

Strains of Negation in Norwegian

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ABSTRACT*

Scandinavian has a class of negative determiners which correspond in meaning to English *no* (e.g. in *ingen poeng* 'no points'). However, the distribution of DPs formed from these determiners is severely restricted. In general, they may license sentence negation only from a position outside the VP. In this paper, I examine different contexts in which *ingen*-phrases may appear VP-internally in Norwegian, and develop a descriptive taxonomy which sheds some light on the formal properties of negation.

1. Introduction

A central concern of this paper is why Norwegian (and, in fact, the other Scandinavian languages) doesn't have sentences like that in (1a), though it does have sentences like those in (1b–c); by straightforward Bloomfieldian substitutability, the failure of (1b) and (1c) to combine in (1a) is unexpected (I vary the subject simply for the sake of diversion).

- (1) a. * Svenskene ga Norge ingen poeng.
the.Swedes gave Norway no points
 (intended: 'The Swedes gave Norway no points')
- b. Portugiserne ga Norge tre poeng.
the.Portuguese gave Norway three points
 'The Portuguese gave Norway three points'
- c. Spanjolene ga oss ingen poeng.
the.Spaniards gave us no points
 'The Spaniards gave us no points'

A pronominal indirect object is not itself sufficient to allow the negative direct object, as indicated in (2a). This paper is not primarily concerned with the alternative in (2b), typical of Icelandic, found in Swedish and Danish, and attested in Norwegian (marked here with a dagger; attested examples are given in §2). Such sentences are not typical of modern colloquial Norwegian,

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and for many speakers they are simply ungrammatical, as marked here. To express the intended thought, the negative adverbial *ikke* is used, as in (2c).

- (2) a. * Danskene har gitt oss ingen poeng.
the.Danes have given us no points
 (intended: 'The Danes have given us no points')
- b. *† Islingene har ingen poeng gitt oss.
the.Icelanders have no points given us
 (intended: 'The Icelanders have given us no points')
- c. Finlenderne har ikke gitt oss noen poeng.
the.Finns have not given us any points
 'The Finns haven't given us any points'

In Svenonius 2000, a paper chiefly concerned with the Icelandic facts, I suggested that the Norwegian pattern in (1–2) can be explained if negative expressions like *ingen poeng* must move out of VP in order to express sentential negation, and if this movement is constrained by Holmberg's Generalization, the observation that certain movements (classically Object Shift) do not cross non-adjunct material such as verbs, prepositions, and indirect objects. I summarize those arguments in §2.

In this paper I more closely examine the expression of negation in Norwegian by elements like *ingen poeng* in (1c). I identify five different cases. In the first case, that exemplified by (1c), *ingen* is a licenser of sentential negation; although it does not itself express negation, it allows predicates to be interpreted negatively. This is discussed in §3. In the second case, *ingen* is interpreted very narrowly to mean something like 'zero'; on this reading, some speakers actually accept (1a) and (2a) above. In §4 I use the term TRIFLING negation for this case, because the negative word often seems to mean something like 'a trifle.' The third case involves prepositions, and is somewhere in between the first two, in that negation is not quite as tightly confined as in trifling negation, but is not interpreted at the sentential level, either. I will use the term P negation for this third case, discussed in §5. The expression NARROW SCOPE negation will sometimes be convenient as a cover term for the last two cases, trifling negation and P negation. There are also examples of *ingen* in coordinate structures, which I discuss in §6. Finally, I briefly turn to some cases of *ingen* in the expression of double negation in §7.

2. Negative movement and Holmberg's Generalization

Negative Movement is the movement of negative expressions like *ingen* 'nobody' and *ingen penger* 'no money' to a position to the left of VP, as illustrated in the examples in (3); (3a-b) are from an authoritative reference grammar (Faarlund et al. 1997:712), where they are identified as literary or archaic; (3c-d) are quoted in the same work (p. 884) from modern literature, but it is noted that they are 'stylistically marked.' Since this paper otherwise deals with a more colloquial register of Norwegian, I mark these sentences with a dagger and an asterisk (*†), the asterisk signifying ungrammaticality for my informants, and the dagger signifying an attested pattern in a literary or archaic style ((3d) is acceptable, as a VP idiom).

- (3) a. *† Han har ingen penger fått.
he has no money received
 'He has received no money'
- b. *† ...hvis han ingen penger får
if he no money receives
 '...if he receives no money'
- c. *† ...som for øvrig ingenting betyr for meg
as for remaining nothing means for me
 '...which is furthermore of no significance to me'
- d. † Snakket ville ingen ende ta.
the.talk would no end take
 'The talking wouldn't stop'

The pattern of Negative Movement has been documented and analyzed in Rögnvaldsson 1987, Christensen 1986, 1988, 1995, Jónsson 1996, and Svenonius 2000. In languages in which Negative Movement is not subject to Holmberg's Generalization, Negative Movement gives rise to sentences like (2b) or like those in (3), with a negative constituent outside the VP.

To appreciate the modern colloquial Norwegian pattern, consider briefly the position of the verb and the direct object in the Norwegian clauses in (4). The object always follows both the verb and the negative adverb *ikke* in (4). The finite verb moves across the adverb in a main clause (4a-c), but not in an embedded clause (4d).

- (4) a. Vi vant ikke konkurransen.
we won not the.competition
 'We didn't win the competition'

- b. Vi kunne ikke vinne konkurransen.
we could not win the.competition
 'We couldn't win the competition'
- c. Vi vant ikke i konkurransen.
we won not in the.competition
 'We didn't win in the competition'
- d. ...at vi ikke vant konkurransen
that we not won the.competition
 '...that we didn't win the competition'

Moving the object to the left of the negative adverb is generally always ungrammatical, as indicated in (5).

- (5) a. * Vi vant konkurransen ikke.
we won the.competition not
- b. * Vi kunne konkurransen ikke vinne.
we could the.competition not win
- c. * Vi vant konkurransen ikke i.
we won the.competition not in
- d. * ...at vi konkurransen ikke vant
that we the.competition not won

However, a pronominal object may cross an adverb, though not much else, giving rise to the pattern in (6). The non-finite verb in (6b), the preposition in (6c), and the unmoved finite verb in (6d) all block Object Shift (cf. Holmberg 1986, 1999).

- (6) a. Vi vant den ikke.
we won it not
 'We didn't win it'
- b. * Vi kunne den ikke vinne.
we could it not win
- c. * Vi vant den ikke i.
we won it not in
- d. * ...at vi den ikke vant
that we it not won

Now compare the pattern of grammaticality in (7) to that in (6). As above, examples which are rejected in ordinary colloquial Norwegian are marked with an asterisk, but sentences which may be found in literary styles are also marked with a dagger.

- (7) a. Vi vant ingen konkurranse.
we won no competition
 'We didn't win any competition'

- b. *†Vi kunne ingen konkurranse vinne.
we could no competition won
 c. * Vi vant ingen konkurranse i.
we won no competition in
 d. *†...at vi ingen konkurranse vant
that we no competition won

The pattern in (7) is immediately explained if [i] the negative object moves out of VP and [ii] this movement is subject to Holmberg's Generalization, just like Object Shift. Unlike the case with Object Shift, however, non-movement leads to ungrammaticality. Compare the pattern in (8a-c) with that in (4b-d).

- (8) a. * Vi kunne vinne ingen konkurranse.
we could win no competition
 b. * Vi vant i ingen konkurranse.
we won in no competition
 c. * ...at vi vant ingen konkurranse.
that we won no competition

Non-movement is only possible when a narrow-scope reading can be constructed, as will be discussed below.^{1,2}

¹ Another element, besides unmoved V and P, that blocks Object Shift is DP. The Object Shift pattern can again be replicated in ditransitives; this has been demonstrated partly in (1–2) in section §1 above but I expand here for completeness.

- [i] a. Vi skylder ikke Halldor det. [ii] a. *Vi skylder Lægreid ingen nye sjanser.
we owe not Halldor it *we owe Lægreid no new chances*
 b. Vi skylder han det ikke. b. Vi skylder han ingen nye sjanser.
we owe him it not *we owe him no new chances*
 c. * Vi skylder det ikke Halldor. c. * Vi skylder ingen nye sjanser Lægreid.
we owe it not Halldor *we owe no new chances Lægreid*

[iib] is fine, with Object Shift and Negative Movement. [iic] is out, because Negative Movement, like Object Shift, cannot cross a DP in Norwegian. And [iia] is out because *ingen* is stuck inside VP by the non-shifting indirect object

² Particle shift contexts also demonstrate the dependence of *ingen* on object movement, given the analysis of particle shift in Svenonius 1996, where it is argued that the object must remain in a small clause internal position in order to follow a particle, as in [ii].

- [i] Vi kaster (ingen) fylliker ut herfra.
we throw no drunks out here.from
 'We throw (no) drunks out of here'
 [ii] Vi kaster ut (*ingen) fylliker herfra.
we throw out no drunks here.from
 'We throw out drunks from here'

Christensen 1995 proposes that negation must be expressed in the IP domain, and that in Norwegian this requirement holds at surface structure. This allows negation to be expressed as *ikke* or by *ingen* in the object-shifted position, as in the examples above; but negation can also be expressed in other VP-external positions, for example in subject position as in (9a), topic position as in (9b), or adverbial positions to the left of VP as in (9c–d). (Example (9d) is stylistically rather marked; in general, the neuter singular form *intet* is not used by many speakers.)

- (9) a. Uheldigvis fikk ingen norske artister delta i år.
unfortunately got no Norwegian artist participate in year
 'Unfortunately no Norwegian artist was able to participate this year'
 b. Ingen grupiser ble han hengende lenge med.
no groupies remained he hanging long with
 'No groupies was he with for long' (= 'He wasn't with any groupies for long')
 c. Han synger på ingen måte visesanger.
he sings on no way folk.songs
 'In no sense does he sing folk songs'
 d. Juryen har på intet tidspunkt tatt imot bestikkelser.
the.jury has on no occasion taken against bribes
 'The jury has not accepted bribes on any occasion'

Note that even though the negative expression in (9c) follows the verb, it is outside the VP; the verb has moved to second position, and the negative expression is to the left of the direct object.

Christensen's characterization is essentially correct, for sentence negation (on which see §3). More specifically, for the purposes of this article, I will assume that the pattern here is due to the fact that the negative expression bears uninterpretable negative features which must be valued and thereby eliminated by some interpretable negative feature (following the general system of feature checking suggested in Chomsky 2000). This is most straightforwardly implemented if interpretable negative features are found in NegP, as in for example Zanuttini 1997, though this is not strictly necessary.

Following Nilsen 1997, Neg in Norwegian is located below various mood and modality adverbials but above certain aspectual adverbials. This can be seen in (10–11). Compare (10a), in which a negative temporal PP is placed to the right of the subject-oriented adverbial *klokkelig* 'wisely,' with (10b),

which shows that it cannot be placed to the left of that same adverb, while (10c–d) show that non-negative temporal PPs may occupy either position.

- (10) a. Han har klokkelig på intet tidspunkt innrømt å ha sett Melodi Grand Prix.
he has wisely on no time admitted to have seen Melody Grand Prix
 ‘He has wisely admitted at no time to having seen the Eurovision Song Contest’
- b. * Han har på intet tidspunkt klokkelig innrømt å ha sett Melodi Grand Prix.
he has on no time wisely admitted to have seen Melody Grand Prix
- c. Han har klokkelig på dette tidspunktet innrømt å ha sett MGP.
he has wisely on this time admitted to have seen MGP
 ‘He has wisely admitted at this time to having seen the EVSC’
- d. Han har på dette tidspunkt klokkelig innrømt å ha sett MGP.
he has on this time wisely admitted to have seen MGP
 ‘He has at this time wisely admitted to having seen the EVSC’

The above pattern holds for all adverbs which Nilsen identifies as higher than *klokkelig* (e.g. *ærlig talt* ‘honestly,’ *heldigvis* ‘luckily,’ *angivelig* ‘reportedly,’ *sannsynligvis* ‘probably,’ *nødvendigvis* ‘necessarily,’ etc.). Adverbs which Nilsen places just below these allow both orders (e.g. *vanligvis* ‘usually,’ *igjen* ‘again,’ *ofte* ‘often’). Still lower we find adverbs which must be below negation, such as temporal-aspectual *tidlig* ‘early,’ as illustrated in (11).

- (11) a. Fønsene har på intet tidspunkt tidlig slått av TV’en.
the fans have on no time early turned off the TV
 ‘The fans have at no time turned the TV off early’
- b. * Fønsene har tidlig på intet tidspunkt slått av TV’en.
the fans have early on no time turned off the TV

For the sake of simplicity, I will assume that low adverbs (like *tidlig*) are adjoined to some (extended) projection of V, while high adverbs (like *klokkelig*) to some (extended) projection of I. The data in (10–11) then suggest that Neg must be between I and V.³ I will assume that Neg is only interpretable if there is some lexical material in its projection by the time of Spell-Out; I elaborate on this in §6. The spirit and effect are similar to Haegeman’s (1995) Neg Criterion, though a difference will emerge in §7 (cf. also Koopman 1996).

³ Alternatively, Neg features are checked in I, but independent principles of adverb ordering force the orders observed in (10–11). See Ernst (2002) for a detailed account of adverb ordering which does not rely on a primitive sequence of functional heads.

3. Sentence negation

Central to the discussion which follows is the difference, established most clearly by Klima (1964), between sentence or sentential negation and constituent or local negation.⁴ Norwegian counterparts to Klima’s diagnostics include negative appositive tags with *ikke engang* ‘not even’ as in (12), tag questions as in (13), tags with *heller ikke* ‘neither’ as in (14) (*heller* translates elsewhere as ‘rather,’ so that an over-literal gloss might be ‘rather not’), and conjunctions with *heller* ‘either,’ as in (15). In each set, the (a) example shows sentence negation with the appropriate tag or other diagnostic, the (b) example shows that an adverb like *utvilsomt* ‘undoubtedly’ does not induce sentence negation, and the (c) example shows a positive alternative to the tag, which is compatible with the absence of sentence negation (and to which the morphologically negative adverb is irrelevant).

- (12) a. Tyskere liker ikke sviskelåter, ikke engang de gode.
Germans like not oldies, not even the good
 ‘Germans don’t like oldies [old melodies], not even the good ones’
- b. * Tyskere liker utvilsomt sviskelåter, ikke engang de gode.
Germans like undoubtedly oldies, not even the good
- c. Tyskere liker utvilsomt sviskelåter, selv de dårlige.
Germans like undoubtedly oldies even the bad
 ‘Germans undoubtedly like oldies, even the bad ones’
- (13) a. Slovenere har ikke sans for ballader, har de vel?
Slovenians have not appreciation for ballads have they well
 ‘Slovenians don’t appreciate ballads, do they?’
- b. * Slovenere har usedvanlig sans for ballader, har de vel?
Slovenians have unusual appreciation for ballads have they well
- c. Slovenere har usedvanlig sans for ballader, har de ikke?
Slovenians have unusual appreciation for ballads have they not
 ‘Slovenians have an unusual appreciation for ballads, don’t they?’
- (14) a. Litauere digger ikke folkeviser, og det gjør heller ikke latviere.
Lithuanians dig not folk.songs and that do either not Latvians
 ‘Lithuanians don’t groove on folk songs, and neither do Latvians’

⁴ See Horn (1989) for discussion of the history of the distinction, and for limitations of Klima’s diagnostics.

- b. * Litauere digger utvilsomt folkeviser, og det gjør heller ikke latviere.
Lithuanians 'dig' undoubtedly folk.songs and that do either not Latvians
- c. Litauere digger utvilsomt folkeviser, og det gjør også latviere.
Lithuanians 'dig' undoubtedly folk.songs and that do also Latvians
'Lithuanians undoubtedly groove on folk songs, and so do Latvians'
- (15) a. Kroater avviser alltid joiker, og serbere kan ikke utstå dem heller.
Croats reject always joiks, and Serbians can not tolerate them either
'Croats always reject joiks,⁵ and Serbs can't stand them either'
- b. * Kroater avviser alltid joiker, og serbere misliker dem utvilsomt heller.
Croats reject always joiks and Serbs dislike them undoubtedly either
- c. Kroater avviser alltid joiker, og serbere misliker dem utvilsomt også.
Croats reject always joiks and Serbs dislike them undoubtedly also
'Croats always reject joiks, and Serbs undoubtedly dislike them, too'

Through the application of such tests, it can be demonstrated that sentences like the one in (1c) in §1 do in fact naturally express sentence negation.

- (16) a. Polakkene ga oss ingen poeng, ikke engang ett.
the.Poles gave us no points not even one
'The Poles gave us no points, not even one'
- b. Grekerne ga oss ingen poeng, gjorde de vel?
the.Greeks gave us no points, did they well
'The Greeks gave us no points, did they?'
- c. Tyrkerne ga oss ingen poeng, og det gjorde heller ikke israelerne.
the.Turks gave us no points and that did either not the.Israelis
'The Turks gave us no points and neither did the Israelis'
- d. Vi ble forbigått av Malta, og russerne ga oss ingen poeng heller.
we were passed.by by Malta and the.Russians gave us no points either
'We were passed over by Malta, and the Russians gave us no points either'

It is worth noting that although 'no-negation' (i.e. sentence negation expressed by a negative noun phrase, as opposed to 'not-negation') tends to have a high-register flavor in English (as documented e.g. by Tottie 1991), it is relatively natural in Norwegian once the stringent conditions detailed in §2 are met. Thus the Norwegian sentences in (17) are perfectly natural in speech, unlike their English counterparts.

- (17) a. Rumenerne fant ingen feil med de russiske trubadurene.
the.Romanians found no flaw with the Russian.the.troubadors
'The Romanians found no problems with the Russian troubadors'

⁵ A joik is a traditional Sámi song.

- b. Vi skjønnte ingenting.
we understood nothing
'We understood nothing'
- c. De bruker ingen synth.
they use no synthesizer
'They use no synthesizer'

The pattern creates an interesting learnability problem. Given that the sentences in (17) are commonplace, the badness of similar sentences with complex verbs and with prepositions would seem difficult to learn. Confirming this, Kvam (1999) found in a study of Norwegian L2 learners of English that they tended to overuse constructions like those in (17) while avoiding the equivalents of bad Norwegian sentences. Possibly, the Norwegian situation (in which negation must be overtly expressed in the functional domain) represents a default setting of a parameter, while the English situation (in which sentence negation can be expressed from within the VP) represents a marked case, which must be learned. This seems consistent with the cross-linguistic evidence, as the English type of negation seems to be rare.

4. Trifling negation

An application of the tests given in §3 shows that sentences like (2a) (repeated here, more or less, as (18b)) are possible (though marginal for some speakers) on a constituent negation reading, one in which *ingen poeng* means the same thing as 'zero points.' This is demonstrated using the 'neither' tag in (18a).

- (18) a. * De har gitt Norge ingen poeng, og det har heller ikke irene.
they have given Norway no points and that have either not the.Irish
(intended: 'They have given Norway no points, and neither have the Irish')
- b. De har gitt Norge ingen poeng, og det har også uesterne.
they have given Norway no points and that have also the.Estonians
'They have given Norway no points, and so have the Irish'

The example in (1a) above also admits this 'zero points' reading, for the same speakers who accept (18b). In general, the narrow scope or constituent reading of negation is quite restricted in Norwegian, at least as much as in English. Examples in which the noun is not so easily thought of as representing a quantitative scale resist this interpretation, for example those in (19).

- (19) a. * Halldor har sunget ingen svisker, og det har heller ikke Jahn.
Halldor has sung no oldies and that has either not Jahn
 (intended: ‘Halldor has sung no oldies, and neither has Jahn’)
- b. * Halldor har sunget ingen svisker, og det har Jahn også.
Halldor has sung no oldies and that has Jahn also
 (intended: * ‘Halldor has sung no oldies, and so has Jahn’)

The contrast between (18) and (19) is replicated in the English translations. Thus, English is like Norwegian in restrictively allowing a narrow-scope negation reading in (18b), but not in (19b); but English is unlike Norwegian in allowing a sentential negation reading for (18a) and (19a) (and for (1–2)).

Similar cases of *ingen* appearing within the VP are given in (20). The examples in (20b–c) are from literary works, cited in Faarlund et al. 1997:885.

- (20) a. Vi kan kjøpe kjøtt i Kilpisjärvi for nesten ingenting.
we can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost nothing
 ‘We can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost nothing’
- b. Han sat og stirde tungt inn i ingenting.
he sat and stared heavily into in nothing
 ‘He sat and stared heavily into nothing’
- c. I dag driver skyene mot ingensteds.
today drive the.clouds toward nowhere
 ‘Today the clouds are drifting to nowhere’

It is clear in each case that sentence negation is not intended; in (20a) the purchase of meat is possible, in (20b) staring takes place, in (20c) clouds are drifting. This can be demonstrated using Klima’s tests (I have modernized the spelling in example (21b), compared with the cited example (20b)).

- (21) a. * Vi kan kjøpe kjøtt i Kilpisjärvi for nesten ingenting, kan vi vel?
we can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost nothing can we wellt
 (intended: * ‘We can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost nothing, can we?’)
- b. * Han satt og stirret tungt inn i ingenting, og det gjorde heller ikke jeg.
he sat and stared heavily into in nothing and that did either not I
 (intended: * ‘He sat and stared heavily into nothing, and neither did I’)
- c. * I dag driver skyene mot ingensteds, ikke engang horisonten.
today drive the.clouds toward nowhere not even the.horizon
 (intended: * ‘Today the clouds are drifting to nowhere, not even the horizon’)

Tests for affirmative polarity can be successfully applied.

- (22) a. Vi kan kjøpe kjøtt i Kilpisjärvi for nesten ingenting, kan vi ikke?
we can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost nothing can we not
 ‘We can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost nothing, can’t we?’
- b. Han satt og stirret tungt inn i ingenting, og det gjorde jeg også.
he sat and stared heavily into in nothing and that did I too
 ‘He sat and stared heavily into nothing, and so did I’
- c. I dag driver skyene mot ingensteds og det gjorde de i går òg.
today drive the.clouds toward nowhere and that did they yesterday too
 ‘Today the clouds are drifting to nowhere, and they were yesterday, too’

In each case, the negative expression means something like ‘nothing of importance’ (‘very little money’ in (20a)); hence I propose the term *trifling negation*, from the English word *trifle*, meaning nothing of importance.

A slightly different kind of example, which I nonetheless believe is closely enough related to deserve the same moniker, is seen in (23). Some speakers find these sentences strained, in clear contrast to the sentence-negation sentences given in (17). The example in (23d) is from Faarlund et al. 1997:885.

- (23) a. Du betaler for ingenting.
you pay for nothing
 ‘You are paying for nothing’ (‘wasting your money’)
- b. Han flirer av ingenting.
he laughs of nothing
 ‘He is laughing at nothing’ (‘for no reason’)
- c. De hadde diskutert ingenting i hele kveld.
they had discussed nothing in whole evening
 ‘They had discussed nothing all evening’ (‘contentless things’)
- d. Engelskmannen gjør ham til ingenting.
the.Englishman makes him to nothing
 ‘The Englishman reduces him to nothing’

As above, each sentence is affirmative: payment is made, laughter occurs, talking goes on, the Englishman does something. In each case the object could be replaced with an expression which is not formally negative, such as ‘a trifle’ or ‘trifling things,’ without dramatically changing the meaning.

- (24) a. Du betaler for bagateller.
you pay for trifles
 ‘You are paying for trifles’
- b. Han flirer av småting.
he laughs of small.things
 ‘He is laughing at the slightest thing’

- c. De hadde diskutert fillesaker i hele kveld.
they had discussed trivial things in whole evening
'They had discussed trivial things all evening'
- d. Engelskmannen gjør ham til en ubetydelighet.
the Englishman makes him to an insignificance
'The Englishman reduces him to insignificance'

Unlike the sentences in (24), the sentences in (23) with negative words are likely to require context to make them acceptable to Norwegian speakers. The same is basically true of the English equivalents. Klima-style tags can make the intended meanings clearer, as in (25).

- (25) a. Du betaler for ingenting, og det gjør jeg også.
you pay for nothing and that do I also
'You are paying for nothing, and so am I'
- b. Hun ler uansett hva jeg sier, og han flirer også av ingenting.
she laughs regardless what I say and he laughs also of nothing
'She laughs no matter what I say, and he laughs at nothing, too'
- c. De har diskutert ingenting i hele kveld, har de ikke?
they have discussed nothing in whole evening have they not
'They have discussed nothing all evening, haven't they?'

There is an important difference between the Norwegian examples in (23a–c) and their English equivalents. The Norwegian sentences are only grammatical at all on the indicated translations. In this, (23a–c) contrast importantly with their English counterparts, all of which are potentially ambiguous. This can once again be brought out by Klima's tests.

- (26) a. You pay for nothing, not even the drinks.
b. He laughs at nothing, does he?
c. He has said nothing for hours, and neither has she.

The Norwegian sentences do not allow this interpretation, with sentence negation.

- (27) a. * Du betaler for ingenting, og det gjør jeg heller ikke.
you pay for nothing and that do I either not
(intended: 'You are paying for nothing, and neither am I')
- b. * Hun ler aldri, og han flirer av ingenting heller.
she laughs never and he laughs of nothing either
(intended: 'She never laughs, and he laughs at nothing, either')
- c. * De har diskutert ingenting i hele kveld, har de vel?
they have discussed nothing in whole evening have they well
(intended: 'They have discussed nothing all evening, have they?')

This is consistent with the observations made above, that Norwegian requires a negative element overtly outside VP in order for sentential negation to be licensed. If the negative elements in sentences like (23) are moved, then sentence negation may result, as in (28) (cf. (9b) in §2).

- (28) a. Ingenting flirer han av (ikke engang Fleksnes).
nothing laughs he of not even Fleksnes
'He doesn't laugh at anything (not even Fleksnes)'⁶
- b. Ingenting har de diskutert på åresvis (har de vel?)
nothing has they discussed on years have they well
'They haven't discussed anything in years (have they?)'

So far, it seems that Norwegian and English are quite similar except for the fact that English allows VP-internal negative expressions to license sentence negation. For both languages, there is a restriction on trifling negation: for example, (19) does not admit of any trifling negation reading, and is simply ungrammatical. Similarly, the variations on (23b–d) given in (29) are simply ungrammatical (I will return to (23a) in §5; cf. (37c) there).

- (29) b. * Han flirer av ingen vitser.
he laughs of no jokes
(intended: 'He laughs, but not at any jokes')
- c. * De har diskutert ingen sannheter.
they have discussed no truths
(intended: 'They have discussed things which were not truths')
- d. * Vi kan kjøpe kjøtt i Kilpisjärvi for nesten ingen finske mark.
we can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for almost no Finnish marks
(intended: 'We can buy meat in Kilpisjärvi for very few Finnish marks')

The conditions on this kind of trifling negation are not entirely clear to me, but it seems that the negative noun phrase must not have actual referential content, not even in the form of an explicit restriction, except where such a restriction is quite broad and conventional. As noted above, trifling negation is often paraphraseable using an expression which is not formally negative in place of the negative one. It is also interesting to note that trifling negation readings for *ingen* are often non-salient, so that examples like those in (23) are often rejected by speakers as ungrammatical.

A possible formal analysis available in the current framework is that speakers may exceptionally treat words like *ingenting* as a kind of noun

⁶ Fleksnes is a well-known Norwegian television character.

meaning, roughly, ‘a trifle’ (cf. *nothing much*). When they do so, *ingenting* is not formally negative, and therefore has no negative features. This means that it escapes the licensing conditions which ordinarily apply to *ingen* (checking of uninterpretable neg features), which allows it to remain within VP. It also means that it cannot license sentential negation, since by assumption, that requires an expression with negative features to appear in the projection of Neg.

5. P negation

Thus far, I have shown that sentence negation is always licensed by an overt negative element outside VP in Norwegian (as proposed by Christensen), while trifling negation may be expressed inside VP, but that the trifling interpretation of *ingen* is greatly restricted. In this section I show another kind of VP-internal negation, one which is not quite so severely limited as constituent negation.

First, consider the English examples in (30), modeled on classic examples from Jackendoff 1972 and Rochemont 1978.

- (30) a. Kim looks good in no clothes.⁷
 b. Robin would be satisfied with no job.

These and similar sentences have been discussed intensively and extensively in previous literature (e.g. see Haegeman 1995 and references there). Like the sentences in (25–26), they admit of two different readings, one of which is sentence negation; on this reading, Kim doesn’t look good in any clothes, and Robin wouldn’t be satisfied with any job. The other reading has a narrower scope, and means, respectively, that Kim looks good naked and Robin would be satisfied if unemployed. Klima’s tests force the differences, as expected.

- (31) a. Kim looks good in no clothes, and so does Robin.
 b. Kim looks good in no clothes, and neither does Robin.
 (32) a. Kim looks good in no clothes, doesn’t he?
 b. Kim looks good in no clothes, does he?

⁷ The example is usually given with the preposition *with*. In fact, *with no clothes (on)* may be more natural than *in no clothes*, on both readings, and similarly *med ingen klær (på)* may be more idiomatic in Norwegian than *i ingen klær*; however, I use *in* and *i* here to underscore the fact that the behavior of this construction does not depend on the preposition *with* or *med*.

As Klima noted, negative inversion is triggered in English only when a fronted element licenses sentential negation, as in (33b); the non-inverted structure in (33a) can only be interpreted with local negation.

- (33) a. In no clothes, Kim looks good.
 b. In no clothes does Kim look good.

It is perhaps no surprise by now to the reader that the Norwegian examples in (34) lack the sentence negation reading (nor will it come as a surprise that some speakers reject them outright, without context).

- (34) a. Vesna ser fin ut i ingen klær.
Vesna looks fine out in no clothes
 ‘Vesna looks good naked’
 b. Sestre ville være fornøyd med ingen jobb.
Sestre would be satisfied with no job
 ‘Sestre would be satisfied jobless’

The lack of a sentence negation reading is expected since as noted, Norwegian allows sentential negation only when the negative word licensing it has left VP.

- (35) a. I ingen klær ser Kim fin ut.
in no clothes looks Kim nice out
 ‘In no clothes, Kim looks good’ or ‘In no clothes does Kim look good’
 b. Med ingen jobb ville Robin være fornøyd.
with no job would Robin be satisfied
 ‘With no job, Robin would be satisfied’ or ‘With no job would Robin be satisfied’

Though the sentences in (35a–b) are ambiguous, sentential negation can be tested using Klima’s diagnostics, as in (36a–b), or using negative polarity items, as in (36c–d).

- (36) a. I ingen klær ser Kim fin ut, gjør han vel?
in no clothes looks Kim nice out does he well
 ‘In no clothes does Kim look good, does he?’
 b. Med ingen jobb ville Robin være fornøyd, og det ville heller ikke Kim.
with no job would Robin be satisfied and that would neither not Kim
 ‘With no job would Robin be satisfied, and neither would Kim’
 c. I ingen klær ser Kim fin ut i det hele tatt
in no clothes looks Kim nice out in the whole taken
 ‘In no clothes does Kim look good at all’

- d. Med ingen jobb ville Robin overhodet være fornøyd
with no job would Robin overhead be satisfied
 ‘With no job would Robin be satisfied whatsoever’

It should already be apparent that the narrow-scope examples cannot be subsumed under trifling negation. The question is not whether Kim’s clothes or Robin’s job is of any significance; instead, the question is one of whether Kim and Robin are dressed or employed at all. Unlike the trifling negation cases discussed in the previous section, these examples allow contentful material in the DP; some examples are given in (37) (though it should be noted that some of these are rather strained, for some speakers, and require mitigating context; the ones with *med* ‘with’ tend to be the least objectionable).

- (37) a. Marko ville være lykkeligere med ingen dagjobb.
Marko would be happier with no day.job
 ‘Marko would be happier without a day job’
 b. Ira ser fin ut i ingen underbukser.
Ira looks fine out in no underpants
 ‘Ira looks good without underpants’
 c. Man må betale dyrt for ingen tilsetningsstoffer.
one must pay expensive for no additives
 ‘One must pay a lot for additive-free food’
 d. Han ble sittende igjen med ingen penger.
he became sitting again with no money
 ‘He was left with no money’
 e. Jeg foretrekker klær som er lagd av ingen syntetiske stoffer.
I prefer clothes as are made of no synthetic materials
 ‘I prefer clothing which is made of no synthetic materials’

These examples all express the notional absence of some identifiable thing or property. They each involve a preposition which is immediately local to the negative word. It is not a general property of prepositions to license local negation (cf. §2). In the good examples here, the relevant thing or property is one for which there is a relatively high degree of conventional interest in its absence or presence, though this requirement seems to be relaxed somewhat for examples with *med* ‘with.’

Formally, I will assume that these examples involve predicate negation occurring at the level of the PP. Some PPs are interpreted as predicates, and if predicates are the locus of sentence negation, then this is properly seen as a

strain of sentence negation. Essentially, Neg can be projected in conjunction with certain kinds of predicative heads, including I (cf. §2) and predicative P.⁸

In some cases the local negation reading vanishes if the negative DP is separated from the preposition.

- (38) a. Ingen underbukser ser Ira fin ut i.
no underpants looks Ira fine out in
 ‘No underpants does Ira look good in’
 b. Ingen katter ble han sittende lenge med.
no cats remained he sitting long with
 ‘No cats was he stuck with for long’

However, such inseparability is not a general property of this type of negation, as other examples are ambiguous when the negative DP is fronted.

- (39) a. Ingen jobb ville Robin være fornøyd med.
no job would Robin be satisfied with
 ‘No job would Robin be satisfied with’ or ‘Jobless, Robin would be satisfied’
 b. Ingen tilsetningsstoffer må man betale dyrt for.
no additives must one pay expensive for
 ‘No additives must one pay dearly for’ or ‘Additive-free things, one must pay dearly for’

The possibility of topicalization of a DP with a local negation reading may be linked to the extent to which that negative DP has a conventional association—in (39a), the absence of a job, in (39b) the absence of additives. This may vary from speaker to speaker, but it is fair to assume that the absence of underpants in (38a) and the absence of cats in (38b) are less conventionally salient properties. I will assume that the contrast between (38) and (39) has to do with the way this salience interacts with the semantics of topicalization; if the *ingen* phrase can be reconstructed from the topic position, then it can be interpreted as licensing negation in the PP, as suggested above.

6. Coordination

Another context which appears to violate the conditions on *ingen* noted in §2 is coordination. The sentences in (40) are modelled on some discussed by Progovac 2000.

⁸ This makes more sense on the model alluded to in footnote 2, if Negation is a mode of predication as in Horn 1989, Ladusaw 1992.

- (40) a. Jeg vil ha deg eller ingen.
I will have you or nobody
 'I want you or nobody'
- b. Jeg hilste på mange folk, men ingen av dine venner.
I greeted on many people, but none of your friends
 'I met many people, but none of your friends'
- c. ...med mindre du kjøper roser og ingen nelliker.
with less you buy roses and no carnations
 '...unless you buy roses and no carnations'
- d. et publikum som elsker svisker og ingen nye låter.
an audience as loves oldies and no new tunes
 'an audience that loves oldies and no new tunes'

Overall, Klima-style tests will show that these clauses are formally affirmative ('I want you or nobody, and so does Sandy'; * 'I want you or nobody, and neither does Sandy').

If these coordinations are interpreted as reduced sentential coordination, then the interpretation may be as sentential negation ('I want you or I don't want anybody'; 'unless you buy roses and you don't buy any carnations'). But in each case the negative word is too low to be interpreted as sentential in a fully spelled-out clause.

- (41) a. * Jeg vil ha ingen.
I will have none
- b. * Jeg hilste på ingen av dine venner.
I greeted on none of your friends
- c. * ...med mindre du kjøper ingen nelliker.
with less you buy no carnations
- d. * et publikum som elsker ingen nye låter.
an audience as loves no new tunes

In each case, the sentence is ruled out because *ingen* is trapped in VP. In (41a), the verb is non-finite, in (41b), there is a preposition, and in (41c-d), the verb, though finite, is in an embedded clause in which verb movement is impossible.

These examples do not fall under trifling negation as they allow full DPs with descriptive material, as seen in the examples here. They do not fall under P negation as they do not consistently involve secondary predication.

They also have the peculiar property that the negation which is licensed can be unusually deeply embedded. Some examples are given in (42).⁹

- (42) a. Jeg vil ha et portrett av deg på veggen eller bilder av ingen.
I will have a portrait of you on the wall or pictures of nobody
 'I want a portrait of you on the wall or pictures of nobody'
- b. Jeg hilste på mange menn, men fedrene til ingen av vennene mine.
I greeted on many men, but the fathers to none of the friends my
 'I met many men, but the fathers of none of my friends'
- c. ...med mindre du kjøper orkidéer og blomster av ingen billigere type.
with less you buy orchids and flowers of no cheaper variety
 '...unless you buy orchids and flowers of no cheaper variety'
- d. et publikum som elsker joiker og låter fra ingen plass sør for polarsirkelen
an audience as loves joiks and tunes from no place south for the arctic circle
 ? 'an audience that loves joiks and music from no place south of the arctic circle'

Though the embeddings here invariably involve prepositions, these cases of *ingen* cannot be subsumed under P negation, as they are all sharply ungrammatical in the absence of coordinate structures.

- (43) a. * Jeg vil ha bilder av ingen på veggen.
I will have pictures of nobody on the wall
 (intended: 'I want pictures of nobody on the wall')
- b. * Jeg hilste på fedrene til ingen av vennene mine.
I greeted on the fathers to none of the friends my
 (intended: 'I met the fathers of none of my friends')
- c. * ...med mindre du kjøper blomster av ingen billigere type
with less you buy flowers of no cheaper variety
 (intended: '...unless you buy flowers of no cheaper variety')
- d. * et publikum som elsker låter fra ingen plass sør for polarsirkelen
an audience as loves tunes from no place south for the arctic circle
 (intended: ? 'an audience that loves music from no place south of the arctic circle')

As indicated, such embedded negation tends to be grammatical in English, though it belongs to a literary or learned register. As can be seen by comparing the translations of (42d) and (43d), coordination does not seem to be relevant to this phenomenon in English.

⁹ These examples are at best stylistically awkward, and require some context; e.g. for (42a), a licensing context would be one in which an interlocutor is insisting that the speaker put up pictures of other people on the wall. Even with this context, two of six speakers polled rejected all of the sentences in (42), finding no contrast with (43).

A possible analysis for these constructions, in the current framework, is that coordinate subclausal structures can be interpreted at LF by constructing a clausal coordinate to contain them. Once a clausal coordinate structure is built, a Neg head is available to host the negative element. A similar approach would account for the possibility of *ingen* in gapping constructions, as shown in (44).

- (44) a. * Ola har skrevet femten låter, og Kari har skrevet ingen.
Ola has written fifteen songs and Kari has written none
 b. Ola har skrevet femten låter, og Kari, ingen.
Ola has written fifteen songs and Kari none
 'Ola has written fifteen songs, and Kari, none'

If Holmberg's Generalization effects are sensitive only to overt material, as suggested in Holmberg 1999, then the constraints on negation noted in §2 will not hold in the LF representation, and the second conjunct, constructed only at LF, will allow clausal negation, on exactly the same conditions as English does.

This is relevant for Christensen's (1995) parameter distinguishing English from Norwegian negation. Christensen suggested that Norwegian negation must be licensed at S-structure, while English negation could be licensed at LF. If the analysis here is on the right track, then the licensing of Norwegian negation is determined at LF. The difference between Norwegian and English resides rather in what movement is allowed negative expressions.

If a clause is built on the negative expression in the right conjunct (in the examples in (40), say) out of copies of pieces of the left conjunct, then eventually the negative expression will be contained within a VP, just as in the bad examples in (41). Thus, it seems that negative-licensing movement is possible at LF, even in Norwegian. But if LF movement is possible here, why can it not be applied in all cases, e.g. those in §2?

One formal way to capture this state of affairs is to assume a polarity head (cf. Laka 1990) which is not specifically negative when it is inserted in the tree. For example, taking negation to be a mode of predication, the relevant head might be a Predicative head Pred (cf. Bowers 1993), rather than a Neg head. Suppose that Pred can be set to Negative (i.e., is NegP) if the first thing merged with it bears formal Negative features, and is set to Affirmative otherwise. Holmberg's Generalization constrains overt movement only. In the Norwegian cases in §§1–2, the negative element can only make Pred Negative

if it can do so without violating Holmberg's Generalization. In the coordinate cases here, however, movement does not violate Holmberg's Generalization since the material being copied at LF has no phonological content.

English might be different in having a null negative operator which can be merged with Pred overtly. As noted at the end of §3, this would represent a marked option and require clear triggers to be learned.

7. Double negation

One final clue about the nature of negation in Norwegian which I will discuss here is the possibility of double negation. Norwegian does not have negative concord, and when two negative elements appear in a single clause, they can ordinarily only be interpreted as doubly negative.

- (45) a. Ingen studenter besvarte ingen oppgaver.
no students answered no assignments
 'No students answered no assignments' (= 'All students answered at least one assignment')
 b. Ingen vil ikke invitere deg.
nobody will not invite you
 'Nobody doesn't want to invite you' (≈ 'Everybody is willing to invite you')
 c. Vi fikk ikke ingen poeng.
we got not no points
 'We didn't get no points' (= 'We got some points')

Such sentences are about as awkward in Norwegian as they are in English. Interestingly in the context of the present paper, double negation leads to situations in which a negative expression is licensed inside VP, for some speakers.

- (46) a. * Studentene kunne svare på ingen oppgaver.
the students could answer on no assignments
 (intended: 'The students could answer none of the assignments')
 b. Ingen studenter kunne svare på ingen oppgaver.
no students could answer on no assignments
 'No students could answer none of the assignments'
 c. Studentene kunne på ingen måte svare på ingen oppgaver.
the students could on no way answer on no assignments
 'The students could in no sense answer none of the assignments'

(46a) is ungrammatical, as expected, because the negative object cannot license sentence negation from within VP. It cannot receive a trifling negation

interpretation because it contains contentful material (the N *oppgaver*); it cannot receive a P-negation reading because that involves negating a predicative PP (which in this case might express that the students could answer in the absence of an assignment; perhaps the impossibility of this reading has to do with the notion of conventional absence discussed in §5); finally, there is no coordination, so the strategy of building a second clause to host the negative expression is not viable.

However, (46b–c) are grammatical (the contrast is salient for four of six speakers polled, but sharp for only two). This is actually prefigured by the sketch of a formal analysis made at the end of §2 and extended in §6. There, I opined that the condition on *ingen* is that its uninterpretable features be checked by interpretable features in Neg (or Pred, in §6). I also suggested that the condition on Neg is that it be overtly filled by something (because the polarity of Pred is determined by the polarity of the first thing merged with it, as suggested in §6). In the examples in (46b–c), a VP-external negative expression is found, and it is presumably this expression that licenses interpretable features in Neg, while at the same time cancelling its own uninterpretable features. Once Neg is licensed, it has interpretable Neg features, and these are not erased. Therefore, they can check the uninterpretable features on the embedded negation as well.

This account predicts that negation in these examples, like that in the coordination examples in §6, should be possible even for embedded negations. This seems to be borne out (the same two speakers who rejected (46b–c) also rejected (47c)).

- (47) a. *Artistene beholdt rettighetene til mange av låtene sine.*
the.artists retained the.rights to many of the.songs RFX
 ‘The artists retained the rights to many of their songs’
- b. * *Artistene beholdt rettighetene til ingen av låtene sine.*
the.artists retained the.rights to none of the.songs RFX
 (intended: ‘The artists retained the rights to none of their songs’)
- c. *Ingen av artistene beholdt rettighetene til ingen av låtene sine.*
none of the.artists retained the.rights to none of the.songs RFX
 ‘None of the artists retained the rights to none of their songs’

The examples in (47a–b) show that a negation embedded within the object leads to ungrammaticality. The example in (47c) shows that in the presence of a higher licensing negation, the VP-internal negation is grammatical.

Note that this data is significant for the formulation of the Neg Criterion in Haegeman 1995, where the Neg Criterion is stated as a biconditional requiring not only that the specifier of NegP be filled, but that all negative elements occupy the spec of NegP. The main evidence examined there comes from negative concord languages, where negative elements plausibly bear no interpretable negative features at all, only uninterpretable ones. In Norwegian, negative elements such as *ingen* must have interpretable negative features in addition to uninterpretable ones, since they contribute independent negative force in contexts like double negation. In addition, they do not need to move overtly to SpecNegP, if Neg is licensed by some other element.

8. Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed the basic pattern of negation in Norwegian, and four different sorts of unusual apparent counterexamples to that general pattern. Each apparent counterexample sheds some light on the general pattern. Trifling negation shows what happens when the uninterpretable negative features are not present on the lexical item; it can occupy VP but it cannot license sentential negation, and it has a very narrow meaning. P negation gives insight as to what extent sentence negation is dependent on clausal structure; predication is necessary but not tense. Coordinate negation shows that sentence negation can be licensed at LF in Norwegian, despite the surfacy effects of the Holmberg’s Generalization facts. Finally, double negation demonstrates a certain division of labor between checking of uninterpretable features on *ingen* and licensing of interpretable features on Neg.

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