A contextual aproach to Neg-raising

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Certain negated predicates (e.g. *think*, *believe*, *want*) invoke a reading where the negation is interpreted in the embedded clause. For example, (1a) implies (1b).

(1a)   John doesn't think Bill left.

(1b)   John thinks Bill didn't leave.

Most other predicates do not trigger such readings. (2a) cannot be interpreted as (2b).

(2a)   John doesn't claim Bill left.

(2b)   John claims Bill didn't leave.

There are two main approaches to Neg-raising: a semantic-pragmatic approach (Bartsch 1973, Gajewski 2005, 2007, Homer 2015, Romoli 2012, Romoli 2013, Zeijlstra 2018), and a syntactic approach (Fillmore 1963, Horn 1978, Collins & Postal 2014).

In this paper we argue that (i) even though the semantic-pragmatic accounts are generally better equipped to account for Neg-raising effects, they still face substantial challenges; (ii) a novel, modified version of the semantic-pragmatic approach can overcome these problems; and (iii) so-called Horn-clauses, often considered the strongest argument for the syntactic and most problematic for semantic-pragmatic approach, at closer inspection, cannot be explained under syntactic approach but can actually be explained under our novel, modified version of the semantic-pragmatic approach.