

Quantification and focus in Negative Concord

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1. Introduction

Negative Concord (NC) appears to be a cross-linguistically varied phenomenon, despite initial optimistic hopes.¹ Studies have revealed that n-words may be assigned diverging interpretations in different languages. In some languages they carry logical negation, while in others they do not. Apparently, in some languages they are interpreted as universals (e.g. Greek, cf. Giannakidou 1998), in others as existentially quantified, and proposals have been offered in which their quantificational force varies as a function of syntactic context.

This paper examines Hungarian n-words and advocates the view that Hungarian is a truly *hybrid* language type with respect to a typology of NC in both of these regards: (i) n-words can be negative or non-negative as an option, and (ii) they can be interpreted as universally quantified and also as existentially quantified. Importantly, the two choices are independent of each other. The simultaneous presence of these options within the same language (confirming a prediction of Giannakidou 2000) furnishes solid evidence that the same options are available within a cross-linguistic typology of Negative Concord.

The paper is structured into two main parts. First, I refute two—opposing—views of the negativity of Hungarian n-words, each of which classifies Hungarian as belonging to what can be referred to as a *pure* type of Negative Concord. According to Puskás (1998, 2000) n-words in this language invariably carry logical negation, while according to É.Kiss (1998, 2002) and Olsvay (2000), they are non-negative. I argue that these accounts mischaracterise the role played by a negative particle optionally appended to n-words, and that the correct approach factors Hungarian n-words into two morpho-syntactic classes: one that is semantically negative and another that is non-negative.

Second, I explore the issue of the quantificationality of n-words. I demonstrate that both the negative and the non-negative n-word varieties can be interpreted either as universally or as existentially quantified. In exploring the distribution of the two interpretational options, I argue that the ambiguity is one between the presence and lack of a universal quantifier, the latter situation resulting in a non-quantified Heimian indefinite interpretation, subject to existential closure. A well-definable gap in the coverage of the mapping from the syntactic positions occupied by the n-words to their quantificational status is eliminated by demonstrating that n-words can (optionally) be fronted by syntactic focalization due to a morphosyntactically reflected ‘even’ component in their semantics. This result provides strong confirmation for treatments of NPI put forward by Lee (1993), Lahiri (1998) and Horn (2000).

I conclude with spelling out the main consequence of these findings for a general typology of Negative Concord, and their connection to the Jespersen Cycle.

2. The negativity of Hungarian n-words

2.1 The patterns

I first review the basic syntactic patterns in Hungarian Negative Concord clauses. N-words in this language may remain postverbal if there is an overt negation element in the clause, cf. (1a).² N-words come in two flavours: they may or may not be modified by the particle *sem*. I will be using the term *s*-words to refer specifically to unmodified, bare n-words (due to the

initial morphological element *s(e)*- shared across the paradigm of *n*-words). The variety modified by *sem* will be referred to as *sem*-expressions. Now, *sem*-expressions (but not *s*-words) are preverbally, but not postverbally, in complementary distribution with the negation particle. For example, in (1b) a *sem*-expression is licensed postverbally, but it is excluded preverbally in the presence of negation. As (1c) illustrates, a *sem*-expression can appear preverbally without negation, and it is able to license a postverbal *s*-word or *sem*-expression. This patterning recalls Romance NC, where the negation particle is excluded if and only if the *n*-word is in a preverbal position, where it is able to license further, postverbal *n*-words. It is possible to front more than one *s*-word (1d), but not more than one *sem*-expression (1e). It is to be underscored with respect to this latter scenario, that multiple preverbal *sem*-expressions are not simply incapable of receiving a concord reading and receive instead a Double Negation (DN) reading, but such orderings are ungrammatical. Although it is ill-formed to front more than one *sem*-expression, it is possible to front exactly one *sem*-expression and any number of bare *s*-words, provided that the *sem*-expression is immediately preverbal (i.e. linearly last among the fronted *n*-words) (1f). Note that if only bare *s*-words are present in the clause, they always require the presence of negation: they exhibit a variety of NC called ‘strict NC’ (Giannakidou 1998), also found in Slavic and Greek. However, *s*-words can also be licensed by a preverbal *sem*-expression instead of negation, both when *s*-words are postverbal and when they are preverbal. The verb in negative clauses is generally inverted to the left of the verbal prefix by V-movement, whether or not the clause contains an overt negation particle.

- (1) a. nem jött el senki
 not come-PAST-3SG PREFIX nobody-NOM
 ‘Nobody came along’
- b. (*Senki sem) nem jött el (senki sem)
 nobody-NOM SEM not come-PAST-3SG PREFIX nobody-NOM SEM
 ‘id.’
- c. Senki sem jött el sehova (sem)
 nobody-NOM SEM come-PAST-3SG PREFIX nowhere-to SEM
 ‘Nobody came along anywhere’
- d. Senki sehova nem jött el
 nobody-NOM nowhere-to not come-PAST-3SG PREFIX
 ‘Nobody came along anywhere’
- e. *Senki sem sehova sem jött el
 nobody-NOM SEM nowhere-to SEM come-PAST-3SG PREFIX
 ‘id.’
- f. Senki soha sehova sem jött el
 nobody-NOM never nowhere-to SEM come-PAST-3SG PREFIX
 ‘Nobody ever came along anywhere’

The same generalizations also hold if the inverted verb is preceded by a focus, e.g. (2a–b).

- (2) a. (Senki (*sem)) nem MA jött el (senki (sem))
 nobody-NOM SEM not today come-PAST-3SG PREFIX nobody-NOM SEM
 ‘Nobody came along TODAY’
- b. Senki sem MA jött el
 nobody-NOM SEM today come-PAST-3SG PREFIX
 ‘id.’

It is to be noted that the grouping of the facts above is different from the one usually presented in previous accounts; it already gives a flavour of the analysis I propose: *s*-words and *sem*-expressions are to be treated as distinct classes.

As in the broader literature on Negative Concord items in Romance, Germanic, Slavic and Greek, here too two fundamental questions arise:

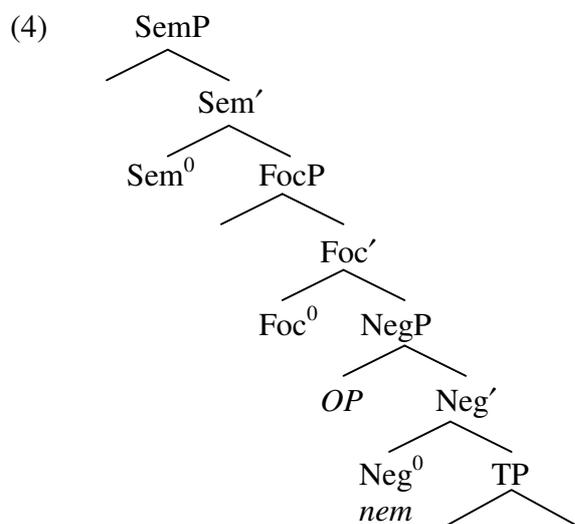
- (3) a. Do Hungarian *n*-words carry logical negation?
 b. Are they quantificational, and if so, what is their quantificational force?

Question (3a) has received both a positive (Puskás 1998, 2000) and a negative answer (Szabolcsi 1981a, É.Kiss 1994, 1998, Olsvay 2000), while the second issue has invariably been resolved by attributing to Hungarian *n*-words a universal quantifier status. As far as (3a) is concerned, however, both answers seem inadequate, although for different reasons. Below, I critically review the two families of theories stemming from, on the one hand, the positive, and on the other, the negative answer given to (3a), demonstrating that neither one is tenable. Then, I present my alternative, according to which Hungarian *n*-words are to be properly subcategorized into two classes, bare *s*-words and *sem*-expressions, only one of which is negative: i.e. the correct answer to (3a) is ‘yes and no’. I return to (3b) in section 3.

2.2. Are Hungarian *n*-words negative?

I now demonstrate in what ways Puskás’ (1998, 2000) model of Hungarian Negative Concord is inadequate. Here I limit myself to empirical criticisms, leaving aside conceptual issues. On Puskás’ account, Hungarian *n*-words are essentially universal quantifiers prefixed by logical negation ($\neg\forall x$), following Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman & Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman (1995), and a substantial body of work stemming from these. On this view, NC arises as a result of the absorption of several negative operators, by the analogue of *Wh*-absorption (Higginbotham and May 1981, May 1985). In Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman and Zanuttini (1991) and ensuing work, this absorption is characterized as Neg-factorization, a rule of the syntax–semantics mapping which gets rid of the unwanted instances of logical negation under specified conditions. The alternative absorption rule in May (1989) involves the formation of a polyadic quantifier complex.

Below I present a brief synopsis of Puskás’s particular proposal. The relevant hypotheses she makes are summarized in (5) below, along with the pertaining portion of clause structure that is assumed (4)³, as well as illustrative examples.



- (5) a. N-words inherently carry logical negation.
 b. By the Neg-Criterion, they must move (overtly or covertly) to Spec,NegP, where they form a complex specifier and undergo absorption (with each other and with the negation operator OP).
 c. This movement is covert in the default case; if bare *s*-words are fronted overtly, this involves movement (of the complex specifier of NegP) to Spec,FocP (cf. 6a); if *sem*-expressions are fronted overtly, this involves a second step of movement from Spec,FocP on to Spec,SemP, pied-piping all other n-words (cf. 6b).
 d. Multiple instances of *sem*-expressions are unable to undergo absorption if moved overtly (cf. 1e); one overtly fronted *sem*-expression can undergo absorption with covert chains of *sem*-expressions (cf. 1c).
 e. When a *sem*-expression or the sequence of *s*-word plus negation precedes preverbal focus, *sem* and *nem* are construed as alternative constituent negation particles negating the *s*-word they immediately follow (cf. 6b); in this case the n-word is interpreted existentially ($\neg\exists$), not universally, as in all other cases.
 f. *Nem* is deleted by a phonological rule if right-adjacent to *sem* (or to *nem*) (cf. 6b).
- (6) a. $[_{FP} [\text{senki} \quad \text{soha}]_i \quad [_F \text{nem} \quad \text{jött}]_j \quad [_{NegP} t_i \text{ OP } [_{Neg} t_j] \quad [_{TP} \text{el} t_j \dots]$
 nobody-NOM never not come-PAST-3SG PREF
 ‘Nobody ever came along’
 b. $[_{SemP} [[\text{senki} \quad [\text{soha} \text{sem}]]_i \quad [_{Sem}] \quad [_{FP} t_i \quad [_F \text{nem} \quad \text{jött}]_j \quad [_{NegP} t_i \text{ OP } [_{Neg} t_j] \quad [_{TP} \text{el} t_j \dots]$
 nobody-NOM never SEM not come-PAST-3SG PREF
 c. $[_{SemP} [[\text{senki} \quad [\text{soha} \text{sem/nem}]]_i \quad [_{Sem}] \quad [_{FP} \text{IDE} \dots]$
 nobody-NOM never SEM/not here
 ‘Nobody ever came HERE’

(5a) and (5b) are the core hypotheses of this genre of accounts of Negative Concord. An analysis involving optional movement to Spec,NegP is avoided by assuming that overt movement of n-words is triggered for a particular reason: focussing (cf. 5c). The postulation of a single SemP projection along with the corresponding checking of a *sem*-expression against the Sem⁰ head, and the proviso that multiple occurrences of *overtly* moved *sem*-expressions cannot be absorbed (cf. 5d) conspire to derive the fact that only one *sem*-expression is allowed in the preverbal field. The claim in (5e) takes care of pre-focus occurrences of n-words (cf. 2a,b), while the phonological deletion rule⁴ in (5f) is responsible for the complementary distribution effects obtained with negation and preverbal *sem*-expressions (cf. 1b,c).

This account suffers from a number of shortcomings. First, it involves stipulations that are required to eliminate complications arising as a consequence of (5a), i.e. assuming n-words to carry negation. Below I point out two.

Since bare *s*-words and *sem*-expressions are both taken to carry negation, an interpretive asymmetry needs to be stipulated between them to derive the fact that maximally one *sem*-expression may occur preverbally, whereas no such restriction applies to *s*-words. The semantic provision is that multiple *sem*-expressions cannot undergo absorption in case they move to/through Spec,NegP in *overt* syntax—while absorption of one overtly and one or more covertly moved *sem*-expressions is possible. This provision as it stands is entirely ad hoc; it is not clear why it should hold. Even if we grant it, however, the account does not get some facts right. Given that movement to SemP and movement to FocP are overt, it is not obvious why these two movements could not be applied independently to two *sem*-phrases. It appears from (6c) that *sem*-phrases are able to move to SemP without having moved through FocP. But if such double movement is possible, it is wrongly predicted that multiple *sem*-

expressions are grammatical preverbally. Given that *sem*-phrases can move to SemP without moving to FocP, another stipulative property of the account becomes prominent, namely that SemP is stipulated to be a unique, non-recursive projection. Note that the corresponding positive polarity analogue of SemP, i.e. IsP (‘AlsoP’, cf. Brody 1990) is recursive; indeed any number of *is*-phrases (‘also’-expressions) can move to the preverbal domain. If SemP were recursive too, it would again be possible to move several *sem*-expressions to the preverbal field—contrary to fact. Even if these complications were avoided in some way, the multiple occurrence of preverbal *sem*-expressions is not properly ruled out. This is because the interpretive stipulation above merely demands that multiple *sem*-expressions cannot undergo Absorption. As such, it does not prohibit multiple preverbal *sem*-phrases with a Double Negation reading. This is once again unattested.

A second problem with the account that is independent of these complications is that it overgenerates elsewhere. Consider a negated sentence containing a focussed constituent in Spec,FocP above negation, and a *sem*-expression moved to Spec,SemP above focus, like in (7a). This sentence would have (7b) as a possible representation.

- (7) a. Senki *sem* MA nem jött el
 nobody-NOM SEM today not come-PAST-3SG PREF
 ‘Nobody is such that it’s TODAY that he did not come along’
 b. [_{SemP} [_{sem} *senki sem*]_i [_{Sem}] [_{FP} MA [_F nem jött]_j [_{NegP} t_i OP [_{Neg} t_j] . . .

In Spec,NegP *senki sem* ‘nobody’ and the negation operator OP undergo absorption, hence a Negative Concord (single negation) reading is predicted. However, this is plainly contrary to fact, as the translation shows. Thus, absorption in Spec,NegP generates a NC reading even where in reality only a DN reading obtains. Not only does an incorrect result obtain with a ‘negation > focus > negation’ DN scope pattern, but there also arises a problem related to the simpler ‘negation > focus’ NC scope pattern, illustrated in (2b) above. To generate (2b) NegP needs to be absent altogether, otherwise a construction like (7b) would be generated with two negations. However, if pre-focus *sem* (or *nem*) are constituent negations, then it is expected that they do not license a postverbal n-word. However, this is an incorrect result:

- (8) Sehova *sem* MA jött el senki *sem*
 nowhere-to SEM today come-PAST-3SG PREF nobody-NOM SEM
 ‘Nobody came along nowhere TODAY’

Further, the constituent negation treatment forces Puskás (1998, 2000) to stipulate that n-words in the pre-focus position are interpreted as existentials (under negation), whereas in all other positions they are universally quantified. This is not only conceptually problematic, but also empirically incorrect, as will be shown in section 3.

Third, the complex specifier treatment of multiple preverbal n-words is untenable. This syntactic assumption, however, is crucial in achieving that out of a sequence of preverbal n-words only the linearly last one can be a *sem*-expression, cf. (1e–f). This is because in moving to Spec,SemP, the *sem*-expression pied-pipes all other n-words, owing to the fact that they together form a complex specifier (cf. 6b). If they did not form one complex constituent, it would be possible to generate (non-existing) sequences of preverbal n-words where a *sem*-expression is linearly non-last—for instance (9), (9) a minimal pair of (6b).

- (9) * [_{SemP} [_{soha sem}]_i [_{Sem}] [_{FP} [_{senki}]_k [_F nem jött]_j [_{NegP} t_k t_i OP [_{Neg} t_j] [_{TP} el t_j . . .

The complex specifier analysis of sequences of preverbal n-words is insupportable for a number of reasons. Surányi (2002 a, b, c) cites prosodic, syntactic as well as semantic evidence apparently militating against such a treatment. For one thing, assuming a complex specifier mis-assigns sentential stress as well as restricts the onset of the yes/no interrogative intonational contour in ways in which in reality it is not restricted. From a syntactic perspective, on the one hand, some high adverbs are able to separate pre-verbal n-words; on the other hand, ordinary coordination appears possible below a fronted n-word:

- (10) Soha [senkinek nem küld képeslapot] és [semmiről nem készít fotót]
 never [nobody-DAT not sends postcard-ACC] and [nothing-of not makes photo-ACC]
 ‘He never sends a postcard to anyone and he never makes a photo of anything’

I have shown that assuming all n-words to be negative necessitates stipulative syntactic assumptions, some of which are in fact empirically unjustified.⁵ An additional desideratum emerges from the discussion of this approach for a correct analysis (beyond the need for an explanation of patterns reviewed in (1–2) above); namely, preverbal n-words should not form a constituent but should be placed in a layered structure.

I now go on to examine the opposing alternative, according to which Hungarian n-words are invariably non-negative. My conclusion will be that such a uniform treatment is also problematic. In section 2.3 I present a novel account, according to which *sem*-modification plays a crucial role: while bare *s*-words are non-negative, *sem*-expressions do carry a [neg] property.

2.3. Are Hungarian n-words non-negative?

The other existing alternative view, that of Olsvay (2000) and É.Kiss (1994, 1998, 2002), as well as Puskás (1999), holds that Hungarian n-words are uniformly non-negative. Then again, there is a need for an account of the preverbal complementary distribution effects, illustrated in (1b,e). The account of these authors involves positing two phonological deletion rules⁶; *nem*-deletion: *nem* is deleted if it immediately follows a *sem* particle, and *sem*-deletion: *sem* is erased if it precedes a *sem*-expression.⁷ As argued in Surányi (2002 a, b, c), these deletion rules do not exist. If they did, they would be clearly language- and construction-specific. Moreover, they would be descriptively inadequate as far as word order predictions are concerned, and they would also make wrong predictions for stress assignment. Here I point out only a few of the examples illustrating this descriptive inadequacy.

One instance of undergeneration is manifested in cases like (11), where an adverb intervenes between two preverbal n-words, still the first of these cannot be modified by *sem*.

- (11) Senkit (*sem) még semmi baj nem ért
 nobody-ACC (SEM) yet nothing problem-NOM not affect-PAST-3SG
 ‘Nobody had any problems yet’

The phonological deletion account overgenerates as well, i.e. there exist a number of contexts where the relevant adjacency holds, yet no deletion occurs. Witness (12):

- (12) sem nem jött el, sem nem maradt otthon
 SEM not come-PAST-3SG PREF SEM not stay-PAST-3SG at_home
 ‘He neither came along, nor stayed at home’

In this construction, the sequence of *sem nem* seems exempt from *nem*-deletion.⁸ A further example of overgeneration is (13): if the *sem*-expression within an infinitival clause is licensed by a higher negation, it is able to be adjacent to negation.

- (13) ^(?)nem akartam semelyiket sem ' nemfejezni be / be fejezni
 not want-PAST-1SG none-ACC SEM not finish-INF PREF / PREF finish-INF
 'I didn't want to not finish any one of them'

Finally, *sem*-deletion strikingly overgenerates in the postverbal domain. It predicts that *sem* will have to be deleted there as well—but that is plainly false: postverbally any number of *sem*-expressions may form a sequence.

The central question of prosody *nem*-deletion gives rise to concerns stress pattern. On any account, a main stress falls on the left edge of the predicate phrase, which in negated clauses begins with *nem* in the ordinary case. *Nem* at the same time reduces the stress falling on the adjacent inverted verb (up to lack of stress), cf. (14a) (on É.Kiss' and Olsvay's view, the verb forms part of a complex head together with *nem*, for them the Neg head). The deletion of *nem* at the *segmental* level should not in fact also remove the main stress from the whole phonological unit of *nem*+V (or complex head) as such: if *nem*-deletion exists, we expect that when *nem*-deletion takes place, the inverted verb always receives main stress. However, it is attested that when *nem* is absent because a *sem*-expression immediately precedes the inverted verb, then the verb stress is reduced in the same way as when *nem* is present, cf. (14b, c); deaccentuation may extend over the postverbal prefix too, again similarly to the case when *nem* is present. Stress is normally deleted off one-syllable verbs, while a full stress removal is only an option with longer verbs (deaccentuation is marked by ↓ below).

- (14) a. ' Jnos 'nem ↓jött↓ (↓)el(↓)
 J.-NOM not come-PAST-3SG PREF
 'John didn't come along'
 b. ?*'Senki sem 'jött (↓)el(↓)
 c. 'Senki sem ↓jött↓ (↓)el(↓)
 nobody-NOM SEM come-PAST-3SG PREF
 'Nobody came along'

What I have shown is that the preverbal complementary distribution patterns are not *phonological* phenomena, dependent on adjacency. But if n-words are uniformly *non-negative*, as assumed under the approach under scrutiny, and if deletion cannot be invoked, then these patterns are left without an account. I now propose that Hungarian has two paradigms of n-words from the perspective of negativity: one is non-negative, the other carries [neg].

2.4. The two classes of n-words

2.4.1 The negative and the non-negative n-word paradigms

I have argued that both the approach that assumes Hungarian n-words to be uniformly semantically negative and the one taking them to be uniformly non-negative fail, although for very different reasons. I now suggest an alternative view.

are fronted qua *every*-QPs. Members of this quantifier class have been generally taken to be able to occupy their scope position overtly in Hungarian (a form of overt Quantifier Raising) ever since the earliest analyses (cf. É.Kiss 1987, 1991 and references therein). *Every*-QPs may also surface postverbally, taking inverse wide scope (over preverbal focus or another preverbal quantifier or quantificational adverb)—I will assume the same for *n*-words, which may also optionally remain postverbal (as the parentheses in the examples show). A bare *s*-word—just like a positive universal quantifier—may raise above focus as well in the presence of negation (cf. also (2a)):

- (17) (Senki) nem MA jött el (senki)
 nobody-NOM not today come-PAST-3SG PREF nobody-NOM
 ‘Nobody came along TODAY’

Given that negation can occur above focus, as in (18a), *sem*-phrases will also be able to be placed in the same position, carrying negation in their *sem* particle, as in (2b), repeated here as (18b).

- (18) a. Nem MA jött el
 not today come-PAST-3SG PREF
 ‘He didn’t come along TODAY’
 b. Senki sem MA jött el
 nobody-NOM SEM today come-PAST-3SG PREF
 ‘Nobody came along TODAY’

The question remains: if *sem*-expressions are universals too, why is it impossible for them to raise above negation (or above another *sem*-phrase) qua universal quantifier freely, in contrast to *s*-words? In other words, why are (1b, e) barred?

To be able to understand this restriction, the status of postverbal *sem*-expressions must be explored first. Now if they carry [neg], as I am assuming, these also form a (covert) dependency (Agree in Chomsky’s recent work) with the [neg]-bearing functional head, call it F^0 (NB: this is not identical with the focus head in Puskás (1998, 2000)). Brody (1997) argues that multiple *Wh* interrogatives are interpreted as a single question not because the relevant interpretable [wh] feature is present only on one of the *wh*-elements, but essentially because they all form a chain with C^0 , thus creating a single (complex) object that is interpreted at the semantic interface as expressing a single question, scoping from the position of the highest one of the *wh*-elements. I adopt this view for Hungarian Negative Concord: multiple occurrences of *sem*-expressions, all linked up to [neg] in a functional head F^0 and hence forming a single (complex) object at the semantic interface, are interpreted as expressing a single logical negation at the position of the topmost instantiation of negation, be it the negation element *nem* or the negative particle *sem*. Acquaviva (1997, 1999) takes a very similar stance. The mechanism whereby Italian Negative Concord items receive a single negation interpretation is described in analogous terms: in Acquaviva (1997) a representational chain, in Acquaviva (1999) a dependency connects individual *n*-words and clausal negation to be read as a single LF object. In effect, this is a form of absorption, in a broad sense.¹⁰

We are now in a position to address the issue of ‘freezing’ affecting postverbal *sem*-phrases, i.e. why they are not eligible to undergo universal quantifier raising (QR) above negation, unlike bare *se*-words. I argue that this ‘freezing’ effect is a subcase of what is known as the improper movement generalisation.

Broadly speaking, according to this generalisation, given a sufficiently elaborated typology of movements which maps onto a certain movement hierarchy, a movement operation cannot feed another movement operation (applying to the same element) if the latter movement is lower on the movement hierarchy. The typology in the 80s was rough: it divided the relevant movements into A type and A-bar type, with the corresponding hierarchy A-bar > A: after an element has been A-bar moved, it was not possible to be A-moved. In the 90s, the need for a more elaborate movement typology has become clear (cf. Müller and Sternefeld 1993, Müller 1995) (e.g. topicalization appears to be higher on the hierarchy than *wh*-movement: a *wh*-element can be topicalized, but once topicalized, it cannot move to a regular *wh*-position in the left periphery, see e.g. Starke 2001). The point of significance here is that on a hierarchy of movements, syntactic operator movements serving operator feature checking appear to be placed higher than QR. Typically, QR targets the nuclear clause (a propositional unit), while syntactic operator movements target higher positions. Syntactic operator movements cannot feed QR, creating improper movement.

But then, in this light it is clear why QR cannot move *sem*-expressions which have already entered a [neg]-checking (Agree) relation with F^0 : this would be improper movement, creating first a (covert) operator-movement dependency, which then would be followed by QR. This is ruled out. That explains why *sem*-expressions cannot be fronted above a negation or a *sem*-expression that overtly marks their covert [neg]-checking position. Recall that bare *s*-words do not carry a [neg]-feature, hence do not enter checking with F^0 . As a correct consequence, they can freely and multiply undergo fronting via QR.

2.4.2 Fragments

A final note is in order on a test which is frequently used to detect the (non-)negativity of *n*-words: the answer fragment test. The procedure involves constructing a question–answer pair in which the answer consists of only a single *n*-word: if the answer then is interpreted as involving negation, the *n*-word should be negative, if it is not, then it is not negative:

- (19) a. I didn't see anybody
 b. I saw nobody

- (20) Who did you see?
 a. *Anybody
 b. Nobody

Test is of questionable validity, as has been repeatedly pointed out (cf. e.g. Puskás 1999, Surányi 2002a, b, c; Giannakidou to appear). This is because answer fragments can be (according to Merchant (to appear) they must be) analysed as full clausal structures involving A-bar movement of the fragment (here: focus movement, cf. section 3.2) and ellipsis. This full clausal structure contains the negation that can license the fragment (if structural conditions of licensing are met after the A-bar movement; this is not the case in (20a)). Hence, the exchange in (21) does not provide evidence for the assumption that Hungarian *n*-words are negative:

- (21) a. Kit láttál?
 'Who did you see?'
 b. Senkit
 nobody-ACC

Hungarian in fact can be used to demonstrate that such fragments are not negative by themselves. Consider a question like (22a). This question can be answered with (22b), and to a lesser extent, with (22c); many informants find the latter answer to be degraded.¹¹

- (22) a. Kit nem érdekel ez a kérdés?
 who-ACC not interest-3SG this the question-NOM
 ‘Who doesn’t this question interest?’
 b. Senkit
 nobody-ACC
 c. ??Senkit sem
 nobody-ACC SEM

If the bare *s*-word in (b) did carry logical negation in itself, then, given that here the question embeds a negated clause, it would be expected that (b) expresses a DN reading—which it does not. But on the present account, bare *s*-words are non-negative. In fact, (c) may be degraded precisely because the reconstructed antecedent already contains clausal negation, and as we have seen, *sem*-expressions are in complementary distribution with negation when A-bar moved to a preverbal position. To still be able to make (c) (marginally) interpretable, one strategy would be to take a smaller constituent as syntactic antecedent, viz. the clause *without* clausal negation in (a). However, Merchant (2001) argues that the reconstructed clausal unit does not have to be syntactically isomorphic to an antecedent clause, only it must be semantically licensed by the (syntactic) antecedent: the semantic antecedent must be present in the interpretation of the syntactic antecedent.¹² Note that the semantic antecedent is preserved in (c): the *sem*-expression itself carries the negation. In sum, the answer fragment test provides indirect evidence that bare *s*-words are non-negative, and *sem*-expressions are negative.^{13, 14}

2.4.3 Interim summary

Let us briefly take stock of the results in this section. The assumption that *sem*-expressions are negative and check [neg] of F⁰ in Spec,FP, while *se*-words are non-negative derives the basic patterns in (1–2). *Sem*-phrases check [neg] in the same way as the negation particle, triggering verb-inversion in the ordinary case. Taking n-words to be universally quantified provides a rationale for the optional fronting of *s*-words above negation: Hungarian has optional overt fronting of wide scope universals. Given that bare *s*-words do not check [neg], they are above FP when fronted (I take them to be adjoined to FP). This quantifier raising movement is not available to *sem*-expressions given that they need to enter a [neg]-checking movement dependency with a functional head F, pre-empting subsequent QR above FP.¹⁵

I have been assuming so far in the discussion that all occurrences of n-words in Hungarian, whether negative or non-negative, are universally quantified. In the next section I will show that although this is an assumption shared by a number of researchers analysing Hungarian NC, it is not entirely correct: Hungarian n-words can be either universally or existentially quantified. Moreover, this distinction does not correlate with the negativity divide argued for in this section; instead, it cuts it across.

3. The quantificational status of n-words

The issue of the quantificational property of n-words in general has been hotly debated in the broader literature on Negative Concord, and it has been resolved variously for different language types. According to one approach, n-words (in some languages) are a case of NPI and are interpreted as existentially quantified in the scope of negation. Another influential approach (Zanuttini 1991, Haegeman & Zanuttini 1991, Haegeman 1995) holds that n-words

(in some languages) are universal quantifiers, scoping above negation. The two interpretations are logical equivalents; however, they give rise to discrete linguistic effects.¹⁶

The assumption that Hungarian n-words are interpreted as universals has been taken for granted since earliest times in the study of Hungarian syntax (cf. e.g. Szabolcsi 1981b, 1997; É.Kiss 1987, 1994; Olsvay 2000; Puskás 1998). The view has an obvious descriptive appeal: the numerous symmetries found between the distribution and prosody of n-words and universals like *every*-NPs fall out directly (although the parallel is complete for *s*-words only, as I have shown).

As far as distribution is concerned, as pointed out in section 2.1, *s*-words can optionally appear either postverbally or preverbally (above negation or above an immediately preverbal *sem*-expression). If a preverbal focus is present, *s*-words can move above preverbal focus as well (cf. (2a)). It needs to be added that in case one or more preverbal topics are present, preverbal *s*-words appear to the right of the last topicalized constituent. Certain preverbal adverbs can interpose in the string of preverbal *s*-words (cf. e.g. (12)). Significantly, all these distributional properties are shared by *every*-NPs. Because of the apparent symmetries between *s*-words and *every*-NPs (and due to collapsing *sem*-expressions with *s*-words), the received wisdom has been that n-words in Hungarian are universal quantifiers (see Puskás (1999, 2000), who also corroborates the universal quantifier treatment).

I will argue now that appropriate diagnostics reveal that (i) in some cases n-words in Hungarian can indeed be interpreted as universal quantifiers, yet (ii) in other cases probes indicate that they can be interpreted as existentially quantified. In section 3.1 I test n-word occurrences for their universal/existential interpretation. Giannakidou (2000), examining a number differences in the linguistic effects the universal over negation vs. the existential below negation interpretations give rise to, argues forcefully that Greek n-words are interpreted as universals. Diagnostics in subsections 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 in section 3.1 are based on her work.

In section 3.2 I will argue that n-words may be focussed, which I will bring to bear on the quantificationality issue. Then in section 3.3 I come to the syntactic distribution of the universal/existential readings, which receives its account in 3.4.

3.1. Diagnosing universal/existential interpretation

3.1.1 Modification: *almost* and *whatsoever/at all*

One test often applied is *almost*-modification (see Dahl 1970, Horn 1972; Zanuttini 1991; van der Wouden and Zwarts 1993). *Almost* (and *absolutely*) are taken to be able to modify universal quantifiers, but not existential indefinites (see Horn and Lee 1995 for a refinement).¹⁷ In fact, as Puskás (2000: 341) also points out, n-words can be modified by *almost* in Hungarian:

- (23) Tegnap majdnem senkivel nem beszélt Zeta
 yesterday almost nobody-with not talk-PAST-3SG Z.-NOM
 ‘Yesterday Zeta talked to almost nobody’ [=Puskás 2000: 341, (70c)]

However, further qualification is in order. In reality, not all n-word occurrences allow *almost*-modification freely. Witness (20):¹⁸

- (24) a. ?Majdnem senkivel sem beszélt Zeta
 almost nobody-with SEM talk-PAST-3SG Z.-NOM
 ‘Zeta talked to almost nobody’

- b. *Nem találtam majdnem semmit (sem) a hűtőben
 not find-PAST-1SG almost nothing-ACC SEM the fridge-in
 'I found almost nothing in the fridge'

We will return to the conditions of *almost*-modification in section 3.3 below. The lesson at this point is that the correct generalisation is that Hungarian n-words sometimes may, sometimes may not be modified by *almost*. (Note that *sem*-modification does not appear to play a role here.) This should mean that some, but not all occurrences of Hungarian n-words are interpreted as universal quantifiers. An existential interpretation may be responsible for the degraded status of occurrences that do not tolerate modification by *almost*.

Modification by *egyáltalán* 'whatsoever / at all' also gives a mixed result. 'Whatsoever' and 'at all' reinforce NPI *any* in the scope of negation in English, but not universals. Consider now (25):

- (25) a. Nem vitt el egyáltalán senkit sem moziba
 not take-PAST-3SG PREF at_all nobody-ACC SEM cinema-to
 'He didn't take anybody at all to the cinema'
 b. *?Egyáltalán senkit soha nem visz el moziba
 at_all nobody-ACC never not take-3SG PREF cinema-to
 'He doesn't ever take anybody at all to the cinema'

It appears that some n-word occurrences behave like existential NPI-s, others do not. We return to the distribution of modifiability by *egyáltalán* 'whatsoever / at all' in section 3.3. For the moment, the implication is that besides the universal interpretation, Hungarian n-words can have another, existential NPI reading.

3.1.2 Donkey anaphora

A second test involves donkey anaphora. It is well known from dynamic semantics that universal quantifiers do not normally support anaphora appearing outside the sentence that they appear in¹⁹, whereas existentials do. An illustration from English is the following:

- (26) a. I saw a boy. He was tall.
 b. I saw every boy. *He was tall.

Giannakidou (2000) argues that Greek emphatic n-words must be universals because they do not support donkey anaphora (whereas non-emphatic *k*-words occurring in non-veridical contexts do, so she analyses the latter class as existentials). A complication with the argument is that if Greek emphatic n-words were in reality existentials, to get the correct interpretation, they would be placed in the scope of negation; however, existentials in the scope of negation are known not to support donkey anaphora (being inaccessible, in terms of DRT; for the same point, cf. Richter and Salier 1998) ((27b)=Giannakidou 2000 (39)):

- (27) a. I didn't see a boy. ($\neg > \exists$) *He was tall.
 b. *The students that didn't buy any/some book should show it now.

Now, Giannakidou (2000: 476) goes on to argue that in directive sentences like the one below an anaphoric link *can* be established between the pronoun and the *any*-phrase; in other words, negated directives allow donkey anaphora in the case of existentials in the scope of negation ((28)=Giannakidou 2000 (40a)):

(28) Don't check any book out from that (Satanic) library; reading it might warp your mind.

Then, the appropriate test case in Hungarian is (29), a negated directive:

(29) Ne fogjál meg semmit (sem) a laboratóriumban!
not touch-IMP-2SG PREF nothing-ACC (SEM) the laboratory-P-in
Még *pro* megrázhát
possibly *pro* PREF-give_shock
'Don't touch anything in the lab. It could give you a shock.'

The grammaticality of such examples suggests that n-words in Hungarian *can* be interpreted existentially.

3.1.3 Predicative n-words

Giannakidou and Quer (1995) note that just like universal quantifiers of the *every*-NP type, n-words in Greek cannot function as predicate nominals. In contrast, existential indefinites can. Thus Greek n-words side with *every*-NPs in this respect. NC languages seem to be split in this regard: Italian, Spanish and French n-words follow the same pattern as Greek, while Russian, Polish and Serbian n-words disallow a predicative use (cf. Giannakidou to appear).

Hungarian appears to be able to use n-words predicatively:²⁰

- (30) a. Nem lesz semmi baj (sem)
not will_be nothing problem SEM
'There won't be any problem'
- b. Ez a zaj nem volt semmi (sem) a tegnapihoz képest
this the noise-NOM not was nothing SEM the to-yesterday's in_comparison
'This noise was nothing compared to yesterday's'
- c. Nem volt semmi köze sem hozzá
not was nothing business-POSS-3SG SEM it-to
'He had nothing to do with it'

These data suggest that Hungarian n-words may be interpreted as existentials.²¹

3.1.4 Modification: *is*

Giannakidou (2000) points out that in Greek, *ke* 'and' is a modifier of existential quantifiers, and n-words and universal quantifiers are incompatible with it, thus forming a natural class in this respect. A similar consideration may turn out to be relevant in Hungarian as well.

Hungarian has a paradigm of weak negative polarity items (cf. Tóth 1999) licensed in a range of nonveridical contexts. This paradigm of weak NPI has the morphological structure *vala* + *Wh* + *is*, where *vala*- is 'some' (31a). Here *Wh* stands for a bare indefinite that functions as a *wh*-pronoun when on its own, and *is* is (homophonous with) *is* 'also/even'.²² Now *vala*- 'some' and *minden*- 'every' combine with the bare *wh*-indefinites to make the paradigms of existential indefinite and universal pronouns (cf. 31b). It is commonly accepted that weak NPI-s are interpreted existentially. Importantly, though *is* can modify weak NPI-s and *wh*-phrases (which are taken to be existentially quantified), cf. (31a), it cannot modify positive universal quantifiers, cf. (31c):

- (31) a. valaki is / ki is
 some-body also/even / who also/even
 b. valaki / mindenki / ki
 some-body / every-body / who
 c. *mindenki is
 every-body also/even

Now, as noted in Section 2.4, historically *sem* is a combination of *is* ‘also/even’ + *nem* ‘not’. This means that the n-word paradigm and the existential weak NPI paradigm at an abstract level share the property of being modified by *is*. That n-words pattern with an existential weak NPI is suggestive evidence of the availability of an existential interpretation.²³

3.1.5 Incorporation

A further relevant observation concerns incorporation. Bare singulars in Hungarian undergo ‘incorporation’ to the verb, cf. (32).²⁴ In this incorporated position, bare singulars have an existential reading. They are scopally inert (cannot scope over any operator that has the predicate in its scope), and need not be in the scope of any operator. Ordinary weak existential complements too can, and with some verbs must, be incorporated (33a/a’). Universals, however, cannot be in the incorporated position, cf. (33b). Also, incorporated bare plurals lack a generic interpretation, but only have an existential one.²⁵

- (32) a. János régi bélyeget gyűjt
 J.-NOM old stamp-ACC collect-3SG
 ‘John collects old stamps’
 b. *János gyűjt régi bélyeget
- (33) a. János valami híres embert alakít
 J.-NOM some(thing) famous person-ACC act-3SG
 ‘John plays the part of a famous person’
 a’. *János alakít valami híres embert
 b. *Egy színész minden híres embert alakít
 an actor-NOM every famous person act-3SG
 ‘An actor plays the part of every famous person’

In this light now consider the data below. An n-word within an infinitival clause is licensed by matrix negation in both (34) and (35). As the acceptability contrast between the (a) and (b) examples show, the obligatory fronting of the n-word is due to incorporation (and not quantifier fronting, which, as we have seen, is optional). The fronted n-word must be adjacent to the verb—a trait of incorporation again.

- (34) a. nem szeretnék Pálnak semmi hülyeséget mondani holnap
 not like-COND-1SG P-DAT nothing stupid-ACC tell-INF tomorrow
 b. ?*nem szeretnék Pálnak mondani semmi hülyeséget holnap
- (35) a. nem szeretnék semmi különösnek látszani
 not like-COND-1SG nothing particular-DAT seem-INF
 ‘I wouldn’t like to seem anything particular’
 b. *nem szeretnék látszani semmi különösnek

Given that incorporated nominals in Hungarian can only be quantified existentially, but not universally, these examples too demonstrate that n-words in Hungarian can receive an existential interpretation.

3.1.6 Existential import and split readings

It is well known that universal quantification has a pragmatic implicature of existence in natural language (cf. e.g. Stawson 1952).²⁶ If an n-word is interpreted as a universal quantifier scoping above negation ($\forall > \neg$), then such existential import is predicted, unlike if an n-word is interpreted as an existential indefinite in the scope of negation. As Giannakidou (2000) demonstrates, existential import invariably gets generated in the case of Greek emphatic n-words. Hungarian n-words, however, appear to be different: they are not always presuppositional. Witness (36):

- (36) a. Nem fedeztem fel semmi nyomát
 not discover-PAST-1SG PREF nothing trace-POSS-3SG-ACC
 ‘I didn’t discover any trace’
 b. Nem látom semmi értelmét
 not see-1SG nothing sense-POSS-3SG-ACC
 ‘I don’t see any point (in it)’
 c. Mari nem látott semmilyen unikornist
 M-NOM not saw-3SG nothing_like unicorn-ACC
 ‘Mary saw no unicorns’

These examples are perfectly felicitous. Equivalent sentences in Greek are pragmatically odd (cf. Giannakidou 2000: 505), because there n-words are invariably presuppositional. The speaker in (36b) asserts that there is no point in it, thus a conflict would arise if the n-word had to have an existential import; or by uttering (36c), oddly, we would commit ourselves to the existence of unicorns (this is the case in Greek, but not in these Hungarian sentences). N-words in such examples cannot be universals, but may be existentials in the scope of negation.

A similar observation concerns some verbs (like ‘find’, ‘arrive’), which (when lacking a prefix) require a non-specific, hence non-presuppositional, argument. Among others, existential indefinites can, while universals cannot combine with such verbs. As noted in É.Kiss (2002) and Surányi (2002c), these verbs allow an n-word argument.

- (37) Nem érkezett senki (sem)
 not arrive-PAST-3SG nobody-NOM SEM
 ‘There hasn’t arrived anybody’

As argued in Surányi (2002c, 2003), the conflicting requirements of *almost* (enforcing the universal reading) and the verb ‘find’ (enforcing an existential reading) conspire to render (24b) above degraded. We have confirmation then that the conjecture that n-words in Hungarian can have an existential indefinite interpretation is accurate.

The availability of so-called ‘split’ readings with modal verbs (cf. e.g. de Swart 1996) once again points to the same conclusion. A German sentence like (38a), or an English example like (38b), has three distinct readings.

- (38) a. Die Firma muss keinen Angestellten feuern
 the firm-NOM must no-ACC employee-ACC fire-INF
 ‘The company must fire no employee’

- b. One is allowed to fire no nurses

These readings are the *de re* ('there are no nurses such that one is allowed to fire them/for each nurse, one is not allowed to fire her'), the *de dicto* ('what one is allowed to do is not fire any nurse') and the 'split' ('one is not allowed to fire any nurses'). As Giannakidou (2000) shows, the 'split' reading is unavailable with the Greek counterpart (because Greek n-words translate as universal quantifiers). However, the Hungarian equivalent admits this reading rather easily:

- (39) Nem lehet egy ápolónősem / senkit sem elbocsátani
 not may a nurse-ACC SEM / nobody-ACC SEM PREF-fire-INF
 One may not fire any nurses / anybody'

Such a 'split' reading has been taken to be decomposed as $\neg > \text{modal} > \exists$, hence we have evidence that Hungarian n-words may get interpreted as existential quantifiers.²⁷

3.1.7 Topicalizability

Universal quantifiers denote familiar discourse entities. This renders them suitable candidates for topics, and in a number of languages they can even undergo syntactic topicalization (e.g. Italian, Greek; cf. Cinque 1990, Giannakidou 2000). As noted in Surányi (2002c), in Hungarian too, when descriptively sufficiently rich to make a topic (e.g. modified by a relative clause)²⁸, universal quantifiers can undergo syntactic topicalization, cf. (40a) where the universal precedes another topic. Under the same proviso, n-words can also be syntactically topicalized, cf. (40b).

- (40) a. Minden meghívott, aki eljött Pétert jól ismeri
 every invited_one-NOM who PREF-come-PAST-3SG P.-ACC well know-3SG
 'Every invited person who has come along knows Peter well'
 b. Semelyik meghívott, aki nem jött el Pétert nem ismeri
 none invited_one-NOM who not come-PAST-3SG PREF P.-ACC well know-3SG
 'None of the invited persons who hasn't come along knows Peter'

Now, given that an indefinite in the scope of negation is analysed as novel (e.g. Heim 1982) (and as such can be used in out of the blue contexts), it cannot topicalize. Independently of this, it would be problematic to give an indefinite analysis to topicalized instances of bare *s*-words (modified by a relative clause, as in (b) above). Given that bare *s*-words are non-negative, they would escape the scope of their licensing negation, yielding the $\exists > \neg$ (i.e. not the attested) scope relations. Then, topicalizability doubly argues that Hungarian n-words can receive a universal quantifier interpretation.

3.1.8 Licensing

Licensing conditions of existential NPI demand that the NPI be in the immediate scope of the licenser, for our purposes, negation: no other (non-NPI-licensing) operator may intervene (Linebarger's (1987) Immediate Scope Constraint). If Hungarian n-words were invariably existential NPI, they would be expected to obey this condition. As (41) shows, this is not the case. In (41a), the sentence is well-formed whether or not a universal quantifier, or a quantificational adverb occupying a preverbal focus position within the infinitival clause intervenes between the licensing negation in the matrix and the n-word in the infinitival clause. In (41b) we have the same configuration of negation > focus > n-word, only within one clause. The n-word needs to be stressed in both cases.

- (41) a. Nem akarok mindenkinek / KÉTSZER elmondani semmit
not want-1SG everybody-DAT / twice PREF-say-INF nothing-ACC
‘I don’t want to say anything twice / to everybody’
- b. Nem NEKI akarok elmondani semmit sem
not he-DAT want-1SG PREF-say-INF nothing-ACC SEM
‘I don’t want to tell anything to HIM’

This pattern can be explained if these n-word occurrences are interpreted as universal quantifiers, and as such, covertly move above negation, where they are licensed locally (cf. Giannakidou (2000) for the licensing of universal n-words). Indeed in Hungarian accent on a postverbal universal too marks covert movement of the quantifier to achieve wide scope with respect to a preceding operator (cf. e.g. É. Kiss (1994); for corresponding postverbal occurrences of n-words, this operator is negation itself). Notice that in light of the preceding section (3.1.6) I am making the prediction that these n-words can only be interpreted as *de re*. Indeed, this is a correct prediction.

In fact the same consideration extends to explain the ungrammaticality of sentences analogous to (41) containing an embedded verb that requires a non-presuppositional argument:

- (42) Nem akarom, hogy (*kétszer is) történjen semmi
not want-1SG that twice also happen-SUBJ-3SG nothing-NOM
‘*I don’t want there to twice happen anything’

(42) is ungrammatical with an intervening quantificational adverb, precisely because the presence of that adverb enforces the *de re*, i.e. presuppositional, reading that can be derived by the ‘universal over negation’ construal only: the embedded verb selects for a non-specific/non-presuppositional argument. We have confirmation then that n-words in (41) can only be interpreted as universal quantifiers, but not as existentials.

In this section I have applied a number of diagnostics to detect the quantificational status of n-words in Hungarian. As demonstrated in section 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.1.4, 3.1.5 and 3.1.6, n-words in this language can have an existential indefinite interpretation in the scope of negation. Section 3.1.7, 3.1.8 and the introduction to section 3 have provided evidence that they can be interpreted as universals scooping over negation. Finally, section 3.1.1 has yielded mixed results: both a universal and an existential interpretation appear to be necessary. A question that has been avoided so far concerns the syntactic distribution of the two readings. This matter is taken up in section 3.3, where it will be shown the two readings are not available in all possible syntactic positions.

Before I come that, I examine a last issue that bears on the quantificationality of n-words: focussing.

3.2 N-words and focus

Whether n-words in Hungarian can undergo syntactic focussing has proved to be a controversial question. As we have seen, Puskás (1998, 2000) analyses preverbal n-words as being focussed; however, no convincing argument is offered. On the other hand, Olsvay (2000) argues that n-words are *never* focussed in Hungarian, and the same view appears to be implicit in É.Kiss (2002). I believe that not all instances of n-words are focussed, given that n-words (of the two varieties) are not in complementary distribution with focus preverbally, whereas preverbal focus is known to be unique (if there are two foci, one must remain postverbal, cf. e.g. Surányi 2002c). In fact Olsvay’s (2000) arguments only indicate that there exist non-focussed preverbal instances of n-words²⁹, not that all instances of are non-

focussed. I argue now that n-words in Hungarian are syntactically focusable, though not invariably focussed.

Preverbal focus in Hungarian is marked by emphatic accent which is normally followed by a deaccenting of the immediately right-adjacent inverted verb, or the *nem*+verb sequence. Such a stress pattern is readily available with preverbal *sem*-expressions, cf. (43a, b). This prosodic pattern is not obligatory: if the *sem*-expression is not emphatic, but bears neutral phrasal stress, then the following verb (consisting of at least two syllables) may also receive stress, cf. (43c). The focus stress pattern is also available with bare *s*-words as an option, cf. (43d, e). (Capitals indicate emphatic stress, ' marks neutral stress of phonological phrase, while ⁰ full stress reduction. Naturally, all grammatical examples in (40) are truth-conditionally equivalent.)

- (43) a. SENKI SEM ⁰szavazott Jánosra
 noone-NOM SEM vote-PAST-3SG J.-for
 'Noone voted for John'
 b. *SENKI SEM ' szavazott Jánosra
 c. ' senki sem ' szavazott Jánosra
 d. SENKI ⁰nem ⁰szavazott Jánosra
 e. ' senki ' nem⁰szavazott Jánosra

Prosodic evidence then suggests that both classes of n-words are focusable—though not necessarily focussed when preverbal.

The same conclusion is suggested by the distribution of postverbal focus. A focussed expression is normally only licensed postverbally by a preverbal occurrence of focus. Observe now that a postverbal focus can also be licensed by a preverbal *sem*-expression, cf. (44a). Again, the same is possible with a bare *s*-word, but only if it bears emphatic stress and the stress of the negation and the verb is reduced, cf. (44b, c).

- (44) a. SENKI SEM ⁰szavazott végül CSAK JÁNOSRA
 noone-NOM SEM vote-PAST-3SG finally only J.-for
 'Finally nobody voted for only John'
 b. SENKI ⁰nem ⁰szavazott végül CSAK JÁNOSRA
 c. *' Senki ' nem⁰szavazott végül CSAK JÁNOSRA

Note that these observations only apply to *immediately* preverbal *sem*-expressions (e.g. (40b) would not admit a postverbal focus), and *immediately* pre-negation *s*-words followed by an unstressed negation particle. I return to a syntactic analysis of focussed n-words directly in the next section.

The general conjecture is that Hungarian n-words are in fact focusable with the regular prosodic and syntactic consequences. We can conclude in particular that (i) n-words are not always focussed, in fact never focussed when above regular preverbal focus, or above a preverbal n-word, and (ii) immediately preverbal *sem*-expressions, and immediately pre-negation *s*-words are focussed as an option.³⁰

Focusability can be brought to bear on the quantificationality issue. This is because universal quantifiers (whether containing a count or a mass noun, cf. 'every' or 'all') are not syntactically focusable at all in Hungarian, (cf. 45). (Note that syntactic focus in Hungarian is identificational, not informational or 'new-focus'; cf. É.Kiss 1998).

- (45) *MINDEN BORT ivott meg
 all wine-ACC drink-PAST-3SG PREF
 ‘He drank ALL THE WINE’

The conclusion to draw is once again that Hungarian n-words cannot be uniformly treated as universal quantifiers. I return to interpretation in focussed patterns in sections 3.3.4 and 3.4.2.

3.3. Interpretation and distribution

The results achieved so far suggest that Hungarian has two paradigms of n-words, a negative (*sem*-expressions) and a non-negative (bare *s*-words), and members of both paradigms appear to admit of either a universal interpretation or an existential interpretation. What remains to be settled is under what syntactic conditions these latter two interpretations are available to n-words. This is what I turn to next. I will examine the distribution of three properties: modifiability by ‘almost’ and by ‘whatsoever / at all’, existential import, and split readings.

Before that, let us preview the basic syntactic fields that will play a crucial role. These fields are based on the results of section 2: the set of positions available to an n-word in a clause without an independent focus is divided into three fields, as in (46) (cf. Footnote 15).

- (46) [Field 1 [FP Field 2 F [Field 3
 (nem) V

Field3 is the postverbal domain. *Field2* is the immediately preverbal position (i.e. this field includes only one position for n-words), identified with FP in section 2, where F contains [neg] (this is where the verb inverts to). In a neutral clause, FP either contains the negation particle or a *sem*-phrase before the verb, checking [neg]. A bare *s*-word in a neutral sentence is located in Field1, not in Field2, since it does not check the [neg] feature of F. I will assume FP to be a SigmaP-type projection following Laka (1990): F can contain [foc], besides [neg] (i.e. FP is also targeted by focus movement). When the immediately preverbal n-word is focussed (as in (43a,d) and (44a,b)), it still sits in FP (i.e. Field2). In such a case a *sem*-expression checks both [neg] and [foc] on F, while a focussed bare *s*-word checks only [foc] (and [neg] is checked by the negation particle). *Field1* covers any further positions to the left of FP. If a lexical focus like ‘only John’ sits in FP, then any n-word to its left will inevitably be in Field1. Then, Field1 comprises the case of n-words above a (lexical or n-word) focus in Field2, and the case of a non-focussed *s*-word above negation.

Further details of the syntactic analysis do not matter for the present purposes. The negation particle can be construed as a head element in F, for the sake of simplicity (see also Footnote 15).

3.3.1 Modifiability

It appears that ‘almost’ can generally modify n-words in any syntactic position, i.e. in any of the three fields in (46). That includes Field2 even when the n-word in Field2 is focused (i.e. the syntactic focus position), which is apparently paradoxical given that universal quantifiers are barred from being syntactically focussed, as we have just seen.³¹ That a non-focussed n-word in Field2 (i.e. a *sem*-expression that merely carries out [neg]-checking) can also be modified by ‘almost’ indicates that Field2 is available for a universally quantified n-word.

Further, recall from the discussion in section 3.1.1 and 3.1.6 that ‘almost’ cannot modify an n-word if it complements a verb requiring a non-specific (hence non-presuppositional) argument, cf. (24b). Interestingly, the same sentence becomes more easily acceptable if the n-word is in Field2, receiving emphatic stress under a focus stress pattern.

- (47) a. MAJDNEM SEMMIT SEM találtam a hűtőben
 almost nothing-ACC SEM find-PAST-1SG the fridge-in
 b. MAJDNEM SEMMIT nem találtam a hűtőben
 almost nothing-ACC not find-PAST-1SG the fridge-in
 ‘I found almost nothing in the fridge’

When the ‘almost’-modified n-word is in Field1, the sentence is unacceptable. These fact taken together suggest that focus in some way changes the interpretation of the n-word: it is neither a universal (universals are barred from the focus position and are incompatible with the verb in (47)), nor an existential in the scope of negation (‘almost’-modification is incompatible with that). I come to this perplexing observation directly in section 3.4.

Recall that *egyáltalán* ‘whatsoever / at all’ is able to modify existential indefinites in the scope of negation, but not universals. Now the fact is that it can modify n-words in the postverbal field (Field3) as well as in Field2, provided that the n-word in Field2 is focussed.³² N-words modified by *egyáltalán* ‘whatsoever / at all’ are disallowed in Field1; see (25b) above, as well as (48).

- (48) (*?Egyáltalán) senkit sem JÁNOS visz el moziba
 at_all nobody-ACC SEM J.-NOM take-3SG PREF cinema-to
 ‘JOHN doesn’t take anybody (at all) to the cinema’

Since modification by *egyáltalán* ‘whatsoever / at all’ allows the existential but not the universal interpretation, the existential reading seems to be ruled out in Field1, and in Field2 too just when the n-word is not focussed.

3.3.2 Existential import

As shown in section 3.1.6, n-words need not have existential presupposition when postverbal (Field3), cf. (36). However, in Field1 existential import is generated, and this is what makes (49a, b) odd.

- (49) a. # ' Semmértelme 'soha sem volt
 nothing sense-POSS-3SG-NOM never SEM be-PAST-3SG
 ‘There has never been any point (in it)’
 b. # ' Semmi értelme ' nem volt
 nothing sense-POSS-3SG-NOM not be-PAST-3SG
 ‘There wasn’t any point (in it)’

In Field 2, when the n-word is focussed, the sentence becomes perfectly acceptable again, cf. (50).

- (50) SEMMI ÉRTELMÉT (sem / ⁰nem) ⁰láttam
 nothing sense-POSS-3SG-ACC (SEM / not) see-PAST-1SG
 ‘I didn’t see any point in it’

In short, there is indication that an existential reading is available in Field3, while such a reading is ruled out in Field1. Focussed n-words in Field2, again do not generate existential presuppositions.

As demonstrated in (37) above, verbs requiring a non-specific/non-presuppositional argument are compatible with a postverbal n-word. In contrast, as shown by (51a, b), Field1 appears to enforce the universal interpretation, which is incompatible with the non-specificity

requirement of the verb; hence the oddity, cf. (51a, b). The same is apparently the case in Field 2, with a non-focussed n-word, cf. (51c). The focussed instances in Field2, however, are impeccable.

- (51) a. # Senki ' nem érkezett
 nobody-NOM not arrive-PAST-3SG
 'There hasn't arrived anybody'
 b. # Senki sehova nem érkezett
 nobody-NOM nowhere-to not arrive-PAST-3SG
 'There hasn't arrived anyone anywhere'
 c. # Senki sem 'érkezett
 nobody-NOM SEM arrive-PAST-3SG
 'There hasn't arrived anybody'
 d. SENKI SEM ⁰érkezett
 e. SENKI ⁰nem érkezett

The conclusion we can draw from this is that Field1 forces the universal interpretation, Field3 does not force it (cf. (38)), and Field2 again forces it when the n-word is not focussed. As witnessed in the previous subsection, focussing alters the situation in Field2: when the n-word is focussed in Field2, it paradoxically loses the universal interpretation.

3.3.3 Split readings

In section 3.1.6 above, postverbal n-words were seen to allow a split reading, as well as a *de re* reading. Now in Field1 only the *de re* reading obtains. This reading is derived if n-words in Field1 are universally quantified and their fronting is put down to universal quantifier movement, (cf. 52a, b). In Field2, when no focussing is involved, again the *de re* reading prevails, cf. (52c). With focus on the Field2 n-word, as in (52d, e), the sentence is ambiguous between the *de re* and the split reading (similarly to (39) above). (In the context of (52) a *de re* interpretation is easier to get with the employees of a particular company in mind, while the split reading favours a categorical imperative reading.)

- (52) a. Senkit soha nem lehet elbocsátani
 nobody-ACC never not may PREF-fire-INF
 'Nobody may ever be fired'
 b. Senkit sem CSAK EGYSZER lehet elbocsátani
 nobody-ACC only once may PREF-fire-INF
 'For nobody is it the case that (s)he may be fired ONLY ONCE'
 c. Senkit sem ' lehet elbocsátani
 nobody-ACC SEM may PREF-fire-INF
 d. SENKIT SEM ⁰lehet elbocsátani
 nobody-ACC SEM may PREF-fire-INF
 e. SENKIT ⁰nem ⁰lehet elbocsátani
 nobody-ACC not may PREF-fire-INF
 'Nobody may be fired'

Taking the *de re* reading to be generated in Hungarian by the 'universal over negation' construal³³, Field1 appears only compatible with a universal reading, and Field2 without focussing also requires the universal reading. A focussed n-word behaves exceptionally in Field2 once more: it appears to have both the *de re* and the split reading available. However,

a universally quantified interpretation of n-words in focus cannot derive the *de re* reading: recall that focussing does not admit universals in Hungarian.

3.3.4 The existential scope puzzle

Finally, let us zoom in on one of the two structures where the n-word is focussed. (53), which is analogous to (51e), illustrates an s-word above negation in a context that blocks the universal interpretation on two counts: because the n-word is focussed, and because a universal quantifier is incompatible with the non-specificity requirement of the verb.

- (53) SEMMIT ⁰nem ⁰találtam
nothing-ACC not find-PAST-1SG
'I didn't find anything'

When the existential reading of the n-word in (53) is considered, a complication arises with respect to the syntax–semantics mapping: as the n-word c-commands negation, it is wrongly predicted that the existentially quantified n-word takes negation in its scope ($\exists > \neg$). This reading is clearly not what is obtained. Again, the notoriously exceptionally behaving case of a focussed n-word is involved here. We return to this presently.

3.4. Distribution of readings: summary and discussion

Two main conclusions emerge from the careful examination of the distribution of readings. One concerns the distribution of the non-focussed n-words, the other regards the focussed cases. I will discuss them separately.

3.4.1 The distribution and interpretation of non-focussed n-words

While Field3 allows both a universal and an existential reading, Field 1 allows only the former. With respect to a non-focussed n-word in Field2 (which can only be a *sem*-phrase, otherwise it cannot carry out [neg]-checking in Field2), the following has been demonstrated: it can be modified by 'almost'; it cannot be modified by *egyáltalán* 'whatsoever / at all'; it is incompatible with a verb requiring a non-specific argument; and it disallows split readings. Field2 apparently only admits a universally quantified n-word in the non-focussed case.

If indeed n-words are ambiguous between the universal and the existential indefinite interpretations, then why cannot an existential n-word be fronted to Field2, under the non-focussed reading? I propose to adopt the indefinite NPI treatment of the existential reading proposed in Ladusaw (1992), developed in Ladusaw (1994), Acquaviva (1993), Giannakidou and Quer (1995, 1997), Giannakidou (1997) and Richter and Salier (1998), among many others. In particular, I adopt the view that indefinite NPI-s are licensed in the (immediate) scope of negation, and they are interpreted as a Heimian indefinite (contributing a variable and a descriptive restriction only): their existential interpretation is due to the fact that they come to be bound under existential closure.

A central insight in Ladusaw (1992) is that indefinite NPI-s are self-licensing: they involve a negative component (maybe even morphologically expressed) that licenses the indefinite. Now in Hungarian this negative component is clearly identifiable: it is the *sem* particle. However, the bare n-word component of the *sem*-expression precedes the *sem* particle itself: let us assume that it also c-commands the *sem*-particle, due to a QP-internal DP-fronting to the left, following Shlonsky (1991) (see Footnote 9). If that is true, Hungarian NPI indefinite *sem*-phrases cannot be self-licensing, but depend on a distinct (antiveridical) licenser. This may be a c-commanding negation or a c-commanding preverbal *sem*-phrase (only fronted *sem*-expressions are interpreted as expressing logical negation: they are the highest in the complex chain; cf. section 2.4.1). An NPI indefinite *sem*-phrase is licensed by

neither of these two when it is fronted to check [neg] in FP, i.e. Field2. However, it cannot license itself either, since its bare NPI component has *sem*-phrase internally moved above the potential licenser *sem*. Therefore in the preverbal position, the NPI indefinite *sem*-phrase cannot be licensed at all. It appears then that by adopting an NPI indefinite approach to Hungarian n-words the restriction that a non-focussed n-word cannot be interpreted as existentially quantified in Field2 can be made to follow.

Given that n-words are indefinite NPI-s on their existential reading, it also follows that they cannot be fronted to Field1, viz. above preverbal focus (be it lexical or an n-word itself) or above a preverbal [neg]-checking element (whether negation particle or a *sem*-phrase), both located in FP. This is because Field1 is essentially the domain for universal quantifier fronting *above* FP. Given that indefinite NPI-s do not belong to the class of universals, they cannot undergo such quantifier raising.

The existential reading in the postverbal field, Field3, is also straightforward to account for: here, being in the scope of negation, indefinite NPI-s are subject to existential closure.

Beside the existential reading, Hungarian n-words have been demonstrated to also exhibit the universal reading. Now Ladusaw (1994) proposes that the quantificational property of n-words is radically context-dependent in the sense that in the nuclear scope of the negation operator, it is existentially closed, and in the restriction of the negation operator, they are interpreted as universally quantified. Critical evidence for this genre of account should ideally come from data indicating that, indeed, as can be expected, under the right conditions, n-words in some contexts are universally interpreted, and in others existentially, within one and the same language. If the present results are correct, Hungarian provides precisely this type of data.

Nevertheless, Ladusaw's (1994) model cannot be adopted to treat Hungarian NC. This is due to two prominent empirical reasons (beyond the conceptual issues related to compositionality raised by the introduction of universal quantification in the restriction of the negation operator).

(i) I have argued in this paper that bare *s*-words are not fronted for reasons of [neg]-checking. Then, the trigger of their (optional) fronting under Ladusaw's assumptions would be unclear: indefinites are not quantificational and hence do not undergo QR (and focussing cannot be responsible either, since only a single n-word can be fronted by syntactic focussing, multiple n-words cannot). Collapsing bare *s*-words and *sem*-expressions under [neg]-checking, the explanation of preverbal complementarity effects argued for in this paper would be lost.

(ii) There appears to be no correlation between universally quantified interpretation and overt movement of an n-word to above negation, contrary to what would be expected if universal force were acquired in a position above negation, as in Ladusaw's (1994) model.

These considerations point to an approach involving lexical ambiguity.³⁴ Significantly, the ambiguity is not one between a universal quantifier and an existential quantifier (as in van der Wouden and Zwarts 1993), but between an expression involving a universal quantifier, and an expression lacking that universal quantifier, viz. a bare indefinite, which then needs to be bound under existential closure.³⁵ Note that NPI indefinite status does not mean that the expression does not bear negation: *sem*-expressions do. Also, a universal quantifier interpretation does not entail that the quantifier phrase also contains negation: bare *s*-words do not.

A recurring idea throughout the discussion has been that if Hungarian n-words can be analysed as (polarity sensitive) universal quantifiers, then beyond their universal quantifier-like properties enumerated in section 3, some aspects of their distribution also follow. In particular, universal quantifiers of the *every*-NP type that take scope over a preverbal operator can be in Field1 or in Field3. The same holds for universally quantified n-words, which take

scope over the preverbal negation operator. Now universal n-words are argued in Giannakidou (1998) to be semantically licensed as polarity sensitive elements by escaping the antiveridical predicate (for the present purposes: a predicate phrase headed by negation) that they are generated inside of (i.e. there is an anti-licensing condition similar to that on positive polarity items), to end up semantically combining with an antiveridical predicate. This semantic requirement explains why universal n-words as polarity sensitive universal quantifiers are not licensed if they only QR to a scope position *within* the scope of negation. Recall that the universally quantified indefinite (the bare *s*-word component itself) is structurally higher in the *sem*-expression than the *sem* particle. When a *sem*-phrase moves to the immediate left of the verb and checks [neg] on F, it licenses itself: the interpretation that is generated involves ‘universally quantified n-word > negation > predicate phrase (=complement of F)’, hence the semantic polarity (anti-)licensing requirement is satisfied. This entails that Field2 (i.e. Spec,FP) can be occupied by a non-focussed universally quantified n-word precisely when it checks [neg] on F (i.e. in case of a *sem*-phrase). Finally, a universally quantified n-word cannot be syntactically focussed, analogously to non-polarity sensitive, positive universal quantifiers.

Then in Field2, on a non-focussed interpretation, only a universally quantified n-word is licensed, while an NPI indefinite is not. It follows that *egyáltalán* ‘whatsoever / at all’ cannot modify n-words in Field2 on the non-focussed interpretation (cf. section 3.3.1): such modification is incompatible with universals. That non-focussed n-words in Field2 can be modified by ‘almost’ is also predicted: universals allow ‘almost’-modification. Further, given that only universals are licensed as non-focussed n-words in Field2, we derive the incompatibility with verbs requiring a non-specific argument, cf. section 3.3.2 (51c), as well as the fact that such occurrences of n-words generate a *de re* reading, cf. section 3.3.3 (52c).

3.4.2 Focussed n-words

3.4.2.1 The mysteries

N-words have been seen to behave in mysterious ways when in the preverbal focus position.

(i) First, recall from section 3.3.1 that when focussed, n-words that are modified by ‘almost’ can combine with verbs that require a non-specific argument.

(ii) Second, it was shown in section 3.3.3 that focussed n-words are apparently compatible with a *de re* reading, with a presupposed set of individuals being quantified over. This is remarkable, since this has been taken to be a property of universals, however, universals cannot be focussed.

(iii) Third, we also witnessed in section 3.3.3 that a reading with no presupposed set of individuals being quantified over (the so-called split reading, which is usually derived as ‘negation > modal > existential’) is available to focussed n-words. However, then a complication arises if focussed n-words were quantified existentially. Given that a focussed n-word is situated above the (modal) verb, obligatorily taking it in its scope, there is no way one can get ‘negation > modal > existential’ scope relations.

(iv) Fourth, in section 3.3.4, it was pointed out that focussed bare *s*-words are above negation and therefore if they come to be quantified existentially, the result is wrongly predicted to be negation in the scope of existential quantification.

Observations (ii), (iii) and (iv) are not compatible with treating focussed n-words as existentially quantified. Observations (i), (iii), along with the generalization that universal quantifiers are not syntactically focusable are incompatible with taking focussed n-words to be universally quantified. Taken together, this raises the question what interpretation focussed n-words in fact have.³⁶ The solution that I suggest and flesh out in the remainder of the paper is that focussing alters the semantic representation in a significant way.

3.4.2.2 The interpretation of n-words in focus

The interpretation of n-words / NP has often been likened to that of minimizers, expressions like the ones below.

- (54) a. Egy cseppet sem érdekli Pétert
 a drop-ACC SEM interest-3SG P-ACC
 'It doesn't interest Peter a bit'
- b. Egy fillért sem költött el
 a penny-ACC SEM spend-PAST-3SG PREF
 'She didn't spend a penny'

Minimizers are polarity elements which denote a minimal quantity or extent. According to Horn (1989: 400), when these elements 'occur in negative contexts, the negation denotes the absence of a minimal quantity, and hence the presence of no quantity at all.' Hence, in negative contexts, they act as a means of negative reinforcement (cf. Vallduvi 1994). Now, minimizers in Hungarian are normally modified by the *sem* particle. As we have seen, *sem* is historically a morphological combination of *is* 'also'/'even' plus *nem* 'not', the negation particle. Analogously to what is argued by Vallduvi (1994) for Catalan, *sem* contributes 'not even' to the interpretation of minimizers: it holds for not even the minimal quantity *x* (e.g. *csepp* 'bit', *fillér* 'penny') that *P*. Hungarian then realizes overtly in the *sem* scalar additive particle what Fauconnier (1975a,b) argues to be an implicit 'even' built into the semantics of minimizers; see also Heim (1984). Fauconnier claims English *any* as well to mark an endpoint on a contextually derived pragmatic scale.

A *sem*-expression in focus is interpreted in much the same way. It has been proposed that NPI-s / n-words are interpreted as the conventionalized extreme element of a scale for which the given property is most likely to hold, cf. Lee and Horn (1994), Krifka (1995), and also Lahiri (1995, 1998) for an essentially similar view of Hindi. Hindi along with Japanese and Korean combine a scalar particle 'even' with an indefinite or indeterminate pronoun in their paradigm of NPI-s.³⁷ Krifka (1995) considers NPI pronouns to denote general predicates, e.g. 'thing' or 'person'. In focus, then, the bottom element is identified as the element for which the property does not hold, and by implicature, the property also fails to hold for all elements higher on the scale (in the case of *senki* 'nobody', it fails to hold for all sets of persons). For the role played by focus in the interpretation of n-words, see also Kadmon and Landman (1993) and Israel (1996).³⁸

Hungarian appears to grammaticalize the scalar (i.e. alternative set invoking) nature of n-words in exhibiting an n-word paradigm with an appended scalar additive particle. Another facet of such grammaticalization is manifested by the option of syntactic focusing itself. The scalar implicature is directly and overtly triggered by *sem* 'even', but it is present in the absence of *sem* as well, i.e. in the case of bare *s*-words too it comes to be associated with negation. In this latter case, however, the focussed n-word is perceived as more marked. Thus, in fact (53) above is slightly more marked than its minimal pair with a *sem*-expression instead of the bare *s*-word, as below.

- (55) SEMMIT SEM ⁰találtam
 nothing-ACC SEM find-PAST-1SG
 'I didn't find anything'

This markedness difference is even more pronounced with minimizers per se: in (56) below the scalar particle *sem* is missing, hence it involves some extra processing to generate the appropriate implicature.

- (56) EGY FILLÉRT ⁰nem ⁰költött el
 a penny-ACC not spend-PAST-3SG PREF
 ‘She didn’t spend a penny’

That the analogue between minimizers and n-words in Hungarian is correct, and involves an ‘even’ and a negation component is confirmed by examples from nineteenth century Hungarian like (57). Here the pseudo-object n-word itself functions as a minimizer (and in present-day Hungarian it would be replaced by the minimizer *kicsit sem*, lit. little-ACC SEM ‘not a bit’). The ‘even’ and the ‘not’ components are separate free morphemes:

- (57) Az istatől pedig mi semmit is nem félünk
 the God-from TOP-PRT we nothing-ACC even not be_afraid-1PL
 ‘And as for God, we are not afraid of him a bit’
 [Szilágyi 1889, Ch.5]

Let me now characterize the semantic interpretation of sentences with an n-word in focus more explicitly. Karttunen and Peters (1979) argued that ‘even’ scopes over clausemate negation in cases like *Sam doesn’t know even Italian*, cf. [even [not [Sam know [_F Italian]]]], where the scalar focus particle ‘even’ is associated with ‘Italian’ as focus. According to one common assumption, ‘even’ in such cases raises covertly above negation (cf. Karttunen and Peters 1979, Wilkinson 1996). I will assume the same for the LF of sentences with a focussed n-word: *sem* (=‘even+not’) covertly raises above the n-word. Its ‘even’ component is scopally above its negation component; i.e. [even [not [.. [_F bare n-word] ..]].³⁹ Note that the bare n-word will be in the scope of negation, hence it will be licensed as an NPI, and its variable will be bound by existential closure under negation.⁴⁰ The focus associated with ‘even’ is the bare n-word itself, i.e. the extremely general (therefore in the context extremely likely) predicate: focus interpretation lambda-abstracts only this predicate, leaving the variable behind, where it is safely bound under closure.

A sentence like (58a) is interpreted as represented in (58b) (in the structured meanings approach to focus), where Q is a less likely predicate in the context than THING (the relative probability relation is defined informally in (58c)).

- (58) a. SEMMIT SEM ⁰talált János
 nothing-ACC SEM find-PAST-3SG J.-NOM
 ‘I didn’t find anything’
 b. $\llbracket \text{EVEN} \rrbracket \langle \llbracket \text{THING} \rrbracket, \llbracket \lambda P. [\neg \exists x. (P(x) \ \& \ \text{FOUND}(\mathbf{j})(x)) \ \& \ \exists Q. (Q \neq P \ \& \ P > Q \ \& \ \neg \exists y. Q(y) \ \& \ \text{FOUND}(\mathbf{j})(y))] \rrbracket \rangle$
 c. $> = \{ \langle P, Q \rangle \mid \text{It's more likely that there is an } x \text{ such that John found } P(x), \text{ than that there is a } y \text{ such that John found } Q(y) \}$

(58b) can be paraphrased informally as ‘Even for the (most general and therefore most likely) predicate THING it is not the case that there is something that is (a) THING and that John found it, and there exist(s) (an) other less likely predicate(s) Q for which it is not the case that there is something that is Q and that John found’.

An interesting corroboration of the present analysis in terms of a Heimian indefinite treatment of focussed n-words comes from a somewhat archaic construction involving bare *wh*-pronouns instead of n-words, with an equivalent interpretation.

- (59) a. Mit sem használt
 what SEM use-PAST-3SG
 ‘It had no effect whatsoever’
- b. Mit sem változtat a tényeken
 what SEM change-3SG the facts-on
 ‘It does not change the facts at all’

This construction is equivalent to corresponding variants with an n-word in place of the bare *wh*-pronoun precisely because n-words, just like bare *wh*-pronouns, are interpreted as pure indefinites in focus.⁴¹

3.4.2.3 Mysteries resolved

The interpretation contributed by focussing with ‘even’ explains the peculiarities have been observed with focussed n-words, enumerated in section 3.4.2.1.

(i) First, ‘almost’-modification was seen not to render a focussed n-word incompatible with a verb that selects for a non-specific argument. This is ultimately due to the fact that ‘almost’ is not strictly speaking a diagnostic for universal quantification, but a diagnostic for end-of-scale (or exact) values. The reason why it cannot modify NPI indefinite n-words in the scope of negation is that ‘almost’ cannot appear in the immediate scope of negation; see Horn (2000) for detailed discussion of this point. Given that bare n-word predicative restrictions are taken to be end-of-scale values when in focus, they can be modified by ‘almost’. Hence focussed n-words can be modified by ‘almost’ without being universally quantified.

(ii) Second, the *de re* reading in section 3.3.3 caused complications because on the one hand, focussed n-words cannot be universals, while on the other, *de re* readings have all along been associated with a universal n-word scoping above negation. However, on the present analysis the *de re* reading can be generated without the focussed n-word needing to be a universal; in fact it follows from the interpretation given in (58b). Recall that the ‘even’+negation complex (= *sem*) has raised up covertly, as necessary for the focus-affected interpretation associated with ‘even’. This raised negation is associated with an appended existential quantifier that can close the variable of the n-word itself (cf. Heim 1982): hence we have ‘ $\neg > \exists > \text{modal}$ ’; precisely a representation of the *de re* reading (see note 33).

(iii) A third complication was related to split readings with the same sentence types. Focus-fronting of an n-word is an operator movement that is driven by the focus property of the n-word (and in the case of *sem*-expressions, also by [neg]). The part of the fronted phrase that is not involved in the operator-movement and -interpretation directly should be able to be A-bar-reconstructed (interpreted in the lower copy), as in *wh*-movement (cf. Chomsky 1995). This part here is the restricted variable itself, which then again will be bound under existential closure introduced under the modal operator associated with the modal verb, i.e. ‘ $\neg > \text{modal} > \exists$ ’; precisely a representation of the split reading.⁴²

(iv) The last problem was related to the potential generation of the non-attested scope order ‘ $\exists > \neg$ ’. Given the assumption that the ‘even’+negation complex (= *sem*) raises in the case of a focussed interpretation, such scope relations are never generated.

4 Concluding remarks

I have argued in this paper that (i) Hungarian n-words have a morphosyntactically and semantically negative and a non-negative paradigm, and that (ii) any n-word in this language is ambiguous between a (polarity sensitive) universal quantifier and non-quantificational indefinite interpretation. Significantly, this confirms the prediction of Giannakidou (2000: 518) that there must be languages that realize both universal and existential negation with their n-words. As pointed out in the discussion, Hungarian has an existential paradigm of

vala-NPI which is licensed in a range of averidical environments, including the scope of negation. However, there appears to be an anti-locality requirement: *vala*-NPI cannot be clausemate to negation. This pattern is also found with Slavic languages. If n-words also have an indefinite (existential) interpretation, as I have argued here, then we can understand this as a blocking effect: local existential reading can be expressed by n-words, hence *vala*-NPI are blocked locally to negation.

I also demonstrated that n-words in Hungarian can be syntactically focussed, due to the scalar ‘even’ particle overtly appearing in negative n-words paradigm. The interpretation of n-words in focus was argued to crucially depend on the non-quantificational indefinite analysis of the existential reading of n-words.

If correct, these results make two significant theoretical points. (i) the two major mechanisms proposed for Negative Concord structures cross-linguistically are both needed in a single language, therefore both are necessary in a typology of NC. (ii) The issues of negativity and quantificationality are independent: non-quantificational indefinite n-words can be either negative or non-negative, and similarly, universally quantified n-words can also be either negative or non-negative.

Let me add a speculative note on diachrony. Jespersen’s description of the historical development of various languages reveals that in many cases n-words enter the language as NPI-s, and over time, potentially going through several stages, they shift to semantically negative expressions (i.e. expressions carrying logical negation) (cf. Jespersen 1917). The transitionality, or hybrid state of affairs that I have found in Hungarian n-words in terms of quantificationality may well be related to the division within the class of n-words with respect to semantic negativity. Plausibly, Hungarian n-words as a whole class can be viewed as having a transitional status with respect to negativity. Future empirical work unearthing evidence from preceding stages of Hungarian to confirm the presence of such a transition and determine its direction would be revealing. The quantified / non-quantified ambiguity that has been uncovered is in fact not unexpected to find in a language that is in a transitional / hybrid stage in the Jespersen cycle.

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¹ This comes on top of variation in the syntax of negation: the negation element can have specifier or head status (‘heavy’ and ‘light’, respectively), and it may or may not be assumed to have a null phonological realization as well. The position of the syntactic projection of negation is also subject to variation.

Negative Concord is commonly understood as a descriptive cover term to designate constructions in which there appear several elements each of which is apparently capable of licensing sentential negation interpretation on its own. I will be using the terms ‘NC item’ and ‘n-word’ (the second due to Laka 1990) more or less interchangeably here, though NC items include elements other than n-words.

² The negation particle (as well as focus, which is fronted in Hungarian) triggers verb inversion: in the neutral word order, the verb immediately follows the verbal prefix PREF, while in the inverted order it precedes it.

³ SemP is a functional projection with a phonologically empty head, hosting *sem*-expressions in its specifier. FocP is focus phrase: ordinarily, focussed constituents are fronted to Spec,FocP, and in such cases the verb is inverted to Foc.

⁴ This deletion rule is proposed by É.Kiss (1992, 1994).

⁵ For more criticism of Puskás’ (1998, 2000) model, see Surányi (2002a,b,c).

⁶ Puskás (1999) is an exception. However, that work does not include an account of the complementary distribution effects.

⁷ Surányi (2002a, b, c) demonstrates that an attempt to reduce the two deletion rules to the Obligatory Contour Principle (OCP), as proposed in Olsvay (2000), is misguided.

⁸ This is an intriguing construction. A perhaps stylistically more neutral, otherwise synonymous, construction is (i). It is to be noted that non-finite clauses can have only *sem* instead of *sem nem* (ii). If *sem* is negative, as I am going to argue, then it appears that *nem* in the special case of (13) is in fact not a contributor of clausal negation. This is a conclusion already suggested in analyses of NC, most recently by de Swart and Sag (2002). It appears that in late 19th century (literary) Hungarian, the same option was available even to preverbal *sem*-expressions in contexts like (iii), where *sem* carries negation in both conjuncts. *Nem* also appears to be an expletive when construed with licensors like ‘without’ (iv) or ‘until’ (v).

- | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|------------|---------------|-----------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| (i) | El | sem | jött | és | otthon | sem | maradt |
| | PREF | SEM | come-PAST-3SG | and | at_home | SEM | stay-PAST-3SG |
| (ii) | sem | el | jönni, | sem | otthon | maradni | |
| | SEM | PREF | come-INF | SEM | at_home | stay-INF | |
| (iii) | A felség | szentséges | személyét | | | | |
| | the highness | sacred | person-ACC | | | | |
| | sem most, | sem soha | is | nem | érdeklettem | | |
| | SEM now | SEM never | also | not | interest-PAST-SUBJ1SGOBJ3SG | | |
| | ‘His royal highness has not been interested in me either now, or ever before’ | | | | | | |
| | [quote from Miklós Wesselényi, in Kónyi 1886] | | | | | | |
| (iv) | anélkül, | hogy | el | (nem) | végezte | | |
| | without | that | PREF | not | complete-PAST-3SG | | |
| | ‘without completing it’ | | | | | | |
| (v) | amíg | el | (nem) | jössz | | | |
| | until | PREF | not | come -2SG | | | |
| | ‘until you come along’ | | | | | | |

⁹ As far as the internal structure of *sem*-expressions is concerned, the negative particle *sem* (or its negative component in case *sem* is to be syntactically analysed into components) may be taken to be a Q heading QP. In a left-headed analysis (i.e. [QP [Q *sem*] [*s*-word]]), the complement phrase of Q must move QP-internally to a specifier above Q (e.g. Spec,QP), along the lines of Shlonsky’s (1991) proposal. When preverbal, this negative QP contributes the negation in the clause.

¹⁰ Note that we are not assuming the creation of a single complex syntactic specifier, a syntactic analysis that was criticised and rejected in section 2.1 above. See Giannakidou (1998) for a criticism of the absorption treatment, and Ginzburg and Sag (2000) for a defence. See Surányi (2002c, Ch.5.2) for a feature valuation-based account. The account of de Swart and Sag (2002) treats this type of Negative Concord as a case of resumptive negative quantification within a polyadic quantifier approach, extending May’s (1989) proposal. If it can be shown, as it will be in section 3 below, that n-words with a universal and an existential interpretation can co-exist in the same clause, then a polyadic quantifier approach cannot cover Hungarian (only monadic quantifiers of the same type can merge into a polyadic quantifier).

¹¹ In one regard both (b) and (c) are marked: question (a) generates an implicature that there are people who *are* interested in this question, and this implicature is cancelled by both answers. It is also interesting to note that questions like (i) (a) cannot be answered as (i) (c), only as (i) (b).

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|------------------------|-----------|----------|---|-----------------------|----------|---------|
| (i) | a. | Mit | nem | találsz? | / | Ki | nincs | otthon? |
| | | what-acc | not | find-2sg | / | who-nom | not_be | at_home |
| | | ‘What can’t you find?’ | | | / | ‘Who is not at home?’ | | |
| | b. | Semmit | ‘Nothing’ | | / | Senki | ‘Nobody’ | |
| | c. | ?*Semmit | sem | | / | ?*Senki | sem | |

¹² This is why (21b) is a possible answer to begin with; and this is why an answer to (22a) ‘Everybody’ is inappropriate: the reconstructed (affirmative) clause is not licensed semantically by the negative question.

¹³ The contrast in (22b–c) can also be taken to be a problem for the phonological deletion rules discussed in section 2.3: although *nem* is phonologically absent, the *sem*-phrase is still inappropriate because *nem* is covertly present in the antecedent clause that is reconstructed in the ellipsis site by default.

¹⁴ A similar test case involves coordinations like (i), to which the same considerations of ellipsis apply (see also Puskás 1999, Giannakidou to appear).

-
- (i) Vagy őt vagy senkit nem veszek el
 or she-ACC or nobody-ACC not marry-1SG PREF
 'I will marry her or noone'

¹⁵ Hence, we can identify three syntactic fields: the postverbal field (Field3), the immediately preverbal position (Field 2) where [neg]-checking by a *sem*-expression takes place, and recursive positions above FP (Field3) targeted by overt quantifier movement.

- (i) [Field 1] [_{FP} Field 2] F [Field 3]
 (nem) V

The preverbal patterning of negation and *sem*-phrases is slightly more complex than can be reviewed here. For details of a full analysis along the presented lines, see Surányi (2002a, b, c), where I propose to identify the projection of the F head as a multiple specifier projection similar to Laka's (1990) SigmaP, housing focus, the negation particle, as well as *sem*-phrases as specifiers. For sake of simplicity, here I take the negation particle *nem* to be a head element in F. Then examples involving regular focus can be accommodated without multiple specifiers of FP: focus occupies Field2, and n-words to its left are in Field3.

In Surányi (2002a, b, c) I argue that 'negation1 > focus > negation2' and '*sem*-phrase > focus > negation' sequences involve a metalinguistic negation1 and *sem*-phrase (cf. Horn 1985, 1989, Cartson 1996). As metalinguistic operators, these do not carry out [neg]-checking at all. Metalinguistic uses of negation and *sem*-expressions are available not only above focus, but also above another negation, or as the only operator, as in (i) and (ii), respectively. Metalinguistic negation itself does not trigger verb inversion, cf. (ii).

- (ii) a. Nem nem jött el
 not not come-PAST-3SG PREF
 'It's not the case that he didn't come along'
 b. Soha sem nem jött el
 never SEM not come-PAST-3SG PREF
 'It has never been the case that he didn't come'
- (iii) a. Nem el jött
 not PREF come-PAST-3SG
 b. Soha sem el jött
 never SEM PREF come-PAST-3SG

¹⁶ Note that universal/existential force and negativity in terms of involving logical negation are independent issues: while Zanuttini and Haegeman argued for a negative universal interpretation (universal quantifier prefixed by negation), Giannakidou (2000) makes the case for Greek that Greek n-words are universals that do not carry negation themselves. If both bare *s*-words and *sem*-expressions can be universally quantified, as I am going to argue, then Hungarian has both non-negative and negative universal n-words.

¹⁷ As often observed, *almost* can modify determiners with a precise value (e.g. *I could solve almost half/50 of the problems*). As Horn (2000) points out, it can modify NPI *any*-NPs in the protasis of (possibly implicit) conditionals (e.g. *If you go into almost any restaurant in San Fransisco, a "Thank You For Not Smoking" sign will be on display*). It can even appear in the scope of negation, if negation is sufficiently far (e.g. *I don't think there's a jury almost anywhere in this country that...*). Horn concludes that what bars *almost* is in fact scopally adjacent negation. Nevertheless, as emphasized in Giannakidou (2000), the *almost* test remains a suitable diagnostics for the case at hand.

¹⁸ (24a) has an irrelevant reading according to which it almost so happened that Zeta talked to nobody—where *almost* takes the whole clause in its scope. The judgment of (24a) varies across speakers from impeccable to strongly degraded.

¹⁹ Except in special, so-called telescopic contexts, as in (i) (Roberts 1989: 717):

- (i) Each degree candidate walked to the stage. He took his diploma from the Dean and returned to his seat.

²⁰ As (30a) illustrates, n-words can appear in existential constructions, even with the negative existential verb *nincs* 'not be':

-
- (i) Nincs itthon semmi
not_be at_home nothing
'There isn't anything at home'

²¹ Puskás (2000) also considers this test, but makes note of a caveat, claiming that it cannot be applied to Hungarian. See Surányi (2002c, 2003) for an argument that it can. Puskás also notes that Hungarian has predicative uses of n-words, citing (i). In fact, all of my informants judge (i) to be unacceptable (which is expected, given that there is no element in (i) that would bear logical negation, in light of Section 2 above). But even when grammatical counterparts of (i), like (ii) are considered, they fail to show what they are intended to, given that universal quantification over kinds is a standard exception in Definiteness Effect contexts like existential sentences (where universals are normally disallowed, except if kinds are involved).

- (i) Zeta semmiféle katona
Z.-NOM no-kind soldier
'Zeta is no soldier'
- (ii) Zeta nem volt semmiféle katona
Z.-NOM not be-PAST-3SG no-kind soldier
'Zeta was no soldier'

²² Hunyadi (1981) notes that the morpheme *is* 'also/even' in turn historically derives from the conjunction *es* 'and' (corresponding to Greek *ke*). This latter form in fact survives today in some dialects.

²³ It is interesting to note that Hindi NPI-s, which are licensed in non-veridical contexts (incl. long-distance) as well as generic environments (in which contexts they are prone to an indefinite analysis), are also modified by a particle *bhii* 'also/even' (Lahiri 1998).

²⁴ 'Incorporation' here is meant as a cover term for the syntactic position of elements that occupy and immediately preverbal position in neutral clauses, often termed the VM position (cf. e.g. Komlósy 1994). Incorporated nominals may be modified by adjectives, but crucially, cannot have a determiner. For details on Hungarian incorporation, see Farkas and de Swart (2003) and references therein.

²⁵ According to Farkas and de Swart (2003) this is explained by the fact that the bare plural is required to be interpreted within the same minimal DRS box as its predicate, however, a generic operator is accompanied by a box-splitting operation. For van Geenhoven (1998), incorporation triggers type shift of the predicate to a complex predicate type involving the introduction of an existential quantifier.

²⁶ Lawlike statements like *All trespassers will be prosecuted*, which are conditional in nature, are exceptional in this regard (cf. Stawson 1952, Moravcsik 1991).

²⁷ The *de dicto* reading 'what one is allowed to do is not to fire any nurses' is unavailable in Hungarian, given negation is overtly above the modal verb, hence the $\neg >$ modal scope relation is fixed.

²⁸ Descriptive richness is also a condition on topicalizability of universal quantifiers in Greek, and n-words in both Greek and Italian (otherwise the universal picks up a set too large for a discourse referent).

²⁹ What Olsvay notes is the fact that a preverbal *s*-word can be modified by a relative clause (as we have seen), and that a certain stylistically marked pattern is possible for *s*-words (*s*-word PREF *nem* V). The crucial fact is that neither option is available to preverbal focus (cf. Surányi 2002a, b, c).

³⁰ Note that conclusion (ii) is not identical to the corresponding conclusion reached in Surányi (2002a, b, c), where only one-syllable verbs were taken into account.

³¹ To get an 'almost'-modified n-word in focus, only the n-word needs to be emphatically stressed, the adverb 'almost' itself needs not, in fact must not. This stress pattern then will be ambiguous: it will also have a reading according to which 'It is almost the case that *p*'. This complication misled me in Surányi (2002c, 2003) to think that 'almost'-modified n-words cannot be felicitously syntactically focussed.

³² Whether a preverbal *sem*-expression is focussed or not is a delicate matter. An important prosodic cue is not so much the degree of stress on the n-word itself, but rather stress reduction of the verb.

³³ A representation of the *de re* reading with an existentially quantified n-word would involve negation scoping over the existential quantifier, which in turn would take the modal in its scope: ' $\neg > \exists >$ modal'.

³⁴ A similar conclusion is reached in Herburger (2001) for the negativity of n-words in Spanish.

³⁵ The universal quantifier itself can possibly be identified with the *s(e)*-morpheme (historically deriving from *is* 'also') shared by the paradigm of n-words as an initial morpheme. *S(e)*-combines with a bare indefinite *wh*-pronoun (contributing a general predicative restriction like HUMAN) to make the n-word (e.g. *sehol* 'nowhere/anywhere' is *se + hol* 'where'); cf. section 2.1 and (31) in section 3.1.4. See Lipták (2001) for an account of bare *wh*-pronouns in Hungarian along the lines of accounts given for languages like Japanese or Bulgarian, where bare indefinites without quantificational force of their own can be bound by various quantifiers (including Wh, 'every', 'some').

³⁶ Text level closure (Heim 1982) in principle could apply to a focussed indefinite n-word in Field2, if it is not in the scope of negation. As will be argued below, this latter case never arises with NPI indefinite n-words in focus. In fact, that is what is expected, for otherwise the NPI indefinite would not be in the scope of any NPI-licensor.

³⁷ According to Lahiri (1998), NPI in Hindi are inherently focussed. This may be the case for Hungarian *sem*-phrases generally, although this type of focus is different from the one for which Hungarian reserves the immediately preverbal position (in the present paper: FP), and which is characterized by identification and exclusion, a type of contrastive focus. On different kinds of focus, see É.Kiss (1998). The ‘even’ component of *sem*-expressions is apparently faded in non-focussed occurrences.

³⁸ Domain widening is one such effect, cf. Kadmon and Landman (1993). Indeed, domain widening is associated with syntactically focussed n-words in Hungarian.

³⁹ Assuming the internal structure of *sem*-phrases I have outlined above (cf. note 9), the LF structure of a focussed n-word like *semmi* ‘nothing’ can be sketched as (i):

- (i) [sem_k [semmi_i [t_k t_i]]
[even not_k [bare n-word_i [even not_k t_i]]]

⁴⁰ If in the case of bare n-word focussing, the implicit ‘even’ component is taken to bundle together with negation, similarly to the case of *sem*, they will raise together as a unit, just as *sem* does. This is what I assume here.

⁴¹ Such *wh*-pronouns modified by *sem* must be syntactically focussed. A non-focussed, postverbal occurrence is unacceptable:

- (i) *Nem használt mit sem (cf. 59a)

⁴² Hence instead of (i), we have the reconstructed (partial) interpretation (ii) (\diamond is a possibility operator corresponding to the modal predicate *szabad* ‘possible, allowed’; the exact details of the analysis are not immediately relevant here).

- (i) $\llbracket \text{EVEN} \rrbracket \langle \llbracket \text{HUMAN} \rrbracket, \llbracket \lambda P. [\neg \exists x. (P(x) \ \& \ \diamond (. . .) . . .] \rrbracket \rangle$
(ii) $\llbracket \text{EVEN} \rrbracket \langle \llbracket \text{HUMAN} \rrbracket, \llbracket \lambda P. [\neg (P(x) \ \& \ \diamond \exists x. (. . . P(x). . .) . . .] \rrbracket \rangle$

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