Questionable Negation[*]

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LSA Annual Meeting, 3 January 2013

1 Introduction

Since Ladd (1981), it has been widely accepted that "high negation polar questions" (HNPQs) – those with the negative marker *-n't* attached to a fronted auxiliary – are <u>ambiguous</u>:

(1) Isn't Jane coming?

- On the so-called "inner" reading of negation, (1) is a question about a <u>negative</u> proposition
    - Roughly equivalent to the corresponding "low negation polar question" (LNPQ) with *not*, e.g. *Is Jane not coming?*
- On the so-called "outer" reading, (1) is a question about an <u>affirmative</u> proposition
    - Roughly paraphrased as *I am under the impression that Jane is coming, is that wrong?*
- The two readings are importantly different in their felicity conditions, which concern speaker beliefs and contextual evidence, but these will not play a central part in this talk.[1]

Ladd (1981) claims that HNPQs can be disambiguated through the use of strict negative and positive polarity items (NPIs/PPIs):

- NPIs are said to evoke the inner-negation reading, while PPIs evoke outer-negation.

The crucial minimal pair Ladd offers to attest this claim, his example (9), involves the NPI *either* and the PPI *too*, reprinted below with Ladd's judgments and commentary provided:

(2) a.   Isn't Jane coming too?   (questions P)
      b.   Isn't Jane coming either?   (questions ¬P)

Every treatment of HNPQs since Ladd (see fn. 1) has attempted to account for this ambiguity.

[1]For detailed discussion of the felicity conditions of HNPQs, see Ladd (1981), Büring and Gunlogson (2000), Romero and Han (2004), Reese (2007), Krifka (To appear), among many others.

> **Preview of the talk:**
> - *Claim:* HNPQs like (1) are in fact <u>not</u> ambiguous for many speakers: the inner-negation reading is simply unavailable. Only the outer-negation reading is possible.
> - *Evidence:* a judgment survey showing that American English (AE) speakers widely <u>reject</u> HNPQs like (2b) involving *either* (along with other strict NPIs like punctual *until* and *for*)
>   - Additional arguments independent of NPIs confirm that the outer-negative reading is unavailable in HNPQs, and indeed that high negation is not <u>sentential</u> negation.
> - Simplifying the empirical picture in this way should give way to a simplified theory.

2   Strict NPIs in HNPQs

2.1   Background

According to Ladd (1981) and much subsequent work, the inner-negation reading characterizes those NPQs whose negation scopes <u>within</u> the proposition being questioned.

- This contrasts with Ladd's description of the outer-negative reading, which characterizes NPQs whose negation is "somehow outside the proposition under question" (*ibid*: p. 165)
- Ladd: HNPQs with an outer-negation reading are questioning the speakers <u>beliefs</u> about P.
  - The notion of the outer-negation reading has been refined and re-defined several times in the literature, which I will not review here: see refs. in fn. 1.

Getting back to inner-negation HNPQs, Ladd's reasoning is as follows: if HNPQs can receive an inner-negation reading – that is, a proposition-level interpretation of negation – then HNPQs should satisfy the licensing requirement of strict NPIs.

- Very roughly speaking, "strict" (or "strong") NPIs are only licensed by negative expressions within the proposition, while weak NPIs have a much wider distribution[2]
  - Some weak NPIs (e.g. *any*) are even licensed in <u>positive</u> polar questions (*Did you buy any books?*), making them poor diagnostics for negation in questions.

So it makes sense to appeal to strict NPIs like *either* to diagnose a low/inner-negation reading.

- But surprisingly, no other strict NPIs have been brought to bear on the matter for English.
  - Instead, Ladd's original example involving *either* (our (2b)) is simply cited and replicated throughout the literature (with minor tweaks).
- But *either* is hardly the only strict NPI: alongside it are punctual *until*- and *for*- phrases, durational *in*-phrases, etc. (see Gajewski 2011 and references therein for discussion):[3]

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[2]This is an oversimplification: see Gajewski (2011) for a recent discussion and survey of the literature.

[3]Each of these can be homophonous with a temporal phrase type that lacks strict NPI properties. For example, punctual *until* is a strict NPI, but <u>durational</u> *until* is not:

   (i)   a.   *John finished the assignment until yesterday.
          b.   John didn't finish the assignment until yesterday.
   (ii)   a.   John understood math until he got to college.
         b.   John didn't understand math until he got to college.

Thus, predicate type (e.g. achievement vs. activity) must be carefully controlled for.

(3) a.   I won't start my talk <u>until you give me some bacon</u>.
     b.   The puppy they launched into orbit wouldn't land <u>for another week</u>.[4]
     c.   John hasn't washed his coffee cup <u>in 15 years</u>.

According to the literature, these have the same licensing conditions as *either* (modulo fn. 3).

- **Prediction:** If *either* is licensed in HNPQs, then those of the sort in (3) should be, too.

    – This would support Ladd's (1981) claim that HNPQs can get an inner-negation reading.

- On the other hand, if the NPIs in (3) are <u>unavailable</u> in HNPQs, this would be mysterious…

    – …unless of course it turns out *either* is <u>also</u> unavailable, contrary to Ladd's judgment.

This calls for a grammaticality judgment survey.

2.2   Experiment: judging the acceptability of strict NPIs in HNPQs[5]

2.2.1   Methods

Three conditions, each corresponding to a particular strict NPI (cf. (3)):

- One condition involving *either*, one for punctual *until*, and one for punctual *for (another)*.[6]

Eight items per condition:

- Four HNPQs (the targets) and four LNPQs (the controls), yielding a total of 3x8=24 items.

    – Filler sentences were not included in the experiment.

Stimuli were randomized and presented individually, each comprising a context followed by a test sentence:

(4)   **Context:** Mary's in-laws are coming over for dinner, and she wanted to make dessert for them. The recipe calls for walnuts, though, and her father-in-law is allergic to walnuts, so Mary planned to use peanuts instead. However, her husband said, "I don't think that's a good idea".

         In this situation, how acceptable is the following question?

         Mary: Can't your father eat peanuts either?

The survey was administered online through a browser-based delivery system for psycholinguistics experiments called Ibex.[7]

- Participants were asked to rate the acceptability of each test sentence in context on a standard seven-point acceptability scale.

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[4]To my knowledge, this strict NPI has never been mentioned in the literature before.

[6]I chose not to include durational *in*-phrases such as (3c) because of a potential confound: to my ear, in a disbelief or surprise context, such phrases are not fully ungrammatical in positive polar questions (cf. ?*Has John cleaned his room in MONTHS?!*), meaning their licensing conditions are not as strict as the others I considered, which are fully ungrammatical in such contexts (cf. **Does John arrive until NOON?!*). Since the stimulus presentation was not auditory, a disbelief/surprise reading could not be properly factored out.

[7]Ibex (formerly "webspr"), created by Alex Drummond, can be accessed at http://code.google.com/p/webspr/.

- Before beginning the survey, participants were given detailed instructions, including sample "good" and "bad" items to fix the scale.

A total of 12 native speakers of American English from across the US participated, ranging in age from 18 to 30.

2.2.2 Results

An overall comparison of the HNPQ items vs. the LNPQ items reveals a clear pattern:

- Strict NPIs were rated much lower (less acceptable) in HNPQs than they were in LNPQs.

  - A t-test shows this difference to be highly significant.[8]

- The same pattern holds within each condition:

  - For each NPI type, LNPQs were deemed significantly more acceptable than their equivalent HNPQ.

(5) *Table 1: means of acceptability ratings*

Condition	Mean HNPQ	Mean LNPQ
either	3.31	6.31
until	1.67	5.94
for	1.58	5.57
Overall:	2.19	6.01

2.2.3 Discussion

The results for the *either* condition directly contradict the judgment reported in Ladd (1981) and repeated throughout the literature on HNPQs (Büring and Gunlogson 2000, Romero and Han 2004, Reese 2007, Krifka To appear, among many others):

- That is, AE speakers consistently reject HNPQs containing *either*, though the equivalent LNPQs are deemed acceptable.

A brief discursion: apparent dialectal variation of *either*

- An informal survey of several Canadian and British English speakers indicates that *either* is a point of genuine dialectal variation:

  - Those varieties seem to freely allow *either* in HNPQs, unlike AE, as we just saw.

- At the same time, these varieties still strongly disallow other strict NPIs in HNPQs (cf. (3)), just as AE disallows them.

  - This suggests that the variation in question concerns *either*'s licensing conditions, rather than the status of negation in HNPQs across the varieties in question.

- Instances of true syntactic/semantic variation between American and Canadian English seem to be extremely rare, making this an intriguing topic for future comparative study.

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[8]$t(286) = -21.890, p < .001$. As this is a preliminary study, both the results and their analysis should be taken tentatively.

If we take strict NPI licensing as a diagnostic for the (un)availability of an inner-negation reading, as Ladd (1981) and others do, then the overall results indicate the following:

- The high acceptability of strict NPIs in LNPQs confirms the presence of the inner-negation reading, as expected for LNPQs (whose low-neg reading is uncontroversial)

- However, the <u>low</u> acceptability of strict NPIs in HNPQs indicates that an inner-negation reading is <u>not present</u> in HNPQs.

Although this is only a preliminary study, and thus its results tentative, it potentially has significant consequences for the theory of NPQs.

- From the beginning, the theory of NPQs has been designed to accommodate a reading that apparently does not exist (in one major variety, at least):

- If HNPQs lack an inner-negation reading, then the theory of negative interpretation in NPQs has been built on a flawed empirical foundation.

  - Thus, if existing theories are to accommodate these findings, they may or may not require significant revision. I return to this point near the end of the talk.

2.3 Stepping back

Faced with these results, though, one could simply reject the original premise that strict NPI licensing diagnoses the inner-negation reading.[9]

- Call this the 'conservative view': this experiment reveals that strict NPIs are not a valid diagnostic of the inner-negation reading in HNPQs.

  - It does <u>not</u> necessarily show that the inner-negation reading is unavailable in HNPQs.
  - In other words, this experiment may just be telling us something about strict NPIs rather than HNPQs.

- This contrasts with the 'ambitious view' depicted above:

  - This experiment reveals that HNPQs lack an inner-negation reading, necessitating a critical examination of existing theories of NPQs.

For the remainder of the talk, I will present arguments in support of the latter view: HNPQs lack an inner-negation reading, contra Ladd (1981) and many others.

3 High negation is not sentential negation

3.1 HNPQs lack an inner-negation reading: additional evidence

The claim to be defended in this section is the following: the negative marker -*n't* in HNPQs cannot contribute to the at-issue content expressed in the proposition.

- In other words, HNPQs do not contain any negated content (at least not at the propositional level), meaning their -*n't* marker is not your average negation.

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[9]Thanks to Oliver Northrup for helpful discussion on this matter.

3.1.1 A note on Strict PPIs in HNPQs

Recall that Ladd (1981) uses the strict <u>PPI</u> *too* to bring out the <u>outer</u>-negation reading in HNPQs (as in (2a)), in contrast with *either*.

- It is worth pointing out that speakers who reject *either* in HNPQs (as I do) still allow *too* in HNPQs (as well as other strict PPIs, such as *just as soon*, *rather*, etc.[10]):

(6) a.   Didn't Jane leave <u>too</u>?
    b.   Wouldn't Chris just as soon stay home?
    c.   Wouldn't Mary <u>rather go to the party</u>?

With this in mind, let's entertain the 'conservative view' for a moment:

- Perhaps HNPQs <u>do</u> allow an inner-negation reading – that is, perhaps their negation <u>can</u> scope within the proposition – but some independent, unknown force is disrupting the licensing of strict NPIs in such cases.

If that's the case, then the fact that strict PPIs are still licensed in HNPQs (6) tells us something about the nature of this hypothetical unknown force:

- Either it is simply not present in HNPQs with an outer-negation reading, and thus does not interfere with PPI licensing;

- Or, it is present in all HNPQs, but somehow only interferes with the licensing of <u>negative</u> polarity items.

Both options are ad-hoc, and neither is conceptually appealing, but that is not <u>evidence</u> that HNPQs lack the inner-negation reading.

- We need a diagnostic that is entirely independent of polarity item licensing.

3.1.2 HNPQs in alternative questions

Very roughly speaking, alternative questions are those in which all possible answers are explicitly provided through the use of disjunction.

- The alternatives introduced by each disjunct are therefore <u>exhaustive</u>, but they are also <u>mutually exclusive</u>: they do not overlap (see Biezma and Rawlins 2012 and refs therein).

  - (When more than one alternative is provided, a final falling contour (L-L%) is present; assume that this holds of all the below examples.)

(7) a.   Do you want coffee or tea?
    b.   #Do you want coffee or a beverage?

(8) a.   Is it nice outside or is it not sunny?
    b.   #Is it nice outside or is it sunny?

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[10]In contexts where an assertion containing a strict PPI is being directly denied, this strict PPI appears to be felicitously within the scope of negation:

   (i)   A: You want Chris to go to the mall with you? I think he would just as soon stay home.
            B: He wouldn't just as soon stay home – he told me he'd LOVE to go!
  See Horn (1989) for reasons such examples do not undermine the strict PPI status of these items.

The (b) examples above are infelicitous because their alternatives are not mutually exclusive.[11]

Note that the second disjunct in (8a) is a LNPQ; its inner-negation reading makes it mutually exclusive with the alternative expressed by the first disjunct.

- However, when there is no inner-negation reading (because negation is simply absent) as in (8b), the two alternatives are no longer mutually exclusive, and the result is infelicitous.

- Thus, a diagnostic for the inner-negation reading emerges:

    - **Prediction:** If we swap the LNPQ disjunct in (8a) for an HNPQ, the result should be good if an inner-negation reading is available, but bad if such a reading is unavailable.

The results in (9a) are clear; additional examples are included for completeness:[12]

(9) a. #Is it nice outside or isn't it sunny?
     b. #Should we ask Mary to come along or shouldn't we invite her?
     c. #Isn't the turkey done or should I take it out?
     d. #Wasn't John in a good mood or was he cheerful?

If HNPQs are ambiguous between an inner- and outer-negation interpretation, as is widely assumed, then the alt-Qs environments in (9) ought to instantly bring out the inner reading:

- The inner reading would satisfy the exclusivity requirement for the alternatives, but e.g. an outer reading would run afoul of this

Despite that fact, the data in (9) are ill-formed, suggesting that the inner-negation reading is simply absent with HNPQs, contrary to conventional wisdom.

At this point, one might argue that the badness of (9) does not indicate the absence of the inner-negation reading; rather, it is ill-formed because HNPQs are generally prohibited within alt-Qs.

- This, however, is empirically false: on an outer-negation reading, HNPQs can appear in an alt-Q (see also Han and Romero 2004: fn. 26), and the alternatives are mutually exclusive:

(10) a. Isn't John coming, or did he have to work tonight?
      b. Are you truly innocent, or wasn't it in fact YOU who killed the butler?

Since HNPQs can function as a disjunct in an alt-Q, there does not appear to be a tenable alternative source for the infelicity of (9).

- We are driven to conclude that the absence of an inner-negation reading for HNPQs is the source of this infelicity.

3.1.3 Intermediate conclusions

The preponderance of these facts suggests that AE HNPQs lack an inner-negation reading.

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[11]See (Biezma and Rawlins 2012: p. 393) for an analysis of disjoined polar questions such as (8a).

[12]To my knowledge, examples like (9) have never been discussed in the literature. Han and Romero (2004) discuss similar-looking examples involving ellipsis (e.g. *Didn't John drink coffee or ~~didn't John drink~~ tea?*, with alt-Q intonation); however, their analysis of those data crucially relies on the presence of ellipsis to derive the ungrammaticality, meaning it cannot be extended to the non-elliptical examples I discuss here. Regarding their fn. 26, see below.

- The empirical burden on the theory of HNPQs is therefore greatly reduced, since it need not – in fact, it *must* not – accommodate data like (2b).

- We will consider the theoretical implications in more detail shortly.

But this raises a worthy question: if high negation (*-n't*) cannot scope within the proposition in HNPQs, then what <u>is</u> its scopal domain?

- For that matter, is high negation even a scope-taking element? Is it even negation?

3.2 Unfamiliar characteristics of high negation

It seems, then, that high negation fails to exhibit any of the hallmark properties of sentential negation. A question worth asking is:

- If high negation does not act like negation, then is it something special? I claim that it is:

  - High negation is singularly associated with certain unique morphological patterns, suggesting that the grammar recognizes it as a special environment.

3.2.1 High negation in Glaswegian English[13]

In Glaswegian English (GE), a variety of English spoken in and around Glasgow, Scotland, sentential negation comes in two forms:

- A free morpheme *no* (cf. Standard English (SE) *not*)

- A bound morpheme *-nae*, obligatorily cliticized to T^0 (inc. pleonastic *do*; cf. SE *-n't*)[14]

(11) *Glaswegian English negation*
    a.   John's **no** coming.
    b.   John is-**nae** coming.
    c.   He'll **no** be there.
    d.   He will-**nae** be there.

What's of interest to us is that GE *-nae* differs from SE *-n't* in one significant way: it cannot appear as an instance of high negation, i.e. attached to a preposed auxiliary/modal, as shown in (12a).

- As a bound morpheme on T^0, it also cannot be left behind in its base position by aux/modal movement, shown in (12b).

- Instead, in <u>just these contexts</u>, GE has a special "negative" morpheme, *-int*, that can attach to a reduced form of the fronted aux/modal (comprising just the onset of the unreduced form),[15] as in (12c).

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[13]Thanks to Gary Thoms for judgments and extensive discussion.

[14]Curiously, *nae* is also the form of the negative determiner in GE: *It's nae bother*, *nae wonder*, etc. (also *naeb'dy* "nobody"). The negative determiner in SE, on the other hand, is homophonous with a <u>different</u> member in the set of negative expressions: namely, the negative polar response particle (*no*). If such polysemy among negative expressions is not accidental, these differences between GE and SE seem curious. (For completeness, the negative polar response particle in GE is *naw*.)

[15]This creates ambiguous forms, e.g. *w-int* ({*was/will/would*} + *-int*). If the aux/modal lacks an onset, e.g. *is*, the surface form is simply *int*.

- This *-int* marker is only licensed in high negation (T-to-C) contexts:[16] it <u>cannot</u> surface in the TP region (i.e. following the subject), as in (12d):

(12) a. *Was-nae it just a crackin' night?   (*crackin'* = "amazing")
     b. *Was it -nae just a crackin' night?
     c.   W-int it just a crackin' night?
     d. *It w-int a crackin' night.

Thus, GE makes a clear morphosyntactic distinction between the neg-marker found in high-negation contexts versus those found in all other contexts.

- This indicates that such a distinction is represented in UG, and AE simply fails to realize it morphologically (but see below).
    - This gets us back to an earlier question: if high negation is not standard sentential negation, then what is it?

Before we get to a possible answer, we turn briefly to a pattern similar to these GE data that is hidden in plain sight.

3.2.2   High negation in Standard English

It is well-known that the finite inflectional paradigm for Standard English *be* contains an accidental gap in the presence of contracted negation.

- Namely, the negative clitic *-n't* can attach directly to any form of finite *be* <u>except</u> the first-person singular form, *am*, as shown in (13a).

- In such contexts, the only recourse is to use uncontracted negation (13b).

But surprisingly, an entirely different pattern emerges in high negation contexts:[17]

- Although the accidental gap for *amn't* persists (13c), another form of *be + -n't* unexpectedly appears in its place, namely *aren't* (13d).
    - Crucially, *aren't* can only appear with a first person singular subject in high negation contexts. Even LNPQs can't license this peculiar combination (13e), but instead take the expected *am* (13f).

(13) a. *I amn't on the list.
     b.   I am not on the list.
     c. *Amn't I on the list?
     d.   Aren't I on the list?
     e. *Are I not on the list?
     f.   Am I not on the list?

This is very much like the situation in GE, only on a narrower scale:

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[16]That is, *-int* can appear in rhetorical questions, tag questions, and exclamatives; however, it is degraded in ordinary HNPQs (**Int John home?*). Thus, *-int* seems to require contexts that are barely or not at all information-seeking, such as the exclamative in (12c) (but investigation into its precise licensing conditions is ongoing). Still, all that matters for us is that UG is sensitive to "negation" in these contexts versus others; see below.

[17]Thanks to Byron Ahn for bringing this fact to my attention.

- Here, as in GE, high negation is associated with a morphological alternation that does not arise in any other environment.

  – We must conclude that high negation has special status in UG (or is itself only licensed in an environment that has special UG status).

I discuss some of the theoretical consequences of this finding shortly.

3.3   Summary

Summarizing to this point, we have seen that high negation (a) fails to exhibit properties familiar to sentential negation, but (b) succeeds in exhibiting properties unfamiliar to sentential negation.

- It is therefore clear that high negation is not sentential negation.

4   ...but it also isn't NOT negation

At this point, we must consider the possibility that high negation simply isn't negation at all, despite its homophony with the reduced sentential negation morpheme.

- This homophony might have a historical source,[18] but this could be irrelevant to the synchronic grammar.

So perhaps high negation is not negation at all, but instead a semantically-distinct morpheme that is irrelevantly homophonous with contracted sentential negation.[19]

- Perhaps the high negation morpheme *-n't* has been reanalyzed as strictly expressing speaker attitude (e.g. as the head of an epistemic or evidential projection in the left periphery)

- This would mean that high negation is base-generated in (or very near) its surface position adjacent to the fronted aux/modal.

  – Complete reanalysis of this sort would explain why it fails to exhibit any of the characteristics of standard negation mentioned earlier: it simply isn't a negative marker.

However, embedded NPQs offer a strong empirical argument against this sort of approach.

- The questions in (14) all have outer-negation readings, just like their root HNPQ analogues

  – But note that the embedded negation is clearly not in the embedded left periphery
  – Likewise, the negative marker need not even be *-n't* (14d):

(14) a.   I wonder if it wouldn't be simpler just to teach children right from the start that life is absurd.[20]

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[18]I do not currently know the historical development of high negation in English, but I intend to look into it in the future (particularly with respect to the grammaticalization of SE *-n't* and GE *-int*, likely related forms).

[19]Something along these lines is implied in Kramer and Rawlins (2009: p. 6), who assert that *-n't* in HNPQs is "conventionalized to carry some additional meaning". It could be argued that a metalinguistic use of negation is in some sense "conventionalized", but Kramer and Rawlins's (2009) use of "additional" here indicates that this is probably not what they had in mind. In the absence of a proper theory of conventionalized negation, I construct a reasonable interpretation of their remarks to argue against.

[20]From Muriel Barbery, *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*.

       (i)   ≈ Wouldn't it be simpler just to teach children from the start that life is absurd?

  b.   I wonder if it isn't just cowardice instead of generosity that makes us give tips.[21]

       (i)   ≈ Isn't it just cowardice instead of generosity that makes us give tips?

  c.   This is why I wonder if we haven't been contacted by aliens already.[22]

       (i)   ≈ Haven't we been contacted by aliens already?

  d.   Some days I wonder if it might not be better to culturally engineer humans to enjoy small scale garden farming.[23]

       (i)   ≈ Wouldn't it be better to culturally engineer humans to enjoy small scale garden farming?

These examples clearly show that an outer-negation reading is available in embedded NPQs, meaning it is <u>not</u> strictly tied to the form or the position of the negative marker.

- If this reading were tied to a special left-peripheral morpheme *-n't*, we would expect it to be unavailable in embedded questions:

  - The lack of T-to-C movement would presumably leave that morpheme without a host.[24]

- Since this reading is clearly possible when both *-n't* and its verbal host are in-situ underneath TP, as well as when the negative marker is *not* rather than *-n't*, we must conclude that it arises by separate means.

Thus, there is no evidence that the negative marker in HNPQs has been reanalyzed as a morpheme generated in the left periphery, and in fact there is evidence against it.

- The remaining challenge, then, is to explain the role played by *-n't* in the only available interpretation, the outer-negation reading.

5   The analytical outlook

To recap, the original data guiding the development of prior HNPQ analyses does not align with the experimental results; thus, they should be re-evaluated.

- The complete absence of an inner-negation reading in HNPQs would seem to undercut core parts of certain proposals.

- Re-evaluating all HNPQ analyses in light of these findings is a large task, and I will not attempt it here; instead, I will discuss one type of approach that seems particularly affected by the arguments I have presented here.

The approach in question is one originating in Ladd (1981), but modified and developed in detail by Romero and Han (2004):

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[21]Quote attributed to Will Rodgers, http://quotationsbook.com/quote/16950/

[22]From http://www.lileks.com/bleats/archive/12/0812/080112.html

[23]From http://thecontraryfarmer.wordpress.com/2012/09/05/weeds-that-like-a-sip-of-roundup-now-and-then/

[24]If this hypothetical morpheme simply cliticized onto whatever was in C^0, then we might expect to see e.g. *I wonder ifn't....* However, I have encountered various rural dialects of American English, particularly those from the South, that have something perhaps similar to this, e.g. *I wonder iffin you're just blowing hot air* (from Google). It seems at least conceivable that *iffin* (also *if'n*) in such dialects is the result of cliticizing this hypothetical morpheme *-n't* to the interrogative complementizer *if*; however, this is purely speculation at this point. I know of no mention of *iffin/if'n* anywhere in the literature.

- In a nutshell, these analyses argue that the apparent inner-/outer-negation ambiguity in HNPQs is derived by variations in the scope of negation
  - That is, in the outer-negation reading, negation is scoping above some particular operator (e.g. Verum: Romero and Han 2004);
  - Whereas in an inner-negation reading (now seen to be absent from HNPQs), negation is taking scope underneath this operator.

- While such an approach is extremely intuitive, it loses much of its conceptual appeal if the inner-negation reading is in fact missing from HNPQs.
  - In essence, this undercuts the motivation for pursuing a scope-based story to begin with.

It seems unlikely that such a proposal could be fruitfully revised to square with the findings presented here, but this is not the case for all prior proposals.

In particular, by way of closing remarks, I would like to suggest a way in which part of a prior analysis – that of Reese (2007) – can be built upon to capture these facts.

- Reese argues that high negation in HNPQs is <u>metalinguistic</u> negation (Horn 1989): that is, negation that targets not-at-issue content.

- This immediately explains many of its behavioral properties described above: as Horn (1989) and others have pointed out, metalinguistic negation
  - Does not contribute to the propositional meaning,
  - Fails to license NPIs,
  - Fails to anti-license PPIs,
  - Is most often used in denial contexts, as HNPQs can be (Reese 2007: p. 112), etc.

- The empirical and theoretical advantages of this proposal are manifold, and I will not discuss them here: see Reese (2007) and Sailor (in progress).

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