A RELEVANCE THEORETIC ANALYSIS OF
NOT THAT SENTENCES:
"NOT THAT THERE IS ANYTHING WRONG WITH THAT"[1]

Gerald P. Delahunty

Abstract

Not that sentences (NTSs)*,* like the one in the title, have been little studied. This paper, based on a corpus of authentic instances of the form, provides the first thorough examination of the interpretations assigned to NTSs in context and an account for those interpretations. The brief version of the account is that the NTS structure encodes procedural instructions to the effect that NTSs are to be interpreted as the rejection of conclusions derived from contextual assumptions.

Keywords: Contextual conclusions, Corpus linguistics, Discourse, Implicature, Juxtaposition, Markedness, (metalinguistic) Negation, *Not that*, Procedural instructions, Relevance theory.

1. Introduction

It is probably accurate to say that most if not all languages include non-canonical structures, i.e., structures that provide some syntactic, morphological, or morphosyntactic means of distinguishing these forms from more typical or basic ones, primarily for the purpose of redistributing, redirecting, or manipulating the flow of information in a discourse by altering the way in which the structure is processed in relation to its context. Some of these devices are well known, but there are others whose structures and discourse properties have been barely noticed. It is with one of these orphans that I will be concerned in this paper. This construction is illustrated in the title and referred to here as the *Not that sentence*, or NTS for short.

---

[1] This example of a *not that sentence* is from "The outing" episode of the TV show "Seinfeld," in which Jerry is thought to be gay. he denies this, and immediately follows his denial with the example in the title. Part of the mystery and humor of examples like this is that they undercut their own credibility. Although Jerry is saying that there is nothing wrong with being gay, somehow we are not fully convinced that he believes this. (See the discussion of Cassio's *Not that I love you not* in the body of the paper.) I am grateful to Debby Thompson for bringing this example of a *not that sentence* to my attention, and to Cathy Topf for tracking it down.

The following (based on Huddleston and Pullum's *Cambridge grammar of the English language* (CGEL) 2002 ch. 16) are perhaps the best known and best researched types of non-canonical structures in English. (See also Birner and Ward 1998; Ward and Birner 2004.)

(1)   a. Topicalizing (complement preposing):
                [Perkins] his name is___ (Le Carré 1962: 74)
        b. Postposing:
                He read ___ at one sitting [all of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina].
        c. Inversion:
                [In the fridge] were [a hotdog and some leftover beans].
        d. Existential:
                [There] is [a hotdog] in the fridge.
        e. Extraposition:
                [It] is not at all clear [that the Iraqi situation has been improved].
        f. Left dislocation:
                [All my financial records], [they] were destroyed in the fire.
        g. Right dislocation:
                Not that [they] minded one bit, [the mammies], . . .
                (McCabe 1995: 9)
        h. Clefts: (See Prince 1978)
                It clefts:
                        It's [the use of CLEFTS] that he wants to explain ___
                Wh-clefts:
                        [What] he wants to explain ___ is [the use of CLEFTS].
                Reverse Wh-clefts:
                        [The use of CLEFTS] is [what] he wants to explain ___
                        (Lambrecht 2001: 497).
                i. Passive:
                        [The houses] were destroyed ___ by tornadoes.

Significantly less well known are the following two types:

(2)   Inferentials: It wasn't that she gave them unmentionable sexual favors.
                        (Delahunty 2001: 518)
(3)   The X is (not) that S:
                a.   The thing is that I don't believe in this permissive society.
                b.   La verdad es que eran una pareja extraña.
                       'The truth is that they were a strange couple.'
                       (Delahunty and Velazquez-Castillo 2002).

Completely unknown (so far as I can tell from my literature searches) except for brief discussions in the *CollinsCoBuild English grammar* (Sinclair 1990: 359) (CC), CGEL (2002: 811), and in Horn (1989: 435-6), all of which I discuss below, is the construction that is the topic of this paper, illustrated by the instance italicized in (4) (cf. *Nobody minds*):

(4)   The time is long ago in Ireland and we are in a quiet village where nothing much has happened for around a hundred years. *Not that anybody minds*. They are more than happy with the way things are, working hard in the fields, saying their prayers at night and being good for the Lord who looks down over all. (McCabe 1995: 33)[2]

In this paper I attempt to provide answers to two related questions: 1. What interpretations are assigned to NTSs in context? 2. Why are those the assigned interpretations? The brief version of the answer is that all NTSs encode procedures that instruct their interpreters to reject the proposition represented by their Ss as a conclusion derived from contextual implications made relevant by their utterance.[3]

---

[2]   English is not the only language to have structures analogous to NTSs. French also has them: *Non (pas)* *que ça fasse une différence* 'Not that that makes any difference.' My thanks to Mary Vogl for this example. My thanks also to Fabienne Toupin for her generous reading and extensive commentary on this paper, as well as the following French example, which is akin to the Seinfeld NTS above:

| *Non pas* | *que j'aie* | *quoi soit contra eux,* | *bien au contraire* |
| Not | that I have | anything against them, | quite the opposite |

[3]   The data on which this paper is based consists of 88 NTSs culled unsystematically from texts of various types that I happened to be reading, including:

poetry	newspapers	essays
novels	email	history
news magazines	biography	literary criticism
linguistics	various sciences	

Statistics would reflect my reading habits rather more than the distribution of NTSs across genres, so I provide only the number of examples in my data and occasional approximate percentages.

Not included in these data and study are expressions similar in various ways to NTSs. I do not deal with fragments such as the phrase italicized in the following:

i.   He'd scared the Fat Man enough to hold him a day or two. But he couldn't count on much more than that. The son of a bitch was the kind who just might call the cops on him. That wasn't what Fleck wanted to deal with. *Not with Mama involved*. He had to get the ten thousand.
(Hillerman 1989: 140)

In this example, the *Not* is followed by a PP, not an S, as in the NTSs with which I am concerned. More importantly, however, is the fact that it provides an explanation for the situation described by the prior sentence, it does not reject a conclusion derived from it.

Nor do I deal with negative elliptical sentences that function as answers to direct questions such as the following:

ii.   "Did Single's make a point of doling out free villas?"
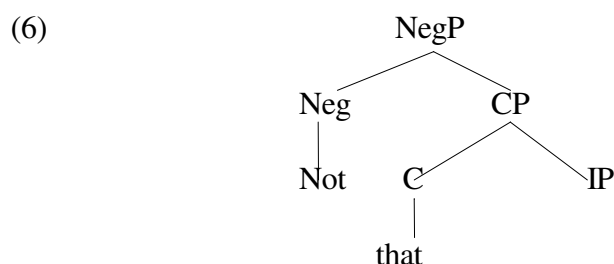   *"Not that I'm aware of."* (Le Carré 1969: 113).

Such examples appear to be bare argument ellipses (Cullicover and Jackendoff 2005) or "stripped" expressions (Ross 1969).

2. Description of *Not that sentences*

From the point of view of the surface sequence of their constituents, NTSs consist of *not that* and a complete S.

(5)   Not that [s Raphael cared]. (McLaverty 2002: 243)

The structure underlying this surface string is more problematic, as CGEL points out. The syntax of the construction is not a focus of this paper but the following is a reasonable conjecture about its structure:

(6)

```
                        NegP
                       /    \
                    Neg      CP
                     |      /   \
                    Not    C     IP
                           |
                          that
```

While the *that* of NTSs indicates that they are syntactically subordinate, they are typically punctuated as complete sentences, that is, initiated with a capital letter and completed with a period or equivalent:

(7)   Not that it follows. (Le Carré 1962: 27)

They may begin paragraphs and even book chapters:

(8)   "Yes," said Mr. Cunningham, the outgoing principal, and "Yes," said the young freshfaced priest whose name was Desmond Stokes, who would one day be almost insanely loathed by the man whose hand he now shook, and whose heart he was also destined to break.

`Brothers`

Not that it seemed like that back in those days of course, oh no. Back then there seemed there was nobody like good old Father Stokes who in a couple of years would be taking over from The Monsignor as boss of the school and who just could not do enough for Raphael to help him get settled in. (McCabe 1995: 87)

3. Prior analyses/mentions

As I noted, very little has been published about NTSs except what I have been able to find in CC (1990), CGEL (2002), and Horn (1989). I discuss these in turn.

3.1. *CC*

CC categorizes NTSs as concessives, saying,

> You can use 'not that' instead of using 'although' and a negative. For example, instead of saying 'I have decided to leave, although no one will miss me', you can say 'I have decided to leave - not that anyone will miss me' (1990: 359).

> Some of my examples can certainly be paraphrased reasonably closely by *although* and a negated clause. For example, the NTS in the following can be replaced by *although it doesn't matter*:

(9)   "Mr. Harriman?"
       "Major," he replied lightly. "*Not that it matters*, old boy."
       (Le Carré 1962: 96)

> However, not all of my examples can be so replaced. For example, the NTS in the following cannot be replaced by a negative *although* clause: *Although Christina wasn't not well liked*, or by a positive *although* clause which eliminates the double negative: *Although Christina was well liked*.

(10)   Her aunt . . . had never attempted to make her a match. The effort would have been regarded as comic throughout the baronies. *Not that Christina wasn't well liked*. She was. (O'Brien 1987[1931]: 293)

Whatever concessive effects NTSs communicate they cannot always be captured by paraphrasing with a negative *although* clause.
       CC also claims that,

> [c]lauses beginning with 'not that' always go after a main clause.

> *I wouldn't want to give away any secrets at this stage - <u>not that</u> we've got any answers yet.*
> *Kunta continued to sleep in Omoro's hut for the next seven nights - <u>not that</u> anyone seemed to notice or care.* (1990: 359)

This suggests that the NTS is grammatically subordinate to a main clause. The punctuation data I adduced shows that producers of NTSs don't seem to think of them in this way. It seems better to regard NTSs as functionally, if not grammatically, dependent on other discourse elements. If we translate this into CC terms, we might say that NTSs always follow the discourse element they depend on. While this is true for all of the examples I have collected, it does not seem to be true in general, as the following, created, example shows:

(11)   Not that I want to embarrass you, but you have egg on your tie.

In this example, the NTS precedes the main clause, contra CC.

3.2. *CGEL*

CGEL devotes a section to NTSs, brief enough to be quoted in full [CGEL's numbering]:

> [15] i. *The film never quite generates his trademark level of icy*
> *paranoia. Not that it doesn't try.*
> ii. *I don't think they should be allowed to use our public health*
> *services - not that I have anything against immigrants, of*
> *course.*
> iii. *There are spare blankets in here, not that you'll have any need*
> *of them.*

> This construction may be glossed as "This is not, however, to say/suggest that . . ."
> In each case, the *not* calls up a proposition that might be naturally assumed or
> expected in the context, and denies that it is in fact true. In [i] what is denied is that
> the film doesn't try to generate the icy paranoia usually found in the director's
> works; in [ii] that the speaker has xenophobic views; and in [iii] that there is
> reason to think that it will be useful to know where the spare blankets are kept
> because you might be cold enough to need them. None of these are linguistically
> explicit.
> The syntactic analysis is somewhat problematic. In terms of function the
> construction occupies a non-embedded position, like a main clause. In terms of its
> structure, we might take *not* as modifying the content clause (as in *not all* it
> modifies *all*, and so on). If so, the whole construction will have the form of a
> subordinate clause even though it is not functionally subordinate; as with other
> cases of this kind (such as *That it should have come to this!*) there is implicit rather
> than explicit functional subordination. (CGEL 2002: 811)

On the whole, this is accurate as far as it goes; but it doesn't go very far. In
particular we need a more precise paraphrase and a more precise notion of the NTS's role
in context than just that it "calls up a proposition that might be naturally assumed or
expected in the context, and denies that it is in fact true."
NTSs do not in fact appear to deny the truth of the propositions their S's represent.
Consider the following example:

(12)   I was getting on splendidly, *not that I'd say it myself*, until such times as the
authorities thought it better that I carry on my own particular Philosophical
Investigations outside the academic establishment. (McLaverty 2002: 339)

According to CGEL, this NTS should deny that the speaker himself would say that he was
getting along splendidly. However, he has just said that he was getting along splendidly. If
the NTS actually denied the truth of its proposition, then the text should be contradictory
and incoherent. It is neither. So what if anything does the NTS actually deny? According
to relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995 [1986]: 176-183), an utterance licenses the

interpreter to hypothesize a basic explicature and higher level explicatures[4]. The first higher level explicature licensed by an assertion is typically of the form *Utterer says that p*, where *p* is the proposition represented by the basic explicature. In denying that he says that *p*, the speaker is also denying any commitment to higher level explicatures such as that he is asserting that he was getting along splendidly, that he believes that he was getting along splendidly, that it is true that he was getting along splendidly, or that he himself would say that he was getting along splendidly, thereby implicating that someone else might say that he was getting along splendidly. Because these higher level explicatures are hypothesized in the search for optimal relevance, this NTS denies the relevance of its proposition as a conclusion to be derived in the context. It is reasonable to assume that, in general, NTSs deny not the truth, but the contextual relevance, of their propositions.

We would also like to know the degree of naturalness or expectedness required before an NTS may occur. In fact, many NTSs in my data seem to occur quite unexpectedly, to come right out of the (con)textual blue. Their relevance is apparent only after they have been processed, as in:

(13)   The voices of the choir rose loudly in the *Te Deum*, the final canticle of the Mass. Anastasius kept his face expressionless, trying not to grimace at the noise. He had never grown accustomed to the Frankish chant, whose unfamiliar tones grated upon his ears like the croaking of blackbirds. Remembering the pure sweet harmonies of the Roman chant, Anastasius felt a sharp stab of homesickness.
        Not that his time here in Aachen had been wasted. Following his father's instructions, Anastasius set out to win the Emperor's support. He began by courting Lothar's friends and intimates, and making himself agreeable to Lothar's wife, Ermengard. He assiduously charmed and flattered the Frankish nobility, impressing them all with his knowledge of Scripture and especially of Greek - a rare accomplishment. (Cross 1996: 349-50)

Nothing in the paragraph prior to this NTS provides a basis for bringing time-wasting to mind. Anastasius' homesickness appears to be due to the unfamiliarity of the Frankish chant. It is only after processing the NTS that one might think of time being wasted as a factor in his homesickness or that his homesickness might have caused him to waste time.

Furthermore, CGEL's connection of NTSs to exclamations seems misplaced. First, I have found no pairs of the form *Not that S; that S!* Second, Zanuttini and Portner (2003) argue that exclamative clauses have three defining characteristics:

a) they contain a WH operator-variable structure;
b) they contain an abstract morpheme FACT in the CP domain;
c) they widen the domain of quantification for the WH operator, which gives rise to the set of alternative propositions denoted by the sentence.

---

[4]   An explicature is an ostensibly communicated assumption, inferentially developed from the logical form of an utterance. A higher level explicature is an explicature embedded under a speech act description, especially the generic ones of *saying*, *telling*, and *asking*, and/or under an attitudinal or other predicate (Sperber and Wilson 1995 [1986]).

NTSs certainly do not contain a WH operator-variable structure; nor, because they are not factive, do they contain a FACT morpheme; and they do not communicate "'a sense of surprise', 'unexpectedness', 'extreme degree', and the like" that Zanuttini and Portner claim for exclamatives and derive from their concept of WIDENING.

3.3. *Horn*

Horn (1989: 435-6) mentions NTSs in passing, making two claims about them. First, he claims that what NTSs express "can be expressed as" negative inferentials (which he refers to as clefts with propositional scope). Second, he claims that NTSs are one of the many surface forms that metalinguistic negation (MLN) can take. I begin with his claim that NTSs and negative inferentials are synonymous and then review the claim that NTSs express metalinguistic negation.[5]

---

[5] For the sake of completeness I briefly compare NTSs with canonical negative sentences.

NTSs and canonical negative sentences are generally not interchangeable, at least not without a change of meaning or textual coherence. The greatest changes occur when an NTS is substituted for a canonical *not* sentence:

(i)   If somehow it had become even remotely like the way it used to be between them, walking along the shore and staring out at the yachts bobbing on the horizon and so on, but *it hadn't* [cf. *#Not that it had*], for the old boatshed days were still with him and to tell the truth, if he had arrived home to hear she had had a stroke, *it wouldn't* [cf. *#Not that it would*] have bothered him very much. (McCabe 1995: 56.)

In these instances replacing the canonical negative sentence with NTS results in unacceptable pieces of discourse, not just changes of meaning. Clearly the NTS and the canonical negative do rather different discourse work. In the cases above, the ordinary negative denies the truth of its positive congener:

        a. It had become … l ike the way it used to be between them, …
        b. It would have bothered him very much.

NTSs, if my thesis is correct, reject a conclusion derivable from relevant local context, and in these instances, the contents of the NTSs prevent the NTSs from relating as an NTS should to its prior context.

        Substituting ordinary negative sentences for NTSs may result in equally dramatic textual changes:

(ii)   Madonna loves England – and the English press, who have remade her into a British everywoman, love her back. *Not that they got invited to her highly public private wedding*. By Carl Swanson. ("Desperately seeking Madonna," *Brill's Content* March 2001: 99)

The canonical negative sentence corresponding to NTS20 in (ii) substantially disrupts the text here:

        a.   Madonna loves England – and the English press, who have remade her into a British everywoman, love her back. *#They didn't get invited to her highly public private wedding*.

The substitution of an NTS for its canonical negative congener results in the loss of information, specifically information on how to relate to the proposition represented by the negative sentence to its local context.

        In the following instance, the NTS indicates that the audience should derive the conclusion that Cahill's effort did him some good and reject this conclusion. The canonical negative corresponding to the NTS, *It didn't do him any good*, merely adds this information to the interpretation of the text without indicating how it is to be integrated.

3.3.1. *NTSs and negative inferentials are synonymous*

Horn's comments on the relationship between NTSs and negative inferentials are worth quoting in full, as these seem to be the only remarks he makes about *not that* sentences [his numbering]:

> Shakespeare seems to have been particularly fond of the multifarious potential of the related *not that . . . but that . . .* formula for rectification. Sentence (136a) is the more familiar citation, but (136b) the more revealing; Bianca here consciously exploits the metalinguistic function of the *not that* form to twist Cassio's assurance of love into a quibble over syntax:

> (136) a. Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.
>   (*Julius Caesar*, 3.2)
>   b. *Cassio:*   Leave me for this time.
>   *Bianca:*   Leave you? Wherefore?
>   *Cassio:*   I do attend here on the general
>   And think it no addition
>   To have him see me womaned.
>   *Bianca:*   Why, I pray you?
>   *Cassio:*   Not that I love you not.
>   *Bianca:*   But that you do not love me! (*Othello*, 3.4)

> The words that Bianca manages to put into Cassio's mouth can be expressed as: *'Tis not that I love you not, but that I do not love you.*

Note that "the words that Bianca manages to put into Cassio's mouth" are in the syntactic form of a negative inferential. However, there is a lot more going on here than "a quibble over syntax." Whereas Cassio denies that not loving her is the reason why he wants Bianca to leave, Bianca straightforwardly denies that Cassio loves her. His choice of construction denies that Bianca should conclude that he loves her not, but, crucially, it does not deny the truth of that proposition, and so does not implicate the truth of its opposite, namely, that he does love her. Bianca is not fooled, nor is she merely quibbling over syntax. Shakespeare has her making a major meaning distinction with a minimal syntactic contrast. The analytic issue is how the *not that* construction accomplishes all of this.

Horn does not develop his claim that negative inferentials express what *not that* sentences express, so we do not know how he would explain this paraphrase relationship, although the most obvious connection would be that the *not that* construction is derived

---

'Before that,' continued McGrath, 'banker Jim Lacey and his family were kidnapped in November 1993 and only released after a ransom of three hundred and forty thousand pounds was handed over the same day. That was one of Dublin gangster Martin Cahill's efforts. **Not that it did him any good**.'

     He flicked through a bunch of papers he was holding and continued. (Carson 1998: 171)

from the inferential by the (relatively free) deletion of the inferential's *it is*. However, because deletions must be recoverable, the *it is* would have to have an antecedent. This is not the case for any of my examples. Moreover, because *it is* is not a phrase and deletion applies to phrases, any rule deleting *it is* would require considerable motivation to avoid being *ad hoc*.

To explore further possible structural relations between negative inferentials and NTSs, let's begin with the question of whether there is a positive structure that corresponds to the NTS. This is important because there are clear positive analogs for negative inferentials, as in the following:

(14)   When the movie was over I hurried Utch and the kids to the car. *It was not that I felt we had to avoid the Winters at that moment; **it was just that it was raining***. (Irving 1973: 213-4)

If the NTS has a positive analog, then it should be of the form *that S*. The following seems to suggest that such a form exists:

(15)   Not that I loved Caesar less, but *that I loved Rome more.* (Julius Caesar 3.2)

The following suggests that modern versions exist, though without the complementizer in the second conjunct:

(16)   Not that he was doing anything wrong but *he feared that others might reach wrong conclusions*!

When we insert *that* as complementizer in the second conjunct, the grammaticality of the whole suffers:

(17)   ?Not that he was doing anything wrong but *that he feared that others might reach wrong conclusions*!

The *that S* construction in (18) seems to offer further support for the existence of positive congeners to *not that* clauses:

(18)   It is not that the literary artist or any other writer in other contexts does not have the choice of making his own meanings, but *that the constitutive conventions fundamentally restrict the set of elements available for combination in specific utterances*. (Carter 1990: 596)

However, while the italicized clause in (18) may be the positive analog of an NTS, it is more likely to be the second of a pair of conjoined inferentials (*It is not that . . ., (but) it is that . . .*) the second of which is reduced by the deletion of *It is*. Alternatively, it could be the second of a pair of conjoined tensed clauses, which constitute a conjoined complement of *It is not*.

While there may be a *that S* structure which is the positive congener of NTSs, this structure certainly does not have a discourse distribution that is at all similar to that of the NTS. For example, one cannot say:

(19)   #"Major," he said lightly. "That it matters."
       #She's no beauty; but then neither am I. *That she's not ugly*; but then neither am I.

Inferentials allow various expression types between *not* and *that*; NTSs do not.[6] Compare the members of the following pair:

(20)   a.   It is not *simply* that I have forgotten the long trail of my own
            accommodations.
       b.   *Not *simply* that I have forgotten the long trail of my own
            accommodations.

Negative inferentials allow a modal in the matrix; NTSs, having no matrix clause, cannot. Consider the following (partially constructed) examples:

(21)   a.   It *may* be that no teacher is teaching about language itself.
            But it *should* not be that teachers are ignorant about language
            itself.
       b.   *May* that no teacher is teaching about language itself.
            *But *should* not that teachers are ignorant about language itself.

Inferentials are syntactically complete sentences and so can occur where an S is required; NTSs are not, and so cannot occur in such contexts.

(22)   a.   If it wasn't that I'm afraid you might be tired after your walk, . . .
            (Somerville and Ross 1977 [1894])
       b.   *If not that I'm afraid you might be tired after your walk, . . .
(23)   a.   Perhaps, then, it is not that what is denied must first have been
            asserted . . . but simply that knowledge of a positive fact counts for
            more than knowledge of a negative one. (Horn 1989: 47)
       b.   *Perhaps, then, not that what is denied must first have been asserted
             . ..

Root transformations, such as subject/auxiliary inversion, may apply in the matrix of inferentials, but again, because NTSs have no matrix, these transformations cannot apply to them.

(24)   a.   It was not that he did not write . . . (London *Times* 1988)
       b.   *Did not that he not write . . .

---

[6] The only exception I have found is one in which the interjection *indeed* is inserted between *not* and *that*: *Not, **indeed**, that I oughtn't to be ashamed to talk like this -* (O'Brien 1988 [1934]: 191)

But more important than the structural differences is the issue of whether the two sentence types can substitute for each other in discourse. The answer to this is not a simple yes or no. Some of my NTSs may be replaced by a negative inferential:

(25)   "The boy's an absolute fool; I told Fielding at the beginning of the Half that he wouldn't possibly get his Remove. Perkins his name is, a nice enough boy; head of Fielding's house. He'd have been lucky to get thirty percent. . . . sixty-one, Snow gave him. I haven't seen the papers yet, of course, but it's impossible, quite impossible."
      They sat down.
      "*Not that I didn't want the boy to get on*. He's a nice enough boy, nothing special, but well-mannered. Mrs. Rode and I meant to have him to tea this Half. We would have, in fact, if it hadn't been for . . ." (Le Carré 1962: 74)

The inferential, *It's not that I didn't want the boy to get on*, seems to work just as well as the NTS here, with little if any change of meaning. About half of my NTS examples allow substitutions like this, but the other half resist being replaced by negative inferentials, for example:

(26)   a.   Madonna loves England - and the English press, who have remade her into a British everywoman, love her back. *Not that they got invited to her highly public private wedding*. By Carl Swanson. (*Brill's Content* March 2001: 99)
       b.   *It's not that they got invited to her highly public private wedding.

And negative inferentials may even more strongly resist being replaced by NTSs. Consider the following from Horn himself (1989: 47)

(27)   a.   Aristotle himself implies elsewhere that he is thinking more of epistemological than logical or ontological priority for affirmation over negation: . . .
            Perhaps, then, *it is not that what is denied must first have been asserted*.
       b.   *Perhaps then, not that what is denied must first have been asserted . . .

Clearly, either NTSs and negative inferentials are not related, or, at the very least, there are considerable (and at this point, unknown) contextual constraints on their intersubstitutability.
      Second, given that inferentials frequently occur in tandems, that is, as sequences of a negative inferential followed by a positive one, it is particularly surprising if we assume that NTSs and inferentials are variants, that so few NTSs show up in my data followed by a *that S* structure. And indeed, when we try to create a tandem of an NTS and its putative positive congener based on an original inferential tandem, the result may be an incoherent text, as in:

(28)   a.   When the movie was over I hurried Utch and the kids to the car. *It
            was not that I felt we had to avoid the Winters at that moment; it
            was just that it was raining*. (Irving 1973: 213-4)
        b.   *Not that I felt we had to avoid the Winters at that moment; just that
            it was raining.

The NTS version of the tandem inferential above is ill-formed in comparison with the original. I have found only one tandem of the form *Not that S; that S*, though I have found a few pairs of the forms *Not that S; but S* and *Not that S; but that S*. Perhaps a factor here is that *but* conjoins both *that* clauses, indicating that the two clauses are to be processed as a unit - as a rejection of a conclusion and its rectification. In general, therefore, the burden of the evidence is that what NTSs express cannot be expressed by negative inferentials.[7]

3.3.2. *NTSs are metalinguistic*

In this section I deal with Horn's (1989: 402) claim that NTSs express metalinguistic negation. In addition I examine, with respect to NTSs, Carston's claim that metalinguistic expressions are echoic.[8]

Horn claims that MLN,

whether or not it is overtly expressed, is compatible only with PPIs (positive polarity items) [his numbering]:

(77)   a. Like hell, I{still love you/*love you anymore}
        b. Like fudge, he's {already washed up/*washed up yet}

---

[7] A possible source of support for Horn's position may be that some languages appear not to have forms analogous to English NTSs. Spanish, for example, uses a negative inferential (e.g., *No es que me tratara bien* '(It is) not that he treated me well') where English would use either a negative inferential or an NTS (Maura Velazquez-Castillo p.c.). Irish is similar. De Bhaldraithe (1959: 480) gives the following instances:

(i)   It is not that I care
       Not that I care
       Ní hé gur miste liom
       Not is that care with-me
(ii)   It is not that I fear him
       Not that I fear him
       Ní hé go bhfuil eagla orm roimhe.
       Not is that be fear on-me before-him

[8] An echoic utterance is "the use of a representation (mental or public) to attribute another representation (mental or public) to someone else (or to oneself at some other time) and, crucially, to express an attitude to it. The representation represented may be linguistic/formal (e.g. phonological, syntactic) or semantic/conceptual and the relation between the two representations is one of resemblance" (Carston 2002: 377).

Positive polarity items include expressions such as *some*, *already*, *rather*, *sort of*, *kind of*, *fairly*, *tolerably*, *still*. NTSs are certainly compatible with PPIs, as the following show:

(29)   a. Not that I still love you.
        b. Not that he has already left.
        c. Not that he doesn't go there sometimes.

However, many of the instances of NTSs that I have collected contain negative polarity items (bolded):

(30)   a. Not that he was doing *anything* wrong. (*Irish Emigrant* 5/22/2000)
        b. Not that it mattered *all that much*. (McCabe 1995: 18-19)
        c. Not that he was pushed *one way or another* what her name was.
           (McCabe 1995: 65)
        d. Not that they minded *one bit*. (McCabe 1995: 90)
        e. Not that it made *a blind bit of difference* what they thought.
           (McCabe 1995: 107)

One of Horn's defining characteristics of a metalinguistic utterance is that it is an expression of the form . . . *not X but Y* . . ., that is, as a rejection of some utterance X, "on any grounds whatever" (1989: 374), followed by a "rectification," Y, introduced by *but* (1989: 402ff). Some of my examples fit this formula:

(31)   I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. *Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached this goal;* **but I press on to make it my own**, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (Saint Paul)[9]

Others are followed by rectifications introduced by other expressions such as *still*:

(32)   *Not that Pilar or her great friend Colette was ever anything other than kind -* **still, Anna felt an intruder in their world, and in the last three terms was simply too sad for their relentless gaiety**. (O'Brien 1988 [1942]: 271)

Or *at least*:

(33)   At the Catholic church, the priests haven't seen confession lines like these in years. "I think the war is unjust," says Father Thomas Davis, who has worn out both ears listening to Marines. "But these young men have no choice. I try to send them off with some peace."

---

[9] Thanks to Laura Gatzkiewicz for this example, who suggests that it could be the basis for a comparative study of NTS form and function, given the number of languages the Epistle has been translated into.

> *Not that wartime here is without joy.* **At least the local violin player is feasting**. Maura Kropke plays at weddings, and Marines have been making her cell phone dance. (Reilly 2003: 104)

And in some instances the rectification is simply juxtaposed to the NTS:

(34)   Christina had no particular ambitions, which was well, considering her handicaps. Illegitimate and without a half-penny of a fortune, her chances of marriage among the small, respectable farmers round about were non-existent. Her aunt had explained this to her, and had never attempted to make her a match. The effort would have been regarded as comic throughout the baronies. *Not that Christina wasn't well liked*. **She was**. (O'Brien 1987[1931]: 293)

However, in a number of instances, a *but* following an NTS does not introduce a rectification. For instance:

(35)   There was great laughing for a while and then Alec decided it was all a wee bit more serious. He smiled as he stroked Malachy's cheek, ever so slowly as he whispered "You've really fucked it up now, haven't you, Dudgeon? *Not that it's any big surprise or anything*. **But by Jesus you've really gone and done a good job on it - I have to hand it to you**. Can't even handle a bunch of kids and now look what's happened. (McCabe 1995: 176)

The *but* sentence in this example provides, not a rectification, but an evaluation of Dudgeon's behavior. It is a continuation of the commentary that Alec provides prior to the NTS. The NTS might be regarded as an interjection between two elements of that commentary.

And in some instances the utterance following the NTS expands on the utterance prior to the NTS:

(36)   She was wearing something dark green with a skirt that came far below her knees. She had pretty knees, *not that he'd seen them often*, **and pretty ankles**. (Hillerman 1990: 281)

In this instance, the NTS comments on the assertion that she had pretty knees, and the post NTS utterance adds that she also had pretty ankles. Here again the NTS feels like an interjection.

Overall, fewer than a third of my NTS examples are followed by a rectification. The remainder are followed by utterances with a variety of discourse functions, whose specifics will have to await further research.

Carston (2002: 295) gathers together the following characteristics of metalinguistic negation, culled from Horn's work, her own, and other sources:

a. They consist of a negative sentence followed by a 'rectification' clause. As I have noted, only some of my NTSs are followed by a rectification.

b. They are rejoinders to previous utterances, aspects of which they reject. I return to this in my discussion of (f) below.

c. When spoken, they tend to receive the so-called contradiction contour (involving a final rise within the negative clause). This does not seem to be the case for NTSs; *Not that it matters* has ordinary assertoric intonation.

d. Taken descriptively they are (truth-conditional) contradictions. But there is no truth conditional contradiction in:

(37)   By conventional standards I made a bad job of being a mother. So I apologise. *Not that that's much use now*. I just wanted to put it on record. (Lively 1987: 82)

e. Addressees are often garden-pathed by them, in that their first interpretation of the negative sentence is descriptive, and, when they process the second clause, they find they must 'go back' and reanalyse the negative sentence as metalinguistic. This is not the case for NTSs, probably because of their special marking (i.e., *not that*), and because there is often no rectification clause to force reanalysis. Conceivably this special marking developed as a device to prevent garden-pathing, and thus save the extra processing effort reanalysis requires.

f. They involve an element of quotation, or mention, or representational use. NTSs do not seem to work this way. Contrast the following examples from Carston (2002: 295) with their NTS analogs:

(38)   a. Jane doesn't eat tom[eɪDouz]; she eats tom [aːtouz]
            Not that Jane eats tom[eɪDouz]; she eats tom [aːtouz]
        b. The points aren't at different locuses; they're at different loci.
            ?Not that the points are at different locuses; they're at different loci.
        c. She hasn't read some of Chomsky's books; she has read everything
            he ever wrote.
            ?Not that she has read some of Chomsky's books; she has read
            everything he ever wrote.
        d. I won't deprive you of my lecture on negation; I'll spare you it.
            ?Not that I'll deprive you of my lecture on negation; I'll spare you it.
        e. We're not halfway there; we've got halfway to go.
            ?Not that we're halfway there; we've got halfway to go.
        f. Poor old Mr Dean's not a bachelor; he's an unmarried man.
            ?Not that poor old Mr Dean's a bachelor; he's an unmarried man.

Overall, it would appear that the NTS is not a metalinguistic construction.

Carston (2002: 267-271, 294-311) proposes an alternative understanding of metalinguistic negation, and indeed of metalinguistic utterances in general. I leave it to readers to review Carston's support for her position and present only her conclusions here. She argues, first, that metalinguistic utterances are echoic; second, that negation is not semantically ambiguous, but is, instead, a univocal operator which takes wide scope and a proposition as its argument; third, that metalinguistic utterances are metarepresentational, that is, "the use of a representation to represent (through a relation of resemblance) another representation (including, possibly, itself)," (p. 378) and that the metarepresented elements

form a proposition; fourth, that while ordinary descriptive negation is generally followed by an utterance giving evidence for the belief represented in the negative utterance, this is not the case for metalinguistic negation. Compare:

(39)   a.   He didn't see the sign: he was looking the wrong way.
               (cf. He didn't see the sign: not that he was looking the right way.)
        b.   I'm not his daughter; he's my father. (Carston 2002:303)

Carston's paraphrases of (39a, b) (and footnote 5) demonstrate the differences between the descriptive and the metalinguistic negation:

(40)   a.   He didn't see the sign because he was looking the wrong way.
        b.   !I'm not his daughter because he's my father.

Fifth, with respect to the *because* test, she argues that presupposition denials pattern like ordinary descriptive negation (Carston 2002: 303-4):

(41)   a.   The king of France isn't bald: France doesn't have a king.
        b.   The king of France isn't bald because France doesn't have a king.

A negative utterance denying a presupposition cannot be replaced by its NTS congener without at least a change in meaning:

        c.   ?The King of France isn't bald: not that France has a King.

Sixth, Carston argues that metarepresented elements occur as complements of higher level propositions such as *is properly said/described as* via pragmatic enrichment, along the lines of the following schema (2002: 306):

(42)   semantically   not [The F is G]; there is no F
        via pragmatic enrichment (a):   [The F is not-G]; there is no F
        via pragmatic enrichment (b):   not ['The F is G' is properly said];
                                             there is no F

For example, she analyses (43a) [adapted from her (49a)] as (43b) [her (53a)]:

(43)   a.   Johnny hasn't eaten SOME of the cakes; he's eaten ALL of them.
        b.   not (Johnny's eaten quantity x of the cakes where x is properly
               described as 'some'); Johnny's eaten quantity x of the cakes where x
               is properly described as 'all'

Like the instances of descriptive negation, and unlike the instances of metalinguistic negation, the second utterance/S in the instances of presupposition denial explains why the first is defectively formulated.

I've shown that NTSs do not pattern like metalinguistic negation or presupposition denials, but given Carston's reanalysis of metalinguistic negation, we should attempt to

determine whether NTSs can be described as echoic utterances. An echoic utterance is metarepresentational in that it represents a representation of some aspect of the form or content of an utterance, attributes that representation to someone other than the speaker at the moment of utterance, and expresses an attitude towards that aspect (Carston 2002: 298, 377; Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 238).

First, it is possible for an NTS to represent a point of view other than that of the speaker at the time of utterance, as (12), repeated here, shows:

(12)   I was getting on splendidly, *not that I'd say it myself*, until such time as the authorities thought it better that I carry on my own particular Philosophical Investigations outside the academic establishment. (McLaverty 2002: 339)

However, there is no reason to believe that the representation represented by NTSs must be attributed to anyone other than the speaker at the time of utterance, as a quick review of the instances I have cited will demonstrate, suggesting that NTSs are not echoic.

Second, is 'properly called/described/expressed as' an adequate paraphrase of the NTS? I suggest that it is not:

(44)   However, I don't want to commit suicide - *not that I'm a Christian*,
       [???not (*p* where *p* is properly described as 'I'm a Christian')]
       but I simply don't want to do such a thing. (Osaragi 2000: 151)

While Carston's solution has some potential attractions, not the least of which are its formal clarity, preciseness, and succinctness, it nonetheless seems to leave out aspects of the communicated meanings of the NTSs. In particular, for the NTS in (44), the evocation of the background beliefs and their causal roles in not committing suicide, specifically that Christian doctrine prohibits suicide. So a better paraphrase of that NTS would be something along the lines of 'Do not conclude that because I don't want to commit suicide that I am a Christian. I am not.'

At this point we know that NTSs are not metalinguistic, either under Horn's original formulation or under Carston's reanalysis of MLN as metarepresentation, so they do not fit her schema for echoic utterances. We also know that NTSs are unlike presupposition denials and descriptive negations.

4. Potential alternative analyses

In this section I investigate the potential of three important research strands concerned with non-canonical sentence types to see if any of them can account for the discourse characteristics of NTSs.

4. 1. *Information structure*

The first approach attempts to correlate "information structure" with syntactic structure. This approach traces its origins to the Prague School of linguistics and is currently most

closely associated with the work of Ellen Prince (e.g., 1978, 1985), Gregory Ward, and Betty Birner. Information structure is conceived of in terms of old and new information, and more delicately, discourse old/new and hearer old/new. These researchers have provided analyses of a range of non-canonical structures, including clefts of various sorts, preposed and postposed constructions, left and right dislocated constructions, expletive *there* constructions, passives, and inverted constructions. Their basic principle is that given or old information occurs before new; however, individual constructions impose their specific discourse/hearer old/new configurations. For example, Ward and Birner (2004: 162-3) argue that the left dislocated phrase in sentences such as, *One of the guys I work with, he said he bought over $100 in Powerball tickets* (their [2]) may be either discourse or hearer new. The issue for this paper is whether this approach provides an adequate account for the discourse characteristics of NTSs. The answer, I believe, is "no."

It must be said at the outset that (as far as I can determine) information structure theorists have not proposed an analysis for NTSs, consequently I do not know whether they would regard NTSs as representing old or new information. However, given that the S of an NTS represents a proposition to be understood as a conclusion derived from its local context, it would seem reasonable to say that at least that proposition is old information. However, as this old information is rejected it is also reasonable to assume that this rejection is new. Interestingly, the negator is in the canonical old information position, viz., sentence initial, and the S is in the canonical new information position, viz., later in the sentence.

NTSs can occur as discourse openers, and indeed, along with a rationale clause, as the sole utterance in a discourse.

(11)   Not that I want to embarrass you, but there is egg on your shirt.

In cases like this the NTS can only represent new information, presumably new to both the discourse and the hearer, who must access or construct relevant assumptions to interpret them, e.g., that someone might be embarrassed by having egg on his tie (and being told about it).

Remember that I claim that NTSs represent the rejection of a conclusion. However, there is nothing in the metalanguage of the information structure approach that is equivalent to "conclusion." The closest might be the term "inferable" from earlier versions of this approach. However, "inferable" simply means connected in some way with prior discourse but not having been already evoked. Later versions of the approach incorporate inferable under discourse-old. Information that is discourse-old "has been explicitly evoked in the prior discourse" (Ward and Birner 2004: 155). Information may be evoked by partially ordered sets, posets, such as "type/subtype, entity/attribute, part/whole, identity, etc." (Ward and Birner 2004: 159). While the specific poset to which "conclusion" belongs, logical relations, is not included in the lists provided by Ward and Birner or Hirschberg (1991), given the unconstrained nature of such lists, there is nothing to prevent us from adding another relationship. However, we must be fully aware of the *ad hoc* nature of this addition and should prefer an analysis in which "conclusion" is a principled element.

The information structure approach deals with elements of sentences, e.g., NPs, PPs, VPs, etc., which are in non-canonical positions, placed there by movement or other

device, depending upon the syntactic analysis adopted. While NTSs are clearly non-canonical, they are so in ways that differ from the kinds of constructions with which information structure theorists have typically been concerned. Conceivably NTSs might be derived by raising *not* from a canonical intra-sentential position (putting aside the issue of the provenance of *that*). The particulars of this movement are so different from regular -*neg*-raising as to constitute a separate rule, one that is applicable in the generation of NTSs alone and is consequently *ad hoc*.

The information structure approach looks to context for elements to which bridge assumptions can be made, based on antecedently known knowledge frames, for example, fridges have doors, beds have feet. The RT approach is much less constrained in that the hypothesized bridging assumption need not have been connected to its antecedent before the NTS is interpreted; recall my discussion of (13) above. Overall, the information structure approach appears unable to provide an adequate account of the discourse uses of NTSs.

4.2. *Levinson's markedness heuristic: Default generalized implicature*

Levinson's (2000) markedness (M-)heuristic states that, "What's said in an abnormal way isn't normal," "What is said simply, briefly, in an unmarked way picks up the stereotypical interpretation; if in contrast a marked expression is used, it is suggested that the stereotypical interpretation should be avoided." This formulation simply says, "Avoid the stereotypical interpretation" when presented with a non-canonical form. It does not predict which of the potentially infinite number of non-stereotypical interpretations to choose.

Levinson goes on to provide four illustrative examples. The first contrasts a simple positive sentence with its corresponding double negative whose interpretation "suggests a rather more remote possibility." The second contrasts a simple sentence with *stop* with the corresponding explicit causative with *cause to stop* whose interpretation "suggests some deviation from the expected chain of events" . . . 'indirectly, not in the normal way, e.g., by use of the emergency brake'." The third contrasts a simple description, *Sue smiled*, with an elaborate paraphrase, *The corners of Sue's lips turned slightly upward*, which, again, suggests a deviation from the stereotypical. The fourth contrasts the interpretations of expressions with pronouns (which induce "assumptions of local coreference") and those with full lexical NPs (which resist "local coreference") (Levinson 2000: 38-9).

I don't think that anyone would want to argue that NTSs are unmarked forms, so I won't make that case. Levinson's approach would involve the implicit contrast between an NTS and a corresponding unmarked form. This leaves us with the problem of determining what that unmarked form might be. In some cases the choice is straightforward; it is simply the canonical negative, *Not that it matters/It doesn't matter*. In other cases it seems to be a positive, *Not that Christina wasn't well liked/Christina was well liked*. In some cases the context may block all of the unmarked possibilities:

(45)   Then I listened to Father's arguments and was turned to accept his point of view. What an unbelievable honor! What an amazing piece of luck! A moldering widow of thirty-three offered a position that any woman in the country would die for. A

chance to see for myself the intimacies of the aristocrats my husband used to tell me of. A chance to see with my own eyes the beautiful rooms of the imperial quarters, the dances, the ceremonies I had until now depended on others to describe. I ought to regard it, if nothing else, as a chance to absorb the atmosphere where Genji dwelt. When I thought of it this way, I could hardly refuse.

   Not that I could refuse in any case. (cf. I could (not) refuse in any case.)

   I remembered how I had once grieved over my fate when Father told me I was to marry, and then gradually I recovered. (Dalby 2001: 245)

Levinson's M heuristic seems inappropriate as the device to account for the interpretation of NTSs for the following three reasons. First, there is no single unmarked form corresponding to NTSs: Sometimes a canonical negation corresponds; at other times a positive. Second, sometimes no corresponding unmarked form will fit in the context of the NTS. Third, the interpretation of NTSs can always be paraphrased as "Do not assume/conclude that S." This uniqueness is in stark contrast with the heterogeneity of interpretations derivable via the M heuristic. While the apparent underlying interpretation in all of Levinson's cases ("deviation from the stereotypical") remains constant, its local interpretations differ considerably.

4.3. *Carston's analysis of juxtaposed utterances: Fact/explanation of that fact*

Carston's (2002) (see also Blakemore (1987: 123) discussion of the interpretation of juxtaposed, as opposed to conjoined sentences suggests another possible analysis for NTSs. NTSs are typically juxtaposed to the utterances upon which they depend for their interpretation. It is to be expected therefore that the interpretation of NTSs would be similar to that of juxtaposed utterances, as Carston views them. She argues that when two utterances are juxtaposed the dominant or default interpretation is that the first represents a fact while the second represents an explanation of that fact. She illustrates this with examples such as the following from Bar Lev and Palacas (1980):

(46) a. Max didn't go to school; he got sick.
   b. Max fell; he slipped on a banana skin.
   c. Max can't read; he's a linguist.

Carston invokes two sources of support for her analysis. First, Blakemore (1987: 123) claims that conjoined sentences satisfy the expectation of relevance as a unit, whereas juxtaposed clauses are planned as separate utterances, each individually satisfying the principle of relevance. In this respect they are like questions, specifically 'Why?' or 'How come?' questions, and their answers. Given that an NTS and its prior are juxtaposed rather than conjoined (indeed, as we will see, cannot be conjoined), it is worth wondering whether these two are interpreted as fact-explanation of that fact. As I noted in section 2, NTSs are generally punctuated as separate sentences.

Carston's second source of support is, as she admits, somewhat speculative. She argues that,

we are explanation-seeking creatures, so that, in general, when we register a new fact/assumption about the world, we look for an explanation for it. When the source of that new fact is an utterance, the speaker can assume that a further utterance on her part which supplies an explanation for it will be relevant to the addressee (2002: 237).

An analysis of NTSs based on Carston's proposal seems to have at least initial plausibility, as the following NTS is a direct response to a *why* question/demand and is specifically characterized as an answer:

(47)   *Brutus:* [. . .] If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: *Not that I loved Caesar less*, but that I loved Rome more. (Julius Caesar 3.2)

Given that NTSs are negative, we must assume that they reject or deny an explanation rather than assert one, for example:

(48)   a.   She hoped that perhaps Miss Robertson would give her a piece
              of ribbon. *Not that she would wear it*, but she'd like to show it to
              Norrie O'Dowd . . . (O'Brien 1988 [1942]: 197)

can be paraphrased as:

        b.   It was not because she would wear it, but because she'd like to show it to
              Norrie O'Dowd that she hoped that perhaps Miss Robertson would give
              her a piece of ribbon.

According to Blakemore (1987) and Carston (2002) juxtaposed and conjoined utterances are processed differently and thus have distinct interpretations, specifically, only juxtaposed utterances can have the question/answer or fact/explanation-of-that-fact interpretation. The following examples demonstrate that NTSs cannot be conjoined to the utterances that immediately precede them, that is, they must be juxtaposed to them, and therefore should be interpreted as explanations of the facts represented by the immediately prior utterance.

(49)   a.   However, I don't want to commit suicide - *not that I'm a
              Christian*, but I simply don't want to do such a thing."
              (Osaragi 2000: 151)
        b.   *However, I don't want to commit suicide - and not that I'm a
              Christian, but I simply don't want to do such a thing."

NTSs differ in this respect from negative inferentials, which can be introduced by *and*:

(50)   a.   I begged him to excuse me, and get some other partner - but no,
              not he; after aspiring to my hand, there was nobody else in the

room he could bear to think of; ***and*** *it was not that he wanted*
merely to dance, he wanted to be with ***me***. Oh! such nonsense! (Austen
1972 [1818]:143)

As the text above stands, the negative inferential cannot be replaced by an analogous NTS introduced by *and*:

b.   *. . . there was nobody else in the room he could bear to think of;
         and not that he wanted merely to dance, he wanted to be with
         me.

If we eliminate the conjunction, then the NTS can replace the inferential, with a very similar meaning:

c.   . . . there was nobody else in the room he could bear to think of;
         not that he wanted merely to dance, he wanted to be with *me*.

However, discourse analysts who like to name the relations between utterances/text segments, have identified a range of such relations. According to Blakemore (1997a, 2001), some analysts (Hovy and Maier 1995) recognize a large number (70) and others (Sanders et al. 1993) a small number (4). Clearly the range of interpretations that may obtain between pairs of juxtaposed utterances is far broader than just fact/explanation[10], as a quick selection of pairs of juxtaposed utterances/sentences from any text will demonstrate, for example:

(51)   (a) I noticed that the rows of clerks behind us had stopped their incessant writing
        and appeared to be listening with rapt attention to our conversation. (b) Forbes
        observed this lapse of discipline as well, and one stern look from him was enough
        to send the clerks back to their labors. (Millet 1998: 90)

Sentences (a) and (b) here are juxtaposed, however they are not related (or relatable) as fact/explanation of that fact. Sequences such as this undermine Carston's analysis of the interpretation of juxtaposed utterances, and make that analysis inapplicable to NTSs.

And indeed one of Carston's own examples seems not to fit her analysis particularly well. Of (52) she writes,

the forward directed cause-consequence relation is strongly favored in the . . .
conjunction cases, . . . this is not inevitably so for the juxtaposed cases. In [these],
the second sentence might well be taken as giving the cause or the reason for the
behaviour described in the first. Both . . . interpretations are compatible with
commonsense assumptions about human interactions, and, without further
contextualization, neither is obviously preferable to the other.

---

[10] Relevance theorists, particularly Blakemore (2001), Blass (1990), Wilson (1998) insist that this naming of relations is redundant and that all that is required is that audiences hypothesize, subject to the search for optimal relevance, the relevance theoretic role an utterance plays in its context. These roles are explicature, implicated premise(s), and implicated conclusion(s) (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 615).

(52)   He hit her. She screamed.

So (52) should be interpretable as either *She screamed because he hit her* or *He hit her because she screamed*. While both of these interpretations seem available to (52), the first, contra Carston, seems preferable, and would follow naturally from a principle such as Grice's (1968) "Be orderly."

Carston's (2002) conception of juxtaposition is undefined. She simply illustrates the idea, assuming that everyone knows what juxtaposition means, viz., side-by-side placement. She claims that (46c), *Max can't read; he's a linguist*, is interpreted as *Max can't read because he's a linguist*, i.e., that the second of the two sentences explains the fact represented by the first.

However, this approach runs into at least the following four problems. First, as I noted above, various discourse analysts have identified relations between utterances ranging in number from four to seventy.

Second, we can interpolate an interjection between the two utterances/sentences and the two relevant ones retain the fact/explanation interpretation:

(53)   Max can't read. Watch your step! He's a linguist.

So Carston's notion of juxtaposition needs to be replaced by one that allows for a relativized (or relevant) juxtaposition, namely, that in the interpretation of one utterance, an interpreter can ignore some utterances in the search for an utterance that provides the relevant context for the utterance being interpreted. In the example above, the interpreter would go back to "Max can't read," ignoring the interpolated, "Watch your step!" because s/he would find the latter irrelevant to the interpretation of "He's a linguist," whereas the former would provide an appropriate context.

Third, if we reverse the order of the two utterances/sentences, we can get the same interpretation:

(54)   Max is a linguist. He can't read.

Here again, though it is the first in the sequence, the utterance/sentence "Max is a linguist" explains why "He can't read." This interpretation is not as strong in this case as it is in the other order, but it is nonetheless there.

Finally, according to Carston (2002), explanation includes premises, conclusions, elaborations, and evidence. While some of my examples allow for some of these interpretations, all of my examples can be interpreted as conclusions. It is important to note that the examples that Carston adduces in support of her position are unmarked. It is reasonable to expect that when a construction is marked it will have a range of interpretation distinct from that of its unmarked counterparts (see Levinson 2000). The NTS is a marked construction with a specialized interpretation.

5. NTSs as implicated conclusions

My data consists of 88 NTSs and their relevant contexts. In each instance the NTS rejects a conclusion; this is the only interpretation common to all of my examples. It follows that any account must involve either a general principle which is somehow activated when the form is uttered or that the form encodes a specific meaning. In this section I discuss two potential RT accounts for the interpretation of NTSs[11]. For example, the NTS in (55) rejects the conclusion that a healthy Frank or Lombard was afraid of contagion in the medical sense, which could potentially follow from the premises: (1) that according to the laws of both the Lombards and the Franks, people who were lepers or lunatics or were monstrously deformed could have no place in a society whose ideal was the healthy warrior; and (2) that these laws were formulated on the basis of a medical understanding of contagion.

(55)   In the tribal world of the German barbarians, the more vigorous members of the tribe might look after any number of weaker members whom they chose to adopt. But not where those weaker members were lepers or lunatics, or were monstrously deformed. According to the laws of both the Lombards and the Franks, people like these could have no place in a society whose ideal was the healthy warrior. *Not that the healthy Frank or Lombard was afraid of contagion in the medical sense*; his fear was rather a superstitious dread of those on whom the Gods had so obviously set the mark of their disapproval. (McCall 1979: 133)

As I noted, any adequate analysis must account for the fact that all NTSs can be interpreted as rejected conclusions. We saw that neither an information structure account nor a neo-Gricean markedness account is adequate. My claim here is that NTSs encode procedural instructions on how to integrate them into their contexts (see Blakemore (1987, 1997b) on the conceptual/procedural distinction). Before we deal with that aspect of the interpretation of NTSs, let's take a brief overview of how RT imagines utterances are to be interpreted in context.

According to Sperber and Wilson's (1995 [1986]: 270) *Presumption of Optimal Relevance (revised)*:

a.   The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it.
b.   The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences.

On the basis of this presumption, the hearer sets out to construct a hypothesis about the speaker's intended meaning that is consistent with the principle that an utterance conveys

---

[11] Because all my NTS examples are interpreted in the same way, namely as rejected conclusions, an analysis of them as particularized implicatures would miss an important generalization. This is because a particularized implicature is unique to a local context and computed specifically as part of the interpretation of that context. If the context changes, the particularized implicature must change also. However, NTSs always have the same interpretation, viz., an instruction to the interpreter to derive the proposition represented by the S as a conclusion from local context and to reject that conclusion.

its own optimal relevance. A stimulus is relevant to the extent that it licenses adequate contextual effects for no gratuitous processing efforts.

Contextual effects are "the ways in which a new piece of information may interact with contextual assumptions to yield an improvement in the hearer's overall representation of the world. They are not confined to new assumptions derived from combining new information with contextual assumptions, but may also include increased evidence for existing assumptions or even the elimination of existing assumptions" (Blakemore 1997b: 93-4). The central claim of this paper is that NTSs eliminate assumptions, though not necessarily ones that exist in the mind of the interpreter prior to the processing of the NTS, as my discussion of examples (11) and (13) demonstrates[12]. Contextual effects come with processing costs: The lower the processing cost, the greater the relevance of a communication; the greater the processing costs, the lower the relevance.

Establishing the relevance of an utterance, requires several steps, synopsized in Wilson and Sperber (2004: 615) as subtasks in the overall comprehension process:

a) Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about explicit content (EXPLICATURES) via decoding, disambiguation, reference resolution, and other pragmatic processes.
b) Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual assumptions (IMPLICATED PREMISES).
c) Constructing an appropriate hypothesis about the intended contextual implications (IMPLICATED CONCLUSIONS).

The first RT possibility is that an NTS licenses the creation of a higher order explicature such as, "Do not assume/conclude that S." I see two main problems with this analysis. First, what motivation is there for this explicature rather than some other? One could argue that something like Levinson's M heuristic is at work, but then the same criticisms I leveled at that would apply here also. Second, the imperative mood and the verbs *assume* and *conclude* suggest procedures rather than explicatures, which typically are in the indicative and include speech act terms such as *say*, *believe*, *regret*, and manner adverbials such as *frankly*.

The second RT approach seems more likely, namely that the NTS encodes a procedure to the effect that the interpreter is to reject the proposition represented by the S of the NTS as a conclusion derived from local context. In support of this analysis we have the fact that NTSs are always interpreted in this way, strongly suggesting a conventional interpretation. We also have the fact that this interpretation, though conventional, is not conceptual. Except for the one example with an interjection, none of my examples

---

[12] Fabienne Toupin says that "if the idea is for a speaker to warn [an interpreter] away from an unintended reading, then the unintended reading in question must exist in the mind of the interpreter prior to the processing of the NTS, **or at least** *the speaker must believe that it does indeed exist*. Otherwise, … the whole pragmatic move would be pointless." I think that this may be true in many instances, e.g., (9), but it cannot be true of (11), (12), or (13). Speakers utter NTSs believing that interpreters will be able to construct contextual assumptions which will allow them to construct interpretations of the NTSs. In the case of (13), the relevance of the NTS becomes apparent only after the reader has processed some of the post-NTS sentences, which illustrate Anastasius' use of his time. The NTS in this piece of text is used to effect a topic shift, while keeping the pre- and post-NTS texts connected.

includes anything in addition to *not that*, and none allows further structure. Nor can *not that* be altered without changing the interpretation of the sentence. In addition, *that* has no paraphrasable meaning. *Not that* is a fixed structure with a fixed interpretation, namely the procedural instruction to the interpreter to interpret the proposition associated with the S of the NTS as a conclusion derived from local context, and to reject that conclusion.

According to RT, a marked construction, such as the NTS, should, because of the extra costs required to process it, license more assumptions than any unmarked counterpart (see 4.2. above). The extra information licensed by an NTS is that its proposition is to be interpreted as a conclusion derived from its context and rejected. In the following paragraphs I show how I believe this works.

Let's look at (9) again:

(9)   "Mr. Harriman?"
        "Major," he replied lightly. "*Not that it matters*, old boy."
        (LeCarré 1962: 96)

This NTS is to be interpreted in a context in which Harriman has just corrected Smiley's choice of address term. We might hypothesize that the basic explicature of "Major" is "My correct title is 'Major'," or the like. The basic explicature of the NTS might be "It doesn't matter which title you address me (Harriman) by." Given this correction we might hypothesize that the implicated premises are :

(56)   If X corrects Y about Z, then Z matters to X.
        Harriman has corrected Smiley about Smiley's choice of title for
        Harriman.

From these premises we can hypothesize the following implicated conclusion:

(57)   Smiley's choice of title for Harriman matters to Harriman.

The NTS rejects this conclusion.
        Consider another example:

(58)   Of course, while campaigning, Owens won't be able to admit that there was
        anything wrong with TABOR in the first place. He likes to say that this is
        TABOR's way of self-correcting.
            After all, he has been traveling the country - *not that he'll necessarily tell
        us where or who paid* - arguing that TABOR is the answer to every problem.
            You can say he has been inconsistent on this issue.
            Not me. I'll just say he has been flexible. (Littwin 2005)

Here the NTS occurs in the context in which Littwin says that Governor Owens has been traveling the country. An initial hypothesis for the basic explicature of the NTS could be, "Governor Owens will not necessarily tell us where he has been traveling around the country or who has been paying for that travel."

Given this context and this explicature, a reasonable hypothesis for implicated premises would be:

(59)   Governor Owens has been traveling the country.
        If a state governor travels the country then s/he will necessarily tell the press/citizens of his/her state where s/he has been traveling and who has been paying for that travel.

A likely implicated conclusion would be:

(60)   Governor Owens will necessarily tell the press/citizens of Colorado where he has been traveling and who has been paying for that travel.

The NTS rejects this conclusion.
        The chains of reasoning may be quite long, involving several implicated premises:

(61)   I say Jane, what a perfect character you and I should make if we could be shaken together. My liveliness and your solidity would produce perfection. *Not that I presume to insinuate that some people may not think you perfection already.* (Austen 1964 [1816])

(62) Implicated premises:
        To remark on whether someone (of higher rank) is perfection or not is
                to presume.
        To say that X and Y together would produce perfection is to implicate
                that neither X nor Y alone is perfection.
        To implicate that someone is not perfection is to implicate something
                negative about that person.
        To implicate something negative about someone is to insinuate.
        If X says that X and Y together would produce perfection, then X
                presumes to insinuate that Y is not perfection already.
        E has said that E and J together would produce perfection.
        Though X may implicate that Y is not perfection, other people may
                think that Y is perfection.

(63) Implicated conclusion:
        E presumes to insinuate that some people may not think J perfection
                already.

The NTS rejects this conclusion.
        The general pattern appears to be that an NTS instructs the interpreter to construct a derivation in the following way:

        1. Construct a basic explicature for the NTS
        2. Construct implicated premises:
                a.   If C (assumptions derived from context), then P (assumption

represented by S of NTS)
    b.   C
3. Derive implicated conclusion(s):
    P
4. Reject P.

C must be constructed as part of the search for optimal relevance; the proposition represented by the S of NTS is an explicature developed from (the S of) the NTS, also according to the search for optimal relevance.

6. NTS as complement of *so*

We should not think of NTSs as entirely egregious expressions. In fact, the procedure they encode appears to be the complement of that encoded by one use of *so*, as proposed by Blakemore (1987, 1988, 1996, 1997b, 2002, 2004).   Blakemore argues that this use of *so* instructs its interpreter to process its complement as a conclusion derivable from context. She argues that given the nature of communication, at least as conceived of by RT, it is to be expected that languages would include expressions indicating how other expressions are to be interpreted/processed - "linguistic meaning may encode not just constituents of conceptual representation but also instructions or procedures for manipulating them in inferences," (1997b: 95) thereby minimizing processing costs. She claims that *so* encodes a procedure that,

> constrain[s] the inferential computations that [a] proposition enters into - or, in other words, its relevance. . . . More specifically, *so* encodes the procedural information . . . :

> Process the proposition expressed [by the sentence introduced by *so*] as a conclusion. (1997b: 95)

By the same token, it would be surprising if languages did not have expressions which warned interpreters away from particular interpretations. My claim is that the NTS is just such an expression.

Like *so*, NTSs indicate that their complement propositions are to be integrated with their contexts as conclusions. They differ from *so* in that these conclusions are to be rejected. To see this, let's look at some examples taken from Hobbs (1979) and used in Blakemore (1997b and elsewhere) to demonstrate the discourse work done by *so*.

(64)   a. Tom can open Bill's safe.
        b. He knows the combination.
        c. So he knows the combination.

According to Blakemore, (b) is indeterminate between an interpretation as a conclusion derivable from (a) and other contextual assumptions, or as evidence for (a). Because of the presence of *so*, (c) can only be interpreted as a conclusion derivable from (a) and other

assumptions. Consequently *so* eliminates a potential interpretation, thereby reducing the interpreter's processing costs.

To the data set above we can add:

d. Not that he knows the combination (but . . .)

The NTS in (d) instructs the interpreter not to derive the proposition (b) as a conclusion from (a), thereby eliminating an unintended reading and reducing the interpreter's processing costs. Just as it is unsurprising that languages include expressions that direct interpreters toward intended interpretations, it is equally unsurprising that languages include expressions that direct interpreters away from unintended interpretations.

So and NTSs are similar also in that neither requires a prior utterance. Blakemore (1997b: fn. 1) provides the following scenario: The speaker sees someone arrive home laden with shopping, and says, *So you've spent all your money*. Although none of my collected NTS examples is discourse or text initial, the constructed example (11), repeated here, shows that NTSs can occur without a prior utterance:

(11)   Not that I want to embarrass you, but there is egg on your shirt.

So, *so* instructs its interpreter to construct an implication such that the proposition it introduces is a consequent whose antecedent is derived from the context. An NTS instructs its interpreter to construct a series of inferential steps such that the proposition associated with its S is derived as a conclusion to be rejected. The steps are premises derived from a relevant context, which may include relevant local utterances and relevant non-linguistic context.

Until now the research focus on expressions encoding procedural instructions has been on words and phrases - *so*, *still*, *after all*, *well*, *anyway*, and the like. Clearly, if the argument of this paper goes through, sentential constructions may also encode procedures.

7. Conclusion

Because the NTS form is marked, we expect it to communicate more than its unmarked congeners. It encodes a procedural instruction to its interpreter that its S represents an assumption to be derived from local, relevant context as a conclusion to be rejected. Marking a proposition as a conclusion to be rejected allows a speaker to provide an interpreter with a cost-effective way to avoid an unintended interpretation of an utterance.[13]

---

[13] Tottie (1991: 21) distinguishes between two major functional types of negation – rejections and denials. Denials may be explicit if "they deny a proposition which has been explicitly asserted" and implicit if they deny "something which might merely have been expected, or which might merely be contextually inferred but which has not been asserted by anyone." Although she does not deal with NTSs, my data suggest that these function like her implicit denials.

References

Austen, Jane (1964 [1816]) *Emma*. New York: Signet Classics.

Austen, Jane (1972 [1818]) *Northanger Abbey*. New York: Penguin.

Bar-Lev, Zev, and A. Palacas (1980) Semantic command over pragmatic priority. *Lingua* 51: 137-46.

Birner, Betty, and Gregory Ward (1998) *Information status and non-canonical word order in English*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Blakemore, Diane (1987) *Semantic constraints on relevance.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Blakemore, Diane (1988) *So* as a constraint on relevance. In R. Kempson, *Mental representations: The interface between language and reality*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 183-196.

Blakemore, Diane (1996) Are apposition markers discourse markers? *Journal of Linguistics* 32: 325-347.

Blakemore, Diane (1997a) Restatement and exemplification. *Pragmatics and Cognition* 5.1: 1-19.

Blakemore, Diane (1997b) On non-truth conditional meaning. *Linguistische Berichte: Special Issue on Pragmatics* 8: 92-102.

Blakemore, Diane (2001) Discourse and relevance theory. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, and H.E. Hamilton (eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Blakemore, Diane (2002) *Relevance and linguistic meaning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Blakemore, Diane (2004) Discourse markers. In L. Horn and G. Card (eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics.* Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Blass, Regina (1990) *Relevance relations in discourse*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Brill's Content March (2001).

Carson, Paul (1998) *Scalpel*. London: Arrow Books.

Carston, Robyn (2002) *Thoughts and utterances: The pragmatics of explicit communication*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Carter, Ronald (1990) Language and literature. In N.E. Collinge *An encyclopaedia of language*. London: Routledge.

Cross, Donna Woolfolk (1996) *Pope Joan: A novel*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Culicover, Peter W., and Ray Jackendoff (2005) *Simpler syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dalby, Liza (2001) *The tale of Murasaki*. New York: First Anchor Books.

De Bhaldraithe, Tomás (1959) *English-Irish dictionary*. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair.

Delahunty, Gerald (2001) Discourse functions of inferential sentences. *Linguistics* 39.3: 517-545.

Delahunty, Gerald, and Maura Velazquez-Castillo (2002) The X is that: A lexico-grammatical device for local discourse management. In James F. Lee, Kimberly L. Geeslin, and J. Clancy Clements (eds.), *Structure,*

meaning, and acquisition in Spanish: Papers from the 4th Hispanic linguistics symposium. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Press, pp. 46-64.

Grice, H. Paul (1968) Logic and conversation. In Steven Davis (ed.), (1991) *Pragmatics: A reader.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 305-315.

Hillerman, Tony (1989) *Talking god*. New York: Harper.

Hillerman, Tony (1990) *Coyote waits*. New York: Harper.

Hirschberg, Julia (1991) *A theory of scalar implicature*. New York: Garland.

Hobbs, Jerry (1979) Coherence and co-reference. *Cognitive Sciences* 3: 67-90.

Horn, Laurence R. (1989) *A natural history of negation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hovy, Eduard H., and Elizabeth Maier (1995) Parsimonious or profligate: How many and which discourse structure relations? Unpublished ms.

Huddleston, Rodney, and Geoffrey Pullum (eds.) (2002) *Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Irish Emigrant (2000) May 22.

Irving, John (1973) *The 158 pound marriage*. New York: Pocket Books.

Lambrecht, Knut (2001) The analysis of cleft constructions. *Linguistics* 39.3: 463-516.

Le Carré, John (1962) *A murder of quality*. New York: Bantam Books.

Le Carré, John (1995) *Our game*. New York: Ballantine.

Le Carré, John (1999) *Single and Single*. New York: Pocket Star Books.

Levinson, Stephen (2000) *Presumptive meanings*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Littwin, Mike (2005) Wrong as it sounds, Owens is right on TABOR. *Rocky Mountain News*. March 19.

Lively, Penelope (1987) *Moon tiger*. London: Penguin.

London *Times* (1988) August 30. Obituary for H. Paul Grice.

McCabe, Patrick (1995) *The dead school*. New York: Dell.

McCall, Andrew (1979) *The medieval underworld*. New York: Barnes and Noble.

McLaverty, Bernard (2002) *The anatomy school*. London: Vintage.

Millet, Larry (1998) *Sherlock Holmes and the Ice Palace murders*. New York: Penguin.

Newsweek (2000) July 31.

O'Brien, Kate (1987 [1931]) *Without my cloak*. New York: Virago.

O'Brien, Kate (1988 [1934]) *The ante-room*. New York: Virago

O'Brien, Kate (1988 [1942]) *The land of spices*. New York: Virago.

Osaragi, Jiro (2000) *The journey*. Boston: Tuttle.

Perret, Geoffrey (1999) *Eisenhower*. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corp.

Prince, Ellen (1978) A comparison of *wh*-clefts and *it*-clefts in disourse. *Language* 54: 883-906.

Prince, Ellen (1985) Fancy syntax and 'shared knowledge.' *Journal of Pragmatics* 9: 65-81.

Reilly, Rick (2003) Where have all the young men gone? *Time*, February 17.

Ross, John R. (1969) 'Guess who.' In R.I. Binnick, A. Davison, G.M. Green, and J.L. Morgan (eds.), *Proceedings of the 5th annual meeting of CLS,* pp. 252-286.

Saint Paul *Epistle to the Philippians* 3: 8-14.

Sanders, Ted, Wilbert Spooren, and Leonard M. Noordman (1993) Towards a taxonomy of coherence relations. *Discourse Processes* 15.1: 1-36.

Shakespeare, William *Julius Caesar*.

Shakespeare, William *Othello*.

Sinclair, John (ed.) (1990) *Collins CoBuild English grammar*. London: HarperCollins.

Somerville, Edith, and Martin Ross (1977 [1894]) *The real Charlotte*. London: Quartet.

Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson (1995 [1986]) *Relevance: Communication and cognition*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Tottie, Gunnel (1991) *Negation in English speech and writing*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Ward, Gregory, and Betty Birner (2004) Information structure and non-canonical syntax. In L. Horn and G. Ward (eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 153-174.

Wilson, Deirdre (1998) Discourse, coherence, and relevance: A reply to Rachel Giora. *Journal of Pragmatics* 29: 57-74.

Wilson, Deirdre, and Dan Sperber (2004) Relevance theory. In L. Horn and G. Ward (eds.), *The handbook of pragmatics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 607-632.

Zanuttini, Rafaella, and Paul Portner (2003) Exclamative clauses: At the syntax-semantics interface. *Language* 79: 39-81.