new type of NPI licensing context through French subjunctive and *ne explétif*. The distribution of NPIs on previous studies does not exactly correspond to negative function types. French subjunctive and *ne explétif* are good guidelines for reclassifying NPI licensing context. My classification is by a hierarchy of strength in negative force: *overtly negative proposition* > *negative entailment* > *negative implicature*. A new type of NPI licensing context is: (i) I-domain for negative implicature (ii) E-domain for negative entailment and (iii) overt negation.

Keywords: NPI licensing context, French subjunctive, *ne explétif*, negative force

1. Introduction

Despite their huge contribution, previous studies on NPI licensing context are problematic in that they treat it as a simple filter. Moreover some contexts are still unexplainable within them. My proposal in this paper can provide an answer of why they license NPIs, also explaining the unexplainable.

This paper is organized as follows: In section 2, I will briefly present the previous researches. In section 3, I show that French subjunctive is equivalent to nonveridicality specially focusing on its licensing property of weak NPIs. In section 4, I give you the answer of the question “why and where *ne expétif* comes about”. In section 5, I will propose a new type of NPI licensing context.

2. Previous Research

Among the studies of NPIs, downward entailment (DE, Ladusaw 1979, cited in 1996) is the first to show the property of NPI licensing context. Later on more accurate properties (Zwarts 1993 cited in Ladusaw 1996 and Nam 1998) were proposed, creating a hierarchy of negative

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expressions since DE simply distinguishes negation from affirmation. The followings are three negative functions (examples are from Lee 1999).

(1) Three negative functions

- (i) **Downward entailment** If A and B are two Boolean algebras, the function f from A into B is polarity reversing iff for any $a_1, a_2 \in A$, if $a_1 \leq a_2$, then $f(a_2) \leq f(a_1)$. e.g. at most (weak)
- (ii) A functor f is **anti-additive** iff $f(X \vee Y) = f(X) \wedge f(Y)$. e.g. no, before, every (strong)
- (iii) A functor f is **antimorphic** iff f is anti-additive and additionally $f(X \wedge Y) = f(X) \vee f(Y)$. e.g. not (the strongest)

Zwarts (1995) added here a weaker function, that is ‘nonveridicality’ and Giannakodou(2002, 2007) developed it with Greek subjunctive mood. Zwarts' (1995) definition about nonveridicality is as below:

(2) Nonveridicality

Let O be a monadic sentential operator. O is said to be veridical just in case $Op \Rightarrow p$ is logically valid. If O is not veridical, then O is nonveridical. A nonveridical operator called averidical iff $Op \Rightarrow \sim p$ is logically valid.

Despite the fact that three negative functions and nonveridicality have been instrumental in our understanding of NPI licensing context, some problems remain unsolved: emotive factive predicates that are veridical but license NPIs (e.g. I am happy to get any ticket), and some nonveridical predicates that partially (e.g. % I hope there is any food left) license NPIs. Moreover there are many examples which do not exactly correspond to the typology based on negative functions. French subjunctive and *ne explétif* can guide us to reconsider the previous unsolved problems about NPI licensing context.

3. French subjunctive and nonveridicality

3.1. French subjunctive, nonveridicality and the weak NPIs

Traditionally indicatives represent the act or state as an objective fact while subjunctives¹ express subjective actions such as will/wanting, emotion, doubt, possibility, necessity, judgement, comparatives. French subjunctive also appears after the conjunctions like 'before',

¹ As its name shows, subjunctive is always found in dependent clauses introduced by a subordinate conjunction *que* 'that'.

'except', which license strong NPIs. Intuitively subjunctive is linked with nonveridicality. With this operator, Giannakidou (2007) clearly posits the division between the veridical and the nonveridical in connection with indicatives and subjunctives. If a propositional attitude verb has an availability of at least one truth inference about its complement, it will be veridical and takes the indicative: if not, it will be nonveridical and takes the subjunctive. In this sense, verbs or expressions which license weak NPIs (e.g. will/wanting, emotion, doubt, possibility, necessity, judgement, modal, questions) and even some conjunctions (e.g. before, except) which license strong NPIs are both nonveridical. The example (3) is the usage of the indicative and the subjunctive.

(3) a. Je **désire** qu'il **viene**.

I wish that he come-Sub.

'I wish that he comes.'

b. J' **espère** qu'il **viendra**.

I hope that he come-Ind.-Future.

'I hope that he will come.'

Why do the pairs (3a)-(3b) take different moods in their complements? Guillaumean concept of *temps opérative* 'operative time' (Guillaume 1970) can give us an answer. According to him, all human mental operations need operative time, though it is very instant, and if we differentiate this time, we can see several phases. From each phase, we can read one's mental state or motive from which a particular expression is produced. In this sense 'Espérer' in example (3b) captures speaker's idea of believing realization of its complement while 'désirer' in (3a) represents speaker's lack of certainty of the subordinate clause. The selection of mood depends on how concrete the speaker feels about what is being said.

Now let me show the examples² of French subjunctive (=the nonveridical) licensing weak NPIs. As Lee (1999) argues, we have different forms of strong NPIs '*amu N to*' and weak NPIs '*amu N i-ra-to*' in Korean. Similarly French has its distinctive form of weak NPIs *qui que ce soit* 'anyone' and its inanimate counterpart *quoi que ce soit* 'anything'.

(4) a. Max est trop honnête pour **désirer** être impliqué dans **quoi que ce soit** de tel.

Max is too honest for to-desire to-be implicated in anything of such.

'Max is too honest to want to be involved in any such thing'

b. Je **doute que** Max fasse **quoi que ce soit** de tel.

² Examples are from Lee & Larrivée (1999), Vlachou (2003) and the website 'google'.

- I doubt that Max do-Sub. anything of such.
 'I doubt that Max would do any such thing.'
- c. Je **crains que** il ne dise **quoi que ce soit** qui offenserait les banques d'alimentation.
 I fear that he *ne explétif* say-Sub. anything which offend-Fut.-anterior the bank-Pl of food.
 'I fear to say anything which would offend the banks of food'
- d. Cette fois-ci le chauffeur **refuse que** je paye **quoi que ce soit**,...
 This time-so the driver refuse that I pay-Sub. anything,...
 'This time, the driver refuses to get paid anything from me,...'
- e. Ils m'ont laissé seule, **sans que** je sache **quoi que ce soit** sur mes grands parents.
 They me had left alone, without I know-Sub. anything about my grand parents.
 'They had left me alone, without me knowing anything about my grand parents.'
- f. Maintenant, votez pour le chef du forum ! **Avant que** je fasse **quoi que ce soit**.
 Now vote-Imp. for the chief of-the forum ! Before I do-Sub. anything.
 'Now vote for the chief of the forum ! Before I do anything.'
- g. Olivier est **plus grand que qui que ce soit**.
 Olivier is more tall than anyone.
 'Olivier is taller than anyone.'

In the above examples, the verbs or expressions which take the subjunctive license weak NPIs. The contexts where weak NPIs *amu N-i-ra-to* appears in Korean have a similarity to French subjunctive contexts. Lee (2003) specified in detail the distribution of the weak form *amu N-i-ra-to* in various contexts such as (?)'before' clause, negative predicates, modal, imperative, future tense, generics, *kikkethayya* 'at most', rhetorical questions, questions, conditionals, *?comparatives, ?habitual and universal /generic quantifier. Notice that 'before', negative predicate, rhetorical question and comparatives are supposed to license strong NPIs in negative functions. On this source, I claim that the licensing contexts of NPIs are rather complementary than crystal-clearly divided.

3.2. Unsolved problems: emotive factive predicates and 'hope'

Among the verbs which take the indicative (e.g. assertives, fiction verbs, epistemics, factive verbs, semifactives, Giannakidou 2007), emotive factive predicates in French select subjunctive but do not license NPIs. (5) and (6) are the examples.

- (5) Je suis **content** que tu **sois** avec nous.
 I am happy that you are-Sub. with us.

'I am happy that you are with us.

(6) * Je suis **content** d'avoir obtenue **quelque ticket que ce soit**.

I am happy to have get any ticket

'I am happy to get any ticket.'

However emotive factive predicates in Korean such as *tahaeng-i-ta* 'lucky', *nollap-ta* 'surprising' and *huhoy-ha-ta* 'regret', license weak NPIs form *amu-i-ra-to* 'any', as Lee (1999) observed.

(7) **amu phyo-i-ra-to** kuhae-ss-uni **tahaeng -i- ta**.

any ticket -be-Dec-C get-Past-since luck -be-Dec

'(I) am lucky that (I) got any tickets (at all).'

Lee (1999) suggests that emotive factive predicates should be classified as the weakest NPIs since NPI licensibility is not witnessed cross-linguistically. To explain why this kind of variation occurs, he argues that the speaker's real motivation behind the phenomenon of all those polarity-sensitive expressions should be considered. This argument can be supported by Giannakidou (2002) as she proposes 'pragmatic licensing' for a solution of the emotive factive predicates. She notes that it is problematic if we want to maintain a purely semantic account for NPI licensing context since emotive factive predicates are veridical and not downward entailment. That is to say, pragmatic context should be taken into account. On the other hand, nonveridical desiderative predicates 'hope' in English partially license NPIs. (Lee 1999)

(8) % I **hope** to drink **any** beer from any country.

Example (8) show that 'hope' can license weak NPIs only when speaker's negative implicature intervenes in the context. As for (8) it is acceptable only if we imagine that the person involved is a complete alcoholic, or he has been trapped in a boozeless hell for years. This view exactly corresponds to the concept of *temps opératif* presented in 3.1. The above example suggests that the mental operation in *temps opératif* can be differentiated depending on the situations. This view will be developed as 'pragmatic licensing' in section 5. In the next section, we will see how French *ne explétif* is related with negative entailment.

4. *Ne Explétif* and Negative Entailment.

In general, French adverb *ne* negates verbs with other reinforcing adverbs such as *pas*, *point*, *plus*, *jamais* etc, (e.g. Je ne bois pas de vin. (I don't drink wine.)) and only *ne* alone can not

negate a sentence. So *ne...pas* translates roughly as ‘not’. Originally in an Old French *ne* alone was used for negation and *pas* ‘step’ was used as a minimizer. But through historic change, *pas* is thought to get its negating power from its use for emphasis. Therefore some view *pas* as negative.

On the other hand *Ne explétif* is called "non-negative *ne*", because it has no negative value in and of itself. It is used in situations where the main clause has a weakly negative or uncertainty meaning of fear, warning, doubt. *Ne explétif* appears in a subordinate clause with subjunctive mood, but not all subjunctives can allow *ne explétif*. Accordingly *ne explétif* is a subcase of nonveridicality. Though the appearance of *ne explétif* is not mandatory, it appears in the context where the strong NPIs as well as the weak NPIs are licensed. Thus they do not exactly correspond to three negative functions.

The contexts where *ne explétif* appears are in (9). Some conjunctions such as *à moins que* ‘unless’, *avant que* ‘before’, *sans que* ‘without’ and comparatives are licensing contexts of strong NPIs while the other conjunctions and verbs take weak NPIs.

(9) The contexts where *ne explétif* appears

- a. **Verbs/Conjunctions licensing weak NPIs** : avoir peur ‘to be afraid’, Craindre ‘to fear’, Douter ‘to doubt’, Empêcher ‘to prevent’, Éviter ‘to avoid’, Nier ‘to deny’, de peur que ‘for fear that’, plutôt que ‘rather than’, de crainte que ‘for fear that’
- b. **Comparatives/Conjunctions Licensing strong NPIs** : Autre ‘other’, Meilleur ‘better’, Mieux ‘best’, Moins ‘less’, Pire ‘worse’, Plus ‘more’, à moins que ‘unless’, avant que ‘before’, sans que ‘without’

Let’s take a look at the usage of *ne explétif*.

(10) Aidez -moi avant que tu **ne** parte.
 Help-Imp. Me before you *ne explétif* leave-Sub.
 “Help me before you leave.”

(11) Je crains qu’il **ne** dise **quoi que ce soit** qui offenserait les banques d'alimentation.
 I fear that he *ne explétif* say-Sub. anything which offend-Fut-anterior the bank-Pl of food.
 ‘I fear to say anything which would offend the banks of food’

Example (10) shows that *avant que* ‘before’ clause is nonveridical and takes subjunctive and *ne explétif*. This is because in the speaker’s hypothetical possible world, the event following ‘before’ should not be realized until the event of the main clause has happened. *Craindre* ‘fear’

in (11) also takes subjunctive and *ne explétif* and license weak NPI '*quoi que ce soit*'. Interestingly *ne explétif* is observed in Korean and in Japanese as well³.

(12) Je crains que vous **ne** preniez froid. (F)

na-nun ne-ga kamki-ey kelli ci-nun **anh** assul-ka tulyep ta. (K)

watashi-wa anata-ga kaze-o hiki-wa si-**nai**-ka to sinpai-site iru. (J)

≠I fear that you don't catch a cold.

(13) Je désire vous ne prenez pas froid. (F)

na-nun ne-ga kamki-ey kelli ci anh ki lul palan ta. (K)

watashi-wa anata-ga kaze-o hika-nai koto-o nozon-de iru.

'I hope you don't catch a cold.'

Kinoshita argues that 'fearing something and 'hoping it will not happen' are semantically same. That is, (12) entails (13) in the sentence meaning. To explain her argument, let me write down her hypothesis again.

(14) DÉSIRE NEG . S_i = CRAINDRE S_j

[Where: S_i = S_j; NEG . S_i means the negation of S_i]

If the hypothesis in (14) holds true, we can presume that (12) is identical with (13). That is, we may also mean (13) only mentioning (12). But to make sure that (13) is involved in the meaning of (12) we need somewhere in (12) some markers. In this sense, NEG in (13) moves to (12) and is transferred into *ne explétif*.

Her argument can be supported by Kadmon & Landman (1993)'s claim. They insist that the relationship between the following example (15)-(16) are not a conventional implicature but an entailment. That is (15) entails (16).

(15) I'm sorry that anybody hates me.

(16) I want for nobody to hate me.

Thus we claim that the context where *ne explétif* appears entails negation in their lexical semantics or expression. In Korean and in Japanese however the context is limited to the following expressions ; (i) verbs of emotion or feeling which indicate fear or doubt. (ii) expressions with conjunction 'before'.

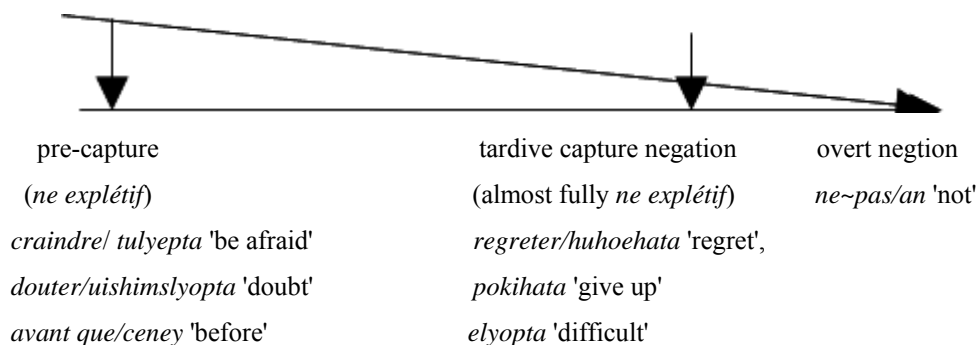
³ French and Japanese examples are from Kinoshita (1998).

- (17) ubak **-i-ra-to** o-ci **anh-ul** **-ka** tulyep ta. (K)
 (18) hiyou **-de-mo** **hura** **nai** **-ka** osoroshi i. (J)
 hail -be -Dec -C come *ne explétif* -Comp afraid-Dec.
 '(I) am afraid it's going to hail.'
 (19) te nai tul-ci **anh-ki** ceney sicip ga-ra.
 more age get *ne explétif* before marriage go-Imp.
 'Get married before you get older'
 (20) kuraku nara **-nai** mae-ni kaette-kuru no-desuyo.
 dark become - *ne explétif* before return Imp.
 'You must come back home before it gets dark.' (Kinoshita : 1998)

Example (17) *tulyepta* (K) and (18) *osoroshi i*(J) 'afraid' license weak NPIs *N-i ra to* (K)⁴, *N-de-mo* (J) just as *craindre* (F) in (11) licenses weak NPIs *quoi que ce soit*, while (19) *ceney* (K) and (20) *mae-ni* (J) usually license strong NPIs. Then how we can define the context which cause *ne explétif*? Apart from the fact that *ne explétif*-causing contexts in Korean and Japanese do not exactly match to that in French, it is very attractive that this kind of phenomenon happens in different languages. In section 5, I will propose a new type of NPI licensing context with this *ne explétif*-appearing context.

5. A New Type of NPI Licensing Context.

In section 4, I claimed that *ne explétif* is a trace of deletion of negative entailment. This means that all the contexts which cause *ne explétif* entail negation in its lexical expression. Since *ne explétif*-appearing context is the subcase of the subjunctive-appearing context, negative entailment is a subcase of the nonveridical. For more generalization, let me briefly introduce a concept of Martin (1987) as the theoretical background. He argues that *ne explétif* represents a force as a movement from the positive to the negative. That is, *ne explétif* pre-captures movement toward the negative. This can be schematized as in figure 1.



⁴ K stands for Korean, J for Japanese and F for French.

(a) **I-domain**: context which holds negative implicature. (i.e. *tahaeng-i-ta* 'lucky', *nollap-ta* 'surprising', hope)

(b) **E-domain**

(b-1) **E-*ne explétif* domain**: context of which lexical semantics or expression entail negation but its complement has not been realized yet. (e.g. *craindre/ tulyepta* 'be afraid', *douter/uishimslyopta* 'doubt', *avant que/ceney* 'before', *sans que* 'except', other French contexts which take *ne explétif*)

(b-2) **E-almost fully negative *ne* domain**: context of which lexical or expression entail negation but its complement is either factive or non-factive. This context does not take *ne explétif*. (e.g. *regreter/huhoehata* 'regret', *pokihata* 'give up', *elyopta* 'difficult', *shillta* 'dislike')

(c) **overt negation** (e.g. *ne pas/an*, not)

This new type not only shows the distribution of NPIs in licensing context but also explains why NPIs are licensed in such context. Human thoughts are not clearly divided: positive and negative, strong and weak etc. To understand why the above contexts license NPIs, we should consider 'mental process' up to its production. By this mental process we can approach NPI licensing context more fundamentally.

5. Conclusion

With French subjunctive and *ne explétif*, we could reconsider previous unsolved problems about NPI licensing context. In some languages like French, its grammatical mood can represent speaker's mental process. This fact helps us to understand why French subjunctive corresponds to nonveridical context. On the other hand, It has been shown that emotive factive predicates (e.g. lucky) and nonveridical predicate (e.g. hope) in English can license NPIs only when speaker's negative attitude is implicated. This means that pragmatic factor should be intervened to explain NPI licensing context. Therefore I set up I-domain for negative implicature which is relatively weak in negative force. *Ne explétif* is a good guideline to establish E-domain since I assume that *ne explétif* is a trace of deletion of negative entailment. My new type helps to understand NPI licensing context under the movement from the positive to the negative in our mental process.

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