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# Negation, Contrast, and the Swedish Prefield

*Johan Brandtler & David Håkansson*

## 1 Introduction

As is well-known in the literature, V2 languages like Swedish pose virtually no syntactic restriction on the element preceding the finite verb. This freedom does not mean that all configurations are stylistically and/or pragmatically equivalent, however. The vast majority of Swedish main clauses are either introduced by a subject (approx. 60–80 %) or a framing adverbial; see e.g. Westman 1974 and Jörgensen 1976 for details. The infrequency of other constituents makes their occurrence marked, a fact that in turn suggests that the restrictions on the Swedish prefield are pragmatic rather than syntactic in nature.

Throughout her career, Valéria Molnár has persistently acknowledged the interplay between syntax and pragmatics. Defending the idea that the left-periphery of sentences is information structurally marked for discourse linking, she has in a number of articles developed a cross-linguistic account of how pragmatics affects the content of [Spec,CP]; see Molnár 2003, 2006 and Molnár & Winkler 2009. In this paper, we will apply her theory of C-constraint to Swedish, showing that it can be used to account for negative preposing, as illustrated in (1b) below.

- (1) a. Sven har **inte** köpt den boken på nätet.  
Sven has not bought that book on net.DEF  
'Sven hasn't bought that book online.'
- b. **Inte** har Sven köpt den boken på nätet.  
not has Sven bought that book on web.DEF
- c. [Spec,CP Inte [C har [Spec,TP Sven [NegP **inte** [VP har Sven köpt ... ]]]]]

In (1b), negation has undergone topicalization from its base position in NegP to [Spec,CP], as illustrated in (1c). However, unless the right pragmatic criteria are

fulfilled, preposing *inte* is infelicitous.<sup>1</sup> Consider the exchange in (2) below:

- (2) A: Vill du ha en cigarett?  
 want you have a cigarette  
 ‘Would you like a cigarette?’
- B: Nej, jag röker *inte*.  
 no I smoke not  
 ‘No, I don’t smoke.’
- B’: # Nej, *inte* röker jag.  
 no not smoke I

As we will see shortly, there exists no uniform explanation of the interpretative effects of negative preposing in Swedish. Furthermore, the restrictions on negative preposing are far from clear. In this paper, we argue that the relevant pragmatic restriction is contrast. We further show that the pragmatic effects associated with different kinds of negative preposing fall out from Molnár’s Contrast Hierarchy. Thus, we propose a unified account of negative preposing that builds on the interplay between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, in line with Molnár’s approach to human language and linguistic theory.

## 2 Negative preposing in Swedish

Before going into the theoretical aspects of negative preposing, let us review the relevant empirical data. The first set comes from Teleman et al, vol. 4 (1999:

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<sup>1</sup>Note that negation differs from most clause adverbials in this respect, as topicalizing a clause adverbial prototypically has none or very subtle effects on the interpretation or the grammaticality of a sentence. Compare the all but equivalent answers in (i) below.

- (i) A: Ska vi träffas klockan 3?  
 shall we meet clock.DEF 3  
 ‘Should we meet at 3 o’clock?’
- B: Javisst. Men jag blir *kanske* lite sen.  
 sure but I become maybe little late  
 ‘Sure. But I may be a little late.’
- B’: Javisst. Men *kanske* blir jag lite sen.  
 sure but maybe become I little late  
 ‘Sure. But I may be a little late.’

175ff) – the main reference work on Swedish grammar –, in which it is noted that negation may topicalize in sentences functioning as objections, see (3), or in enumerations, see (4). In the latter case, topicalization gives rise to an emphasis which turns the sentence into an objection; compare the (a) and (b) examples in (4).

- (3) a. Inte har Lindgren skrivit det där!  
not has Lindgren written that there  
'Lindgren can't have written THAT!'
- b. Inte ska du stå här och skala potatis!  
not shall you stand here and peel potatoes  
'You shouldn't be here peeling potatoes!'
- (4) a. Inte har hon tvättat och inte har jag städad.  
not has she washed and not have I cleaned  
'She hasn't done the laundry, nor have I been cleaning.'
- b. Han har inga pengar, och inte har han nån näver heller.  
he has no money and not has he any birch-bark either  
'He hasn't got any money, nor has he any birch-bark.'

The main etymological dictionary of Swedish, *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* (SAOB) distinguishes yet another use of negative preposing, namely for doing modest or humble requests as in (5).

- (5) a. Inte nekar han väl?  
not denies he PART  
'He doesn't deny, right?'
- b. Inte har du sett Hedlund?  
not have you seen Hedlund  
'You haven't seen Hedlund by any chance?'

As noted by Petersson (2008: 114), a neg-initial clause can often be paraphrased by a negated declarative modified by the modal (or speech act) particles *ju* and *väl*. This observation holds for the sentences in both (3) and (5) – but crucially not (4); see (6) below:

- (6) a. Lindgren har *väl* inte skrivit det där! ≈ (3a)  
Lindgren has PRT not written that there

- b. Hon har *väl* inte tvättat, och jag har *väl* inte diskat.      ≠ (4a)  
 she has PRT not washed and I have PRT not washed.up
- c. Du har *väl* inte sett Hedlund?      ≈ (5b)  
 you have PRT not seen Hedlund

Petersson's observation suggests that negation in the first position is not standard sentential negation, but rather a modal particle negating the *reasons* for claiming *p*. We will return to this issue below.

In a contrastive study of negative preposing in Swedish and Finland-Swedish, Lindström (2009) distinguishes three uses of neg-initial clauses, roughly correlating to those listed by SAG and SAOB: *responsive*, *additive* and *interrogative*. According to Lindström, additive negation (as in (4) above) is stylistically neutral, and furthermore less associated with a particular genre or geographical region than the other two. Responsive (3) and interrogative (5) are primarily used in dialogical contexts, and negation is prosodically unstressed. Additive negation always has prosodic stress.

Syntactically, Lindström points to a number of differences. Additive negation is often preceded by a conjunction, and negation may co-occur with the adverb *heller* 'either' in the prefield. These properties are not compatible with responsive and interrogative negation, as illustrated below:

- (7) a. Det är väl ingen överdrift att äta för 200 kronor, *och inte heller* är  
 that is PRT no excess to eat for 200 kronor and not either is  
 det konstigt om ett gäng dricker lite vin till maten.  
 it strange if a party drinks little wine to food  
 'It's not an excess to eat for SEK 200, neither is it strange if a party  
 wants some wine to go with the food.'
- b. \**Inte heller* ska du stå här och diska.
- c. \**Inte heller* har ni sett Hedlund?

There are no structural differences between responsive and interrogative negation, and Lindström suggests that the different functions are realized through pragmatic and prosodic means. Interrogative negation occurs in yes/no-questions, which prototypically take V1 word order, as in (8) below. However, so called non-open yes/no-questions (cf. Lyons 1977: 768, and Brandtler 2012: 93) often take V2 order – but such questions are not unbiased with regards to the anticipated answer: affirmative non-open yes/no-questions anticipate a positive answer, whereas a negated non-open yes/no-question anticipates a negative answer, cf. (9).

- |     |   |            |
|-----|---|------------|
| (8) | Har ni sett Hedlund?<br>have you seen Hedlund             | unbiased   |
| (9) | a. Inte har ni sett Hedlund?<br>not have you seen Hedlund | neg-biased |
|     | b. Ni har sett Hedlund?<br>you have seen Hedlund          | aff-biased |

Alternatively, interrogative negation may be used as a humble request, in which case negation is better analyzed as a modal particle, as it does not negate the actual question. Such sentences may be paraphrased by *månne* ‘wonder’, as in (10); (see Teleman et al 4: 742ff for discussion).

- (10)     Inte har ni sett Hedlund  $\approx$  Månne har ni sett Hedlund?  
           not have you seen Hedlund   wonder have you seen Hedlund?  
           ‘You haven’t seen Hedlund by any chance?’

Since negation does *not* function as negation in (10), we will mainly focus on additive and responsive negation in the remaining part of this paper.

Summarizing this section, we find the following similarities and differences between different kinds of neg-initial clauses in Swedish:

- Additive negation is stylistically neutral, carries prosodic stress, may be combined with conjunctions and *heller* ‘either’, and does not combine with modal particles such as *ju* and *väl*.
- Responsive/interrogative negation is prototypically used in dialogical contexts, is prosodically unmarked, does not combine with conjunctions or *heller* ‘either’, but does combine with modal particles such as *ju* and *väl*.

In section 4 below, we present a principled explanation of these observed differences, building on Molnár’s notion of C. But before jumping too far ahead, we will briefly review previous accounts of negative preposing in V2 languages.

### 3 Previous accounts

The empirical observation that the Swedish negative adverb may undergo topicalization to [Spec,CP] strongly suggests that it is a maximal projection (i.e. an XP),

generated in [Spec,NegP]. This analysis has also been standardly assumed for the Scandinavian languages in general (see e.g. Holmberg & Platzack 2005).

However, discussing the restrictions on sentence initial negation in V2 languages, Barbiers (2002) argues that negation may be either a head or a maximal projection: “The fact that Standard Dutch NOT can sometimes be preposed but not always suggests that it is sometimes an XP and sometimes a head.” By making this assumption, Barbiers proposes a strict syntactic account of negative preposing that need not make any reference to contextual or situational factors.

Barbiers notes that negation may only be topicalized in Dutch provided the main verb takes a clausal complement; he subsequently interprets this observation to the effect that negation is generated as a maximal projection only when the verb embeds a complement clause. Compare the grammatical sentence (11) below, in which the verb takes a CP-complement, with the ungrammatical one in (12) where the verb takes a DP-complement. The examples are taken from Barbiers (2002: 17):

- (11) Ik had wel gezien dat Jan aankwam, maar NIET had ik gezien dat Ed  
I had well seen that Jan came but not had I seen that Ed  
vertrok.  
left  
'I had seen that John arrived but I had not seen that Ed left'
- (12) \*Ik had Jan wel gezien, maar NIET had ik Marie gezien.

According to Barbiers's theory, the observed differences between clausal arguments and nominal arguments are due to structural positions: a DP-complement is in a Spec-position in relation to the verb, while a CP-complement is a complement to the verb; see (13) below. Since a transitive verb like *think* only assigns one  $\theta$ -role, it only takes one argument: either a CP- or a DP-complement (but not both) as illustrated in (14), taken from Barbiers (2002: 19).

- (13) [CP [TP [V DP [V' [V *thinks* [CP]]]]]]
- (14) a. Ik weet dat Jan dat denkt (\*dat Piet komt)  
I know that Jan that thinks that Piet comes  
b. Ik weet dat Jan (\*dat) denkt dat Piet komt

Whenever the verb takes a CP-complement, Barbiers argues, the preverbal position becomes available for non- $\theta$ -role constituents, such as expletives. This position also

provides an escape hatch for negation, enabling it to topicalize to [Spec,CP]. Consequently, negation cannot topicalize when the preverbal position hosts a nominal argument, as in (12). Thus, Barbiers's theory gives a strict syntactic account of the data above: as a syntactic head cannot topicalize to [Spec,CP], negation in first position is ungrammatical unless it is generated as a maximal projection in preverbal position, as in (11), and this is only possible if the  $\theta$ -criterion is fulfilled by a CP-complement.

Barbiers's analysis is however severely criticized by Zeijlstra (2010). The first problem concerns verb movement. If negation is (sometimes) a head, it should in principle block verb movement to [C<sup>o</sup>]; hence, Barbiers's analysis cannot without additional stipulation explain the data in (15), where the verb precedes negation.

- (15) a. Jag kommer inte.  
I come not  
b. [CP Jag [C<sup>o</sup> kommer] [NegP [Neg<sup>o</sup> inte] [VP t<sub>i</sub> [V<sup>o</sup> t<sub>v</sub>]]]]

Second, Zeijlstra argues that Barbiers's predictions are not supported empirically. In some cases, negation cannot topicalize even though the verb takes a CP-complement (16a); in other cases, negation may topicalize even though the verb takes a non CP-complement (16b). The examples are taken from Zeijlstra (2010: 29–30).

- (16) a. \*Niet had ik gezien dat Eddy vertrok.  
NEG had I seen that Eddy left  
'I didn't see that Eddy left.'  
b. Niet moeten in de lijst worden aangekruist de planten die je  
NEG must in the list be crossed the plants that you  
al hébt.  
already have  
'You must not mark the plants on the list that you already have'

Zeijlstra's arguments hold equally well for Swedish. As illustrated in (17) and (18), negative preposing is independent of the nature of the complement: both (17a) and (17b) are ungrammatical, irrespective of the nature of the complement, and (18) is grammatical even with a DP-complement.

- (17) Följer Anna med ikväll?  
follows Anna with tonight  
'Will Anna join us tonight?'



- a. # *Inte* tror jag det.  
not think I that
- b. # *Inte* tror jag att hon hinner.  
not think I that she has-time
- (18) Om det har regnat någonstans i natt så *inte* är det här.  
if it has rained somewhere in night so not is it here  
'If it has rained anywhere tonight, it sure isn't here.'

Zeijlstra (2010) argues instead that the restrictions on negative preposing in V<sub>2</sub> languages reflect the distinction between clausal and constituent negation. According to his analysis, constituent negation may undergo so called “partial topicalization”, leaving the remaining part of the phrase lower in the structure. In no other instances may negation occur clause initially: “Hence all counterexamples against the ban on single negative markers in Spec,CP reduce to partial topicalisation. This entails that if partial topicalisation does not apply, the single negative marker is banned from Spec,CP”. The reason for this, following Zeijlstra (2010: 1), is that “no negative material may dominate the illocutionary features in C° and that therefore negative material may only appear in Spec,CP provided that it can be reconstructed at LF”. According to Zeijlstra’s analysis, then, clause initial negation is only possible (i) when the negative material is a negative quantifier or of the form [NEG XP], or (ii) when the negative marker is solely fronted via partial topicalization. In contrast to Barbiers’s analysis, which gives a purely syntactic account of negative preposing in Dutch, Zeijlstra’s proposal builds on an interplay between syntax and semantics. Interestingly, Zeijlstra explicitly claims that his analysis is applicable also to Swedish. Hence, we will discuss his model more closely in the next section.

#### 4 Clause initial negation as constituent negation

As discussed in the previous section, Zeijlstra’s analysis of negative preposing crucially builds on the distinction between clausal and constituent negation. For this distinction to be relevant, however, there must be objective tests for deciding when negation has scope over a constituent or a clause. Klima’s (1964) famous *either/too* test has often been used for this purpose: only clausal negation triggers *either* tags; see (19). The same test may be used in Swedish using *heller* ‘either’ and *också* ‘too’; see (20).

- (19) a. John **isn't** friendly, and Bill isn't *either* / *\*too*.  
 b. John is **un**friendly, and Bill is *\*either* / *too*.
- (20) a. Sven är **inte** vänlig, och (det är) inte Bertil *heller* / *\*också*  
 Sven is not friendly and that is not Bertil either too  
 b. Sven är **ov**änlig, och det är Bertil *\*heller* / *också*  
 Sven is unfriendly and that is Bertil either too

If Zeijlstra's analysis is correct, we would expect clause initial negation to co-occur with *too* only, as *too* is compatible with constituent negation. *Heller* should be ruled out, however, as it is triggered by clausal negation. This pattern is not what we find, though. As shown in (21) below, clause initial negation triggers *heller* rather than *too*.

- (21) a. Inte ska du stå här och diska, och det ska inte Bengt  
 not shall you stand here and wash.up and that shall not Bengt  
*heller* / *\*också*  
 either too
- b. Inte hade man råd med lägenhet på den tiden. Det har vi  
 not had one afford with apartment on that time that have we  
 inte nu *heller* / *\*också*  
 not now either  
 'One couldn't afford an apartment in those days, and we can't afford it now, either.'

Another test for distinguishing between clausal and constituent negation is the way a sentence may be accepted or rejected by the hearer. A negative clause is accepted with *nej* 'no', and rejected with *jo* 'yes', whereas an affirmative clause (containing constituent negation) is accepted with *ja* 'yes' and rejected with *nej* 'no'. Compare the clausal negation in (22) with the constituent negation in (23):

- (22) A: Sandra har **inte** kommit.  
 Sandra has not come  
 B: **Nej**, det har hon inte. / **Jo**, det har hon.  
 no that has she not yes that has she
- (23) A: Hans-Åke är ovänlig.  
 Hans-Åke is unfriendly  
 B: **Ja**, det är han. / **Nej**, det är han inte.  
 yes that is he no that is he not

If we apply this test on clause initial negation, we get the same result as with the *heller/också*-test: it must be regarded as clausal negation:

- (24) A: **Inte** ska du stå här och diska.  
not shall you stand here and wash.up
- B: **Nej**, det ska jag inte. / **Jo**, det ska jag.  
no that shall I not yes that shall I
- (25) A: Det var ju till att hyra sitt rum. **Inte** hade man råd med  
it was PART to INF rent one's room not had one afford with  
lägenhet.  
apartment
- B: **Nej**, det hade man inte. / **Jo**, det hade man.  
no that had one not yes that had one.

Based on these two tests of clausal and constituent negation, we must thus draw the conclusion that Zeijlstra's analysis is not applicable to Swedish: preposed negation cannot be regarded as an instance of constituent negation. In what follows, we will argue that the difference between standard middle-field negation and clause-initial negation mirrors a subtle semantic difference.

## 5 C: Pragmatic restrictions on negative preposing

In the previous sections, two different hypotheses on clause initial negation in V2-languages have been scrutinized: the syntactic account of Barbiers (2002), and the semantic-syntactic account of Zeijlstra (2010). However, neither one successfully accounts for the Swedish data discussed in section 1. In this section, we suggest that the restrictions on negative preposing in Swedish are purely pragmatic in nature. As our point of departure, we apply the theory of *C-constraint* as proposed by Molnár.

According to Molnár (2003: 235ff), the left periphery of sentences is characterized by a C-constraint, the primary function of which is to create cohesion. Thus, the c-constraint regulates the content in [Spec,CP]. Building on a close connection between syntax and pragmatics, Molnár further assumes that the C-constraint is syntactically realized by a so called *C-feature*, which may be set positively or negatively. Whenever the feature is set positively, it is specified either by C-continuity or by C-contrast: "While 'C-continuity' refers to identity or similarity of enti-

ties [...], ‘C-contrast’ means non-identity of entities [...], but relatedness to an identical set or scale.”

Taking on a typological perspective, Molnár argues that the C-constraint may be somewhat differently realized cross-linguistically, even when the C-feature is set positively. The Swedish left-periphery is primarily used for C-continuity, while the Russian and Finnish left-periphery is primarily used for C-contrast. Molnár further concludes that English, German and Hungarian have a negatively set C-feature. The so called ‘C-hierarchy’ is illustrated in (26):

- (26) [+C] “C-continuity” < [+C] “C-contrast” < [–C]  
 French < Swedish                  Finnish < Russian                  English < German < Hungarian

The continuity restriction on the Swedish left-periphery makes [Spec,CP] a prime host for subject topics and framing adverbials, which may undergo A<sup>2</sup>-movement. As mentioned in the introduction, the occurrence of other constituents is statistically infrequent, and also pragmatically marked. As an illustrative example, it is decidedly marked to use an object as topic in [Spec,CP] in all-focus sentences (27):<sup>2</sup>

- (27) a. Varför skriker du så? – #[[Mig]<sub>T</sub> skar jag]<sub>F</sub>  
 why scream you so myself cut I  
 ‘Why are you screaming? – I cut myself.’  
 b. Vad hände igår? – #[[Sofia]<sub>T</sub> träffade jag]<sub>F</sub>  
 what happened yesterday Sofia met I  
 ‘What happened yesterday? – I met Sofia.’

As shown in (27), A<sup>2</sup>-movement of an object to [Spec,CP] may be as deviant and pragmatically impossible as A<sup>2</sup>-movement of negation (cf. example (2) above). Importantly, objects are not excluded *per se* from the first position in Swedish, although they often require a contrastive interpretation (cf. Frey 2006).

- (28) Stör jag dig? – [Nej, [mig]<sub>F</sub> stör du inte]  
 bother I you no me bother you not  
 ‘Do I bother you?’ – No, you don’t bother ME.

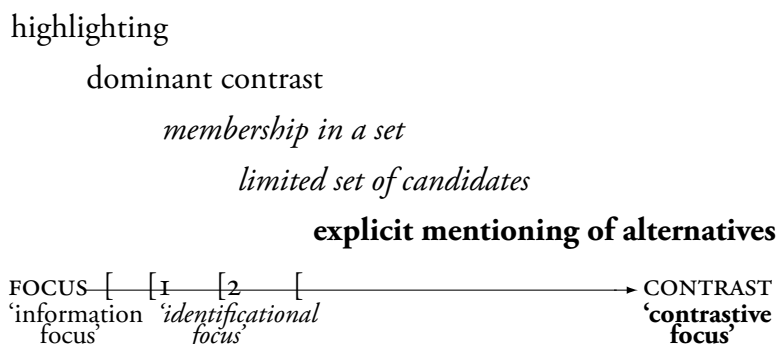
<sup>2</sup>Only the pronominal object *det* ‘it’ may topicalize in all-focus clauses in Swedish, as in (i):

(i) Vad hände igår? – [[Det]<sub>T</sub> vet jag inte]<sub>F</sub>  
 what happened yesterday that know I not  
 ‘What happened yesterday? – I don’t know.’

When considering the contrast-effect of object topicalization, it lies close at hand to assume that the same effect holds for negative preposing. Thus, our hypothesis is that contrast “licenses” preposed negation, and this would explain the ungrammaticality of (2) above. However, the critical reader may object to this description, as it is not obvious that the various interpretations of negative preposing as exemplified in (3–5) can be reduced to contrast. As pointed out by Molnár (2006), however, contrast – although closely related to focus – should not be confused with it. Although contrast and focus often coincides, Molnár argues that these two notions should be kept separate, and furthermore that a contrastive constituent may be connected to topic *or* focus. The connection between contrast and topic/focus gives that cohesion need not necessarily be related to topical constituents in [+C]-languages, as contrast may be regarded as a cohesive device for focal constituents as well.

However, it is not only this two-sided property of contrast – being connected to both topic and focus – that makes it a complicated notion in the literature. Molnár (2006) discusses at some length whether contrast should be regarded as an absolute or a gradual notion. Furthermore, she points to the various views on “whether contrast is a uniform phenomenon or whether a further differentiation of this notion is possible or necessary”. With regards to the first question, Molnár argues that contrast is best described as a gradual notion. The least restricted kind of contrast, i.e. the most general pragmatic and prosodic property of focus and contrast, is *highlighting*; the most restricted kind of contrast, i.e. the most specific one, is *explicit mentioning (or exclusion) of alternatives*. Molnár illustrates the contrast hierarchy thus:

(29) THE CONTRAST HIERARCHY (Molnár 2006: 211)



With regards to the second question (i.e. whether or not contrast is a uniform phenomenon), Molnár (2006: 212–13) argues that all different kinds of contrast minimally share at least one common denominator, as contrast “always operates on alternatives independently of the character of the set (open vs. closed) and the presence of alternatives in the linguistic context and in the situation.” Another common denominator, according to Molnár (2006: 213), is that “contrast is always connected to highlighting independently of the accent type and the special extension of the pitch range”.

The gradual notion of contrast, as suggested by Molnár, may help us understand the difference between additive and responsive/interrogative negation in Swedish. Remember from section 2 that additive negation is characterized by prosodic stress, whereas responsive/interrogative negation is not. So while we argue that all instances of negative preposing in Swedish is related to contrast, the different functions can be related to the contrast hierarchy. Additive negation is primarily used to signal that the expressed state-of-affairs is the opposite from what one could expect at a given time and/or place; thus additive negation works on a limited set of candidates. Consider the sentences below:

- (30) a. [The informant relates how she used to work in a different town.]  
 Det var ju till att hyra sitt rum. Inte hade man råd med  
 it was PRT to INF rent one's room not had one afford with  
 lägenhet.  
 apartment  
 ‘We had no choice but to rent a room. We couldn't very well afford  
 an apartment.’  
 [The ‘expected’ or unmarked option is that one can afford to buy an  
 apartment.]
- b. Vi har inga pengar. Inte har staten några pengar till  
 we have no money not have state.DEF any money to  
 forskningen heller.  
 research.DEF either  
 ‘We have no money. And the government has no money for research  
 either.’  
 [The unmarked option is that the government *does* have money.]

- c. [On the life of Swedish soldiers in Africa.]  
 De har inga andra möjligheter. Inte finns det någonting.  
 they have no other options not is there anything  
 ‘They have no other option. There isn’t anything.’  
 [The unmarked option is that soldiers in Sweden have other options.]

As we see from the examples in (30), the speaker contrasts the actual state-of-affairs with the expected or ‘default’ state-of-affairs. The cohesive effect of this contrastive use should also be evident, as the proposition embedded under negation must informationally connect to the preceding clause. If there is no such connection, additive negation is ruled out. Compare the sentences in (31).

- (31) a. Han är inte snygg, och inte är han särskilt trevlig (heller).  
 he is not handsome and not is he particularly nice either  
 ‘He’s neither handsome nor nice.’  
 b. <sup>??</sup> Han är inte snygg, och inte har han en syster (heller).  
 he is not handsome and not has he a sister either  
 c. Han är inte snygg, och han har ingen syster.  
 he is not handsome and he has no sister  
 ‘He’s not handsome, and he hasn’t a sister.’

If our assumption is correct, i.e. that additive negation is closer to contrast on Molnár’s scale, then responsive negation is closer to focus. The primary function of responsive negation is *highlighting*, as the speaker signals that he or she finds a certain state-of-affairs surprising, unwanted, unfitting etc. Admittedly, separating focus from contrast is a quite intricate task, especially since Swedish does not have any structurally designated position for focus.

However, we saw in example (28) that Swedish disprefers non-contrastive focus in [Spec,CP], since, according to Molnár’s C-hypothesis, the primary function of the Swedish left-periphery is to create cohesion. In order to express strict (non-contrastive) focus, Swedish has to revert to other constructions, most notably clefts.<sup>3</sup> Compare the sentences in (32) and (33):

<sup>3</sup>Naturally, clefts may also be used to express contrastive focus:

- (i) A: Sofia bor i Berlin  
 Sofia lives in Berlin

- (32) a. # LÄKARE vill hon bli.  
 doctor wants she become  
 b. Det är LÄKARE (som) hon vill bli.  
 it is doctor that she wants become  
 ‘She wants to become a DOCTOR.’
- (33) a. # Robin HOOD vill jag ha.  
 Robin Hood want I have  
 b. Det är Robin HOOD (som) jag vill ha.  
 it is Robin Hood that I want have  
 ‘I want Robin HOOD.’

Since clefts are associated with (non-contrasted) focus, they may be used to distinguish between contrasted and non-contrasted focus on Molnár’s contrast hierarchy. If our proposal is correct, i.e. that additive negation leans heavier towards contrast than responsive negation, the prediction is that responsive negation should be more easily paraphrased by cleft constructions. This prediction is borne out, as illustrated in (34) and (35).

- (34) Additive negation
- a. Inte hade man råd med lägenhet. ≠  
 not had one afford with apartment  
 Det var inte lägenhet man hade råd med.  
 it was not apartment one had afford with
- b. Inte har staten några pengar till forskningen heller ≠  
 not has state any money for research either  
 Det är inte staten som har några pengar till forskningen.  
 it is not state that has any money to research  
 Det är inte staten som har några pengar till forskningen heller.
- (35) Responsive negation
- a. Victor! Förlåt mig! Inte menade jag så. ≈  
 Victor excuse me not meant I so  
 Det var inte så jag menade  
 it was not so I meant  
 ‘I didn’t mean it like that.’

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B: Nej, det är i PARIS som Sofia bor.  
 no it is in Paris that Sofia lives



- b. Inte har Lindgren skrivit det där. ≈  
 not has Lindgren written that there  
 Det är inte Lindgren som har skrivit det där.  
 it is not Lindgren that has written that there

We see from the above examples that responsive negation (35) is more easily paraphrased by a cleft than additive negation (34). This means that while both kinds are related to contrast, additive negation is more unambiguously contrastive than responsive negation.

From Molnár's Contrast Hierarchy, it follows that not all contrastive constituents are marked [+C]. Rather, only those that unambiguously operate on a limited set of alternatives have a positively set C-feature. Since Swedish is a [+Continuity]-language, any [-C] constituent in [Spec,CP] will be pragmatically marked. Consequently, we would expect responsive negation to be more marked than additive negation, and this is also what Lindström (2009) found in his corpus study: additive negation is stylistically neutral, whereas responsive negation is contextually restricted.

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, we have proposed a pragmatic-semantic account of negative preposing in Swedish, building on Molnár's notion of C. Since Swedish poses no apparent syntactic restriction on the constituent preceding the finite verb, we have argued that the occurrence of negation in [Spec,CP] must be pragmatically licensed by contrast. Following Molnár (2003, 2006), we assume that Swedish is a C-continuity language; in the unmarked case, [Spec,CP] hosts elements carrying a positively set C-feature (such as aboutness or framing topics). Any clausal element not marked [+C] is dispreferred in [Spec,CP], which consequently means that negation cannot occur clause initially unless it is marked for contrast. Additive negation is stylistically more unmarked than responsive/interrogative negation (see Lindström 2009), and this finding is straightforwardly accounted for by our hypothesis.

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