An analysis of licensing of PPIs in negative imperatives in terms of implicit exemption from obviation

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1. Introduction

This study aims at investigating why, in negative imperatives, as in (1), whose predicate (e.g. *question somebody's immigration status*) denotes a non-intentional, PPI indefinites may be out-scoped by a clause-mate negation. The non-intentional nature of the predicate in (1) is confirmed by the compatibility with an adverb *inadvertently*.

(1)   [How to avoid offending minority customers?] Do not touch them. […] Do not use profanity or racial slurs, and do <u>not</u> (*inadvertently*) question **somebody**'s immigration status. (Coca)

After having examined Goncharov's (2018; 2020a,b) analyses of non-intentionality effect on negative imperatives and on licensing of PPIs, I advance an analysis which combines i) Szabolcsi's (2010) analysis in terms of implicit exemption from obviation and ii) Richardson's (1985) analysis of negative imperatives with non-intentional predicates.

2. Goncharov (2018; 2020a,b)

Goncharov (2018: 1) observes that in Slavic languages, negative imperatives are incompatible with perfective aspect, as in (2a), while this aspectual restriction "is lifted when the action expressed by the verb is interpreted as non-intentional", as in (2b). To account for this contrast, she assumes that intentional predicates are equipped with an intentional operator (**INT**), as in (3a), and that the combination of the assertion in (3b), the scalar implicature in (3d), and the presupposition due to the Intentional operator in (3e), amounts to a contradiction, which isn't, according to her, the case with non-intentional predicates in (2b). The presupposition in (3e) however doesn't seem to distinguish the intentional *open the window* and the non-intentional *fall down*: if 'falling down' starts, it also reached the end point in ordinary situations.

(2) a. Ne otkryvaj   /*otlroj   okno! [Russian]
        not open-IMPERF[ECTIVE].IMP[ERATIVE]/ open-PERF[ECTIVE].IMP   window
        'Don't open the window!'

   b. Ostorožno! Ne   upadi!   [Russian]
       careful   not   fall- PERF.IMP 'Be careful! Don't fall down!'   (Goncharov 2018: 2)

(3) a. Not **INT** open- PERF the window! [paraphrase of (2a)]

   b. Assertion: You must not end up opening the window.

   c. Alternative: You must not start to open the window.

   d. Scalar implicature: $\neg$ (You must not start to open the window) = You may start to open the window.

   e. Presupposition due to **INT**: It must be the case that if you start to open the window, you end up opening it.

Goncharov (2020a,b) revisits Szabolcsi's (2004) observation that PPI indefinites in the controlled complement of *want* may be out-scoped by the matrix negation when the complement predicate is non-intentional, as in (4b), unlike in cases with intentional predicates, as in (4a). To account for this contrast, Goncharov (2020a) argues that the complement denoting a non-intentional action induces a propositional operator **LUCK**, as in (5a), which induces the presupposition, as in (5b), i) that the referent of the matrix subject thinks that in some possible world near by the actual world, an event contrary to what she wants may happen (e.g. 'offending someone', for (4a)), and ii) that PPIs are licensed in this upward-entailing context. This analysis reminds Larrivée's (2012: 894) analysis of (6a) where the proposition including *some* is "presupposed or activated" and "treated as a whole, to which the negative applies to reject it entirely."

(4) a. I do<u>n't</u> want to call **someone**.   [**not > someone*] (Szabolcsi 2004: 417, footnote 10)

   b. I do<u>n't</u> want to offend **someone**.   [√*not > someone*] (ibid.)

(5) a. I want [**LUCK** not [TP PRO to offend **someone**] (paraphrase of (4b))

   b. Presupposition due to **LUCK**: $\exists w' \in$ Near-by(Dox$_{\text{speaker,w}}$) [offend (someone) (speaker)(w')]

(6) a. John did<u>n't</u> say **something**. Jane did. [=It is <u>not</u> John that said **something**, but it is Jane.] (Larrivée 2012: 883)

   b. "λw.John won the lottery(w)" presupposes "$\exists$ w'∈Near-by(Dox$_{\text{j,w}}$) [$\neg$won-the-lottery(j)(w')]" (Goncharov 2020a: 16)

But since **LUCK** is induced in matrix clauses, as in (6b), PPIs should be out-scoped by a clause-mate negation, for example, in "John didn't offend someone", which is not the case. Goncharov (2018) and Goncharov (2020a,b) further advance essentially different accounts for non-intentionality effect on negative imperatives and on licensing of PPIs. It is not clear how her analyses apply to non-intentionality effect on PPI-licensing in negative imperatives, as in (1).

3. Szabolcsi (2010) and Richardson (1985)

Szabolcsi (2010) herself propose a different analysis of PPI licensing in (4b). This author first invokes Farkas's (1988) idea of *responsibility*, i.e. a relation holding between an individual *i* and a situation *s* just in case *i* brings *s* about

intentionally. She then observes that in Hungarian, when the complement of volition verbs expresses a non-responsibility situation, obviation may be explicitly exempt and a subjunctive complement becomes acceptable, as in (7a), where a PPI, *valakit* 'someone', in the complement is appropriately licensed by the clause-external negation.

(7)a. <u>Nem</u>   akarom, hogy   lelöjek   **valakit**. (Hungarian)
      NEGwant.1SGthat   shoot.SBJV.1SG   someone.ACC
      'I do<u>n't</u> want that I (inadvertently) shoot **someone**.' (Szabolcsi 2010: 7)
   b. I want for it <u>not</u> to be the case that I offend **someone**. (*idem.* 6)

Szabolcsi (2010) next suggests that, parallel to Hungarian (7a), the English infinitive in (4a) is reanalyzed, because of its non-responsibility nature, as a subjunctive clause, as in (7b), where *someone* is licensed by the clause-external negation.

    I next refer to Richardson's (1985) analysis of negative imperatives. This author claims that, in (8a), "not falling of the ladder is for the carpenter not an act in any useful sense of the word at all, but rather a state of affairs which he must try to maintain if he is going to accomplish whatever his positive intentions might be". In other words, negative imperatives like (8a) do not convey prohibitions but "commands to monitor against the events denoted by the VPs" (*idem*.247). He proposes to capture this meaning by means of coercing of a monitoring predicate, *take care*, as in (8b).

(8)a. Don't fall off the ladder! (Richardson 1985: 247)
   b. TAKE CARE not to fall off the ladder. (*ibid.*) [paraphrase of (8a)]

4. Proposal

I now propose, partly modifying Szabolcsi's and Richardson's ideas, that the negative imperatives in (1) and (2b) are semantically reanalyzed as (9a) and (9b). According to this analysis, Goncharov's presuppositional content due to LUCK is put into at-issue content. PPIs and perfective aspect are appropriately licensed since negation is clause-external.

(9)a. TAKE CARE for it **not** to be the case [that you question **somebody**'s immigration status].
   b. TAKE CARE for it **not** to be the case [that you fall- PERFdown].
(10) [λx. x TAKE CARE [¬ ∃p [p = λw' (∃y. you question y's immigration status in w')]] ∈ To-Do-List(you)

Furthermore, adopting an analysis of imperative as property-denoting, I semantically represent (9a) by (10), which says that taking care for the relevant situation not to happen is a property for the hearer to put into her To-Do-List. According to this hypothesis, coercion of monitoring predicate TAKE CARE is motivated by avoiding type-mismatch between property-denotation of the imperative and proposition-denotation of the subjunctive clause (cf. Grano's (2015) analysis of non-controlled infinitive of *intend*, as in "John intends for Bill to leave." in terms of coercion of the cause predicate BRING ABOUT). The externalization of negation may be motivated by a need to avoid a semantic incongruity of wide scope of non-intentionality over negation, as shown by the contrast between (11a) (where the adverb instantiating non-intentionality*, inadvertently*, takes wide scope) and (11b) (where it takes narrow scope).

(11)a. ??Inadvertently, I offend **no one**.   b.   There is **no one** I advertently offend.

Two evidences come for the analysis in terms of implicit exemption from obviation : i) It allows to account for licensing of a PPI in the French purpose clause in (12b), in a parallel fashion to the explicit case of exemption in (12a); ii) Japanese auxiliary –TE SHIMAU is ambiguous between a completion reading (with intentional predicates) and an *advertently*-reading (with non-intentional ones), and an imperative with <non-intentional predicate+ TE SHIMAU> is most naturally interpreted as a wish accompanying a sujunctive clause or as parallel to a third person imperative, as in (12c).

(12)a.[…] je maîtrise suffisamment mes sorts de glaces *pour ne pas que je blesse* **quelqu'un** *par inadvertance* ! (google)
     'I sufficiently control my ice trails in order <u>not</u> that I inadvertently hurt **someone**.'
   b. […] *pour ne pas déranger* **quelqu'un** je suis parti m'asseoir sur les derniers bancs […] (google)
     'In order <u>not</u> to disturb **someone**, I left to sit down on the benches in the last row'.
   c. korona-ni   kakat-te simae. (google)
     covid-19-DATcatch-TE SHIMAU-IMPERATIVE
     'Catch inadvertently the covid-19!' = (I wish that) You inadvertently catch the covid-19!

References: **Farkas, D. 1988**. On obligatory control. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 11; **Goncharov, J. 2018**. Intentionality Effect in Imperatives. *Proceedings of FASL* 27; **Goncharov, J. 2020a**. Intentionality in the grammar (http://juliegoncharov.com/docs/three_puzzles_draft.pdf); **Goncharov, J. 2020b**. Language and intentions. GLOW 43. https://osf.io/zm8k3/; **Grano, T. 2015**. Getting your to-do list under control. *NELS* 45; **Larrivée, P. 2012**. Positive polarity items, negation, activated propositions, *Linguistics* 50; **Richardson, J. 1985**. Agenthood and Ease. *Proceedings from the 21st CLS*; **Szabolcsi, A. 2004**. Positive polarity negative polarity. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 22; **Szabolcsi, A. 2010.** Infinitives vs. subjunctives: What do we learn from obviation and from exemptions from obviation? (https://philpapers.org/rec/SZAIVS)