

Validating the Performativity Hypothesis to Neg-Raising using corpus data: Evidence from Polish

Beata Trawiński

Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache, Mannheim
trawinski@ids-mannheim.de

It is known that with certain verbs (such as *think* or *believe*), a negation in the matrix clause can be understood as negating the embedded proposition. Such verbs are referred to as negation raising predicates (NR predicates) and are attested in many languages (Fillmore 1963, Bartsch 1973, Horn 1978, Gajewski 2007). Among many different approaches to Neg-Raising, the idea put forward by Prince (1976) is particularly interesting, since it explains a range of data which is difficult to account for within other, especially syntactic approaches.

Prince (1976) observed that NR predicates exhibit a marked preference to the first person present non-progressive form (in English) and in this regard, they behave in a way similar to performatives. In this paper, the performativity hypothesis is tested using corpus data based on evidence from Polish. The distribution of the negated NR predicate *sądzić* 'think' (Wierzbicka 1969, Modrzejewska 1981) was examined in the balanced version of the National Corpus of Polish (Przepiórkowski et al. 2012). The negated verb *sądzić* exhibits two selectional patterns: It can select indicative complement clauses introduced by the complementizer *że* 'that' and subjunctive complement clauses introduced by the complementizer *żeby* or its variants. In contrast to sentences with *że*, where affirmative structures are possible, sentences with *żeby* obligatorily contain a negation in the matrix clause. Affirmative structures are excluded with *żeby*. However, the matrix negation in sentences with *żeby* can still be understood as negating the embedded proposition. The presence of a semantic negation in the embedded *żeby*-clause is evidenced, among others, by (strong) Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), which can be licensed within these clauses. Similar patterns can be observed in French. According to Prince (1976), French sentences with NR reading contain embedded clauses in the subjunctive rather than the indicative mood. This seems also to hold for Polish.

Based on the above observations and assuming the performativity hypothesis, the preference for the first person present form of NR predicates such as *sądzić* is expected to be stronger with *żeby*-clauses than with *że*-clauses. This is indeed evidenced by the corpus data. In particular, the results of the present corpus study show that the tense and person form of the negated verb *sądzić* correlate with its preferences for *że*- versus *żeby*- complements. The first person present form is associated with *żeby*-clauses significantly stronger than with *że*-clauses. These findings clearly support the performativity hypothesis. Pilot studies of other NP predicates in Polish, such as *wierzyć* 'believe' and *uważać* 'be of the opinion' yielded very similar results. Theoretical modeling of performativity effects in Neg-Raising still remains a challenge.

References: Bartsch, Renate (1973). 'Negative transportation' gibt es nicht. *Linguistische Berichte* 27(7). Fillmore, Charles J. (1963). The position of embedding transformations in a grammar. *WORD* 19(2), pp. 208–231. Gajewski, Jon R. (2007). Neg-raising and polarity. *Linguistics and Philosophy* 30(3), pp. 289–328. Horn, Laurence Robert (1978). Remarks on neg-raising. *Syntax and Semantics* 9, pp. 129–220. Modrzejewska, Ewa (1981). Neg-raising Predicates in English and Polish. *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics Poznan* 13, pp. 41–52. Prince, E. (1976). The Syntax and Semantics of NEG Raising, with Evidence from French. *Language* 52, pp. 404–426. Przepiórkowski, Adam et al. (2012). *Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego*. Warszawa: PWN. Wierzbicka, Anna (1969). *Dociekania semantyczne*. Wrocław: Ossolineum.