[1] negative clause positive clause

i a. *He didn't read it, not even the abstract.* b. \**He read it, not even the abstract.*

ii a. *He didn't read it; neither*/*nor did I.* b. *Ed read it; so did I.*

iii a. *Ed didn't read it, did he?* b. *Ed read it, didn't he?*

iv a. *Not once did Ed read it.* b. *After lunch Ed read it.*

[2] a. *Ed didn't read it, and I didn't either.* b. *Ed read it, and I did too.*

[3] verbal non-verbal

i a. *He doesn't dine out.* b. *He never dines out.*

ii a. *I did not see anything at all.* b. *I saw nothing at all.*

[4] analytic synthetic

i a. *The report is not complete.* b. *The report isn't complete.*

ii a. *Not many people liked it.* b. *Nobody liked it.*

[5] clausal subclausal

i a. *She didn't have a large income.* b. *She had a not inconsiderable income.*

ii a. *We were friends at no time .* b. *We were friends in no time.*

[6] ordinary metalinguistic

i a. *She didn't have lunch with my old*  b. *She didn't have lunch with your `old*

*man: he couldn't make it. man': she had lunch with your father.*

ii a. *Max hasn't got four children: he's* b. *Max hasn't got four children: he's*

*got three. got five.*

[7] i a. *You didn't hurt him.* b. *You aren't tactless.* [primary]

ii a. *Don't hurt him.* b. *Don't be tactless.* [imperative]

iii a. *It's important not to bend it.* b. *It's important not to be seen.* [secondary]

[8] i absolute negators *no* (including compounds *nobody*, *nothing*, etc., and the independent form *none*), *neither*, *nor*, *never*

ii approximate negators *few*, *little*; *barely*, *hardly*, *scarcely*; *rarely*, *seldom*

iii affixal negators *un*, *in*, *non*, *less*, etc.

[9] i a. *None of them supported her.* b. *Few of them supported her.*

[10] i a. *We were friends at no time, not* b. \**We were friends in no time, not*

*even when we were at school. even within a few days.*

ii a. *We were friends at no time, and*  b. *We were friends in no time, and*

*neither were our brothers. so were our brothers.*

iii a. *We were friends at no time, were* b. *We were friends in no time, weren't*

*we? we?*

iv a. *At no time were we friends.* b. \**In no time were we friends.*

[11] a. *We weren't friends at any time.* b. \**We weren't friends in any time.*

[12] i *These terms aren't negotiable, are they?* [verbal negation: clausal]

ii *These terms are non-negotiable, aren't they?* [affixal negation: subclausal]

[13] a. *Liz didn't delete the backup file.* b. *Liz deleted the backup file.*

[14] i A deletion operation took place

ii The deletion operation was performed by Liz

iii The deletion operation was performed on the backup file

[15] a. *Liz didn't delete the backup file*  b. *Liz deleted the backup file*

*and Sue wrote the report. and Sue wrote the report.*

[16] Sue wrote the report.

[17] a. *Kim wasn't at work on Monday* b. *Kim was at work on Monday*

*or Pat on Tuesday. or Pat on Tuesday.*

[18] i Kim was at work on Monday.

ii Pat was at work on Tuesday.

[19] a. *Ed noticed a problem; Liz, however,* b. *Ed noticed a problem; Liz,*

*didn't delete the backup file. however, deleted the backup file.*

[20] i Ed noticed a problem.

ii Liz deleted the backup file.

iii There is some relation of apparent contrast between [i] and [ii].

[21] i a. *She didn't say that she knew him.* b. *She said that she didn't know him.*

ii a. *She didn't promise to help him.* b. *She promised not to help him.*

[22] i a. *She tried to stop offending them.* b. *She stopped trying to offend them.*

[23] i *Liz intentionally deleted the backup file.*

ii *Liz intentionally didn't delete the backup file.* [adjunct has scope over negative]

iii *Liz didn't intentionally delete the backup file.* [negative has scope over adjunct]

[24] i Liz deleted the backup file.

ii Liz did what she did intentionally.

[25] i Liz acted intentionally in not deleting the backup file [meaning of [23ii]]

ii Liz didn't act intentionally in deleting the backup file [meaning of [23iii]]

[26] i *Liz intentionally didn't delete the backup file* and *Liz intentionally deleted the backup file* are **contraries**: they cannot be both true, but they can be both false.

ii *Liz didn't intentionally delete the backup file* and *Liz intentionally deleted the backup file* are **contradictories**: they cannot be both true, but they cannot be both false either.

[27] narrow scope: subclausal wide scope: clausal

i a. \**Liz intentionally didn't delete the*  b. *Liz didn't intentionally delete the*

*backup file, and neither did Sue. backup file, and neither did Sue.*

ii a. \**Liz intentionally didn't delete the*  b. *Liz didn't intentionally delete the*

*backup file, did she? backup file, did she?*

[28] Given a construction containing two scope-bearing elements, the one which comes first will generally have scope over the one which comes later.

[29] i *Liz didn't delete the backup file intentionally.* [negative scope over adjunct]

ii *Liz didn't delete the backup file intentionally.* [adjunct scope over negative]

[30] i *Because it cost $50 she didn't buy it.* [adjunct has scope over negative]

ii *She didn't buy it because it cost $50.* [ambiguous]

[31] i *He hasn't got many friends.* [negative has scope over quantifier]

ii *Many people didn't attend the meetings.* [quantifier has scope over negative]

[32] i *I didn't agree with many of the points he made.* [scope ambiguous]

ii *Everybody didn't support the proposal, but most did.* [wide scope negation]

[33] i *Many members didn't back the proposal.* [narrow scope negative]

ii *The proposal wasn't backed by many members.* [wide scope negative preferred]

[34] i *All of them didn't have a clue what he meant.* [wide scope universal]

ii *None of them had a clue what he meant.* [narrow scope existential]

[35] i *All of the members didn't support the proposal.*

ii *The proposal wasn't supported by all of the members.*

[36] a. *Your children don't hate school.* b. *Your children hate school.*

[37] i a. Somebody's children hate school. b. You are that person.

ii a. Some relatives of yours hate school. b. They are your children.

iii a. There is some attitude your children. b. That attitude is hatred.

harbour towards school.

iv a. There is something your children hate. b. That thing is school.

[38] i *Your children don't hate school.*

If there are children who hate school, they are not yours.

ii *Your children don't hate school.*

If any of your relatives hate school, it is not your children.

iii *Your children don't hate school.*

If your children harbour an attitude toward school, it is not hatred.

iv *Your children don't hate school.*

If your children do hate something, it's not school.

[39] i *At least Max didn't wear a green mohair suit to the wedding.*

ii a. At least the green mohair garment Max wore to the wedding wasn't a suit.

b. At least the green garment Max wore to the wedding wasn't a mohair suit.

c. At least the garment Max wore to the wedding wasn't a green mohair suit.

d. At least what Max did wasn't to wear a green mohair suit to the wedding.

e. At least Max wearing a green mohair suit to the wedding didn't happen.

[40] i *Liz intentionally deleted the backup file.*

ii *Liz intentionally didn't delete the backup file.*

iii *Liz didn't intentionally delete the backup file.* [focus of negation]

[1] i *Kim will be here later on.* [positive clause with auxiliary verb]

ii *Kim will not be here later on.* [analytic primary negation]

iii *Kim won't be here later on.* [synthetic primary negation]

[2] i *Kim waved to us.* [positive clause with lexical verb]

ii *Kim did not wave to us.* [analytic primary negation]

iii *Kim didn't wave to us.* [synthetic primary negation]

[3] i a. *I do not accept, and will not condone or defend, this shameful policy.* [formal]

b. *I don't accept, and won't condone or defend, this shameful policy.* [informal]

ii a. *This is not to say that one could not conceive of a world in which*

*aesthetic properties did not supervene on the physical; but the*

*necessity of positing them does not seem to me an attractive prospect.* [formal]

b. *This doesn't mean that you couldn't imagine a world where aesthetic*

*properties didn't supervene on physical ones; but having to assume*

*them doesn't seem like an attractive prospect to me.* [informal]

[4] i *Had it not been for the weather, the plan would have succeeded.*

ii \**Hadn't it been for the weather, the plan would have succeeded.*

[5] i a. *She doesn't agree with me.* b. *She does not agree with me.*

ii a. *Doesn't she agree with me?* b. \**Does not she agree with me?*

iii a. \**Does shen't agree with me?* b. *Does she not agree with me?*

[6] i *Do most self-indulgent public officials not accept bribes?*

ii *Do not most self-indulgent public officials accept bribes?*

[7] positive imperatives negative imperatives

i a. *Look at me.* b. *Don't look at me.*

ii a. *You look at me!* b. *Don't you look at me!*

iii a. *Everyone shout it out.* b. *Don't everyone shout it out.*

[8] imperative declarative

i a. *Don't be afraid.* b. *You aren't afraid.*

ii a. *Don't have eaten all the pizza* b. *I hope* [*they haven't eaten all the*

*by the time I get back. pizza by the time I get back*]*.*

[9] i a. *Don't any of you think you have* b. *Do not any of you think you have*

*heard the last of this matter. heard the last of this matter.*

ii a. *Don't you renege on our deal.* b. \**Do not you renege on our deal.*

[10] positive negative

i a. *It is vital* [*that he be told*]*.* b. *It is vital* [*that he not be told*]*.*

ii a. [*Locking the doors*] *is unwise.* b. [*Not locking the doors*] *is unwise.*

iii a. [*His accepting it*] *was a shock.* b. [*His not accepting it*] *was a shock.*

iv a. *a plan* [*approved by the board*] b. *a plan* [*not approved by the board*]

v a. *It looks bad* [*for them to smile*]*.* b. *It looks bad* [*for them not to smile*]*.*

vi a. *They let me* [*wear high heels*]*.* b. *They let me* [*not wear high heels*].

[11] i a. *A letter written on a computer!* b. *A letter not written on a computer!*

ii a. *My only son getting into Harvard!* b. *My only son not getting into Harvard!*

iii a. *Oh to have to visit England!* b. *Oh to not have to visit England!*

[12] i *She agreed* [*not to make a formal complaint*]*.*

ii *Jill's instruction had been* [*not to take on any extra staff*]*.*

[13] a. *They must not read it.* b. *They need not read it.*

[14] i *Jill's instruction was* [*not to take on any extra staff in any circumstances*]*.*

ii *You can* [*not answer their letters*]*: you're not legally required to respond.*

iii *You can't* [*not go with them*]*.*

[15] a. *Their aim is not to change things.* b. *Their aim is to not change things.*

[16] i *You can simply not answer their letters, can't you?*

ii *They have always not enforced that regulation, haven't they?*

[17] i *Would you not put your feet on the sofa.*

ii *Can you not ask them to help you?*

iii *Did you not agree with her?*

[1] i [*Not all of them*] *regarded it as a success.*

ii *He seemed* [*not entirely at ease*]*.*

[2] i [*Not all of them*] *had regarded it as a success.*

ii *He was not entirely at ease.*

[3] i *Not all people have had the opportunities you have had.*

ii *Not often do we see her lose her cool like that.*

iii \**I agree with not all your arguments.*

iv \**He not often visits his parents.*

[4] i  *not all not every not many not much not often*

ii \**not both* \**not each* \**not most* \**not some* ?*not any*

[5] i *Not one person supported the proposal.*

ii *They had found not one mistake.*

[6] i *Not two years ago this company was ranked in the top ten.*

ii *He was here not ten minutes ago.*

[7] *His speech had caused not a little confusion.*

[8] i a. *Not even Ed approved of the plan.* b. *Not only Ed approved of the plan.*

ii a. *Not even then did he lose patience.* b. \**Not only then did he lose patience.*

[9] i *We had a* [*not very amicable*] *discussion.*

ii *It somehow sounded* [*not quite right*]*.*

iii *I found his story* [*not wholly convincing*]*.*

iv *He spoke* [*not very confidently*]*.*

v [*Not very many of them*] *had been damaged.*

[10] i *Morton was in his early fifties and not unattractive to women.*

ii *It was a not undistinguished private university with a large endowment.*

iii *They had fixed the walls, and purchased some not inelegant furniture.*

[11] Impressionistic graph of the meanings of *attractive* and *not unattractive*

*attractive*

*not unattractive*

ugliness intermediate looks beauty

[12] i *Not unexpectedly, Charles was late for the meeting.*

ii *Not unreasonably, he asked for payment in advance.*

iii *Not surprisingly, they didn't want any part of it.*

[13] i *Not at any stage of the proceedings did she contemplate giving up.*

ii *Not for the first time, she felt utterly betrayed.*

[14] i *Not an accomplished dancer, he moved rather clumsily.*

ii *Not under any illusions about the matter, he continued to be cautious.*

iii *We need someone not afraid of taking risks.*

[15] i *The film never quite generates his trademark level of icy paranoia. Not that it doesn't try.*

ii *I don't think they should be allowed to use our public health services not that I have anything against immigrants, of course.*

iii *There are spare blankets in here, not that you'll have any need of them.*

[16] i *They are now leaving* [*not on Friday but on Saturday*]*.*

ii *They are now leaving* [*on Saturday, not on Friday*]*.*

iii *They've invited* [*you and your brother, but not me*]*.*

[17] *The night turned viciously cold under a sky crowded with stars that* [*shone, not twinkled,*] *in the diamond-clear air.*

[18] i %*I'm so glad those old people came to the party . . . not!*

ii %*Obviously the government is going to tell us the whole truth . . . not!*

[19] i *no*, *none*, *nobody*, *no one*, *nothing*, *nowhere*, *no place* (informal AmE)

ii *neither*, *nor*, *never*

[20] i [*Kim had done nothing about it,*] *and neither had Pat.* [connective *neither*]

ii [*They never replied to your letter,*] *did they?* [positive tag]

iii *In no city has she been entirely comfortable.* [subjectauxiliary inversion]

[21] non-verbal negation verbal negation

i a. *They showed no remorse.* b. *They didn't show any remorse.*

ii a. *We liked none of them.* b. *We didn't like any of them.*

iii a. *You did nothing about it.* b. *You didn't do anything about it.*

iv a. *I knew neither of them.* b. *I didn't know either of them.*

v a. *He neither knew nor cared* b. *He didn't either know or care*

*where his children were. where his children were.*

vi a. *She had never felt more alone.* b. *She hadn't ever felt more alone.*

[22] i a. *Nobody knew where Kim was.* b. \**Anybody didn't know where Kim was.*

ii a. *At no stage did she complain.* b. \**At any stage she didn't complain.*

iii a. *I didn't go and neither did he.* b. \**I didn't go and either didn't he.*

[23] i a. *This is no place for a child.* b. *This isn't any place for a child.*

ii a. *This is no time to give up.* b. *This isn't any time to give up.*

iii a. *That is no way to behave.* b. *That isn't any way to behave.*

iv a. *I'm no angel.* b.  ?*I'm not any angel.*

v a. *You are no electrician.* b. ?*You're not any electrician.*

vi a. *He's no friend, is he?* b. ?*He isn't any friend, is he?*

[24] i a. *I am not satisfied with the proposal you have put to me in any way.*

b. ?*I am satisfied with the proposal you have put to me in no way.*

ii a. *As far as I can recall, I have not purchased food at the drive-through window of a fast-food restaurant on any street in this city.*

b. ?*As far as I can recall, I have purchased food at the drive-through window of afast-food restaurant on no street in this city.*

[25] i *I was not trying to imply that Bob had offered bribes to any official.*

ii *I was trying to imply that Bob had offered bribes to no official.* [ [i]]

iii *I was trying to imply that Bob had not offered bribes to any official.* [= [ii]]

[26] i *I cannot recall actually seeing a magpie attempting to steal anything.*

ii #*I can recall actually seeing a magpie attempting to steal nothing.* [ [i]]

[27] i *I don't know why they say they were forced to take their shoes off;* [*we certainly forced them to do nothing of the kind*]*.*

ii [*We are requiring people to pay nothing for the concert*]*, but nonetheless we are hoping for at least some donations at the door.*

[28] i *I could do a lot for this place with no money at all.*

ii *Kim regretted having married someone with no ambition.*

iii *It was a matter of no consequence.*

iv *They were arguing about nothing.*

v *She finished it in no time.*

[29] *Getting that degree was no mean achievement, wasn't it.*

[30] i *They predicted no rain.* ) [ambiguously clausal or subclausal]

ii *They promised no increase in income tax.* )

[31] i determinatives: *few*, *little*

ii adverbs: *rarely*, *seldom; barely*, *hardly*, *scarcely*

[32] i a. *Few of them will survive.* b. *None of them will survive.*

ii a. *Ed rarely leaves the house.* b. *Ed never leaves the house.*

iii a. *She had hardly moved.* b. *She hadn't moved.*

[33] *A few have resigned.*

I E

*Many have resigned. None have resigned.*

E I

*Few have resigned.*

[34] i *A few of them, indeed quite a lot, had found the proposal offensive.*

ii *Few of them, if any, will find the proposal offensive.*

[35] *I had hardly arrived at the office when I was summoned to see the boss.*

[36] i *No one would deliberately injure an animal.* |

ii *No one would deliberately injure a mammal.* | direction of

iii *No one would deliberately injure a horse.* | entailment

iv *No one would deliberately injure a racehorse.*

[37] i *Most people can afford to keep an animal.*

ii *Most people can afford to keep a mammal.* | direction of

iii *Most people can afford to keep a horse.* | entailment

iv *Most people can afford to keep a racehorse.* |

[38] downward entailing upward entailing

i a. *Few good drivers ignore signs.* b. *A few good drivers ignore signs.*

ii a. *Few good drivers ignore big signs.* b. *A few good drivers ignore big signs.*

[39] i *I had seldom seen such birds.*

ii *I had seldom clearly seen such birds.*

iii *I had seldom clearly seen such birds through binoculars.*

iv *I had seldom clearly seen such birds through really powerful binoculars.*

[40] i *David rarely watches films.*

ii *David rarely watches violent films.*

[41] i a. *Little of the liquid spilled, not even when the flask fell over.* ) [*not even*]

b. *One seldom sees such birds, not even in Australia.* )

ii a. *She hardly goes out these days, and neither does her son.* ) [connective]

b. *Little of the gas spilled, and little of the gas escaped, either.* )

iii a. *Few good drivers ignore signs, do they?* ) [tag]

b. *Hardly any of them complained, did they?* )

iv *Rarely does the possum emerge before dusk.* [inversion]

[42] i *Few of the boys had shown any interest in the proposal.*

ii *He had so far shown the visitors few of the sights of London.*

[43] i *He's probably lying. It's barely conceivable that he could have done it himself.*

ii *She's barely alive.*

[44] i *She visits her parents only rarely.*

ii \**She had read only few of the letters.*

iii \**She had done only hardly anything about it.*

[45] i *I could do a lot for this place with barely any money at all.* (cf. [28i])

ii *Kim regretted having married someone with little ambition.* (cf. [28ii])

iii *They have predicted little rain for the next month.* (cf. [30])

[46] i a. *That model is available.* b. *Such mistakes are common.*

ii a. *That model is not available.* b. *Such mistakes are not common.*

iii a. *That model is unavailable.* b. *Such mistakes are uncommon.*

[47] *Such mistakes are not common, but they are not uncommon either*.

[48]  *not common*

*uncommon* *common*

[49] a. *Such mistakes are not very common.* b. *Such mistakes are very uncommon.*

[1] i a. *She doesn't see him any longer.* b. *She knows him already.*

ii a. \**She sees him any longer.* b. \**She doesn't know him already.*

[2] i Items which prefer negative contexts over positive ones (e.g. *any longer*) are **Negatively-oriented Polarity-sensitive Items**, or **NPI**s.

ii Items which prefer positive contexts over negative ones (e.g. *already*) are **Positively-oriented Polarity-sensitive Items**, or **PPI**s.

[3] i *Do you need me any longer?* [interrogative]

ii *If* [*you play any longer*], *you'll get too tired.*  [conditional]

[4] i *Have they already left?* [interrogative]

ii *If* [*he has already finished his work*], *we can leave immediately.* [conditional]

[5] i The *any* class of items: *any*n, *anybody*n, *any longer*, *any more* (AmE *anymore*), *anyone*n, *anything*n, *anywhere*n

ii Miscellaneous grammatical items (mostly functioning as adjuncts): *at all*, *either*n, *ever*n, *long*n, *much*, *till*/*until*, *too*n, *what*(*so*)*ever*n, *yet*n

iii The modal auxiliaries *dare* and *need*

iv A few lexical verbs: *bother* (+ infinitival), *budge*, *faze*

v A large and probably open array of idioms, including: *can abide*/*bear*/*stand*, *can be bothered*, *could care less*,[[1]](#footnote-1) *cost* *a bean*, *do a* (*single*) *thing* (*about* ...), *drink*/*touch* *a drop*, *eat a bite*/*thing*, *give* *a damn*/*fig*, *have* *a red cent* (AmE), *have a penny* (*to one's name*) (BrE), *have a clue*, *hear*/*say a word*/*sound*, *hold a candle to*, *in ages*, *in donkey's years*, *lift a finger* (*to help*), *mind a bit*, *move a muscle*, *say a word*, *see* *a thing*, *see a* (*living*) *soul*, *so much as* (+ verb), *take* *a* (*blind*) *bit of notice*, *would* *hurt* *a fly*

[6] i a. *Lee didn't budge an inch.* b. \**Lee budged an inch.*

ii a. *They can't abide aniseed.* b. \**They can abide aniseed.*

iii a. *You needn't come with us.* b. \**You need come with us.*

iv a. *He didn't wait so much as a week.* b. \**He waited so much as a week*.

v a. *She hasn't woken up yet.* b. \**She has woken up yet.*

vi a. *I didn't see a living soul.* b. #*I saw a living soul.*

vii a. *Joe hasn't lifted a finger to help.* b. #*Joe has lifted a finger to help.*

[7] i a. *We won't leave till six o'clock.* b. \**We will leave till six o'clock*.

ii a. *We won't publish it until next year.* b. \**We will publish it until next year*.

iii a. *We won't stay until the end.* b. *We will stay until the end.*

ii *I would like nothing better than to attend the dinner.*

iii *George will stop at nothing to get that job.*

[9] i a. *They laughed, but not for long.* b. *It was salty, but not half bad.*

ii a. *It wasn't for long.* b. *It wasn't half bad.*

[10] i a. *They didn't laugh loudly or for long.* b. #*It wasn't too salty or half bad.*

ii a. *No one laughs for long.* b. #*Nothing was half bad.*

iii a. *Few people laughed for long.* b. #*Few portions were half bad.*

iv a. *I doubt that he'll laugh for long.* b. #*I doubt that it was half bad.*

v a. *Did they laugh for long?* b. #*Was it half bad?*

vi a. *I'll leave if they laugh for long.* b. #*I'll leave if it's half bad.*

[11] i a. *The new, more elaborated abstracts were much favoured among modernists.*

b. *Location theorists have given these matters much consideration.*

c. *This means much to the American tradition.*

d. *The design of an interlocking frame is much like a mechanical puzzle.*

e. *The president spent much of the weekend at his summer home on Cape Cod.*

ii a. *Thank you very much for the lovely flowers.*

b. *So much has happened that I'm not sure I can remember it all.*

c. *When I wear these I look too much like my dad.*

d. *This is much better than the other one.*

e. *I'll tell you this much: I didn't pay full price.*

iii a. *The lecture was very long but it didn't really cover much.*

b. *I went sailing once but I didn't enjoy it much.*

c. *He isn't much of a dancer.*

[12] i a. *I don't enjoy sailing much.* b. \**I enjoy sailing much.*

ii a. *We don't have much time.* b. \**We have much time.*

iii a. *Kim isn't much of a dancer.* b. \**Kim is much of a dancer.*

[13] i a. *Did they have a dog?* b. *Did they have any money?*

ii a. *Has she been to Paris?* b. *Has she ever been to Paris?*

iii a. *Did they help him?* b. *Did they lift a finger to help him?*

[14] i *I don't think you know anything about truffles or any other gourmet foods. Do you eat truffles regularly? Have you even so much as tasted truffles in ages?*

ii *Did you budge an inch to let anyone else sit down? Not you; you just sat there hogging the whole couch as usual*.

[15] i *some*, *somebody*, *someone*, *something*, *somewhere*, *somehow*, *somewhat*

ii the paucal determinatives *a few*, *a little*, *several*, *various*

iii the degree adverbs *pretty*, *fairly*, *quite*p, *far*p

iv aspectual *already*, *still*

v connective *so*, *too*, *as well*

vi the modal idioms *would rather*, *would sooner*, *would as soon*

vii illocutionary *I guess*

[16] i a. *They made some mistakes* b. \**They didn't make some mistakes.*

ii a. *It's pretty big.* b. \**It isn't pretty big.*

iii a. *It is still a mystery why he ran off.* b. \**It isn't still a mystery why he ran off.*

iv a. *Kim saw it, and so did Pat.* b. \**Kim saw it, but not so did Pat.*

v a. *This one is far better.* b. \**This one isn't far better.*

vi a. *I would rather die.* b. \**I wouldn't rather die*.

vii a. *I guess I agree.* b. \**I don't guess I agree*.

[17] i *I would rather not commit myself.*

ii *Far more of them didn't understand it than did.*

iii *We already can't afford any luxuries: how will we deal with this new expense?*

iv *I still don't know how she did it.*

v *I didn't understand some of the points she was trying to make.*

vi *I'm afraid I couldn't stand several of her friends.*

[18] i \**Kim didn't see it, and so didn't Pat.*

ii \**Kim didn't see it, and Pat didn't see it too / as well.*

[19] i A: *It's a pretty big fish.* B: *It isn't pretty big, it's absolutely gigantic.*

ii A: *He's pretty stupid.* B: *He's not pretty stupid, he's actually quite bright.*

[20] i *You can't tell me that it isn't far better for some couples to divorce than to stay together.*

ii *Never think that I wouldn't rather be with you than at the office.*

[21] negative interrogative positive interrogative

i a. *Wouldn't you rather stay here?* b. *Would you rather stay here?*

ii a. *Didn't Kim see it too* / *as well?* b. *Did Kim see it too* / *as well?*

iii a. *Isn't he pretty stupid?* b. ?*Is he pretty stupid?*

iv a. *Aren't they still*/*already in London?* b. *Are they still*/*already in London?*

v a. *Isn't there something wrong with it?* b. *Is there something wrong with it?*

[22] i *Kim made some mistakes.* [positive]

ii *Kim didn't make any mistakes.* [negative with verbal negation]

iii *Kim made no mistakes.* [negative with non-verbal negation]

[23] PPIs NPIs absolute negators

i a. *some any no*

b. *someone*/*somebody anyone*/*anybody no one* / *nobody*

c. *something anything nothing*

d. *somewhere*/*someplace anywhere*/*anyplace nowhere* / *no place*

e. *sometimes*  *ever never*

f. *sometime*, *once anytime*, *ever never*

g. *somewhat at all*

ii a. *still any more* / *any longer no more* / *no longer*

b. *already yet*

iii a. *so neither*/*nor*

b. *too* / *as well either*

c.  *either neither*

d.  *either ... or neither ... nor*

[24] i Universal quantifiers are not polarity-sensitive.

ii Some multal quantifiers exhibit some degree of negative orientation.

iii Paucal quantifiers tend to have positive orientation (like *a few*) or to be approximate negators (*few*).

iv The most central existential quantifiers enter into the pattern of correspondences illustrated in [23i].

[25] i a. *Did Kim make some mistakes?* b. *Did you tell someone?* [PPI]

ii a. *Did Kim make any mistakes?* b. *Did you tell anyone?* [NPI]

[26] i a. *Ed still lives with us.* b. *Ed doesn't live with us any more*/*longer.*

ii a. *Jill has already finished.* b. *Jill hasn't finished yet.*

[27] i a. *Kim enjoyed it and so did Pat.* b. *Kim didn't enjoy it and neither did Pat.*

ii a. *Kim enjoyed it and Pat did too.* b. *Kim didn't enjoy it and Pat didn't either.*

[28] i a. *Kim didn't do anything wrong.* ) [clausal negation]

b. *No one did anything wrong.* )

c. *Hardly anyone liked it at all.* )

ii a. *Pat seemed not very interested in any of these activities.* ) [subclausal negation]

b. *It was a matter of little consequence for any of us.* )

c. *It is unlikely anyone has noticed it yet.* )

[29] i a. *Who helped her?* b. *Who did anything to help her?*

ii a. *Why did you help him?* b. *Why would you lift a finger to help*

*someone like George?*

iii a. *How come you like her?* b. \**How come you like her much?*

[30] a. *Why tell them anything about it?* b. \**Why not tell them anything about it?*

[31] i *The authorities failed to do a thing to ensure the child's safety.*

ii *Lee forgot to take a blind bit of notice when they were giving directions.*

iii *I want you to refrain from moving a muscle* *until you're completely recovered*.

iv *We managed to avoid any further delays.*

[32] i *We kept him from telephoning anyone before the police arrived.*

ii *I am prohibited from so much as naming any of the principals in this case.*

[33] i *My client denies that he ever said any such thing.*

ii *My client denies any involvement in the matter.*

iii *My client completely rejects the notion that he ever said any such thing.*

[34] i *I doubt that Lee has been to the theatre in ages.*

ii *That they will ever have a better opportunity is very much to be doubted.*

iii *I'm doubtful about the value of pursuing the matter any further.*

iv *She expressed skepticism about there being any point in continuing.*

[35] i *It astounds me that they took any notice of him.*

ii *It's surprising he lifted a finger, considering that he's a total stranger.*

iii *We were all amazed that he had been able to write anything during that time.*

[36] i *It would be foolish to take any unnecessary risks.*

ii *Any more pudding would be quite excessive.*

iii *It was stupid of Basil ever to have mentioned the war.*

[37] i a. *Few of the bees stung anyone.* b. \**A few of the bees stung anyone.*

ii a. *At most ten students did any work.* b. \**At least ten students did any work.*

[38] i *By that time I was just too tired to budge.*

ii *It was too difficult for anyone else.*

[39] i a. *She did it without any difficulty.* b. \**She did it with any difficulty.*

ii a. *He left before anyone noticed it.* b. \**He left after anyone noticed it.*

iii a. *I argued against taking any more.* b. \**I argued in favour of taking any* more.

[40] i *Only then did she realise she had any chance of winning.*

ii *She remained the only one capable of making any sense of it.*

[41] i *She ran faster than she had ever run before.*

ii *The performance was as good as any you could hope to see.*

iii *It was the biggest fish I had ever seen.*

[42] i *If you want anything, just call.*

ii *If I'd ever seen anything like that, I'd have reported it.*

iii *I would read your review, if I gave a damn about your opinion.*

iv *Drink any more and you'll have to get a taxi home.*

[1] i a. *Mary doesn't like you.* b. *Mary dislikes you.*

ii a. *He doesn't have many friends.* b. *He has few friends.*

iii a. *The weather wasn't very good.* b. *The weather was rather poor.*

[2] matrix negation subordinate negation

i a. *I don't want to hear about it.* b. *I want to not hear about it.*

ii a. *Mary didn't want you to tell them.* b. *Mary wanted you not to tell them.*

[3] i wanting: *choose*, *intend*, *plan*, *want*

ii advice: *advisable*, *advise*, *had* *better*, *recommend*, ?*suggest*, *be supposed*

iii probability: *likely*, ?*probable*

iv opinion: %*anticipate*, *believe*, *expect*, *feel*, %*figure*, %*guess*, *imagine*, *think*, *reckon*, *suppose*

v perception: *appear*, *feel*, *look*, *sound*, *seem*

[4] i a. *I'm not willing to be included.* b. *I'm willing to not be included.* [weak]

ii a. *I don't want to be included.* b. *I want to not be included.* [medium]

iii a. *I don't insist on being included.* b. *I insist on not being included.* [strong]

[5] i a. *He didn't allow me to go.* b. *He allowed me not to go.* [weak]

ii a. *He didn't advise me to go.* b. *He advised me not to go.* [medium]

iii a. *He didn't order me to go.* b. *He ordered me not to go.* [strong]

[6] i a. *It isn't possible that he's alive.* b. *It is possible that he isn't alive.* [weak]

ii a. *It isn't likely that he's alive.* b. *It is likely that he isn't alive.* [medium]

iii a. *It isn't certain that he's alive.* b. *It's certain that he isn't alive.* [strong]

[7] i a. *She doesn't think he's alive.* b. *She thinks he isn't alive.* [medium]

ii a. *She doesn't know he's alive.* b. *She knows he isn't alive.* [strong]

[8] a. *He doesn't seem to understand.* b. *He seems not to understand.*

[9] i *You mustn't tell anyone.* [strong]

ii *You shouldn't take the job.* [medium]

[10] a. *I can't seem to be get it right.* b. *I seem not to be able to get it right.*

[1] i *I didn't say I didn't want it.* [two semantic negations]

ii *He consulted neither his wife nor his parents.* [one semantic negation]

[2] i *None of them had no redeeming features.*

ii *No one, surely, has never experienced such temptation.*

iii *Never before had no one nominated for the position.*

iv *Neither investigator had no financial interest in the company.*

v *No one didn't consider it a retrograde move.*

[3] i [*He didn't say nothing:*] *he said it didn't matter.*

ii *Not all of them made no mistakes.*

iii *Not many* / *Few people found nothing to criticise.*

iv [*We not only made no progress:*] *we actually moved backwards.*

[4] i *Their action was neither illegal nor immoral.* [disjunctive coordination concord]

ii *They aren't here, I don't think.* [parenthetical concord]

iii *Not in my car, you're not.* [negative retort]

iv *I wouldn't be surprised if it didn't rain.* [pleonastic subordinate negative]

[5] i *No one can say what might not happen if there were another earthquake.*

ii *He is unable to predict how much of it may not turn out to be pure fabrication.*

[6] non-standard standard

i a. !*He didn't say nothin'.* b. *He didn't say anything.*

ii a. !*You gonna spend your whole life* b. *Are you going to spend your whole life*

[*not trustin' nobody*]*?* [*not trusting anybody*]*?*

iii a. !*Nobody here didn't point no gun* b. *Nobody here pointed any gun at*

*at nobody.* *anybody.*

[7] i a. A: *Is this car yours?* B: ( *Yes* (*it is*)*. No* (*it isn't*)*.*

b. A: *Isn't this car yours?* B: (

ii a. A: *He has gone, hasn't he?* B: ( *Yes* (*he has*)*. No* (*he hasn't*)*.*

b. A: *He hasn't gone, has he?* B: (

[8] i A: *She did very well.* B: *Yes* (*she did*)*. No she didn't.*

ii A: *She didn't do very well.* B: *Yes she did. No* (*she didn't*)*.*

[9] i A: *Remember to lock up.* B: *Yes* (*I will*)*.*

ii A: *Don't forget to lock up.* B: *No* (*I won't*)*.*

iii A: *Tell me who did it.* B: *No* (*I won't*)*.*

iv A: *Don't tell them I did it.* B: ?*Yes I will.*

[10] i *Not for all the tea in China! Not likely! Not on a bet!* (AmE)

ii *No fear!* *No chance!* *No way![[2]](#footnote-2)*

[11] question positive answer negative answer

*Are they reliable?* ( *I believe*/*think so.* *I believe*/*think not.*

*( I was told so. I was told not.*

( *It seems so.* *It seems not.*

[12] *Is the city beautiful?* ( *Apparently so.* *Apparently not.*

( *Most definitely so.* *Most definitely not.*

[13] *Does it rain much?* ( \**On the whole so.* *On the whole not.*

( \**So in the winter.* *Not in the winter.*

( \**Usually so this early. Usually not this early.*

[14] i A: *I think you should leave now.* B: *Not without my money.*

ii *I won't go, not even if they beg me.*

iii *There aren't many wild rhinoceroses left, not in Africa or in Asia.*

1. For many American speakers the expression *I couldn't care less* has lost its negation and the expression is now *I could care less*, still with the idiomatic meaning `I do not care at all'. For these speakers, *care less* is no longer a non-affirmative polarity item; *could care less* has become an idiom with a negative meaning (approximately the opposite of its literal meaning). This is not an uncommon development; it is seen again in the development from *I don't know beans about it* I don't know anything about it to *I know beans about it* with the same meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *No way* can also be integrated into clause structure as an emphatic negator, as in *No way is that a diamond!* The original manner meaning has here been bleached away, so that we understand That is emphatically not a diamond. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)