
Action-oriented apprehensives and the embedding of negative purpose adjuncts.

Alda Mari¹ & Chloé Tahar²

¹Institut Jean Nicod, ²Université de Neuchâtel

alda.mari@ens.fr, chloe.tahar@unine.ch

Verbs of fearing are robust selectors of expletive negation across languages, including French *craindre* ('fear'). We propose that expletive negation in the complement of verbs of fearing descends from Latin negative purpose adjuncts. We show that verbs of fearing can receive an action-oriented reading with embedded eventives, see (1) or an epistemic reading with embedded statives (2) (extending Hare (1971)'s distinction for *want*).

- (1) Je crains qu'elle n'arrive en retard.
'I fear that she'll be late.'
- (2) Je crains que Marie soit la coupable.
'I fear that Mary is the culprit'

Based on a fined-grained corpus-study drawing its material from historical French corpora, we establish that, in Medieval French, expletive *ne* appears only with the action-oriented reading of *craindre*. In our analysis, *ne* introduces a negative purpose clause.

- (1) $\llbracket ne p \rrbracket^{M,i,GOALS} = 1$ iff $\forall w' \in GOALS(M(i),w) : \neg p(w')$

We endorse a double-layered analysis of the attitude *craindre* whereby uncertainty is represented as a partitioned epistemic modal base $M(i)$ as the verb introduces universal quantification over a restricted set of

- (2) $\llbracket x \text{ craint que } ne p \rrbracket^{M,i,FEARS,GOALS}$ is defined if $M(i)$ is partitioned between p and $\neg p$ worlds (uncertainty).
If defined $\llbracket x \text{ craint que } ne p \rrbracket^{M,i,FEARS,GOALS} = 1$ iff
 $\forall w' \in FEARS(M(i),w) : \forall w'' \in GOALS(M(i),w') : \neg p(w'')$

In Modern French, expletive negation can appear with the mere-fear reading of *craindre*. In this context, we submit that *ne* loses its plain modal meaning and becomes non-at-issue, expressing mere dispreference (see Yoon, 2011).

- (3) $\llbracket x \text{ craint que } ne p \rrbracket^{M,i,FEARS,GOALS}$ is defined if $M(i)$ is partitioned between p and $\neg p$ worlds (uncertainty).
If defined $\llbracket x \text{ craint que } ne p \rrbracket^{M,i,FEARS,GOALS} = 1$ iff
 $\forall w' \in FEARS(M(i),w) : p(w')$
NON-AT-ISSUE: $\forall w'' \in GOALS(M(i),w') : \neg p(w'')$

References: • Hare, M. (1971). Wanting, some pitfalls. In : *Practical Inferences*. • Yoon, S. (2011). *Not in the mood: the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of evaluative negation* PhD thesis, University of Chicago.