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TWO METATEXTUAL OPERATORS: NEGATION AND CONDITIONALITY IN ENGLISH AND POLISH

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In his recent work on negation Horn (1985, 1989) argues that logical operators can be seen as pragmatically (not semantically) ambiguous between a descriptive and metalinguistic use. In the unmarked descriptive use, which is found in all standard cases of sentential negation, *not* operates on propositions and focuses on their truth or falsity. In the metalinguistic use, which is a marked extension of the descriptive one, the focus is on the assertability of the utterance. In Horn's definition, metalinguistic negation expresses the speaker's "unwillingness to assert, or accept another's assertion of, a given proposition in a given way"; it is "a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatever, including conventional or conversational implicata it potentially induces, its morphology, its style or register, or its phonetic realization" (Horn 1989:363). In what follows I will argue that Horn's pragmatic interpretations are better described as metatextual, rather than specifically metalinguistic; Polish data particularly support this viewpoint. Metatextual uses of another operator - conditionality - will also be displayed, together with examples where metalinguistic uses of negation and conditionality co-occur in the same utterance.

I. Metatextual negation in Polish

The most interesting cases among Horn's examples are those where *not* is used in its sentential negation position, and yet is interpreted metalinguistically. Many, though not all such examples have parallel Polish translations. An equivalent translation can, for instance, be provided for the sentences in which pronunciation, morphology, or appropriateness of a given constituent are commented upon (all English examples are taken from Horn 1989):

- (1a) He didn't call the [pólis], he called the [polís].
- (1b) Nie wezwał pol[i]cji, tylko pol[i:]cje.
- (2a) I didn't manage to trap two mongeese - I managed to trap two mongooses.
- (2b) Nie złapałem dwu głuszców, tylko dwa głuszce.
- (3a) Grandma isn't feeling lousy, Johnny, she's just a tad indisposed.
- (3b) Babcia nie korkuje, Jasiu, tylko troszkę źle się czuje.

Example (1b) contrasts the substandard pronunciation of *policja* with the correct one, while (2b) rejects morphologically deviant forms *głuszce*(ACC), *głuszców*(GEN), in favour of *głuszce*(ACC), *głuszców*(GEN). In (3b), the item objected to is the slang verb *korkować*.

Like the English (a) versions, all of the (b) Polish examples have the form of full negative sentences. This is marked in three ways:

- the negative particle *nie* precedes the verb,
- pronominal subjects could occur in (1) and (2) only in the position before *nie* (*On nie wezwał..., Ja nie złapałem...*),
- the direct objects of (1) and (2) are marked with the genitive case, which is obligatory for negative sentences in Polish. In affirmative sentences direct objects are in the accusative case. Thus, the noun phrases *policja* and *dwa głuszcze* appear in the genitive form in the first clauses of (b) sentences, and in the accusative form in their second clauses.

Not all of the (b) forms are as unmarked as the English versions. In the case of (3), the Polish translation offered in (3b) would probably be the standard way of objecting to the term previously used by Johnny. In (1) and (2), on the other hand, alternatives such as (c) and (d) would be used more readily than (b):

- (1c) Wezwał nie pol[i]cję, a pol[i:]cję.
- (1d) Nie "wezwał pol[i]cję", tylko "wezwał pol[i:]cję".
- (2c) Złapałem nie dwa głuszcze, a dwa głuszcze.
- (2d) Nie "złapałeś dwa głuszcze", tylko "złapałeś dwa głuszcze".

Unlike the (b) sentences above, (1c) and (2c) do not contain sentential negation. In the (c) sentences, any pronominal subject would have to occur directly before the verb - *On wezwał..., Ja złapałem....* Further, they differ from sentential negation in that *nie* does not precede the verb and the case of direct objects is accusative. In these examples, then, the metalinguistic negation takes the form of constituent or focus negation, with the negative particle *nie* preceding the phrase being objected to. Such constructions in English (e.g. *He called not the [pólis], but the [pólis]*) are apparently less common: English normally uses sentential-level negation marking for metalinguistic uses of negation.

The (d) examples contain direct quotations from the utterances just heard, which is marked in pronunciation by a pause between *nie* and the material quoted. The particle *nie* directly precedes the quote and the expression under scrutiny is marked by a fall-rise intonation, within the quotation. Furthermore, the deleted subjects can be recovered only within the quotes: *Nie "on wezwał..."*, *Nie "ty złapałeś..."*. Most crucially of all, the objects in these examples are accusative, not genitive.

In spite of the fact that in Polish constituent negation prevails as an expression of metalinguistic objection to the form of an expression, sentential-level metalinguistic negation in such cases is acceptable both in English and in Polish. Copula sentences constitute another group of examples where sentential negation can be interpreted metalinguistically in both languages, apparently regardless of the nature of the objection:

- (4a) Ben Ward is not a black Police Commissioner but a Police Commissioner who is black (quoted after Horn 1989).

- (4b) Ben Ward nie jest czarnym komisarzem policji, lecz komisarzem policji, który jest czarny.

Again, the negation in (4b) is sentential negation: the particle *nie* precedes the verb (as in the (b) sentences of (1) through (3) above). The sentence can, however, be rephrased as constituent negation, with *nie* preceding the predicate noun phrase.

Sententially positioned negation in (4b) can be interpreted metalinguistically, because, first, the predicate phrase is rhematic in standard intonation contour and is thus in focus without further marking, and, secondly, negating the copula does not trigger special case marking in the predicate phrase, as is the case in SVO sentences. Consequently, there is no formal difference between descriptive and metalinguistic use.

Sentences like (4a) are used to reject their predicate NP's as appropriate descriptions of their referents. Similar constructions can be used to object to appropriateness of forms of address - Horn's example *She is not Lizzy, if you please - she's Her Imperial Majesty* seems to be ambiguous between these two functions. In Polish the two uses would be marked by case. Ordinary predicate noun phrases of copula sentences in Polish are marked with the instrumental case, in affirmative and negative variants alike. In the "form of address" metalinguistic instances, however, the case is nominative in both clauses, as in: *Nie jestem Ela, tylko pani Kowalska (I'm not Lizzy(NOM) - I'm Mrs. Kowalska(NOM))*.

Presumably, then, it is possible to interpret Polish *nie* metalinguistically in its sentential negation position, largely due to the overall echo-repair format of the construction in which it appears.

However, in some sentences in Polish the format of the construction alone does not ensure acceptability. For instance, a metalinguistic reading will not be possible for a sentence in which negation focuses on the content verb in an SVO structure:

- (5a) Chris didn't manage to solve the problem - he solved it easily.
 (5b) *Krzysztof nie zdołał rozwiązać problemu(GEN) - rozwiązał go(ACC) z łatwością.

Sentence (5b) is a contradiction - it first asserts that Chris didn't solve the problem, and then that he did. Similarly in a scalar example:

- (6a) Around here, we don't like coffee, we love it (from Horn 1989).
 (6b) *My tu nie lubimy kawy(GEN), my ją(ACC) kochamy.

Examples (5b) and (6b) are unacceptable as wholes, because the echo-repair format and the fall-rise focus on the verb do not suffice to prevent the reading of negation in the first conjuncts as descriptive. The standard preverbal position of the negative particle and the genitive case marking on the object override the intonational contour. Let us recall that in the Polish equivalents of (1) and (2) above, which are very similar syntactically to (5b/6b), the rejected expressions

could be identified as inappropriate without any reference to their meaning: the objection was directed exclusively at the form of the utterance - pronunciation, morphological form, or style. In (5) and (6), on the other hand, which, according to Horn, object to conventional and conversational implicatures respectively, the expressions in question are rejected with respect to their contribution to interpretation, not form.

Interestingly enough, at least (6b), though not (5b), can be saved if we formally mark the echoic character of the first clause by changing the case of the object from the genitive, characteristic of negation, to the accusative, which must have been used in the previous utterance referred to. The change to an accusative object makes it clear that (6c) is a negative comment on positive content, rather than an expression of a negative proposition:

(5c) *Krzysztof nie **zdołał** rozwiązać problem(ACC) - rozwiązał go(ACC) z łatwością.

(6c) My tu nie **lubimy** kawę(ACC), my ją(ACC) **kochamy**.

The only plausible explanation of the difference in acceptability of (5c) and (6c) is that the former has fewer surface signals of the metalinguistic reading intended, because it does not offer repair of the phrase objected to - instead, it explains the reason for the rejection. The repair - *Chris solved the problem* - is implicit in a sentence like (5), but it is not given explicitly, as in (6). In fact, if an explicit repair is offered instead of an explanation, (5c) becomes acceptable:

(5d) Krzysztof nie **zdołał** rozwiązać problem(ACC) - po prostu go(ACC) rozwiązał (Chris didn't manage to solve the problem - he simply solved it).

Further, with an explicit repair a constituent negation variant is also acceptable, such as *Nie "zdołał rozwiązać", a "rozwiązał" (? Not "managed to solve", but "solved")*. With an explanation instead of a repair, however, the only acceptable translation of (5a) is with the phrase *To nieprawda, że...* (*It's not true that...*), as in (5e):

(5e) To nieprawda, że Krzysztof **zdołał** rozwiązać problem(ACC) - rozwiązał go(ACC) z łatwością.

This might be taken to suggest that in the case of an objection to conventional implicature the difference between the descriptive and metalinguistic reading is blurred. Horn rejects the phrase *It's not true that* as a proof of descriptive use, for, as he claims, it can also be ambiguous between a descriptive and metalinguistic reading. Nevertheless, clearly *It's not true that* is not an acceptable paraphrase of all examples of metalinguistic negation. For instance, it is rather unlikely that the phrase would be used to reject the pronunciation or morphological form of an expression, as in ?? *It's not true that I caught two mongeese - I caught two mongooses*. Apparently, then, *It's not true that*, even if not unambiguously descriptive, is much more likely to be used as a comment on meaning-related phenomena than on pure form.

The examples above seem to point to some kind of difference between metalinguistic comments on form and those objecting to aspects of interpretation. These differences, however, disappear in the constituent negation format. A possible explanation is that a metalinguistic comment has to first of all make it clear which part of the previous utterance is being objected to. If the expression echoed is inappropriate in form (pronunciation, morphology, style) or rhematic (as in the case of copula sentences), it is easily identifiable. In the case of comments on aspects of interpretation, such as implicature, sentential negation fails to be understood metalinguistically because nothing singles out a particular implicature as the subject of the comment. Constituent negation format, which puts the expression in question directly in the scope of *nie*, helps to single out the part of the sentence responsible for the relevant implicature.

Thus, the asterisked examples above are found unacceptable for just one reason - that it is not clear whether *nie* negates the whole sentence or only part of it. This seems to suggest that metalinguistic negation is first of all an objection to a localizable part of the text of the previous utterance; what the speaker of a metalinguistically negative sentence has to achieve first is to make clear which fragment of the utterance she¹ objects to. And, as we have seen, all of the formal devices used in the examples above (echo-repair format, intonation, change of case, constituent negation) are meant to highlight the part of the utterance being questioned and have nothing to do with the nature of the objection raised. It thus seems that the uses of negation exemplified above can more appropriately be described as *metatextual*, rather than as specifically metalinguistic comments on linguistic form.

As for the specific reason why the fragment is considered inappropriate, it is clearly marked only in the cases pertaining to form (pronunciation, morphology, style), while in other instances the aspect of the interpretation being rejected can only be understood in contrast with the interpretation offered in the repair.

The revision of Horn's terminology suggested above admits various understandings of what the "text" is. In the majority of cases, exemplified above, the fragment in question is a word or a phrase. But it is also possible to make a metatextual comment on the whole utterance, if the aspect of the utterance which is questioned can only be derived on the basis of its text as a whole. A good example is quoted by Horn (1989) after Wilson (1975:152):

(7) I'm not his daughter - he's my father.

The echo and the repair are semantically synonymous in this case and there are no formal signals of focus on any of the expressions. The only aspect that can be calculated as being objected to is an overall framing of the clause's content.

In Polish, which uses double negation, it is also possible to express an objection to two fragments of the text. One token of negation in such instances is the particle *nie*, which then appears in the sentential negation position and focuses on the verb, the other is *zaden* (*no*), which can only precede nominals. Such a use of double negation, sometimes possible also in English, will predominantly express

an objection to formal aspects of the previous utterance - pronunciation, morphology, and style, as in:

- (8) Nie walnąłeś się do żadnego wyra, tylko poszedłeś do łóżka (You did not hit no sack, you went to bed).

The same construction with *nie* preceding the verb and *żadnego* preceding the noun phrase can also be used to unambiguously mark the focus of metatextual negation if it does not fall within the immediate scope of *nie*. We can thus have a sentence similar to (8) with only the noun *wyro* being objected to:

- (9) Nie poszedłeś do żadnego wyra(GEN), tylko do łóżka.

With this additional marking the case of the object remains genitive without causing confusion, for the text in question is identified unambiguously.

We have thus seen that the negative particle *nie* has a metatextual use in Polish, similar, with surface differences, to what Horn defines as metalinguistic negation. Polish examples also test positively for Horn's three diagnostics for metalinguistic negation. The first diagnostic concerns the inability of metalinguistic negation to incorporate prefixally. Horn's English example (10) has an equivalent in Polish:

- (10) The queen of England is {not happy/*unhappy} - she's ecstatic.

- (10a) Królowa {nie jest szczęśliwa/*jest nieszczęśliwa} - jest w ekstazie.

Horn also notes that metalinguistic negation does not trigger negative polarity items. Thus in *Chris didn't manage to solve some of the problems - he managed to solve all of them* there is no possibility of using *any* instead of *some*. Similar restrictions seem to hold for analogous expressions (*niektóre/żadne*) in Polish.

The third diagnostic has cross-linguistic validity and concerns the use of a conjunction like *but* in the repair part following a statement containing metalinguistic negation. Languages like German, Swedish, Spanish, and Finnish use two conjunctions in the contexts in which *but* is used in English, and, as Horn argues, only one of them appears in the context of metalinguistic objection to previous utterance. Thus, one type of *but* is used in a concessive sense, and then the first conjunct does not have to be negative, but obligatorily relates to a point having a higher position on an implied pragmatic scale than what the second conjunct relates to. If the first conjunct is negative, the negation is interpreted descriptively. Also, the syntactic form of the second conjunct cannot be reduced:

- (11) Max doesn't have three children, but he has/does have two.

The second *but*, expressing contrastive rather than concessive meaning, appears in different contexts. The preceding clause is necessarily negative, and the negation is interpreted metalinguistically. The syntax of the second conjunct is reduced, as in (12):

- (12) Max doesn't have three children, but four.

In Polish, a similar opposition is marked and similar restrictions hold for the two constructions. Also, as in German and Spanish, two different conjunctions

are required. Thus, the equivalent of *but* in (11a) is *ale*, while in (12a), which requires intonation focus on *trojga*, conjunction *a* has to be used.

(11a) Max nie ma trojga dzieci(GEN), ale ma dwoje.

(12a) Max nie ma trojga dzieci(GEN), a czworo.

Presumably, two constructions with *but* are distinguished similarly in English and in Polish. However, formal differences disappear in a constituent negation format, which is acceptable for both cases:

(11b) Max ma nie troje dzieci(ACC), a dwoje (Max has not three children, but two).

(12b) Max ma nie troje dzieci(ACC), a czworo (Max has not three children, but four).

This can be seen as due to the form of the construction, for as Horn notes himself, post-auxiliary constituent negation can only be taken metalinguistically. However, the observation does not seem to answer all the relevant questions. If (11b) is a metatextual comment, then what aspect of the utterance does it object to? Whichever form it takes, a sentence like (11) goes down the implied scale, not up, as was claimed characteristic for descriptive uses of *but*. Regardless of the form, the sentence claims that it is not the case that Max has three children, and such a reading is not metalinguistic in the sense proposed by Horn. Apparently, then, a metatextual objection can be made also with respect to an aspect of propositional content.

There is still an important difference between (11a) and (11b), marked, among others, by case and the position of *nie*, in that the former is concerned with falsity, the latter with unassertability. In (11b) part of the propositional content is rejected, but the repair offered assumes some common ground with the previous utterance. The same holds for (12b). Both interlocutors in the speech exchanges concluded with (11b) and (12b) believe that Max has children, but they seem to disagree on how many he has, and the direction of the scale in which the correction is to be made does not seem to matter in a constituent negation format in Polish.

There seem to be more examples of metalinguistic/metatextual comments objecting to aspects of propositional content. Horn classifies these as metalinguistic on the grounds of their form:

(13a) John was born, not in Boston, but in Philadelphia.

(13b) John wasn't born in Boston, but in Philadelphia.

(13c) John wasn't born in Boston, he was born in Philadelphia.

All of these have exact equivalents in Polish. In all versions it is clear from the sentences that it is not true that John was born in Boston. The repair, on the other hand, states that he was born in Philadelphia. These are, surely, statements concerning propositional content, and not implicature, form, or style. What makes them metatextual, then?

First, they are objections to the previous utterance directed at one of its aspects. Also, they have the form of a metatextual construction, that is, they contain the echo part and the repair part, whether in sentential or constituent format. But they do not comment on the language used in one of its pragmatic or formal aspects, they reject a part of the text of the previous utterance on the basis of its contribution to the propositional content. Like our previous examples, they focus on a part of the text of the previous utterance.

What all the examples considered above share is the attempt to reject only a part or aspect of the previous utterance which the speaker finds unassertable. In the examples concerned with form only, the speaker agrees with the whole of the content, but rejects part of the wording. In those directed at implicatures, the essential part of the message remains untouched (e.g. he did solve the problem, we are indeed fond of coffee, etc.). In the case like (13), there is also a part of the message which is accepted, perhaps something like: "John was indeed born in an East Coast city with historic tradition, but the city was not Boston - it was Philadelphia". The cases described by Horn, which comment on the choice of expression, can be referred to as metalinguistic, but they seem to be a part of a larger class of utterances, which I proposed above to call *metatextual*.

The view that seems to emerge from the above considerations is that we are dealing with something more than an ambiguity of negation, even if it is a pragmatic ambiguity. The ambiguity arises in a specialized construction, whose pragmatic function is to find the most effective expression of the thought one of the interlocutors - let us continue envisaging him as the hearer - purports to communicate. The context for using such a construction is the situation where the hearer communicated an assumption in the way he considered to ensure its appropriate understanding by the speaker. The utterance produced is thus meant to communicate a thought and the form is believed to give the thought the best expression.

The other interlocutor - the speaker - receives the utterance and assumes she understood the message - the thought. But she believes that the utterance does not give an optimal expression to the thought. She thus offers an improvement on the formulation of what she assumes to be the intended message. The speaker does not reject the whole of the utterance, but one of its aspects, and the comment offered has to make it clear which aspect it is. It does so by echoing and revising the fragment of the text the speaker rejects. With the objections to formal aspects of the utterance, such as pronunciation, morphological form or style, the corrective effect is ensured by the very juxtaposition of the form rejected and the form meant to substitute for it. Hence, as we saw above, such cases require only minimal marking of the echo and the repair parts of the construction.

In the cases in which some part of the meaning is under scrutiny, more surface signals may be required for the hearer to understand the objection (as we saw in the examples from Polish, the range of available means of focusing on the right part of the text may be quite broad). In some cases, as in (13) above, the rejected part of the text may be objected to with respect to its content. However, this does

not mean that the utterance is rejected as false, but that it is not a fully adequate expression of the hearer's thought. In the example like (13) the speaker does not concentrate on the falsity of the statement about John being born in Boston, but on getting right the purported message about John's place of birth. The sentence is still concerned with unassertability, not falsehood, as in Horn's definition, but we can say that the speaker considers the previous utterance unassertable with respect to an aspect of propositional content. The fact that in semantic terms the unassertability renders the sentence false does not concern the speaker of a metatextual utterance, because her point is to get the message right, whether with respect to form or intended interpretation. She does not even have to assume that the hearer holds a false belief in such a case, she may treat the inaccuracy as a lapse of memory or even a slip of the tongue.

In the examples related to interpretation, not form, we are thus dealing with a cline of comments on meaning, ranging from conversational implicature, through conventional implicature, to propositional content. None of these can really be qualified as a comment on the choice of language, that is a metalinguistic comment, because what the repair concerns first of all is what the hearer has said (or implicated), and not how he has said it. Regardless of whether the aspect of meaning in question is described as pragmatic or semantic, it remains an aspect of the overall interpretation, and may thus be evaluated as being more or less adequate as a description of the state of affairs in question.

II. Metatextual conditionals

Horn (1985, 1989) notes that pragmatic ambiguity between descriptive and metalinguistic uses is characteristic not only of negation, but also of other operators, such as disjunction and conditionality, and of some constructions, such as questions.

Horn's chief examples of metalinguistic conditionals, such as (14) and (15), are constructions he calls "Austin conditionals", after Austin's (1961) famous sentence *If you are hungry, there are biscuits on the sideboard*. Such conditionals, as Horn claims, are metalinguistic in that they are concerned with specifying conditions for the appropriateness of asserting the antecedent, and not for its truth.

- (14) If you haven't already heard, Punxsutawny Phil saw his shadow this morning.
- (15) If I may say so, you're looking particularly lovely tonight.

In some works on conditionals, however, (Van der Auwera 1986, Sweetser 1990), such examples are described as **speech act conditionals**, and their antecedents are thus seen as conditions on the appropriateness of a speech act purportedly performed in the consequents. In the Austin example above, then, the *if*-clause does not qualify the appropriateness of asserting that there are biscuits on the sideboard, but gives a justification for offering biscuits to the hearer. Similarly, the antecedents of (14) and (15) justify acts of informing and

complimenting, respectively.

It can further be noted that Horn's sentences in fact show little similarity to his examples of metalinguistic negation. They are not contextualized in the same way, as they do not refer to the previous utterance, and they do not contain parts identifiable as "echo" and "repair", or as "echo" and "explanation". Even more importantly, they do not seem to distinguish among individual aspects of the utterance, such as pronunciation, morphological form, style, implicature, etc.

On the other hand, examples displaying exactly these features can be found:

- (16a) He trapped two mongeese, if that's how you make a plural of "mongoose".
- (16b) He trapped two mongeese, if "mongeese" is the right form.
- (17a) Grandma is feeling lousy, if I may put it that way.
- (17b) Grandma is feeling lousy, if that's an appropriate expression.
- (18a) Chris managed to solve the problem, if solving it was in any way difficult for him.
- (18b) Chris managed to solve the problem, if "manage" is the right word.
- (19) The Queen of England is happy, if not ecstatic.
- (20) John was born in Philadelphia, if that's where they keep the Liberty Bell.

Sentences (16)-(20) have much in common with examples of metatextual negation considered in the previous section. The utterance in the "antecedent"² presents a given thought in a given way. The speaker, however, is not sure if she chose the right expression to render an aspect of the utterance - whether pertaining to form or interpretation. To mark the lack of certainty, she appends to the utterance an *if*-clause expressing her doubt about a part of the text. The *if*-clause may highlight the fragment in question by echoing it (as in (16b) and (18b)), or referring to it anaphorically (note the use of *that* in (17b)). It may also offer a repair, as in (19), or explain the reasons why the speaker is not sure about the expression being an appropriate one - this is the case in (16a)-(18a) and in (20). The comments offered can concern any aspect of the utterance - its form (see (16)), its style (as in (17)), its implicata ((18) and (19)), or an aspect of its propositional content (as in (20)).

The similarities between metatextual conditionals like (16)-(20) and metatextual negative constructions are striking: the comments in both cases are comments on assertability, they object to a part of the previous utterance, and they pertain to the same range of phenomena. The difference lies mainly in the fact that in metatextual conditionals the speaker comments on her own utterance, and the comment follows the utterance in the same construction. In cases of metatextual negation the speaker usually objects to an interlocutor's utterance (although, as Horn shows, it is possible for the speaker to create a special rhetorical affect by rejecting what she has just communicated), and the metatextual utterance is formally independent of the one it comments upon. Also, the objection expressed in

a metatextual conditional is understood as doubt, or uncertainty, not as outright rejection of the previous utterance as unassertable. This seems to follow from two factors: first, the use of *if* dictates a weaker interpretation of the objection than in the case of *not*, and, secondly, if the speaker were sure that the utterance is not assertable in a given way, she would initially choose a different means of expression.

To account for these data, we need to postulate a class of metatextual conditionals, which is independent of speech act conditionals (such as Austin's famous example) and bears a striking resemblance to Horn's cases of metatextual negation.

Speech act conditionals and metatextual conditionals are still similar in many respects. First of all, both types express conditions on appropriateness, and thus do not involve any real-world dependence between their antecedents and consequents. Neither of the classes admits the use of conditional verb forms, i.e., speech act or metatextual interpretation is excluded from subjunctive and counterfactual conditionals. Also, *then* is not used to introduce the "consequents" in either class.

The similarities are not incidental. Both speech act and metatextual clauses are comments on utterances presented in their "consequents", and are thus markedly different from standard conditionals, which express a content relation between the clauses (in the sense introduced by Sweetser 1990). Their parenthetical role can be seen also in the fact that they can be used as comments on content conditionals, as in (21) and (22), presenting a metatextual and speech act condition respectively:

- (21) I would go with pleasure if I didn't feel so lousy, if that's an appropriate expression.
- (22) If I know my daughter, she'll go mad if you tell her.

It seems possible, then, to refer to speech-act and metatextual examples jointly as conversational conditionals.

But there are significant differences between the classes, too. We can note, for instance, that speech act conditionals are often specific to a given force or sentence type, and may explicitly refer to its preconditions. Thus, *if*-clauses such as *if I haven't already asked...*, *if it's not rude to ask...* can only function with questions as "consequents", while *if I may say so* typically accompanies a declarative. There are no such restrictions in the case of metatextual comments, since they focus on a fragment of the text regardless of the utterance's force or sentence type. Another argument for treating the two classes independently is that an utterance can be qualified by both types of comments simultaneously. In (23), for instance, the initial *if*-clause justifies the appropriateness of asking a question, while the final one focuses on the phrase *my husband*.

- (23) If I haven't already asked, when did you last see my husband, if I can still call him that.

Let us also note that it is rather unlikely that the same speech act would be hedged twice, by means of two independent *if*-clauses, while two metatextual comments on two formal aspects of an utterance would be acceptable.

Speech act and metatextual conditionals also differ with respect to their pre-ferred clause order. The former are most often used with their *if*-clause in the sentence-initial position, but a reversed clause order is equally acceptable (as in a paraphrase of (14) above: *Punxsutawny Phil saw his shadow this morning, if you haven't already heard*). The metatextual ones, on the other hand, are almost exclusively sentence-final, apparently due to the fact that a metatextual comment must echo the text in question or refer to it anaphorically, and thus has to follow it. Further, as in the case of negative metatextual constructions, it has to be clear which part of the text is being focused upon. The sentence-final position of a metatextual "antecedent" ensures the text-metatext proximity only if the "text" appears in the predicate phrase, or otherwise in the rheme of the preceding "consequent". If it is a sentence-initial part, the link may be lost, as in (24):

(24) *My husband hates onion soup, if I can still call him that.

In such cases, due to the required transparency of the text-metatext relation, the speaker has the unique possibility of putting an *if*-clause inside the "consequent", as in *My husband, if I can still call him that, hates onion soup*.

Metatextual conditional sentences have been shown to be strikingly parallel to the negative constructions discussed by Horn. Also, the two types of metatextual operators seem to co-occur in some contexts. In a sentence like *The Queen of England is happy, if not ecstatic* (example (19) above) we are dealing with a conditional metatextual comment on the scalar implicature triggered by *happy*. The *if*-clause is obligatorily negative and can be interpreted as suggesting that *ecstatic* is perhaps a better term than *happy*. Under this interpretation the negation, interestingly enough, is also interpreted metatextually, for the speaker is not saying that the Queen is not ecstatic.

The difference between a negative metatextual utterance like (10) (*The Queen of England is not happy, she is ecstatic*) and the conditional one like (19) is that in the former negation focuses on the term related to a lower position on the scale (*happy*), and in the latter on the one having a higher position (*ecstatic*). In the metatextual conditional the weaker term has actually been used, and is questioned, rather than rejected, while the stronger term (e.g., *ecstatic*) is only considered as an alternative. A possible gloss to clarify the actual scope of negation here is: "It is appropriate to use the word 'happy' to describe the Queen's emotional state, if it is not more appropriate to use the word 'ecstatic'". The affinity between the scalar uses of metatextual and negative constructions can also be seen in the fact that the conditional examples involving scalar implicature are the only ones involving a potential repair.

Scalar metatextual conditionals are also interesting in that they are elliptical in form:

(25) He spoke ungraciously, if not rudely.

(26) She ate many of the cakes, if not all.

With respect to this many analyses (Kjellmer 1975, König 1986, Haiman 1986) treat examples like (19), (25) and (26) on a par with sentences like (27), and qualify them jointly as concessive:

(27) The salary was good, if not up to her expectations.

Sentence (27) has a straightforward concessive interpretation, and its negation is understood descriptively, as we can see in the paraphrase: *The salary was good, even if it was not up to her expectations*. As for (19), (25) and (26), they have two interpretations. One is indeed parallel to that of (27), and can be paraphrased in the same way: *He spoke ungraciously, even if he didn't speak rudely*. The second, metatextual interpretation is best rendered quite differently, with a different expression in the scope of *even*, and no negation: *He spoke ungraciously, perhaps even rudely*. Presumably, then, the scalar conditional/negative metatextual constructions should be seen as independent of the concessive elliptical constructions as exemplified in (27), even though they are formally similar. Elliptical *if*-clauses can be ambiguous between the two uses, and the choice of one interpretation or the other crucially relies on the metatextual or descriptive interpretation of negation.

As a final point, we should consider a group of conditional constructions which are metatextual in character, but do not involve echoic use and are not concerned with explanation or repair. Instead, a linguistic expression used in one of the clauses functions itself as a justification for a parallel or contrasting expression used in the other clause. The first examples of such use were noted by Ducrot (1972) (and quoted by Horn 1985, 1989):

(28) If the Cité is the heart of Paris, the Latin quarter is its soul.

Ducrot sees the *if*-clauses of such examples as offering justification for the metaphor used in the "consequent". It can perhaps be added that both clauses of (28) are metaphorical, and justify each other against a background of a broader metaphor in which Paris is envisaged as a human being. The reciprocity of the justification can be seen in the possibility of reversing the order of the clauses: *If the Latin Quarter is the soul of Paris, the Cité is its heart*. Such sentences can thus be called symmetric metatextual conditionals.

The symmetric metatextual sentences can also express contrast, as in *If Velazquez soothes, Goya terrifies*. The clauses can again be reversed without affecting the stylistic effect. They cannot be reversed, though, if the rhetorical device used is intensification, not symmetry or contrast: *If Mary is just pleasantly pretty, her sister is a real beauty*.

As I suggested in the earlier version of this paper (Dancygier 1986), a metatextual analysis in terms of intensification can be postulated for a sentence first discussed by Jespersen (1940), then commented upon by Haiman (1978) and Sweetser (1990):

(29) If I was a bad carpenter, I was a worse tailor.

The example seems to be best interpreted as "If bad is the right expression to describe my carpentry, worse has to be used to describe my tailoring".

III. Conclusion

In the analysis above two main points have been made. Firstly, it was argued that Horn's idea of metalinguistic use is better captured in terms of a comment on a part of the text of the previous utterance, objecting to it in any of its aspects, including its contribution to propositional content. In the second part, it was shown how metatextual use is realized with respect to another operator - conditionality, and how two metatextual operators can function in one sentence, complementing each other. The data presented suggest that it does not suffice to treat metatextual use solely in terms of pragmatic ambiguity of operators, but that we also have to be concerned with a variety of formal devices languages may employ to mark this use as distinct from the descriptive one. In the data analyzed above we saw devices such as intonation, double negation, or case, and also some specialized constructions. For instance, the echo-repair format prevails in the cases of sentential-level negation, constituent negation is the basic expression of metatextual negation in Polish; also, metatextual *if*-clauses appear sentence-finally, and are syntactically reduced if they also contain metatextual negation. Finally, metatextual comments, which qualify the assertability of an utterance, can focus on its content, not only form. Interestingly, they do so without implying that the utterance objected to is false.

I hope to have shown, then, that surface exponents of metatextual use may vary across languages, and that the pragmatics of metatextual interpretations is more complex than has originally been suggested by Horn.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ I will follow the convention whereby the speaker is referred to as *she*, while the hearer as *he*.
- ² The quotes signal that the terms *antecedent* and *consequent* can be used solely with respect to formal features of a conditional construction.

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