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.*
   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

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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 kutyá!*
   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:
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.
    I teacher am
    'I am a teacher.'

b. Én nem vagyok tanár.
    'I am not a teacher.'

(13) a. János beteg volt.
    John ill was
    'John was ill.'

b. János nem volt beteg.
    '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.
    John at.home be.3SG
    'John is at home.'

b. János nincs otthon.
    'John is not at home.'

    John-DAT be-3PL dog-3SG-PL
    'John has dogs.'

b. Jánosnak nincsenek kutyái.
    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).

    not.be-3SG at.home John either
    'John is not at home, either.'

b. János sincs otthon.
    'John is not at home, either.'

(17) a. Nincs otthon egy fiú sem.
    not.be-3SG at.home a boy at.all
    'No boy is at home.'

b. Egy fiú sincs otthon.
    '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 felejteni 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-felejteni 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) *Várok, 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 láto gatta 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 /le geny!
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 kutyá.
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 kutyá.
'Take care so that the dog should not come in.'

c. Vigyázz, hogy a kutyá 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 egyé!
nothing-ACC not-that eat-IMP.2SG nothing-ACC not eat-IMP.2SG
'Do not eat anything!'

b. *Nehogy egyé semmit!

c. Nehogy egyé 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 irreality of the content of the subordinate clause.

   John smarter it-ADESS not-that this-ACC believe-SUBJ-3SG
   'John is smarter than believing this.'
   John rather blocked not-than supported the plan-ACC
   'John blocked rather than supported the plan.'
   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 \(se\mbox{m}/se\) 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**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrogatives:</th>
<th>Indefinites:</th>
<th>Universals:</th>
<th>Negatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ki 'who'</td>
<td>valaki 'somebody'</td>
<td>mindenki 'everybody'</td>
<td>senki 'nobody'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mi 'what'</td>
<td>valami</td>
<td>minden</td>
<td>semmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hol 'where'</td>
<td>valahol</td>
<td>mindenhol</td>
<td>sehol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mikor 'when'</td>
<td>valamikor</td>
<td>mindenkor</td>
<td>semmikor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hány 'how many'</td>
<td>valahány</td>
<td>mindahány</td>
<td>sehány</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**
amoneyless student

(39) **pénz-telen, állás-talan diák**
money-less, job-less student

(40) a. **kér-etlen segítség, olvas-atlan könyv**
solicite-NEG help read-NEG book
'un-solicited help, unread book'
b. e-het-etlen étel, olvas-hat-atlan cikk
‘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) TÁVALY nem felvételizett senki nyelvészetből.

‘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.

‘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 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 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    
'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.:

John not 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:
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.

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.

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*.

References


Surányi, Balázs. 2006b. Quantification and focus in Negative Concord. Lingua 116, 272-313.