

What ‘not’ might mean: Expletive Negation in attitude contexts.
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Emotive doxastics, inquisitive predicates, negated veridical responsive predicates, dubitatives and negative predicates may select for sentential complements with Expletive Negation (EN), namely a negative marker that does not reverse the polarity of the embedded proposition. In the past EN has been argued to be semantically vacuous (Espinal 1992, 2000), the same as real negation (Abels 2005), or to have some semantic contribution different than that of real negation (e.g. evaluative mood (Yoon 2011)). In this paper I identify some new necessary conditions for EN-licensing and show that EN contributes the meaning of a weak epistemic modal.

Condition I: Non-anaphoric semantic tense. A comparative analysis of Classical Greek (ClGr), Russian, Hebrew, Spanish and French EN data challenges existing analyses of EN that draw a causal link between EN and (subjunctive) mood. In French and Spanish, EN is licensed in the subjunctive complements of EN-selecting predicates but not in the infinitival complements that these verbs also select. On the other hand, EN is grammatical in ClGr, Russian and Hebrew infinitives. As different diagnostics show (availability of morphological tense alternations, availability of two temporal adverbs with distinct reference (1b), licensing of an embedded subject (1c)) the distribution of EN in (infinitival) complements tracks the existence of an active tense operator in the embedded clause. In other words, EN is grammatical in complements with free or dependent tense but not in complements with anaphoric tense (as characterized in Picallo 1984, Landau 2004, a.o.).

- (1) a. phobeisthai to me:te epenegkein pseude: timo:rian.
 fear.V.Inf.Pr the.D.n.Acc. NEG-and bring-upon.Pst.Prfv.Inf wrongful punishment
 “...to dread bringing upon him a wrongful punishment” Plat. *L.* 12.943d [ClGr]
- b. Včera oni bojalis’ kak by mafija ix zavtra ne
 Yesterday they feared.PST how MOD mafia them tomorrow NEG
 našla [Russian]
 find.PST.PRF
 “Yesterday they feared that tomorrow he might find them.” (N. Radkevich p.c.)
- c. Ha-kaba’im man’u me-ha-es le’hitpaset. [Hebrew]
 the-firemen prevented NEG-the-fire spread.INF
 “The firemen prevented the fire from spreading.” (Landau 2002)

Condition II: Question-selecting predicates with existential force. By adopting current semantic analyses of emotive doxastics, dubitatives (Anand & Hacquard 2013), and rogative predicates (Uegaki 2012) I show that EN-selecting predicates have in common the fact that they select for complements of type $\langle\langle s,t \rangle, t \rangle$ and introduce a bipartition of the doxastic alternatives of the epistemic subject (i.e. they have existential force). By slightly modifying Anand & Hacquard’s (2013) analysis of emotive doxastics and Uegaki’s (2012) analysis of interrogatives, I show that it is the complementizer *that* (not the matrix predicate) that introduces a likelihood scale such that ϕ is more likely than not ϕ , where ϕ is the embedded proposition.

Semantic Contribution of EN. Under the present account, the meaning of an emotive doxastic has four components: a desirability scale, a representational component, an “uncertainty condition” (Anand & Hacquard 2013) and a probability scale. Matrix negation can target the probability scale regardless of whether EN is present or not (2a), whereas in the absence of EN it

cannot target the desirability scale (2b). On the other hand, a sentence with EN cannot be a felicitous answer in a question, as shown in (3).

- (2) a. Dhen fovame pos/ mipos kseri tin alithia. Ime sighuros
 NEG fear that/ lest.NEG-that know the truth. Am sure
 pos ehi mavra mesanihta. [Modern Greek (MG)]
 that has black midnight
 “I do not fear that he knows the truth. I am sure he is totally ignorant.”
- b. Dhen fovame mipos/#pos kseri tin alithia. Gia tin
 NEG fear lest.NEG-that/that know the truth. for the
 akrivia to elpizo kiolas.
 preciseness it.CL hope even
 “I do not fear that he knows the truth. In fact, I even hope it.”

- (3) A: Erhete o Nikos? B: Fovame pos/ #mipos erhete. [MG]
 Come the Nikos Fear.1SG that lest.NEG-that comes.
 A: “Is Nikos coming?” B: “I fear that/ #lest he is coming.”

These data show that EN marks a set of doxastic alternatives as equally probable, indicating that the speaker does not have any kind of evidence about their ordering. In other words, EN alters the probability scale introduced by the declarative complementizer from that in (4a) to that in (4b). The EN sentence is less informative than that with the *that*-complement and thus it triggers the scalar implicature in (4c). For that reason, an EN-complement results to an infelicitous answer in (3), while matrix negation in (2) can target either the probability or the desirability scale.

- (4) a. $\phi >_{\text{LIKELY}} \neg\phi$ *that*-complement
 b. $\phi \geq_{\text{LIKELY}} \neg\phi$ EN-complement
 c. $\phi =_{\text{LIKELY}} \neg\phi$ scalar implicature triggered by EN

Further evidence attesting the connection between EN and epistemic modality comes from epistemic modal licensing: epistemic modals are ungrammatical in EN complements (5), while they can alternate with epistemic *tha* (‘will’) in counterfactuals (6). The fact that EN asserts (4b) is also evident from its use in counterfactuals (6) and the minimal pair in (7).

- (5) Fovame pos/ *mipos mporei na fighun ta pedhia simera. [MG]
 Fear that/ lest.NEG-that might SBJ leave the children today
 “I fear that/ *lest children might leave today.”
- (6) An epine afto to siropi, mipos/ tha ghinotan kala.
 If drink.PST this the syrup, lest.NEG-that/ will become fine
 No EN: “If he drank that syrup, he would recover.”
 EN: “If he drank that syrup, he would possibly recover.”
- (7) Elegha pos/ mipos chriazese voithia.
 say.Pst.Imfv.1SG that/ lest.NEG-that need.Prs.2SG help
 No EN: “I thought that you need help.” EN: “I wondered whether you need any help.”

Conclusions. EN marks doxastic alternatives as equally likely, and thus it can only be selected by predicates with existential force. Selection of EN by predicates with universal force would cause a semantic clash. The semantic contribution of EN, the fact that it scopes above Tense, it is in complementary distribution with epistemic modals, and it can be used in counterfactuals instead of epistemic *tha* (will) indicate that EN acts as an epistemic modal.