

# Motivations for Scandinavian Negative Indefinite Shift

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## BIG QUESTIONS:

- What are the triggers for movement?
- In what ways can prosody interact with syntactic movement?
- Does prosody play a role in Negative Indefinite Shifting in Scandinavian languages?

## ANSWER:

- Prosody controls and moderates the heaviness of moved copies.

## 1 Introduction

- (1) Negative Shifting (NegShift) is a process in the Scandinavian languages where a negative indefinite (NI) obligatorily shifts to a position outside of the VP.
  - a. Manden havde måske *ingenting* [<sub>VP</sub> sagt t<sub>o</sub> ].  
     man-the had   probably nothing   said  
     ‘The man hadn’t said anything.’
  - b. Jeg har *ingen* bøger [<sub>VP</sub> lånt børnene t<sub>o</sub> ].  
     I   have no   books   lent children-the  
     ‘I haven’t lent the children any books.’
- (2) This process occurs to all NIs and is permissible from a large number of different contexts, depending on the variety and register (see Table 1).
- (3) This process bears some resemblance to Scandinavian Object Shift (OS), which is where a weak object pronoun shifts to a position outside of the verb phrase (Holmberg 1986, 1999).
  - a. Jag kyssade<sub>v</sub> henne<sub>o</sub> inte [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>o</sub> ] Sw  
     I   kiss.PST   her       NEG  
     ‘I didn’t kiss her.’
- (4) There has been some evidence that OS is prosodically driven (Erteschik-Shir 2005, Erteschik-Shir & Josefsson 2017, Erteschik-Shir, Josefsson & Köhnlein 2020, Brinkerhoff & Tengesdal 2021).
- (5) Despite similarities between NegShift and OS, NegShift doesn’t directly correlate to the accounts of OS.
- (6) Chiefly, a wider range of material is allowed to undergo NegShift, which includes both pronouns and full DPs, whereas only prosodically weak object pronouns are allowed to undergo OS.
- (7) However, not all NegShift is treated equal. Christensen (2005: 65f), speaking on Danish, claims that the “weight” of the NI plays a factor in whether or not NegShift occurs.

- a. Jeg har [*intet nyt*]<sub>o</sub> hørt t<sub>o</sub>.  
I have nothing new heard  
'I haven't heard anything new.'
- b. \*Jeg har [*intet nyt i sagen*]<sub>o</sub> hørt t<sub>o</sub>.  
I have nothing new in case-DET heard  
'I haven't heard anything new about the case.'

I claim that NegShift is mostly a syntactic operation with prosody playing a supporting role in determining what material is allowed to surface at PF.

## 2 Distributional properties of NegShift versus OS

- (8) There appear to be some similarities between OS and NegShift with them both operating on pronouns and moving them to a position outside of the VP.
  - a. Jag kyssade<sub>v</sub> henne<sub>o</sub> inte [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>o</sub> ]  
I kiss.PST her NEG  
'I didn't kiss her.'
  - b. Jag har ingen<sub>o</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> kyssat t<sub>o</sub> ]  
I have no-one kiss.PST.PTCP  
'I haven't kissed anyone.'
- (9) Unlike OS, NegShift also operates on full negative DPs.
  - a. Jens har *ingen hunder* [<sub>VP</sub> **sluppet** t<sub>o</sub> ud]. Da  
Jens have no hounds let out  
'Jens haven't let out any dogs.'
  - b. Jeg har *ingen bøger* [<sub>VP</sub> **lånt** børnene t<sub>o</sub> ]. WJ/Scan1  
I have no books lent children-the  
'I haven't lent the children any books.'
- (10) Additional evidence from Engels (2012) shows that NegShift is allowed out of a wider range of contexts than OS, which are summarized in Table 1.
  - a. We see a strong preference for NegShifting across the verb and phonological material in the VP as seen in the bolded and colored rows.
  - b.

## 3 Comparison of NegShift and OS

- (11) By comparing NegShift's patterns against OS's patterns, we can determine whether they are governed by the same or different factors.
- (12) There are three different metrics that we can use to determine the governing factors:
  - a. Obedience to Holmberg's Generalization.

Table 1: Distribution of NegShift across different Scandinavian languages. WJ = West Jutlandic, Ic = Icelandic, Fa = Faroese, DaL = Danish Linguists, SwL = Swedish Linguists, Scan1 = literary/formal Mainland Scandinavian, Scan2 = colloquial Mainland Scandinavian and Norwegian

NegShift across		WJ1	WJ2	Ic	Fa	DaL1	DaL2	SwL	Scan1	Scan2
String-vacuous		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Verb</b>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
<b>IO</b>	<b>verb in situ</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*
	<b>verb moved</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Preposition	verb in situ	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?	*	*	*
	verb moved	✓	✓	?	*	*	*	*	*	*
Infinitive	verb in situ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	*	?	*	*
	verb moved	✓	*	*	✓	*	*	*	*	*

- b. Where the loci of movement are.
- c. How NegShift and OS interact with one another.

### 3.1 Holmberg's Generalization

- (13) OS only occurs if the verb has moved to V2 and must obey Holmberg's Generalization.
- a. Holmberg's Generalization:  
Object Shift cannot apply across a phonologically visible category asymmetrically c-commanding the object position except adjuncts (Holmberg 1999: p. 15)
- (14) Examples of OS
- a. Peter så<sub>v</sub> ham<sub>o</sub> ikke [VP t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>o</sub>] (Across negation)  
Peter see.PST him not  
'Peter didn't see him.'
  - b. Peter så<sub>v</sub> ham<sub>o</sub> ofte [VP t<sub>v</sub> t<sub>o</sub>] (Across adverbials)  
Peter see.PST him often  
'Peter often saw him.'
- (15) NegShift does not obey Holmberg's Generalization. In fact the verb has to remain in situ for it to occur.
- (16) Examples of NegShift with the verb in situ.
- a. Ég hef engan<sub>o</sub> [VP séð t<sub>o</sub>.] Ic  
I have nobody seen  
'I haven't seen anybody.'
  - b. Í dag hefur Petur einki<sub>o</sub> [VP sagt t<sub>o</sub>]. Fa  
today has Peter nothing said  
'Peter hasn't said anything today.'
  - c. Manden havde måske ingenting<sub>o</sub> [VP sagt t<sub>o</sub>]. Da  
man-the had probably nothing said  
'The man hadn't said anything'

- (17) Additionally, it is allowed to occur across any phonological material in the VP, which is denied by Holmberg's Generalization.
- a. Jón hefur *ekkert* [<sub>VP</sub> **sagt Sveini** t<sub>o</sub>]. Ic  
 Jón has nothing said Sveinn  
 'John hasn't told Sveinn anything'
  - b. Í dag hefur Petur *einki* [<sub>VP</sub> **givið Mariu** t<sub>o</sub>]. Fa  
 today has Peter nothing given Mary  
 'Today, Peter hasn't given Mary anything.'
  - c. Jeg har *ingen bøger* [<sub>VP</sub> **lånt børnene** t<sub>o</sub>]. WJ/Scan1  
 I have no books lent children-the  
 'I haven't lent the children any books.'
- (18) This behavior is called the *Anti-Holmberg Effect* (Fox & Pesetsky 2005, Engels 2012)

CLAIM: OS and NegShift are not beholden to the same generalizations.

### 3.2 Landing site

- (19) OS occurs to the left of all adverbials.
- a. Jeg lånte *hende*<sub>IO</sub> faktisk<sub>Adv</sub> aldri<sub>Adv</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>IO</sub> bøgerne].  
 I lent her actually never books-the  
 'I actually never lent her the books'
- (20) NegShift occurs to the right of most adverbials with the exception of light adverbials (Nilsen 1997, Svenonius 2002).
- a. Jeg har faktisk<sub>Adv</sub> *ingen bøger*<sub>DO</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> lånt Othilia t<sub>DO</sub>].  
 I have actually no books lent Othilia  
 'I didn't actually lend Othilia any books.'

CLAIM: OS AND NEGSHIFT MOVE TO DIFFERENT LOCATIONS.

### 3.3 Interaction of NegShift and OS

- (21) When there are both weak object pronouns and NIs in the sentence they both shift to their respective landing sites.
- a. Jeg lånte *hende* faktisk *ingen bøger*.  
 I lent her actually no books  
 'I didn't actually lend her any books.'
- (22) When the verb remains in situ OS is blocked from occurring but NegShift is still allowed to occur.
- a. Jeg har *ingen bøger* lånt *hende*.  
 I have no books lent her  
 'I haven't lent her any books'

CLAIM: OS and NegShift are not the same.

BIG CLAIM: OS and NegShift are not derived by the same mechanisms.

## 4 Prosodic restrictions on NegShift

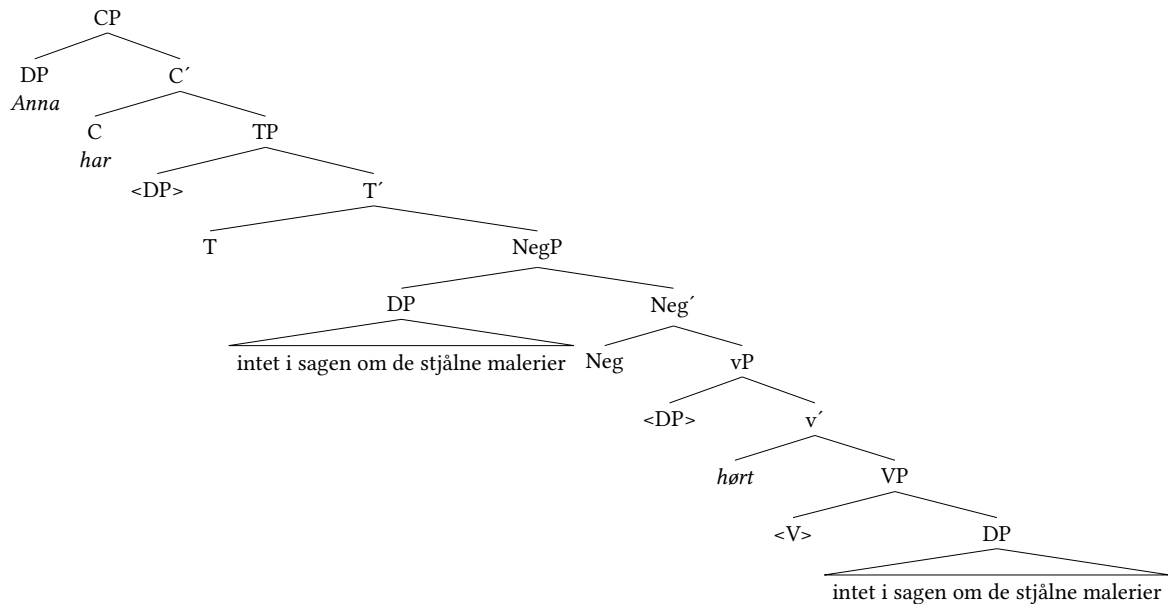
- (23) Christensen (2005: 65f) claims that the “weight” of the NI plays a crucial factor in whether or not NegShift occurs.
- Jeg har *intet*<sub>o</sub> hørt *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
I have nothing heard  
'I haven't heard anything.'
  - Jeg har [*intet nyt*]<sub>o</sub> hørt *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
I have nothing new heard  
'I haven't heard anything new'
  - \*Jeg har [*intet nyt i sagen*]<sub>o</sub> hørt *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
I have nothing new in case-DET heard  
'I haven't heard anything new about the case.'
  - \*Jeg har [*intet nyt i sagen om de stjålne malerier*]<sub>o</sub> hørt *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
I have nothing new in case-DET about the stolen paintings heard  
'I haven't heard anything new in the case about the stolen paintings.'
- (24) In those instances where the NI is too large one potential repair is to strand the PP while moving just the pronoun or using the negative particle *ikke* and a NPI.
- Jeg har *intet*<sub>i</sub> hørt *t*<sub>i</sub> [*pp i sagen om de stjålne malerier* ].
  - Jeg har *ikke* hørt [ *noget i sagen om de stjålne malerier* ].
- (25) This same behavior has also been remarked upon by Penka (2011) for Swedish.
- Men mänskligheten har *ingenting*<sub>o</sub> lärt sig *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
but mankind-the have nothing taught themselves  
'But mankind haven't taught themselves anything.'
  - ? Vi hade *inga grottor*<sub>o</sub> undersökt *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
we have no caves explored  
'We haven't explored any caves.'

## 5 Copy and partial deletion account

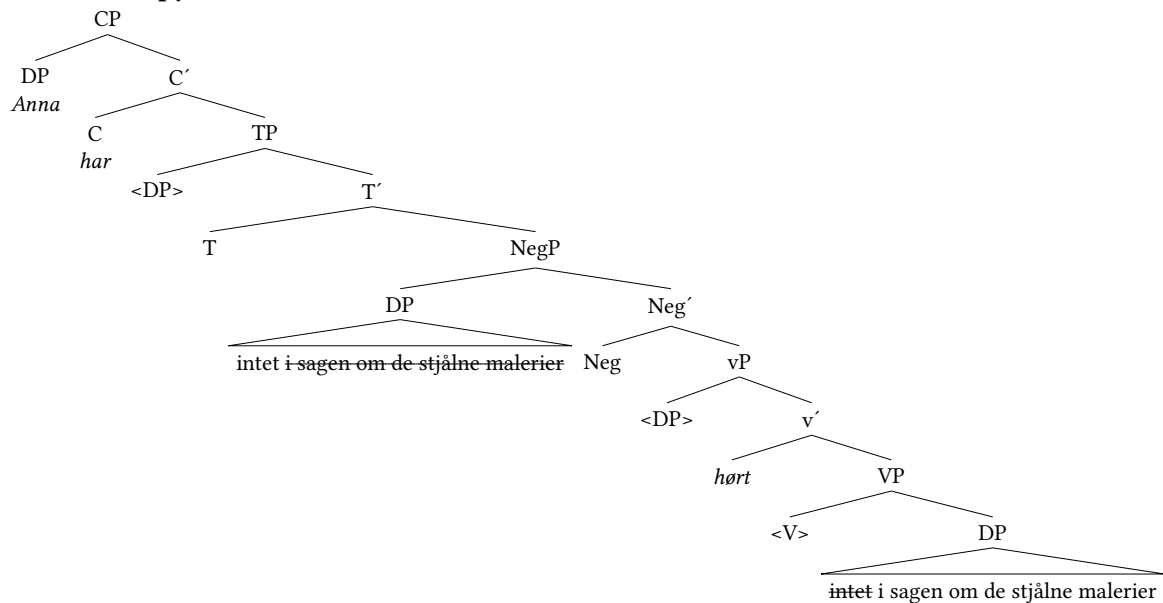
- (26) One way to account for this behavior is following Zeijlstra 2011 account for the split-scope that these NIs introduce in Germanic languages.
- (27) Split-scope is evident when modals and other auxiliaries are present and the negation scopes higher than the modal/auxiliary's scope.
- (28) Split-scope is the result of a copy-theory of movement where the indefinite interpretation is in the lower copy while the negative operator is interpreted in the higher copy.

(29) Following Fanselow & Ćavar (2001, 2002) parts of the copy are removed in PF or LF.

(30) For example, we see this in the following syntactic structure.



(31) At this point during PF, part of the higher copy is deleted leaving only the NI pronoun. In the lower copy *intet* is deleted.



QUESTION: What decides which material is deleted?

CLAIM: Prosody/phonology is responsible for deletion by restricting and regulating the amount of material that is allowed in the *Mittelfeld*.

## 5.1 PF deletion

- (32) Unlike pronominal object shift, NegShift is purely syntactic in origin
  - a. Motivated by the need to value a uninterpretable [ $u$ NEG] feature.
- (33) Following the copy theory of movement Chomsky (1993), multiple copies of the NI will be present at PF spell-out.
- (34) A question arises as to whether or not phases have any bearing on the facts presented above.
- (35) There are two potential answers
  - a. Phases do not play a role in determining phonological/prosodic behavior.
  - b. Phases do play a role in determining phonological/prosodic behavior.
- (36) Recent evidence from Weber (2020) suggests that phases do in fact play a role in determining phonological behavior.
- (37) In order for the phonology to interact with two copies at the same time, the base generated position and the landing site both must belong to the same phase.
  - a. This requires that NegP and the rest of the Cinquean hierarchy of adverbials (Cinque 1999) belong to the same phase as  $\nu$ P.
- (38) Kandybowicz (2008) makes the observation that multiple copies that are generated by the narrow syntax can be *phonologically* realized when there is a identifiable PF well-formedness condition is avoided.
  - a. Similarly, I argue that PF can also dictate the amount of material that is deleted in those copies.
  - b. PF being able to delete is not new and was argued for by Ott & Struckmeier (2016) to account for German clausal ellipsis.
- (39) In the case of NegShift, there are restrictions on *Mittelfeld* well-formedness.
  - a. It has been observed that only a limited amount of structure is allowed and a wide degree of variation is permitted in the *Mittelfeld* (see Haider 2017).
  - b. I argue that the largest unit that is allowed to remain in the *Mittelfeld* in Scandinavian is a maximal prosodic word ( $\omega_{\max}$ ).
    - i. Stød is a marker for  $\omega_{\max}$  in Danish (Basbøll 2005, Kalivoda & Bellik 2018)
    - ii. Tonal accents are a characteristic for  $\omega_{\max}$  in Swedish and Norwegian (Kristoffersen 2007, Myrberg & Riad 2013, 2015, Riad 2014)
- (40) Evidence for this comes from the size of the material that is allowed to “shift” in these languages.
- (41) As observed for Danish only a pronoun or DP, consisting of just a D and NP, is allowed to occupy the *Mittelfeld* when NegShift occurs.
  - a. Jeg har *intet*<sub>o</sub> hørt *t*<sub>o</sub>.  
     I    have nothing heard  
     ‘I haven’t heard anything.’

- b. Jeg har [*intet nyt*]<sub>o</sub> hørt t<sub>o</sub>.  
 I have nothing new heard  
 ‘I haven’t heard anything new’
- c. \*Jeg har [*intet nyt i sagen*]<sub>o</sub> hørt t<sub>o</sub>.  
 I have nothing new in case-DET heard  
 ‘I haven’t heard anything new about the case.’
- (42) In those instances where the NI is too large one potential repair is to strand the PP while moving just the pronoun or using the negative particle *ikke* and a NPI.
- a. Jeg har *intet*<sub>i</sub> hørt t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>PP</sub> i sagen om de stjalne malerier ].  
 b. Jeg har *ikke* hørt [ *noget* i sagen om de stjalne malerier ].
- (43) This is also partially true in Swedish where the largest unit that is allowed to move DPs consisting of a pronoun (Penka 2011).
- a. Men mänskligheten har *ingenting*<sub>o</sub> lärt sig t<sub>o</sub>.  
 but mankind-the have nothing taught themselves  
 ‘But mankind haven’t taught themselves anything.’
- (44) More marginally a full DP consisting of a D and NP can shift.
- a. ? Vi hade *inga grottor*<sub>o</sub> undersökt t<sub>o</sub>.  
 we have no caves explored  
 ‘We haven’t explored any caves.’
- (45) This difference between Danish, which allows full DPs, and Swedish which tolerates full DPs, but prefers pronouns, suggests the *Mittelfeld* in Swedish will delete copies until they are just the NI pronoun.
- (46) The *Mittelfeld*’s phonological well-formedness will cause deletion of different amounts of material in Danish and Swedish can also explain Norwegian’s lack of NegShift.
- a. Norwegian deletes everything as it prefers not to have any copies in the *Mittelfeld*  
 b. This deletion would then leave the valued [NEG] feature which gets pronounced as negation which then causes the lower copy to surface with a NPI.  
 c. This behavior of total deletion is also attested in Danish and Swedish where negation and a NPI is always a potential instead of NegShift.
- (47) This phonological well-formedness will be called the LIGHT MITTELFELD CONDITION (LMC), where the largest prosodic unit that is allowed in the *Mittelfeld* are  $\omega_{\max}$ .

## 6 Conclusion

(48)

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# Appendix

## Cyclic Linearization

- (49) Cyclic Linearization is a theory that was developed by Fox & Pesetsky 2005 as a way to account for OS and Holmberg's Generalization.
- (50) This theory works by stipulating that spell-out is cyclic and order preserving.
- (51) This proposal was extended by Fox & Pesetsky (2005) and Engels (2011, 2012) to account for quantifier movement (QM), which NegShift is a subset of.
- (52) Under this proposal QM is subject to an "Anti-Holmberg Effect" or an "Inverse Holmberg Effect", which are identical in principle
  - a. Under Holmberg's Generalization, OS can only apply if the verb has undergone movement from V to T to C.
  - b. The Anti-Holmberg Effect explains that only when the verb remains in situ can we have QM, which is the result of the ordering operations between the different phases being in agreement.

- (53) In order to account for OS, Fox & Pesetsky propose that the during the spell-out of the VP phase the V is the leftmost element in its phase<sup>1</sup> and at which point the ordering restrictions are in place which state that the V must precede the O.
- (54) At this point the V moves to T and then to C at this point the object is free to move to a position higher because the order that existed at the VP phase continues to hold.
- (55) OS and string-vacuous Neg-Shift
- a.  $[_{CP} S V \dots [_{NegP} O \text{ adv } [_{VP} t_v t_o ]]]$
  - b. VP Ordering:  $V > O$   
CP Ordering:  $S > V, V > O, O > \text{adv}, \text{adv} > VP$
- (56) If the DO were to move instead of the IO this would now result in the DO being ordered before the IO at the spell-out at the CP phase.
- (57) In the case of NegShift, where it is able to shift across various phonological material it is proposed that the NI first moves to the left edge of the VP before spell-out of that phase.
- a.  $[_{CP} S \text{ aux } \dots [_{NegP} O [_{VP} t_o V t_o ]]]$
  - b. VP Ordering:  $O > V$   
CP Ordering:  $S > V, \text{aux} > O, O > \text{adv}, \text{adv} > VP \rightarrow O > V$
- (58) The benefit of using Cyclic Linearization comes from being able to account for why certain orders are fixed throughout the entire derivation.

## Svenonius 2002

- (59) Svenonius (2002) describes that *in Norwegian* NIs only license sentential negation when it has moved to a position outside of the VP.
- (60) According to Svenonius there are five distinct cases involving NIs.
- a. *ingen* is a *licensor* of and does not in and of itself express negation.
  - b. TRIFLING NEGATION *ingen* can be narrowly interpreted to mean something like "zero" or "a trifle", when this is the case NegShift has not taken place.
  - c. P NEGATION is not as tightly confined like in trifling negation, but is not interpreted at the sentential level, this involves predicates only.
  - d. NARROW SCOPE is a cover term for trifling and P negation.
  - e. *ingen* can appear in double negation expressions.
- (61) Before looking at examples it is important to remember that Norwegian does not allow NegShift in colloquial Norwegian.
- a. When it does occur it is marked and is indicative of a literary or archaic style.
- (62) I will only focus on sentential and trifling negation.

<sup>1</sup>The position of the V at the left-edge of the phase could be due to the movement of V to *v* in which case it is actually the *v*P that acts as the phase not the VP.

- (63) Examples of sentential negation in Norwegian, the mark (\*†) shows that the interpretation is ungrammatical in the colloquial register but attested in literary or archaic styles.
- Vi vant ingen konkurranse.  
We want no competition  
'We did not win any competition'
  - \*† Vi kunne ingen konkurranse vinne.  
We could no competition won
  - \* Vi vant ingen konkurranse i.  
We won no competition in
  - \*† ...at vi ingen konkurranse vant  
that we no competition won
- (64) The sentential interpretation is only possible if:
- The NI moves outside of VP, and
  - Is subject to Holmberg's Generalization
- (65) When it comes to the trifling negation, it is only the constituent that is negated. This type of reading is quite restricted in Norwegian and generally means something like "zero" when used.
- \* De har gitt Norge ingen poeng, og det har heller ikke irene.  
they have given Norway no points and that have either not the.Irish  
(intended: 'They have given Norway no points, and neither have the Irish')
  - De har gitt Norge ingen poeng, og det har også esterne.  
they have given Norway no points and that have also the.Estonians  
'They have given Norway no points, and so have the Estonians'
- (66) We know that we get the constituent negation when we compare (65a), which uses *neither*, with (65b).
- (67) Svenonius claims that the only way that we get sentential negation is through NegShift.
- It is unclear if the cases involving