

Negation in Hungarian

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Abstract

In Hungarian negation is expressed by the negative particle *nem* (*ne* in imperative, subjunctive, and optative clauses). In the case of predicate negation, *nem* precedes the verb phrase; in the case of constituent/focus negation, it precedes the preverbal focus. *Nem* merges with the 3rd person copula, yielding *nincs* 'isn't'. The predicate negating *nem* elicits the inversion of the verbal particle and the verb. An indefinite in the scope of negation is supplied with the minimalizer *sem*. Hungarian is a negative concord language; universal and existential pronouns have a special negative form (cf. *mindenki* 'everybody', *valaki* 'somebody', *senki* 'nobody'). Such negative pronouns always require the presence of the negative particle.

1. The language

Hungarian is spoken by about 12.5 million speakers in the Carpathian Basin in Central Europe. It is the official language of Hungary; it is a minority language in the neighbouring countries. It is the mother tongue of nearly 10 million speakers in Hungary, 1.5 million speakers in Romania, 500 000 speakers in Slovakia, about 300 000 speakers in Serbia, and 150 000 speakers in the Ukraine. It is dialectally fairly homogeneous. Its only dialect which significantly deviates from the standard language is the easternmost Csángó dialect spoken in the Moldva region of Romania.

Hungarian is a discourse-configurational language, with a clause-initial topic and an immediately preverbal exhaustive focus. Quantifiers are also usually preposed into the preverbal field. The verbal complements with no special discourse role or logical function follow the verb in a free order. The verb agrees with its subject and its definite object. The NP is head-final. Local and temporal relations are expressed by postpositions and a great variety of morphological cases.

2. Clausal negation

2.1. Standard negation

Negation is expressed by the negative particle *nem* in the unmarked case. It can appear in two positions. If *nem* negates a neutral sentence with no structural focus, it immediately precedes the verb:

- (1) a. *A kutya ugat.*
the dog barks
'The dog is barking.'
b. *A kutya **nem** ugat.*
'The dog is not barking.'

The Hungarian verb is often accompanied by a so-called verb modifier: a resultative or terminative verbal particle (2a), a bare nominal object (3a), or some other non-referential, predicative complement. In focusless affirmative sentences the verb modifier immediately precedes the verb. The neutral 'verb modifier, verb' order is reversed in negative clauses (except for a rare, archaic pattern discussed in section 2.5.)

- (2) a. *A kutya meg-fogta a nyulat.*¹
 the dog PRT caught the rabbit-ACC
 'The dog caught the rabbit.'
- b. *A kutya nem fogta meg a nyulat.*
 the dog not caught PRT the rabbit-ACC
 'The dog did not catch the rabbit.'
- (3) a. *A kutya nyulat fogott.*
 the dog rabbit-ACC caught
 'The dog caught some rabbit(s).'
- b. *A kutya nem fogott nyulat.*
 'The dog did not catch any rabbit(s).'

In constructions containing a preverbal structural focus, either the focus, or the background, or both, can be negated:

- (4) a. *A KUTYA fogta meg a nyulat.*
 the dog caught PRT the rabbit
 'It was the dog that caught the rabbit.'
- b. *Nem A KUTYA fogta meg a nyulat.*
 'It was not the dog that caught the rabbit.'
- c. *A KUTYA nem fogta meg a nyulat.*
 'It was the dog that did not catch the rabbit.'
- d. *Nem a KUTYA nem fogta meg a nyulat.*
 'It was not the dog that did not catch the rabbit.'

In focus constructions, it is the focus constituent that elicits the reversal of the 'verb modifier, verb' order of neutral sentences (4a). Focus negation involves no further word order change: the negative particle immediately precedes the focus (4b). Background negation (4c) is non-distinct from clausal negation illustrated in (2b): the negative particle immediately precedes the verb.

Hungarian has a minimizing particle, *sem*, deriving from *es nem* 'also not'. *Sem* is the negative polarity equivalent of the additive/emphatic particle *is* 'also, even' (5a-c). *Sem* also obligatorily accompanies indefinites in the scope of negation (6a-b), in which case it roughly means 'at all'. *Sem* is always unstressed; it is phonologically cliticized to the preceding lexical word. When *sem* appears in an immediately preverbal (5b, 6b) or prefocus (5c) position, the negative particle licensing it is not spelled out (or, putting it differently, it merges into *sem*), as a consequence of which *sem* is interpreted as the negative particle.

- (5) a. *A nyulat nem fogta meg a kutya sem.*
 the rabbit-ACC not caught PRT the dog- NOM either
 'Neither did the dog catch the rabbit.'
- b. *A nyulat a kutya sem fogta meg.*
- c. *A kutya sem A NYULAT fogta meg.*
- (6) a. *A kutya nem fogott egy nyulat sem.*
 the dog not caught a rabbit-ACC at.all

¹ If the verbal particle immediately precedes the verb (as it does in (1a)), they are spelled as one word. To indicate that they are two independent syntactic units to be separated in negative and various other contexts, they will be hyphenated in this paper.

- 'The dog did not catch any rabbit.'
 b. *A kutya egy nyulat **sem** fogott.*

In view of the facts surveyed, Hungarian negation counts as partly symmetric, partly asymmetric in the typology Miestamo (2005): the negation of neutral sentences containing no verb modifier, and the negation of focus constructions is symmetric, causing no restructuring of the sentence, whereas the negation of neutral sentences containing a verbal particle (the majority pattern, including all telic/perfective sentences, among others) is asymmetric, eliciting V-movement across the verb modifier. (In fact, negation may elicit V-movement in all neutral sentences; however, V-movement is invisible if no verb modifier intervenes between the source and the target positions of the verb.)

2.2. Negation in non-declaratives

In imperative (7) and optative sentences (8), the negative particle *nem* is replaced by *ne*. *Ne* occupies the same preverbal and/or prefocus position as *nem* does.

- (7) a. *Ne engedd be a kutyát!*
 not let-IMP-2SG in the dog-ACC
 'Don't let in the dog!'
 b. *Ne A KUTYÁT engedd be!*
 'It is not the dog that you should let in!'
 c. *Ne A KUTYÁT ne engedd be!*
 'It is not the dog that you should not let in!'

- (8) *Bárcsak ne veszett volna el a kutya!*
 if.only not got.lost be-COND PRT the dog
 'If only the dog had not got lost!'

Similar to *nem*, the particle *ne* can also license the minimizer *sem* (see 9a, 10a). When the *sem*-phrase of an imperative, optative, or subjunctive clause is moved into immediately preverbal or prefocus position, *sem* merges with the negative particle, yielding *se* (9b, 10b).

- (9) a. *Ne engedd be a kutyát sem!*
 not let in the dog-ACC either
 'Don't let in the dog, either!'
 b. *A kutyát se engedd be!*
 'Don't let in the dog, either!'
- (10) a. *Ne engedj be egy kutyát sem!*
 not let in a dog-ACC at all
 'Don't let in any dog!'
 b. *Egy kutyát se engedj be!*
 'Don't let in any dog!'

2.3. Negation in non-verbal clauses

Hungarian nominal and adjectival predicates with a 3rd person subject are negated with the particle *nem* left-adjacent to the predicate:

- (11) a. *János tanár /okos.*
 John teacher /smart
 'John is a teacher/John is smart.'
 b. *János **nem** tanár/**nem** okos.*
 'John is not a teacher./John is not smart.'

If the subject is other than 3rd person, and/or if the tense and mood are other than present tense indicative, the copula has to be spelled out. The nominal/adjectival predicate immediately precedes the copula (12a, 13a). This construction is non-distinct from a neutral sentence containing a verbal modifier represented by a bare nominal complement, e.g. that in (3a). In the case of negation, the 'nominal predicate, copula' order is reversed (12b, 13b):

- (12) a. *Én tanár vagyok.* (13) a. *János beteg volt.*
 I teacher am John ill was
 'I am a teacher.' 'John was ill.'
 b. *Én **nem** vagyok tanár.* b. *János **nem** volt beteg.*
 'I am not a teacher.' 'John was not ill.'

In locative and possessive sentences, the copula has to be spelled out also in 3rd person present tense indicative (14a, 15a). The 3rd person present tense indicative copula has a special negative form (the copula is incorporated into the negative particle) (14b, 15b). The negative copula occupies the pre-verb-modifier position of negated verbs. (In possessive sentences, the possessum, bearing a possessive suffix, is not a bare nominal acting as a verb modifier; hence its position is not affected by negation.)

- (14) a. *János otthon van.* (15) a. *Jánosnak vannak kutyái.*
 John at.home be.3SG John-DAT be-3PL dog-3SG-PL
 'John is at home.' 'John has dogs.'
 b. *János **nincs** otthon.* b. *Jánosnak **nincsenek** kutyái.*
 'John is not at home.' John-DAT not.be-3PL dog-3SG-PL
 'John does not have dogs.'

The negative copula can also license the minimizer *sem* (see 16a, 17a). When the *sem*-phrase licensed by it is moved into the immediately preverbal position, its *sem* merges with the negative copula, yielding *sincs* (16b, 17b).

- (16) a. ***Nincs** otthon János **sem**.* (17) a. ***Nincs** otthon egy fiú **sem**.*
 not.be-3SG at.home John either not.be-3SG at.home a boy at.all
 'John is not at home, either.' 'No boy is at home.'
 b. *János **sincs** otthon.* b. *Egy fiú **sincs** otthon.*
 'John is not at home, either.' 'No boy is at home.'

2.4. Negation in dependent/subordinate clauses

Dependent indicative declarative clauses are negated with the regular *nem* particle. In subjunctive clauses, expressing an unreal eventuality, selected by verbs or nominal predicates denoting wish, emotion, possibility, judgment, opinion, necessity, or future action, *nem* is replaced by *ne*, the negative particle also used in imperative and optative sentences. E.g.:

- (18) *Fontos, hogy a kutya ne jöjjön be.*
 important that the dog not come in
 'It is important that the dog should not come in.'

In non-finite negative clauses, i.e., in negated infinitival and participial phrases, the neutral 'verbal particle, verb' order can, but need not, be reversed. Cf.

- (19) a. *Fontos volna nem felejténi el a jelszót.*
 important be-COND-3SG not forget-INF PRT the password
 'It would be important not to forget the password.'
 b. *Fontos volna nem el-felejténi a jelszót.*
 'It would be important not to forget the password.'
- (20) a. *János el-ment, nem csukva be az ajtót maga után.*
 John PRT left not closing PRT the door-ACC himself behind
 'John left, not closing the door behind himself.'
 b. *János el-ment, nem be-csukva az ajtót maga után.*
 'John left, not closing the door behind himself.'

2.5. Other clausal negation constructions

An alternative pattern of negation, gradually disappearing from the language, is still allowed in a number of contexts. It is the preferred option in a single clause type: temporal clauses introduced by *amíg* 'until' (21). In subjunctive clauses (22a), conditional clauses (22b), and non-finite clauses (22c,d), it occurs as an alternative of the regular pattern discussed in Section 2.1. In this construction, the verbal particle precedes (rather than follows) the negated verb.

- (21) *Várom, amíg János vissza nem jön.*
 wait-I until John back not comes
 'I will wait until John comes back.'
- (22) a. *Fontos, hogy a kutya be ne jöjjön.*
 important that the dog in not come
 'It is important that the dog should not come in.'
 b. *Megharagszom, ha be nem jössz.*
 get.angry-1SG if in not come-2Sg
 'I get angry unless you come in.'
 c. *egy el nem olvasott könyv*
 a PRT not read book
 'a book not read'
 d. *egy soha el nem készülő dolgozat*
 a never PRT not prepared.getting paper
 'a paper never getting prepared'

In main clauses, the marked 'verbal particle, negative particle, verb' order has a special emotive value, and, accordingly, it mainly occurs in exclamative, imperative and optative sentences. It is also licensed in coordinate clauses introduced by *se(m)...se(m)* 'neither...nor'.

- (23) a. *Meg sem szólalt!*

- PRT not say.a.word-3SG
 'He did not even say a word!'
- b. *Be ne gyere!*
 in not come.IMP.2SG
 'Don't come in!'
- c. *Bárcsak el ne ment volna!*
 if.only away not go-PAST-3SG be-COND
 'If only he had not left!'
- d. *János se meg nem látogatta Pétert, se fel nem hívta.*
 John neither PRT not visit-PAST.3SG Peter-ACC nor PRT not call-PAST.3SG
 'John neither visited Peter, nor called him up.'

In another pattern of clausal negation, the negative particle *ne* of imperative and optative main clauses and subjunctive subordinate clauses merges with the complementizer *hogy* 'that'. The resulting *nehogy* does not elicit the reversal of the verbal particle and the verb.

- (24) a. *Nehogy be-engedd a kutyát!*
 not-that in let-IMP-2SG the dog-ACC
 'Don't let in the dog!'
- b. *Csak nehogy baj lenne /legyen!*
 only not-that trouble be-COND-3SG /be-SUBJ-3SG
 'If only there would not/should not be any trouble!'

In subordinate subjunctive clauses, there is some uncertainty whether *nehogy* 'not that' is a negative complementizer or just a negative particle. The complementizer *hogy* can be spelled out twice in such sentences, as shown in (25b,c), which argues for the negative particle status of *nehogy*:

- (25) a. *Vigyázz, nehogy be-jöjjön a kutya.*
 take.care not-that in come-SUBJ-3SG the dog
 'Take care so that the dog should not come in.'
- b. *Vigyázz, hogy nehogy bejöjjön a kutya.*
 'Take care so that the dog should not come in.'
- c. *Vigyázz, hogy a kutya nehogy bejöjjön.*
 'Take care so that the dog should not come in.'

On the other hand, *nehogy* – as opposed to *ne* – does not license a negative polarity pronoun (cf. Section 3.2.), which suggests that the pronoun is not a clause-mate of *ne*, i.e., the *hogy* element of *nehogy* is a proper complementizer, and *ne* represents an elliptical superordinate clause:

- (26) a. **Semmit nehogy egyél!* (cf. *Semmit ne egyél!*)
 nothing-ACC not-that eat-IMP.2SG nothing-ACC not eat-IMP.2SG
 'Do not eat anything!'
- b. **Nehogy egyél semmit!*
- c. *Nehogy egyél valamit!*
 not-that eat-IMP.2SG something-ACC
 'Do not eat anything!'

There are also rare, archaic complex complementizers involving the particle *sem*. In common, everyday language their *sem* element is absent. This optional *sem* is not a truthfunctional negative operator; it merely denotes the irrealty of the content of the subordinate clause.

- (27) a. *János okosabb annál, semhogy ezt elhiggye.*
 John smarter it-ADESS not-that this-ACC believe-SUBJ-3SG
 'John is smarter than believing this.'
- b. *János inkább akadályozta, semmint támogatta a tervet.*
 John rather blocked not-than supported the plan-ACC
 'John blocked rather than supported the plan.'
- c. *János okosabb, mintsem gondolnád.*
 John smarter than-not think-COND-2SG
 'John is smarter than you would think.'

3. Non-clausal negation

3.1. Negative replies

The short negative answer to a positive *yes-no* question is *Nem* 'No', with the verb and the verb modifier added optionally:

- (28) *A kutya meg-fogta a nyulat?*
 the dog PRT caught the rabbit-ACC
 'Did the dog catch the rabbit?'
Nem. (Nem fogta meg.)
 'No. (It did not catch it.)'

In the case of a negative *yes-no* question, the answer *Nem* 'No' means agreement with the negative truth value of the questioned proposition:

- (29) *A kutya nem fogta meg a nyulat?*
 the dog not caught PRT the rabbit-ACC
 'Did the dog not catch the rabbit?'
Nem. (Nem fogta meg.)
 'No. (It did not catch it.)'

Affirmative answers to negative questions consist in *De igen* 'But yes', with the verb modifier and the verb added optionally.

- (30) *A kutya nem fogta meg a nyulat?*
 the dog not caught PRT the rabbit-ACC
 'Did not the dog catch the rabbit?'
De igen. (Meg-fogta.)
 but yes (PRT caught)
 'Yes. (It did.)'

3.2. Negative indefinites and quantifiers

A bare indefinite, e.g. that in (3a), can be interpreted as a verb modifier or as a focus. In the former case, it is negated via clausal negation, with the word order 'negative particle, verb, NP_{verb modifier}' (31a). If a focussed indefinite is negated, the word order is 'negative particle, NP_{focus}, V' (31b).

- (31) a. *A kutya nem fogott nyulat.*
 the dog not caught rabbit-ACC
 'The dog did not catch any rabbit.'
 b. *A kutya nem NYULAT fogott.*
 the dog not rabbit-ACC caught
 'It was not a rabbit that the dog caught.'

Indefinites containing an indefinite article must be supplied with the minimizer *sem/se* in the scope of negation. Such indefinites appear either among the constituents following the negated verb (32a), or they are preposed into the focus position immediately preceding the verb (32b). In the latter case, *nem* is not spelled out, or, putting it differently, it merges into *sem*, and *sem* is interpreted as the carrier of negation (see the discussion of (6b)).

- (32) a. *A kutya nem fogott egy nyulat sem.*
 the dog not caught a rabbit at.all
 'The dog did not catch any rabbit.'
 b. *A kutya EGY NYULAT SEM fogott.*
 'The dog did not catch any rabbit.'

Hungarian is a negative concord language, i.e., negative indefinite and negative universal pronouns cooccur with a separate expression of sentential negation (cf. Haspelmath 1997/2004). Hungarian indefinite pronouns (*valaki* 'somebody', *valahol* 'somewhere', etc.) in the scope of negation, and universal pronouns (*mindenki* 'everybody', *mindenhol* 'everywhere', etc.) with scope over negation have identical negative polarity equivalents, composed of *sem/se* and the root morpheme of indefinite and universal pronouns, functioning as interrogative pronouns in themselves. Compare the set of interrogative, indefinite, universal, and negative pronouns:

(33) *Hungarian pronouns*

Interrogatives:	Indefinites:	Universals:	Negatives
<i>ki</i> 'who'	<i>valaki</i> 'somebody'	<i>mindenki</i> 'everybody'	<i>senki</i> 'nobody'
<i>mi</i> 'what'	<i>valami</i>	<i>minden</i>	<i>semmi</i>
<i>hol</i> 'where'	<i>valahol</i>	<i>mindenhol</i>	<i>sehol</i>
<i>mikor</i> 'when'	<i>valamikor</i>	<i>mindenkor</i>	<i>semmikor</i>
<i>hány</i> 'how many'	<i>valahány</i>	<i>mindahány</i>	<i>sehány</i>
etc.			

In many contexts, the negative pronouns, also referred to as *se*-pronouns, are ambiguous between a negative polarity existential reading ('it is not the case that anybody did...') and a negative polarity universal reading ('everybody did not...'). The two meanings are logically equivalent; however, the former is [-specific], whereas the latter is [+specific], denoting every member of a contextually determined set. In some cases the selectional restriction of the verb or the structural position of the pronoun only allows one of the two readings. E.g., when *senki* represents the subject of a verb expressing appearance or coming into being, requiring a nonspecific indefinite subject, it is an existential in the scope of negation:

- (34) *Nem érkezett senki.*
 not arrived nobody
 'Nobody arrived. [It is not the case that anybody arrived].'

When the *se*-pronoun occupies the canonical post-topic, pre-focus position of universal quantifiers, it only has the [+specific] universal meaning:

- (35) *Senki nem A DÉLI VONATTAL érkezett.*
 nobody not the noon train-with arrived
 'Nobody arrived with the TRAIN AT NOON. [For everybody, it was not the train at noon by which (s)he arrived].'

As illustrated by (34) and (35), a *se*-pronoun can be licensed by either a predicate-negating *nem* or a focus-negating *nem*. It can optionally be followed by the minimizer *sem*. When *sem* immediately precedes the negated verb or the negated focus, the negative particle is not spelled out; it has presumably merged into *sem*. Thus (34) and (35) also have the following versions:

- (36) a. *Nem érkezett senki sem.*
 not arrived nobody at.all
 'Nobody arrived.'
 b. *SENKI sem érkezett.*
- (37) a. *Nem a DÉLI VONATTAL érkezett senki sem.*
 not the noon train-with arrived nobody at.all
 'Nobody arrived with the TRAIN AT NOON. [For everybody, it was not the train at noon by which (s)he arrived].'
 b. *Senki sem A DÉLI VONATTAL érkezett.*

3.3. Abessive/caritive/privative negation

The Hungarian postposition corresponding to *without* is *nélkül* (38a). A *nélkül* PP can be adjectivalized by means of the suffix *-i* (38b). Denominal negative adjectives are derived by the suffix *-talan/telen*, *-atlan/etlen* (39), and verbal negative adjectives are derived by the suffix *-atlan/etlen* and *-hatatlan/hetetlen* (40) (for details, see Kiefer 2001).

- (38) a. *János pénz nélkül érkezett.*
 John money without arrived
 'John arrived without money.'
 b. *egy pénz nélkül-i diák*
 a money without-ADJ student
 'a moneyless student'
- (39) *pénz-telen, állás-talan diák*
 money-less, job-less student
- (40) a. *kér-etlen segítség, olvas-atlan könyv*
 solicit-NEG help read-NEG book
 'unsolicited help, unread book'

- b. *e-het-etlen étel, olvas-hat-atlan cikk*
 eat-POSS-NEG food read-POSS-NEG article
 ‘inedible food, unreadable article’

4. Other aspects of negation

4.1. The scope of negation

As discussed in Section 3.2., a negative existential, e.g., *senki*, is ambiguous: it can function either as the negative polarity equivalent of *valaki* ‘somebody’, or as the negative polarity equivalent of *mindenki* ‘everybody’. When functioning as a negative existential, it is in the scope of negation, and it is in the scope of focus, as well, if the sentence contains one:

- (41) *TAVALY nem felvételizett senki nyelvészetből.*
 last.year not took.entrance.exam nobody linguistics-from
 ‘It was last year that nobody took an entrance exam in linguistics. [It was last year that there wasn’t anybody who took an entrance exam in linguistics.]’

A *se*-pronoun functioning as a universal, on the other hand, takes immediate scope over negation (i.e., *senki nem...* means ‘everybody was such that (s)he did not...’). If negation is subsumed by a focus, the scope order will be focus > universal > negation. The fact that the negative quantifier is in the scope focus is indicated by its destressing.

- (42) *A MÁSODIK ÉVFOLYAMON nem bukott meg senki nyelvészetből.*
 the second-year class-in not failed PRT nobody linguistics-in
 ‘It was in the second-year class that nobody failed in linguistics. [It was in the second-year class that everybody was such that (s)he did not fail in linguistics.]’

If the negative particle negates the focus, the scope order will be: universal > negation > focus:

- (43) *Senkit nem A PROFESSZOR buktatott meg nyelvészetből.*
 nobody-ACC not the professor failed PRT linguistics-in
 ‘Nobody was failed in linguistics by the PROFESSOR. [For everybody, it was not the professor who failed him/her in linguistics].’

4.2. Negative polarity

The strong negative polarity items licensed by a clause-mate negative particle are the *se*-pronouns illustrated in (34)-(43). The weak negative polarity items licensed by a negative element in a superordinate clause, e.g., a negative particle, the postposition *anélkül*, ‘without’, or the matrix verb *tagad* ‘deny’ are presented in (44a-c). Weak negative polarity items also occur in other types of nonveridical/unreal clauses, e.g., in questions and certain modal contexts, but they are not allowed in veridical sentences – cf. Tóth (1999).

- (44) a. *János el-ment anélkül, hogy bármit is /akármit is /valamit*
 John PRT left it-without that anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC
is mondott volna.
 PRT say-PAST-3SG be-COND
 ‘John left without saying anything.’

- b. *Nem igaz, hogy bármit is /akármit is /valamit is mondott.*
 not true that anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT said-3SG
 'It is not true that he said anything.'
- c. *Tagadta, hogy bármit is /akármit is /valamit is látott*
 denied-3SG that anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT saw-3SG
volna.
 be- COND
 'He denied that he had seen anything.'

cf.

- (45) **János bármit is /akármit is /valamit is látott.*
 John anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT/anything-ACC PRT saw-3SG
 'John saw anything.'

4.3. Case marking under negation

Negation does not alter case marking.

4.4. Reinforcing negation

Negation is commonly reinforced by the minimizer *sem*, cliticized to indefinites in the scope of negation and to *se*-pronouns (recall examples 6, 10, 17, 32, 36, 37). *Nem* itself can also be reinforced by the modifier *egyáltalán*, e.g.:

- (46) a. *János egyáltalán nem volt fáradt.*
 John at.all not was tired
 'John was not at all tired.'
- b. *Egyáltalán nem JÁNOS volt a hibás.*
 at.all not John was the faulty
 'It was not at all John who was to blame.'

4.5. Negation in complex sentences

Two negative clauses can be coordinated by the particles *se(m)...**se(m)...* 'neither..., nor...'. *Se(m)...* *se(m)...* coordinates either comments of focus constructions (47a) or comments of neutral sentences (47b). (An alternative word order of the latter construction is shown in (23d).) The topic, if there is one, precedes *sem* (47a,b). In topicless sentences, *sem* is clause-initial (47c).

- (47) a. *János se(m) PÉTERT nem ismeri, se(m) MARIVAL nem találkozott még.*
 John neither Peter-ACC not knows nor Mary-with not met yet
 'John neither knows Peter, nor has met Mary yet.'
- b. *János se(m) nem látogatta meg Pétert, se(m) nem hívta fel.*
 John neither not visited PRT Peter-ACC nor not called up
 'John neither visited Peter, nor called him up.'
- c. *Se(m) nem esik, se(m) nem fúj a szél.*
 neither not rains nor not blows the wind
 'Neither is it raining, nor is the wind blowing.'

A negative and a positive sentence can be conjoined by the conjunctions *de* or *hanem*:

- (48) a. *János nem beszél németül, de tud oroszul.*
 John not speaks German but knows Russian
 ‘John does not speak German but he knows Russian.’
- b. *János nem NÉMETÜL beszél, hanem OROSZUL.*
 John not German speaks but Russian
 ‘It is not German that John speaks but Russian.’
- c. *Nem JÁNOS beszél németül, hanem PÉTER.*
 not John speaks German but Peter
 ‘It is not John that speaks German but Peter.’

The conjunctions *de* and *hanem* are not synonymous. *De* is used when the negative and positive statements to be conjoined can be simultaneously true. The negative and the positive conjuncts can follow in either order.

- (49) a. *A kutya meg-fogta a nyulat, de nem ette meg.*
 the dog PRT caught the rabbit but not ate PRT
 ‘The dog caught the rabbit but did not eat it.’
- b. *A kutya nem fogta meg a nyulat, de meg-kergette.*
 the dog not caught PRT the rabbit but PRT chased
 ‘The dog did not catch the rabbit but chased it.’

A negative and a positive statement conjoined by *hanem*, on the other hand, are alternatives; the truth of one excludes the truth of the other. *Hanem* presupposes the presence of a negative particle in the first conjunct; *hanem* introduces the second, positive conjunct. *Hanem* is particularly common in the case of contrasted foci.

- (50) *A kutya nem A NYULAT fogta meg, hanem A KACSÁT.*
 the dog not the rabbit-ACC caught PRT but the duck-ACC
 ‘It was not the rabbit that the dog caught but it was the duck.’

4.5. Metalinguistic negation

Metalinguistic negation, i.e., the negation of a linguistic utterance – as opposed to the truthfunctional negation of a proposition –, is expressed in Hungarian by the regular negative particle *nem*; however, the metalinguistic *nem* does not elicit the reversal of the verbal particle and the verb, and does not licence a *se*-pronoun in its scope (51b). The negated utterance and the utterance regarded as correct are often coordinated by the contrastive conjunction *hanem*.

- (51) a. *János nem össze-szidta a gyerekeket, hanem nevelte őket*
 John not PRT scolded the children-ACC but educated them
 ‘John did not scold the children; he educated them.’
- b. **János nem össze-szidott sehány gyereket, hanem nevelte őket.*
 John not PRT scolded any children-ACC but educated them
 ‘John did not scold any children; he educated them.’

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