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Negative Polarity Verbs in Norwegian¹

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Abstract

While negative polarity items (NPIs) have been widely discussed in the linguistic literature, the focus has been on nominals and hardly ever on verbs. The present paper has two main objectives: to investigate to what extent there are NPI verbs in Norwegian, and to uncover their licencing conditions. It turns out that there is a whole host of NPI verbs. Their licencing conditions range from pure negation via negative adverbials to yes/no questions and many more – generalised to those that are indeterminate with respect to truth value. The licencing has to be local with respect to CP domain, a fact that leads to a recategorisation of a rather large group of verbs to be analysed as modal verbs: the occurrence of NPI verbs in the complement of these verbs would otherwise wrongly have been in a CP domain away from their licencer, but when the upper verbs are being interpreted as modals, their clausal complements are no longer CPs. These verbs also pass other independent tests for modalityhood.

1 Introduction

Negative polarity items (NPIs) have been the centre of much recent research, both in syntax and semantics. The expressions that are usually discussed are nominals (such as Progovac 1993). Other categories, such as verbs or adverbs, or their phrasal expansions, are more rarely the focus of attention. Including these categories gives the opportunity to see that earlier suggestions for NPI licencing have been insufficient.

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In this paper we shall focus on negative polarity verbs in Norwegian. We shall start with some examples of verbal NPIs, and look at some semantic characteristics of NPIs. Then we shall look briefly at what has been claimed about their licencing previously. We start the investigation of the syntactic licencing mechanisms by looking at c-command. It will be clear that there are obstacles against the most simplistic c-command account. First, the relationship between the licencer and the NPI verb has to be local. An investigation of what it means to be "local" shows that the local domain is the clause in which the NPI verb is contained, whether it is finite or nonfinite. This investigation leads to a new look at some other verbs, which turn out to have to be classified as modals. When finally the V2 feature of Scandinavian syntax is regarded with respect to NPI verbs, and also NPIs are regarded with respect to other licensors, it turns out that c-command cannot be a proper licencing mechanism. The final analysis is a checking account, where NPI verbs are taken to have a strong [+nonveridical] feature (a semantic feature often used in the NPI literature, by for example Zwarts 1995 and Giannakidou 1997) that has to be checked by some other position that has this feature, whether it is a proper negation like *ikke* 'not' or, for example, the C position in yes/no questions.

2 Some examples of Norwegian NPI verbs and NPI verbal expressions

While the literature abounds with examples of NPIs in the shape of nominal expressions, very little has been said about NPIs in the form of other syntactic categories (with a few exceptions such as Hoeksema 2000 and Lindstad 1999, and some earlier work by myself, Johannessen 1998). Here, we shall focus on simple and complex NPI verbs. It turns out that this is not a small class of unusual verbs, but a large group of very common verbs.

What does it mean for a verb to be an NPI verb? A short answer sufficient for the present paper is the following: If a sentence containing negation or some other marker of nonveridicality is acceptable to a native speaker, and removing the nonveridicality marker yields the sentence unacceptable or gives a completely different interpretation of the verb, then the verb is an NPI verb. Consider some authentic examples below (each NPI is in bold print, while the licencer is represented in italics) - the sentences below would all be ungrammatical with the negation removed.

(1)

- a. Vi kan *ikke* **begripe** at det er mulig å få det gjennomført.
we can not understand that it is possible to get it done
'We cannot understand that it can possibly be done.'
www.magazinet.no/preken.asp?ID=2205 -
- b. Vi kan *ikke* **fatte** at én person skal være en like stor risiko som...
we can not understand that one person should be the same risk as
'We cannot understand that one person should be as great a risk as...'
www2.tv2.no/hjelperdeg/tv2/owa/artikkel.vis?a=3986
- c. Jeg kunne vel *ikke* **ane** at vi skulle komme til å få det så trivelig?
I could though not understand that we should come to get it that nice
'I had, I guess, no idea that we were going to have such a good time.'
www.femme.no/sex/frokenfemme/0106211729.cfm
- d. Det var noe ved fyren som Karl *ikke* **kunde fordra**.
it was something about the-guy that Karl not could stand
'There was something about the guy that Karl could not stand.'
The Oslo Corpus
- e. Ser jeg et par Puma-sko på Blindern kan jeg *ikke* **dy meg**
see I a pair of Puma-shoes at Blindern can I not restrain myself
'If I see a pair of Puma shoes at Blindern, I cannot restrain myself'
universitas.uio.no/kultur/1246.shtml

3 Some semantic characteristics of NPIs

It is well known since Ladusaw (1980), that negative polarity items are to some extent semantically predictable, being the smallest of a gradable set.

- (2) Jeg har *ikke* **en eneste liten vante**
I have not an only little glove
'I haven't even got a single little glove.'

- (3) Jeg har ikke et rødt øre
I have not a red cent
'I haven't got a red cent.'

Notice that the minimal amount or size of such items is relative; a glove is of course not small in itself – but as a piece of clothing it is one of the tiniest that can be had. The meaning of the second NPI, *et rødt øre*, is more opaque, given that that coin is no longer in circulation, and it is unclear why the redness (copper colour) is stressed – but again it points to the smallest imaginable amount of money.

While many nominal NPIs are idiomatic, such as (3) above, it is also common that they are productively made, like (2) above. This dichotomy is also present with NPI verbs, although somewhat more context is perhaps necessary to get the intended meaning. (1e) above is idiomatic, while (4) below is productively created:

- (4) Ikke spør om jeg løp, jeg kunne ikke engang krabbe.
not ask whether I ran, I could not even crawl
'Don't ask whether I ran, I couldn't even crawl.'

Like nominal NPIs, some verbal NPIs have positive counterparts, while others do not:

- (5) *Nominal NPI, without veridical, polysemous counterpart:*
a. Jeg skjønte ikke det grann
I understood not the grain
'I didn't understand one iota.'

- Verbal NPI, without veridical, polysemous counterpart:*
b. Ser jeg et par Puma-sko på Blindern kan jeg ikke dy meg
see I a pair of Puma-shoes at Blindern can I not restrain myself
'If I see a pair of Puma shoes at Blindern, I cannot restrain myself.'

- (6) *Nominal NPI, with veridical, polysemous counterpart:*
a. Jeg har ikke en eneste liten vante
I have not an only little glove
'I haven't even got a single little glove.'

Verbal NPI, with veridical, polysemous counterpart:

- b. Jeg kunne vel ikke ane at vi skulle komme til å få det så trivelig?
I could though not understand that we should come to to get it so nice
'I had no idea that we would have such a good time.'

There is not much to say about the semantics of the verbs that have no polysemous, veridical counterpart. But notice that the semantics of the NPI verbs that do have a veridical counterpart, is not just the negation of the non-negated verb:

- (7) ane "ha en (svak) følelse av, ha en tanke om" (*Landrø and Wangensteen 1993*)
have a weak feeling about, having a thought about

But the negated verb *ane* is not just the negated form of (7). Rather, the meaning of the negated *ane* is really strong and emphatic, it does not negate having a feeling or a thought about the matter in question, but rather negates having any knowledge about it:

- (8) ikke ane "not to have the faintest idea, not to have a clue"

4 Negative Polarity Items - previous discussions

While negative polarity items were recognised by Otto Jespersen (1917:14), as "strengthening of negatives", it was not until much later that the topic was properly discussed. Starting with Klima (1964), the topic was given a proper discussion, and it was suggested that these items had to be triggered by negation in a specific syntactic configuration. In the 1990s, Progovac (1993:150) suggested that all NPIs obey Principle A of the Binding theory (implying c-command of the NPI by the negative element).

There have been several semantic approaches by linguists like Ladusaw, Zwarts, Van der Wouden and Giannakidou, that give insight into the semantic licencing of the contexts of the NPIs. Some of these will be surveyed below.

The semantic licencing contexts of NPIs have been studied for a long time. Important work such as Zwarts (1995) and Giannakidou (1997), and much other work by these and other authors, use Montague's notion of veridicality to account for different types of licencing contexts for polarity items. Zwarts (1995) shows how terms such as nonveridicality and averidicality can be used to describe different degrees of contexts that do not imply the truth of the propositions involved. E.g., the logical connective *or* is nonveridical, while the connectives *neither-nor* are averidical. In Modern Greek, Giannakidou (1997) uses the terms to contrast proper (emphatic) NPIs, which are averidical, and free-choice items, which are nonveridical.

Zwarts (1994) divides negative polarity items into three types (weak, strong and superstrong), according to what semantic licencing is required for each type. All of the types need monotone decreasing contexts (e.g. *at most N*), but strong NPIs need the context to be anti-additive (e.g. *no one*) in addition. The superstrong NPIs need an anti-morphic licencing (such as *not*).

5 Syntactic licencing

5.1 The syntactic position of *ikke*: [Spec, NegP]

Before going into an investigation of the licencing for the Norwegian NPI verbs, let us first briefly look at the syntactic position of *ikke*. We will assume that the negation sits in a NegP, as argued generally by Haegeman (1995:126) and Ouhalla (1990:191), and more specifically for the Norwegian *ikke* ('not') by Lindstad (1999), Johannessen (1998) and Jensen (2001). Although there may be some arguments for *ikke* being a head in that phrase (Johannessen 1998), there are convincing arguments that the negative element is in Spec of NegP, i.e. that it is not a head. Let us refer to Rizzi (1990:17), who argues that negatives must be A' elements since they create inner islands with respect to adjunct movement. Thus, while in (9a), the *wh*-question can ambiguously refer to the matrix or the embedded predicate, in (9b), only the matrix predicate is available:

- (9) a. How strongly do you believe that inflation will rebound?
 b. How strongly do you not believe that inflation will rebound?

(Rizzi 1990:16, attributed to Bill Ladusaw)

Rizzi's second argument (Rizzi 1990:22-3) for the A' status of the negation is indeed V-to-I movement, as we find it in Norwegian. Thus, since the verb moves to C in declarative sentences, as in (10) below, and thus moves past a negation, it is clear that the negation cannot be a head (since that would have violated the principles of Relativized Minimality).

- (10) a. [CP Petter spiser [IP I' ikke [I' t [VP t ertestuing]]]]
 Petter eats not stewed peas
 'Petter doesn't eat stewed peas.'
 b. [CP om [IP Petter [I' ikke [I' spiser [VP t ertestuing]]]]]
 whether Petter not eats stewed peas
 '...whether Peter doesn't eat stewed peas.'

(Adapted from Nordgård and Áfari 1990:70-71)

We thus assume a structure (contra Johannessen 1998) with Lindstad (1999), in which there is a NegP with the negation *ikke* in the specifier position:

- (11) [CP om [Topic Petter [NegP ikke [I' spiser [VP t ertestuing]]]]]
 whether Petter not eats stewed peas
 '...whether Peter doesn't eat stewed peas.'

(Adapted from Lindstad 1999:55)

5.2 *Ikke* as a licencer in a c-command configuration

As mentioned above, Progovac (1993, and later work) shows that c-command has something to do with the licencing of NPIs. Since the negation *ikke* 'not' is the core licencer of NPIs, licencing - as we have seen - strong NPIs, we shall start with the assumption that whenever *ikke* is involved, it must c-command the NPI that it licences.

(12) NPI verbs must be c-commanded by *ikke*.

Clearly, this looks like a good working hypothesis, as exemplified below (repeated from above):

(13) Det var noe ved fyren som Karl *ikke* kunde fordra.

There was something about that guy that Karl couldn't stand

(14) [CP som [Topic Karl [NegP *ikke* [T' kunde [VP t fordra]]]]]

Interestingly, many of the NPI verbs, like the one here, often co-occur with the modal verb *kunne* 'can'. One effect, syntactically, is that (part of) the NPI verbs are c-commanded by the negation. But as we shall see later (section 5.4) the co-occurrence of negative modals with NPI verbs has a different explanation, of a semantic rather than syntactic nature. And in fact, it is often the case that there is no such c-command relation between the negator and the NPI, as will become clear in section 5.5.

5.3 Clause-internal c-command

It is not, however, enough for a NPI verb to be c-commanded by its licencer. As we can see below, the c-command relation has to be confined to a local, clausal domain. In this respect, too, it is reminiscent of anaphoric binding. Indeed, it is reminiscent of the binding conditions for *ni* NPIs in Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian (Progovac 1994). In the (a)-sentences below, the NPI verbs are contained in a finite complement clause. They are all c-commanded by *ikke*, situated in the upper matrix clause, but they are ungrammatical. The (b)-sentences are c-commanded within their own clause, and are grammatical:

(15) a. *Hun elsket *ikke* [at han **rikket** seg]
she loved not that he moved himself
'She didn't love that he moved.'

b. Hun elsket [at han *ikke* **rikket** seg]
she loved that he not moved himself
'She loved that he didn't move.'

(16) a. *Hun besluttet *ikke* [at hun skulle **begripe** det]
she decided not that she should understand it
'She didn't decide that she should understand anything at all.'

b. Hun besluttet [at hun *ikke* skulle **begripe** det]
she decided that she not should understand it
'She decided that she shouldn't understand anything at all.'

(17) a. *Hun fortalte *ikke* [at hun skulle **ense** bråket]
she told not that she should notice the-noise.'
'She didn't tell [us] that she should notice the noise.'

b. *Hun fortalte [at hun *ikke* skulle **ense** bråket]
she told that she not should notice the-noise.'
'She told [us] that she shouldn't notice the noise.'

Finiteness is not a decisive criterion, though; the sentences below show that neither can the c-command cross the boundary of a nonfinite clause:

(18) a. *Hun elsket *ikke* [å **rikke** seg t]
she loved not to moved herself
'She didn't love to move.'

b. Hun elsket [å *ikke* **rikke** seg t]
she loved to not move herself
'She loved not to move.'

(19) a. *Hun besluttet *ikke* [å **begripe** det]
she decided not to understand it
'She didn't decide to understand anything at all.'

b. Hun besluttet [å *ikke* **begripe** det]
she decided to not understand it
'She decided not to understand anything at all.'

- (20) a. *Hun valgte *ikke* [å ense bråket]
 she chose not to notice the-noise
 'She didn't choose to notice the noise.'
- b. Hun valgte [å *ikke* ense bråket]
 she chose to not notice the-noise
 'She chose not to notice the noise.'

Let us refine the licencing requirement:

(21) NPI verbs must be c-commanded by *ikke* within their local clausal domain.

5.4 What does "clause-internal" mean? - Main verbs as modal verbs

So far, it may seem that the licencing condition for NPI verbs is simply that they need to be c-commanded by *ikke* clause-internally. However, certain types of data makes this generalization problematic. Below, the NPI verbs are contained in nonfinite clauses with the negation in the matrix clause, and they are, surprisingly, grammatical.

- (22) Hun trengte *ikke* [å begripe noe som helst]
 she needed not to understand anything at all
 'She didn't need to understand anything at all.'
- (23) Hun maktet *ikke* [å ense bråket]
 she managed not to notice the.noise
 'She didn't manage to notice the noise.'
- (24) Hun pleide *ikke* [å rikke seg når han kom inn]
 she used not to move herself when he came in
 'She didn't use to move when he entered.'

The contrast in grammaticality between (22-24) and (18a-20a) seems very odd. Might there be an underlying contrast between the structures in the two sentences, one that makes it possible to keep the generalization we have reached?

Let us look at the matrix verbs in section 5.3 above contrasted with those in the present section.

Actually, at closer investigation, it turns out that the nonfinite complements of such verbs as the matrix ones above can occur *without* an infinitival marker, see the authentic examples below in (25)-(27). This is in sharp contrast to most verbs, which take infinitival complements with obligatory infinitival markers (see (28)):

- (25) Fyllingen-jentene [...] maktet ikke [fullføre det de hadde gjort så fint].
 the-Fyllingen-girls ... managed not finish that they had done so nicely
 'The Fyllingen-girls didn't manage to finish what they had done so nicely.'

(The Oslo Corpus)

- (26) Jeg greide ikke [tenke på noe annet enn å dø].
 I managed not think on anything else than to die
 'I didn't manage to think of anything other than dying.'

www.nt.fylkesbibl.no/enhjemningen/rosen.htm

- (27) ... de pleide ikke [gå alene på denne tiden].
 they used not walk alone on this time
 'They used not to walk alone at this time.'

travellersclub.no/Eventyr%20og%20Historier/lou_lou.htm

- (28) a. * Hun valgte *ikke* [fullføre]
 she chose not finish
 'She chose not finish.'

- b. Hun valgte *ikke* [å fullføre]
 she chose not to finish
 'She chose not to finish.'

Some other verbs that allow their nonfinite infinitival complement clause to occur without an infinitival marker are:

- (29) bruke ('be used to'), behøve ('need'), orke ('manage'), evne ('manage'), klare ('manage'), gidde ('be bothered'), tørre ('dare'), våge ('dare'), risikere ('risk'), få ('be allowed').

In Johannessen (1998), it was suggested that the lack of infinitival marker could be seen as a kind of NPI. The main reason for that suggestion was that the lack of the infinitival marker is usually accompanied by a negated matrix verb. E.g., the Bokmål Norwegian examples in Faarlund et al. (1997) are all negated (a fact which is not noticed by the authors, however):

- (30) a. Du behøver ikke (å) komme.
 you need not (to) come
 'You needn't come'
 b. Vi trenger ikke (å) gå så tidlig.
 we need not (to) go that early
 'We needn't go that early.'
 c. Jeg orker ikke (å) høre på deg.
 I stand not (to) listen on you
 'I can't bear listening to you'
 d. Han gadd ikke (å) prøve en gang.
 he bothered not (to) try one time
 'He didn't even bother trying.'

(Faarlund et al. 1997:996)

Faarlund et al. (1997) suggest that such verbs are auxiliaries, a suggestion that will be taken up in this paper. Before we investigate it more fully, it is interesting to note that van der Wouden (1996:1) in a discussion of modal verbs such as English *need*, German *brauchen* and Dutch *hoeven* finds a direct relationship between the grammaticalization of such verbs into modals and their becoming negative polarity items. Duffley and Larrivé (1998) in a similar vein discuss the verbs *need* and *dare* and argue that their semantics as modals give them something in common with other NPIs, as we shall see later.

Eide (2002:45) shows that specifically *ikke trenge* and *ikke behøve* are modal auxiliaries. Semantically, they can be divided into two different senses, deontic and epistemic, and syntactically, they can occur with bare infinitivals.

It is worth investigating whether the matrix verbs that allow bare infinitival complements can all be seen as modals. Eide gives a number of syntactic criteria for modalityhood (Eide 2002: 36) for her examples *ikke trenge/ikke behøve*. They both pass the most important criterion; that of taking bare infinitival complements. Among Eide's other tests for modality, her two verbs pass one more: the possibility of being repeated in a tag, see (31) vs. (32):

- (31) Jon trenger/behøver ikke spise først, trenger/behøver han vel?
 Jon needs/needs not eat first, needs/needs he though
 'Jon does not need to eat first, does he?' (Eide 2002:42)
 (32) * Jon velger ikke å spise først, velger han vel?
 Jon chooses not to eat first, chooses he though
 'Jon does not choose to eat first, does he?'

We know that our verbs in (26-28), and those listed above in (29) have in common that they take bare infinitivals. Thus, they have passed Eide's most crucial test. But do they also pass the test of being repeated in tags? We see below that adapting the authentic examples from above, adding tags, yields perfectly fine sentences, as does making up examples from the other verbs listed above. (The sentences (33-35) are the equivalents of (25-27), and (36-44) are the verbs from (29), put into the frame of (36).)

- (33) Fyllingen-jentene [...] *makter* ikke [fullføre det de hadde gjort så fint],
 maktet de vel?
 (34) Jeg *greide* ikke [tenke på noe annet enn å dø], greide jeg vel?
 (35) ... de *pleide* ikke [gå alene på denne tiden], pleide de vel?
 (36) Kristin *braker* ikke reise, bruker hun vel?
 Kristin uses not travel, uses she though
 'Kristin doesn't usually travel, does she?'
 (37) Kristin orker ikke reise, orker hun vel? (to manage)

- (38) Kristin evner ikke reise, evner hun vel? (to manage)
- (39) Kristin klarer ikke reise, klarer hun vel? (to manage)
- (40) Kristin gidder ikke reise, gidder hun vel? (to be bothered)
- (41) Kristin våger ikke reise, våger hun vel? (to dare)
- (42) Kristin tør ikke reise, tør hun vel? (to dare)
- (43) Kristin risikerer ikke reise, risikerer hun vel? (to risk)
- (44) Kristin får ikke reise, får hun vel? (to be allowed)

We can conclude that the verbs that take bare infinitives are modal auxiliaries from a syntactic perspective. Whether they are modals from a semantic point of view is not clear. Eide (2002) has shown that it is possible to find two different meanings of the Norwegian equivalents of *need* (*behøve, trenge*) and *dare* (*føre, våge*). Duffley and Larrivé (1998:98) distinguish a “full verb” and a “modal” sense of the verbs *need* and *dare*. The modal sense of *dare* is among other things: “What conditions whether an action itself or state of daring can exist [...]”, while the full verb sense is simply: “The realization or existence of daring [...]”. Duffley and Larrivé (1998:§4) point out that the description of the modal sense shows why these verbs are also likely to become NPIs; they describe a kind of minimal meaning - not the actual action or state referred to by the verb, but rather the very conditions for any event to take place. This way, the epistemic sense of a negative modal is stronger and more absolute than the root sense, and the modalisation of these verbs can be seen as a grammaticalisation of the negated, epistemic version of these verbs. i.e. the NPI sense.

It is interesting to see the “modalisation” of the above verbs in relation to other, traditional modals. A particular case in point is the verb *kunne* ‘can’, which very often cooccurs with NPI verbs. For example, *kan ikke fordra* (‘cannot stand’) (the verb exemplified in (1d) above) has 343 hits on the Google search engine, while *fordrar ikke* (‘stands not’) has only 32 hits. The epistemic meaning of this modal verb in a negative context is of course very similar to that described for

other modals by Duffley and Larrivé above: *kan ikke* ‘cannot’ describes a situation where it is absolutely impossible for something to take place, it denies the very possibility of the described event to occur. Using this modal, then, together with a NPI verb achieves an effect that is even stronger than when the NPI verb is used on its own. We find support for the idea that negative modals strengthen the meaning of the NPI verbs if we accept that lack of a modal with negation of ordinary, non-NPI verbs means that no strengthening is attempted: In this case, the situation is reversed: a negative modal followed by an ordinary verb, such as *kan ikke være glad i* (‘cannot love’), gives only four hits on the Google engine, while ordinary negation without a modal, *er ikke glad i* ‘doesn’t love’ gives 210 hits.

There is another syntactic characteristic that pertains to the type of verbs discussed in this section. Lødrup (2000: 46-7) notes that such verbs do not have passive participles – a fact that he relates to the negative polarity feature of these verbs: they cannot be achievement verbs. Whatever the reason for their defective behaviour in the passive voice, the syntactic fact that these verbs do not have a passive participle is one which they share with modal verbs.

It is characteristic of modal verbs that “these “verbs can have both an epistemic and a root modal sense” (Thráinsson and Vikner (1995:53). It is clearly not easy to imagine what the epistemic senses of the verbs above might be – epistemic senses being those that express the speaker’s knowledge, rather than modifying the acts described in the utterance. However, it seems that Thráinsson and Vikner’s requirement is too strict. Bybee et al. (1994:195) show that the epistemic senses derive diachronically from their deontic counterparts: “It is clear that the epistemic senses develop later than, and out of, the agent-oriented senses.” Therefore, since our modals are obviously new, it is possible that the epistemic senses have not yet developed.²

Since the verbs in question can be regarded as syntactic modals, we shall follow Platzack (1998) and Eide (2002:110)’s analysis of modals; that modals are raising verbs, not control verbs. Recall that our problem is to account for the fact that

² It should be noted that it is not certain that there is a steady development towards full modality for these verbs. In fact, for many speakers, the use of these verbs without a complementiser in the complement seems somewhat old-fashioned. The development may thus have stopped and reversed.

NPI verbs like *begripe* in (45) (repeated from above) seemingly can be licenced from the matrix clause across a clause boundary:

- (45) Hun *trengte ikke* [(å) *begripe* noe som helst]
 she *needed* not to/0 understand anything at all
 'She didn't need to understand anything at all.'

Now that we understand that these matrix verbs are modals, and thus raising verbs, we can analyse these sentences structurally differently from those that contain ordinary control verbs. Let us follow Platzack's (1998:146) analysis of Swedish: The infinitival marker is generated in C, so that control verbs have a proper CP complement. Modal verbs are raising verbs, and lack infinitival markers; they do not have a CP complement. A raising structure and a control structure adapted from Platzack (1998:148,154) are exemplified below:

- (46) Hun_i *trengte ikke* [A_{gr}OP Agro [VP t_i *begripe* noe som helst]] (raising)
 (47) Hun *valgte ikke* [CP å [TP PRO_i T [A_{gr}OP Agro [VP t_i fullføre bok]]]] (control)

We see that infinitival clauses that have infinitival markers pattern with finite complement clauses – they are both CPs. Bare infinitival clauses, i.e. the complements of modal verbs, are not CPs. We see that the generalisation we started out with is right, but we must stress that the clausal domain is CP:

- (48) NPI verbs must be c-commanded by *ikke* within their local CP domain.

This accounts for why *begripe* in (45) above is licenced by the negation *ikke*; the NPI verb is in the same local CP domain as the negative licencer. It also accounts for why (49) below is impossible; the matrix verb takes a CP complement, which blocks the licencing between the subordinate NPI verb and the negative licencer in the matrix clause.

- (49) * Hun *valgte ikke* [CP å [TP PRO_i T [A_{gr}OP Agro [VP t_i *begripe*]]]] (control)

However, the negative modals we have established here have the possibility of facultatively including an infinitival marker in their complement, cf. (45) above. We need to address the versions of such sentences when they do contain an

infinitival marker. There is nothing unacceptable about them, see (50)-(51) (the latter being authentic, albeit without a NPI verb complement).

- (50) Hun *trengte ikke* [å *begripe* noe som helst]
 she *needed* not to understand anything at all
 'She didn't need to understand anything at all.'
- (51) Du *trenger ikke* [å dra til Kina for å stå på ett ben].
 you *need* not to go to China for to stand on one leg
 'You need not go to China to stand on one leg.'
www.gyldendal.no/foraage/bifrost/oktober.html

It is clear that by Platzack's analysis it is impossible to suggest that the infinitival marker sits in C in such sentences, since modal verbs do not have a CP. A possible site, however, is the head of the A_{gr}O position, and that will be the suggestion here:³

- (52) Hun_i *trengte ikke* [A_{gr}OP å [VP t_i *begripe* noe som helst]] (raising)

³ There are still some unsolved problems. Kjell Johan Sæbø (p.c.) has made me aware of the verbal complex *ha til hensikt å* 'have in mind to', which can licence an NPI verb in the lower infinite CP.

- (i) ... Da gjenstår en forhandlingsrunde med Arbeiderpartiet,
 Then remains a discussion-round with the-Labour-Party
 som *ikke* har til hensikt [å *rikke* seg på sin motstand mot kontantstøtten.] ...
 who not has to aim to move itself on its resistance against the cash-support

'Then remains the discussions with the Labour Party,
 that does not have in mind to move with respect to its resistance against the cash support.'

www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/1998/11/09/139417.html - 22k

I am not sure why this is possible. It is possible that the infinitival marker is part of the verbal complex in a stronger sense than what it is otherwise the case, so that the whole verbal complex is a raising verb, and the complement not clausal.

5.5 Is c-command really the licencing condition? - Problems with V2

We have seen that the NPI verbs must be licensed within their local CP, and we have assumed that the licensing consists of a c-command relation. This is supported by the general fact that nominal NPIs cannot usually occur in subject position:

(53) Jeg så ikke noen gutt
I saw not any boy
'I didn't see any boy.'

(54) *Noen gutt så ikke meg
any boy saw not me
'No boy saw me.'

Whenever NPIs are subjects at all, they are always c-commanded by their licencer, as noted by Jensen (2001, attributing this observation to Tarald Taraldsen):

(55) Linda trodde ikke [at noenting var bra nok].
Linda thought not that anything was good enough
'Linda didn't think [that anything was good enough].'

It is often thought that c-command is a crucial criterion, as we saw above in section 4. It would follow that NPIs could not be fronted, since that too would violate the c-command criterion. Giannakidou (1998) even claims that there are semantic reasons for this. She says that bare fronting of APIs (affective polarity items) will be excluded because of their sensitivity semantics, and formulates this ban thus:

(56) Ban on the topicalization of dependent existential quantifiers
Dependent existential quantifiers cannot be topicalized.

(Giannakidou 1998:237)

However, Lindstad (1999:90) shows that NPIs can actually be topicalised:⁴

⁴ Christer Platzack (p.c.) points out that topicalisation must be highly restricted, though, given the generally impossible types of sentences as in (which are Swedish, but the same holds for Norwegian):

(57) Noen slik høyesteretsdom har vi ikke i Norge, opplyser A.
any such supreme court verdict have we not in Norway, informs A.
'We don't have any such supreme court verdict in Norway, informs A.'

But while nominal NPIs still have some c-command requirement when occurring in *in situ* positions, verbal NPI are freer. Norwegian, in virtue of being a V2 language, systematically has the finite verb in the second position in the sentence, thereby systematically having the finite verb higher than the adverbials, including the negation *ikke*. Consider the examples of simplex NPI verbs below.

(58) a. Det raker ikke de utenlandske arbeidsgiverne.
it concerns not the foreign employers
'It is of no business to the foreign employers.'

b. Hun ensset ikke bråket.
she sensed not the.noise
'She didn't notice the noise.'

c. Bonden vørte henne ikke.
the.farmer sensed her not
'The farmer didn't notice her.'

d. Tålte ikke tanken på alle de lukkede dører.
stood not the.thought on all the closed doors
'Couldn't stand the thought of all the closed doors.'

(i) Någonsin hadde han inte varit i Rom
Ever had he not been in Rome
'He hadn't ever been to Rome.'

(ii) Ett rött öre hade han inte
a red dime had he not
'He didn't have a dime.'

e. Hun **hæter ikke** lukten av øl. ...
she stands not the smell of beer
'She cannot stand the smell of beer.'

universitas.uio.no/magasinet/1507.shtml

f. Det **gjelds ikke nå**.
it counts not now
'It doesn't count now.'

g. Ho **smiler mot ham og rikker seg ikke**.
she smiles towards him and moves not
'She smiles towards him and doesn't move'

h. Det **nytter ikke å arrestere mig**.
it uses not to arrest me
'There is no use arresting me.'

i. Hun **eier ikke humor**.
she owns not humour
'She has not (sense of) humor.'

(All sentences are taken from the Oslo Corpus)

In addition to simplex NPI verbs like those above, there are also complex NPI predicates of various kinds. They have in common that they consist of a verb plus something else, of which we shall see some combinations below. They are all licenced by a negation further down than the finite verb.

Modal verb + infinitival verb + complement:

(59) a. Men kirken **vil ikke vite av undere som ikke har godkjennelse**.
but the-church will not know of miracles that not have approval
'But the church doesn't want to know about miracles that are not accepted.'

b. Jeg **kan nesten ikke få sagt det**.
I can almost not get said it
'I'm almost not able to say it.'

c. Karl **kunde ikke dy seg** for å sende ham vekk.
Karl could not restrain himself for to send him away
'Karl couldn't resist the temptation to send him away.'

d. Hun **lot seg ikke merke med det**.
she let herself not notice with it
'She didn't let herself be shown to bothered by it.'

e. Det **fikk ikke hjelpe om han var litt nervøs**.
it got not help if he was little nervous
It couldn't be helped that he was a bit nervous.

f. Ungdommens **følelser skal man ikke kinse av**.
the-youths' feelings shall one not ignore of
'The feelings of the young shouldn't be ignored.'

(All sentences are taken from the Oslo Corpus)

Auxiliary verb + adjectival phrase:

(60) a. Det **var ikke godt å si** hvor denne ville gå.
it was not good to say where this would go
'It wasn't easy to see where this one would go.'

b. Det **var ikke fritt for at** han kjente seg litt sår.
it was not free for that he felt himself little sore
'It was clear that he felt a bit hurt.'

c. Sant å si **hadde han ikke hatt stort med jenter å gjøre**.
true to say had he not had much with girls to do
'He actually hadn't had a lot to do with girls.'

d. Han **var ikke sen om å** konstatere at kista var der.
he was not late about to confirm that the chest was there
'It didn't take long for him to see that the chest was there.'

(All sentences are taken from the Oslo Corpus)

Verbs + prepositional phrases:

- (61) a. Han kom seg *ikke* til å lese den.
he came himself not to to read it
'He couldn't make himself read it.'
- b. Han fikk seg *ikke* til å lese den.
he got himself not to to read it
'He couldn't make himself read it.'
- c. Vi kommer *ikke* utenom June som banker på døren.
we come not around June who knocks on the door
'We can't ignore June who's knocking on the door.'
- d. Det er likevel *ikke* til å komme forbi at...
it is still not to to come past that
'It still shouldn't be ignored that...'
- e. Det var *ikke* til å begripe.
it was not to to understand
'It was impossible to understand.'
- f. Det var *ikke* til å undres over at ho var slik.
it was not to to wonder over that she was thus
'It was not strange that she was like that.'
- g. Jenta kunde da *ikke* for at hun hadde slike venner.
the-girl could then not for that she had such friends
'The girls shouldn't be blamed for having such friends.'
- h. Motivet til ugjerningen vil han *ikke* ut med.
the.reason for the-crime would he not out with
'The reason for the crime, he didn't want to tell.'
- i. Faren til Anna var *ikke* (til) å spøke med.
the-father to Anna was not to to joke with
'The father of Anna was not one to joke with.'

- j. Snart vet en *ikke* av det før det drypper fra taket.
soon knows one not of it before it drips from the roof
'Soon one doesn't know it until it's dripping from the roof.'

(All sentences are taken from the Oslo Corpus)

Verb + Noun phrase:

- (62) a. Men det var *ikke* råd å få moren til å skjønne.
but it was not advice to get the-mother to to understand
'But it wasn't possible to make the mother understand.'
- b. I fjorten dager kunde det *ikke* bli tale om.
in fourteen days could it not be speech of
'For fourteen days, it would be impossible.'
- c. I fjorten dager kunde det *ikke* bli snakkt om.
in fourteen days could it not be talk of
'For fourteen days, it would be impossible.'
- d. Dessuten hadde *ikke* konstabelen noe med det.
besides had not the-constable anything with it
'Besides, the constable had nothing to do with it.'
- e. Det hjalp *ikke* hvor mye han svelgjet.
it helped not how much he swallowed
'It didn't help how ever much he swallowed.'
- f. Det gjorde *ikke* ham det minste.
it made not him the least
'It didn't matter for him in the slightest.'
- g. Og nå vet jeg *ikke* min arme råd.
and now now I not my poor advice
'And now I don't know what to do.'

h. Det lignet *ikke* grisen sånt.
 it looked-like not the-pig such-things
 'It didn't look right.'

i. Jo sjøl smaker nesten *ikke* mat.
 Jo himself tastes almost not food
 'Jo himself eats hardly any food.'

(All sentences are taken from the Oslo Corpus)

We have seen above that many nominal NPIs need to be licensed by c-command (with some exceptions pointed out by Lindstad 1999:90). This requirement is clearly not true for verbal NPIs. While verbal NPIs can be licensed in a configuration in which they are c-commanded by negation in their local CP, it is also the case that we must allow licensing in which they are not c-commanded by the negation, although they do have to be licensed in a local domain. Thus, we must change the requirement, removing the condition that it be c-commanded:

(63) NPI verbs must be licensed by *ikke* within their local CP domain.

5.6 Other Licencers

It would be premature to suggest an analysis of the structural licensing conditions before we have investigated what the licensors of NPI verbs can be. It is well-known in the literature that NPIs vary with respect to their licensing conditions. For example, van der Wouden (1994) refines the semantic contexts which can licence NPIs, into degrees of downward entailment, showing that each type correlates with different kinds of NPIs. NPIs are often divided into degrees, such as strong, medium and weak NPIs, where strong ones have the strongest requirements for licensing - requiring for example the negation marker *ikke* 'not' rather than a negative adverbial such as *aldri* 'never'. This is not the right place to go into all the different types of licensing for NPIs in general or even Norwegian NPIs in particular, I refer to Lindstad (1999) for a thorough overview of this topic for Norwegian. However, we must look at the situation for NPI verbs.

Let us start with the contexts given by Lindstad (1999:3) for NPIs in general, and review them with respect to the NPI *begriper* 'understand'. (See also Giannakidou 1997:96 for a list of NPI contexts.)

(64) Licencing contexts for NPIs in general, taken from Lindstad (1999). Below applied at verbal NPIs.

a. Sentential negation (*ikke* 'not')

Vi *begriper ikke* begeistring...
 we understand not the-marvel
 'We don't understand the marvel.'

www.aftenposten.no/meninger/kommentarer/d145272.htm

b. Negative quantifiers (*ingen N* 'no N')

(i) Så om dette *ikke* blir åpenbart [...], kan *ingen menneskelig fornuft begriper* det.
 so if this not become revealed, can no human sensibility grasp it
 'So if this will not be revealed, then no human sense can grasp it.'

luthersk-kirke.no/matt11_25.htm

(ii) I Bergen har de for eksempel buekorps, et kulturelt fenomen *intet menneske født* øst for Arna er i stand til å *begriper* filla av...
 a cultural phenomenon no person born East of Arna is in capability to to understand the-lap of

'... a cultural phenomenon no person born East of Arna is capable of understanding anything of.'

www.aheger.com/TORKJ31.htm

(iii) Hva det vil si at en annen kunstart svarer, [...] det er det *ingen* som *begriper*.
 what it will say that a different artform answers that is it nobody who understands
 'What it means for another artform to answer, nobody can understand.'

www.museumsnett.no/ingeberg/inh/17/plakat.htm

c. Negative adverbs (*aldri* 'never', *knappt* 'hardly', *neppe* 'hardly', *verken* 'neither')

- (i) Av denne grunn har jeg *aldri* kunnet **begripe** spørsmålet etter det som er a priori i Kants betydning.
of this reason have I never could understand the question after that which is a priori in Kant's meaning...
'For this reason I have never been able to understand the question after what is a priori according to Kant.'

www.hf.ntnu.no/fil/ansatte/olavg/einstein.pdf

- (ii) Senere **begriper** man stadig *mindre*.
later understands one steadily less
'Later one understands steadily less.'
www.aftenposten.no/bakgr/960911/ldag.htm
- (iii) Og jeg **begriper** meg *aller minst* på meg selv...
and I understand myself all least on myself
'And I understand myself least of all.'
www.stud.ntnu.no/~yeronica/abc.html
- (iv) Bakgrunnen blir langsomt tydeligere, og vi **begriper** så *smått* hva motivet i forgrunnen forestiller.
the background becomes slowly clearer and we understand so small what the theme in the-foreground depicts
'... and we understand slowly what the theme in the foreground depicts.'
read.agane.com/nroom/kjoelvann-petterson.htm
- (v) men *først nå* **begriper** jeg at jeg burde ha fortalt deg det ...
but first now understand I that I should have told you it
'but not until now do I understand that I ought to have told you ...'
www.narvik.folketribl.no/skrivebua/skrive/9905/990594.htm
- (vi) *Verken* han eller jeg **begriper** hvorfor mormoren motsetter seg at [...]
neither he nor I understand why the grandmother opposes that...
'Neither him nor I can understand why the grandmother opposes that...'
www.nordlys.no/57/28/81/1.html

d. Negative prepositions (*uten* 'without' (selecting finite, infinite and nominal complements))

- (i) Derfor får vi enda en kategori av mennesker som går i de multinasjonale selskaperes tjeneste, *uten* å **begripe** hva de er med på.
therefore get we yet one category of people who go in the multinational companies' service without to understand what they are with at
'Therefore we get one more category of people who serve the multinational companies without having any idea what they are in.'

www.friheten.no/bitte/2001/01/bitte01.html

- (ii) Nå er de fleste av oss enten FRP-ere eller Dagblad-lesere - *uten* at en fremmed iaktaker ville **begripe** forskjellen. ...
now are most of us either FRPs or Dagblad-readers - without that a strange observer would understand the difference
'Now most of us are either FRP- or Dagblad-readers - without a foreign observer understanding the difference.'

www.friheten.no/bitte/2002/11/bitte43.html

e. Restriction of superlatives (*ADJ-este som* 'ADJ-est that')

- ... og han er *den eneste som* **begriper** virkeligheten. ...
'... and he is the only one who understands the reality'
'... and he is the only one who understands reality.'
www.monstermagazine.no/art_beyond.html

f. Restriction of comparatives (*ADJ-ere enn* 'ADJ-er than')

- Det er *mer* mellom **begriper** himmel og jord *enn* vi **begriper** ...
it is more between heaven and earth than we understand
'There is more between heaven and earth than we can understand'

www.nrk.no/kanal/nrk_pesre/karate/1049322.html

g. Antecedent of conditionals

- Hvis* hun kan **begripe** det, *så* kan jeg og.
if she can understand it, then can I too
'If she can understand it, then I can too.'

h. Yes/no questions

Begriper du hva jeg legger i det?
 understand you what I put in it
 'Do you understand what I mean by it?'

home.online.no/~slandgaa/prosa/omforvent.htm

i. Negative Predicates

Det er *umulig* å **begripe** fryden ved en slik bombe
 it is impossible to understand the-pleasure at such bomb
 'It is impossible to understand the pleasure at such a bomb.'

home.eunet.no/~wsether/veientil.htm

j. 'Negative' Complementisers

Før vi kan **begripe** hva som skjer, er det over.
 before we can understand what that happens is it over
 'Before we can understand what happens, it is over.'

Lindstad comments that his list is not intended to be exhaustive, and it is indeed not difficult to find more contexts:

(65) Yet other contexts that can licence NPI verbsa. Finite Complement of Negative Noun Phrase

... og det er bare med "nød og neppe" at de **begriper** den ...
 and it is only with "great difficulty" that the understand it
 'and it is only with great difficulty that they understand it...'

www.luthersk-kerke.no/hoved.htm

b. Uncertainty Adverbs

Kanskje **begriper** flere at det skal noe formalisering, finansiering, jobbing etc. ...
 understand more that it shall some formalising financing working etc
 'Maybe more people will understand that some formalising, financing, work etc...'

www.uib.no/isf/eyr/arkiv/0035.html

c. "Finally" Adverbs

Men *omsider* klarte ho å **rikke** seg, og sprang ut. ...
 but finally managed she to move herself, and ran out
 'But finally she managed to move, and ran out...'

www.svelgen.no/2001/05/19/novelle.htm

d. Uncertainty Verbs

Jeg *forsøker* å **begripe** forbindelsen mellom hesterittet og døden. ...
 I try to understand the-connection between the horse-race and death
 'I try to understand the connection between the horse race and death...'

home.eunet.no/~wsether/veientil.htm

e. Modal Verb. epistemic meaning

(i) *Bondevik må kunne* **begripe** at den gjentakelse ikke kan skje ...
 Bondevik must can understand that the repetition not can happen
 'Bondevik must be able to understand that such repetition cannot happen...'
idag.no/debattoppslag.php?ID=1363

(ii) Det gjør det - så *vidt* jeg *kan* **begripe** - ikke. ...
 it makes it as far I can understand - not
 'That makes it - as far as I can understand - not...'

www.stortinget.no/stid/2001/s020409-08.html

f. Universal Quantifier

...at byråkratene i Finansdepartementet *i alle fall* **begriper** at det ikke er moms på utgifter! ...
 that the-bureaucrats in the Ministry-of-finance in every case understand that it is not VAT on expenses

'... that the people in the Ministry of Finance at least understand that there is no VAT on expenses...'

www.baat.aller.no/reklame/knmfnytt0521.html

g. Comparative Predicates

Alt i alt opplever vi kanskje at de prosedyreorienterte formuleringene i SPL er enklere å begripe

all in all experience we perhaps that the procedure-oriented formulations in SPL are simpler to understand

'All in all, we perhaps see that the procedure oriented expressions in SPL are simpler to understand...'

aure.himolde.no/in-kurs/in601/h02/Prosedyrer%20og%20Triggere.pdf

h. Antecedent of Conditional_Nonfinite

For å kunne begripe "noe som helst" av livet, må du forstå deg på døden. ...

for to can understand anything at all of life must you understand yourself on the-death

'In order to understand anything at all of life, you must understand death...'

www.energica.no/artikkeldetalj.asp?ArtikkelID=3054

It is clear that the NPI verbs, as exemplified by *begripe*, are weak polarity items, in the sense that they can occur in a wide variety of contexts, not just in the domain of the negation *ikke*. In fact, it seems impossible to give a full list of exactly the contexts in which they can occur. With Giannakidou (1997, 1999), however, we can generalise this type of contexts to being characterised as nonveridical. Clearly, what all the contexts above have in common, is exactly the fact that they give a context which does not assert about some proposition that it is true or veridical. They are hypothetical (as in conditionals), generic (as in comparative predicates), descriptive (as in restrictions of adjectives), modal etc. Let us modify the condition of NPI verbs once again:

(66) NPI verbs must be licensed by a nonveridical operator within their local CP domain.

If this generalisation is correct, there are a couple of sentences above that must be explained:

Finite Complement of 'only'-type adverb

- (67) ... og det er *bare* med "nød og neppe" [at de *begriper* den ...]
and it is only with "great difficulty" that the understand it
'...and it is only with great difficulty that they understand it...'

www.luthersk-kirke.no/hoved.htm

Negative prepositions (*uten* 'without' (selecting finite, infinitive and nominal complements))

- (68) Nå er de fleste av oss enten FRP-ere eller Dagblad-lesere -
now are the most of us either FRPs or Dagblad-readers
'Now most of us are either FRPs or Dagblad readers'

uten [at en fremmed iaktaker ville *begripe* forskjellen. ...]
without that a strange observer would understand the-difference
'... without a foreign observer understanding the difference.'

www.friheten.no/bitte/2002/11/bitte43.html

The above sentences seem to suggest that an NPI verb can be licensed across a finite clause boundary. But let us consider them more closely. In (67), the finite clause containing the NPI verb is not a proper complement clause, but rather part of a clefted construction, and licensed by the adverb *bare* 'only'. A cleft construction is pragmatically only one proposition, which has been turned into two clauses in order to fulfill certain information structure requirements. But the matrix clause of the cleft construction only consists of a semantically empty expletive subject pronoun *det* 'it', followed by a semantically empty copula verb *være* 'be'. Thus, the "complement clause" is semantically speaking not a complement clause. Neither can the subordinate clause of a cleft construction be syntactic complementation; for example, it is impossible to front that clause, contrary to ordinary complement clauses. Compare (69a) with (67) above, and (69a) against (69b), the latter containing an acceptable fronted (object) clause:

- (69) a. * [At de *begriper* den] er det bare med "nød og neppe" *t*.
that they understand it is it only with "great difficulty"
'That they understand it, it is only with great difficulty'

- b. [At snøen er vakker], mener jeg *t*.
that the-snow is beautiful think I
'That the snow is beautiful, I think.'

In the second sentence, (68), the complement clause looks as if it is the complement of the negative preposition *uten* 'without'. At closer investigation, though, it is probably more true to the facts to analyse *uten* as a complex

negative subjunction, not the least because it can be first in an adverbial preposed clause, see (70a). The licencer in this sentence is simply the subjunction itself, clearly inside the subordinate clause. Also, fronting only the clause itself without the "proposition" is completely unacceptable, unlike fronting with other prepositions, compare (70,c).

- (70) a. [*Uten at* han begriper forskjellen], er vi faktisk enten blå eller grønne.
 without that he understands the-difference are we actually either blue or green
 'Even if he does not understand the difference, we actually are either blue or green.'
- b.* [*At* han begriper forskjellen], er vi faktisk enten blå eller grønne uten.
 that he understands the-difference are we actually either blue or green without
 'Even if he does not understand the difference, we actually are either blue or green.'
- c. [*At* han begriper forskjellen], snakker vi mye om.
 that he understands the-difference talk we a-lot about
 'That he understands the difference, we talk a lot about.'

While (68), then, is covered by the condition in (66), (67) is not, and we have to reformulate the condition to make it more precise w.r.t. the domain description:

- (71) NPI verbs must be licenced by a nonveridical operator within their local proposition.
 (Proposition = CP [a matrix clause or a proper complement clause])

Thus, we have established that verbal NPIs must be licenced within a local domain. But there are more challenges. Below, we compare the unacceptable examples from above, section 5.3, and show that with a different verb in the matrix clause, and an NPI which is local with respect to the NPI verb, licencing across a finite boundary is indeed fine.

- (72) Hun visste/*elsket ikke [at han rikket seg i det hele tatt]
 she knew/loved not that he moved himself in the whole taken
 'She didn't know/love that he moved at all.'

- (73) Hun visste/*besluttet ikke [at hun skulle begripe noe som hets]
 she knew/decided not that she should understand anything at all
 'She didn't know/decide that she should understand anything at all.'
- (74) Hun visste/*fortalte ikke [at hun ville ense bråket i det hele tatt]
 she knew/told not that she would notice the-noise in the whole taken
 'She didn't know/*tell [us] that she would notice the noise at all.'

Similar acceptable results can be found with other negated or negative factive matrix verbs, such as *beklage* (regret), *angre* (repent) – although finding examples is very hard, since most of the NPI verbs are nonvolitional, and as such cannot be combined with verbs of regret or repent. It is unclear why the matrix verb seems to have to be factive. However, the fact that the NPI verbs are acceptable in this context, shows a different kind of licencing. What we see, is that a different NPI in the same local domain is enough. Notice that this latter NPI may well have been licenced from the matrix clause, a licencing that is not acceptable by the NPI verb:

- (75) a. Hun visste ikke [at hun ville høre bråket i det hele tatt]
 she knew not that she would hear the.noise in the whole taken
 'She didn't know that she would be able to hear the noise at all.'
- b.* Hun visste ikke [at hun ville ense bråket]
 she knew not that she would notice the-noise
 'She didn't know that she would notice the noise.'

So what the extra NPI does in this context seems to be to ensure the NPI verb that the context is indeed nonveridical; the presence of a different NPI gives the nonveridicality that the NPI verb cannot itself see across the finite clause boundary.

To sum up, we have arrived at the following:

- 1) NPI verbs must be licenced in their local domain.
 Local domain = a CP proposition

- 2) The licencer of an NPI can be any operator that gives the proposition a nonveridical status. Prototypically, it can be the negation *ikke*, but it can be any kind of negative adverbial, adverbials of uncertainty, direct or indirect questions, or even other NPIs.

5.7 The licencing mechanism: Checking

We have seen that NPI verbs are weak, in the sense that there are a host of different contexts that licence them. At the same time, we have seen that they are not as weak as many other NPIs, since they have to be licenced within a local domain. Giannakidou (1999) combines the insight of many researchers, giving two ways in which a sentence is nonveridical, either directly by being in the scope of an operator, or indirectly, by implicature.

(76) Licencing conditions for affective polarity items

- (i) An affective polarity item α will be licenced in a sentence S iff S is nonveridical.
 (ii) A sentence is nonveridical if it is in the scope of a nonveridical operator
 (iii) In certain cases, α may be licenced indirectly in S iff S gives rise to a negative implicature ϕ , and α is in the direct scope of negation at ϕ .

(Giannakidou 1999:408)

However, Giannakidou (1997:193–4) claims that the weak licencing (for Greek) seems to involve c-command, apart from a few cases in which the weak NPIs are contained in a topicalised constituent. On the other hand, Giannakidou claims that strong NPIs in Greek bear a feature [+averidical] that must be checked (Giannakidou 1997:181). This feature has a physical realisation; it must be emphatic.

As we have seen, Norwegian NPI verbs are weak; they can be licenced by several different kinds of contexts. However, Norwegian weak NPI verbs are regularly not c-commanded by a licencer. But, like Giannakidou's strong NPIs, the Norwegian NPI verbs are emphatic. This emphasis could be the physical realisation of a feature [+nonveridical]. Consider the sentences below (repeated from above, but with an indication of emphasis given as capital letters):⁵

⁵ It is possibly the case that the NPI verbs can occur unstressed in echo-situations:

- (77) d. Det **RAKER** *ikke* de utenlandske arbeidsgiverne.
 it concerns not the foreign employers
 'It is of no business to the foreign employers.'
- f. Hun **ENSET** *ikke* bråket.
 she noticed not the-noise
 'She didn't notice the noise'
- a. Vi kan *ikke* **BEGRIPE** at det er mulig å få det gjennomført.
 we can not understand that it is possible to get it done
 'We can not understand that it is possible to get it done.'
 www.magazinet.no/preken.asp?ID=2205 -
- b. Vi kan *ikke* **FATTE** at én person skal være en like stor risiko ...
 we can not understand that one person should be a same big risk
 'We can not understand that one person should be the same risk ...'
 www2.tv2.no/hjelperdeg/tv2/owa/artikkel.vis?a=3986

- (i) a. **Raker** dette arbeidsgiverne?
 concerns this the-employers?
 'Does this concern the employers?'

- b. Det raker ikke de utenlandske arbeidsgiverne.
 it concerns not the foreign employers
 'It doesn't concern the foreign employers.'

Some people (I refer to Marit Julien, p.c.) believe that it is also possible for NPI verbs to occur unstressed in a non-echo situation.

- (ii) a. Men **det** raker da ikke dere
 but that concerns though not you
 'But surely that doesn't concern you.'

- b. Det raker da ikke dere.
 it concerns though not you
 'It surely doesn't concern you.'

This is not in accordance with my own intuitions at all; all of the above examples are acceptable only if the NPI-verb *rake* has already been introduced to the discourse. More empirical research is called for at this point.

Let us summarise so far:

- (78) • NPI verbs are weak (allowing many types of licensors)
 • NPI verbs need not be c-commanded by their licencer
 • NPI verbs are stressed, indicating a feature [+nonveridical]

5.7.1 Licencing by *ikke* 'not'

I shall follow Lindstad (1999:ch 4)'s analysis of negation for Norwegian. He assumes that there is a NegP below the embedded CP (also following a Topic Phrase);

However, he also assumes a PolP lower in the hierarchy, to account for weaker NPIs. The core negation marker *ikke* is situated in NegP, while other polarity adverbs originate in PolP, and have to move to NegP to express sentential negation.

- (79) [CP [C at [TopicP Per_i [Topic' e [NegP ikke [Neg' e [T t_j...]]]]]]
 (Adapted from Lindstad (1999:55))

Looking at a sentence such as (80) below, it is quite clear what happens. The NPI verb has a feature [+nonveridical], which has to be checked.

- (80) [CP Hun [C' enset_i [NegP[+nonveridical] ikke t_j [VP bråket]]]]
 she noticed not the noise
 'She didn't notice the noise.'

During the derivation that is standardly assumed for Scandinavian finite verbs, the NPI verb goes stepwise through the head positions on their way to the final destination in C. One of the head-positions is of course the head of NegP, which clearly can check off the [+nonveridical] feature of the verb.

A slightly more complicated example is one where the NPI verb is complex - consisting of e.g. a finite modal and a nonfinite main verb. In these cases it is not even clear what should count as the NPI, the whole verbal complex or just the main verb. Consider (81).

- (81) Ser jeg et par Puma-sko på Blindern kan jeg ikke dy meg
 see I a pair of Puma-shoes at Blindern can I not restrain myself
 'If I see a pair of Puma shoes at Blindern, I cannot restrain myself'
universitas.uio.no/kultur/1246.shtml

For the verb in (81) it is likely that the whole verbal complex should count as a NPI; the main verb never occurs in a finite position, and neither does it occur with other auxiliaries:

- (82) a. * Jeg dyr meg ikke (I don't restrain myself)
 b. * Jeg dydde meg ikke (I didn't restrain myself)
 c. * Jeg har ikke dydd meg. (I haven't restrained myself)
 d. *Jeg skal ikke dy meg (I shall not restrain myself)

If the [+nonveridical] feature is attached to the modal verb, then licencing can be explained in exactly the same way as for the finite NPI in (80). However, sometimes, the [+nonveridical] feature is clearly attached to a non-finite form of the verb, such as below, where there is no other alternative NPI verbform:

- (83) Hun elsket [å ikke rikke seg]
 she loved to not move herself
 'She loved not to move.'

Here, the usual verb movement does not come into play, given that *rikke* is infinite. However, checking does not have to be the result of full verb movement. Here, it is enough for the non-finite verb to find an appropriate checking position; the head position of the NegP.⁶

⁶ Holmberg (2002) suggests that there is a PolP that c-commands TP. The verb moves from T to the head of PolP, incorporates there, and then the subsequent movement is Pol-to-C-movement. That analysis is not compatible with the one suggested here; verb movement via T to head of PolP would only work for finite verbs, not for the non-finite ones we have seen in e.g. (83).

5.7.2 Licencing in questions

Yes/no questions are typically nonveridical: There is no assertion about truth values in such questions. Therefore, most NPIs, and certainly all NPI verbs, are licenced in this context:

- (84) *Aner dere hvor mange billetter som har blitt solgt til i kveld?*
 know you how many tickets that have been sold to tonight
 'Do you have any idea how many tickets have been sold for tonight?'

www.playboard.no/magazine_more.asp?ID=21

Where is the [+nonveridical] feature checked in yes/no questions? Traditionally, the C projection is the one where the features of the clause are determined (Nordgård and Áfari 1990). Therefore, it is likely that this is the position where this feature is checked:

- (85) [CP [C [+nonveridical] *Aner* [T dere hvor mange billetter som har blitt solgt til i kveld?]]

But with this analysis, it seems that constituent questions would also be licensors of NPI verbs. This ought not to be the case; constituent questions do not licence NPI verbs (see below, the star is for the minimiser NPI reading – not for the root reading):

- (86) a. * *Hva aner dere om hvor mange billetter som ble solgt?*
 what know you about how many tickets that were sold
 'What have you any idea about how many tickets were sold?'
- b. * *Hvor aner dere at billettene ble solgt?*
 where know you that the-tickets were sold
 'Where have you any idea that the tickets wer sold?'
- c. * *Hvem aner dere at solgte billetter?*
 who know you that sold the tickets
 'Who have you any idea that sold the tickets?'

There are actually two reasons why constituent questions are banned as licensors for NPI verbs. One reason, maybe the most important, is that constituent questions are not actually nonveridical. In these questions, there is a presupposition that the event in the question is actually true – what is being questioned is not the whole event, but only one of its participants. I.e., related to the sentences in (86), it is the case that tickets have been sold, what is being questioned is what we know about it, where it happened or who did it.

The second reason why NPI verbs cannot be licenced by constituent questions is the fact that there is a conflict of focus. We have seen that NPI verbs are minimisers, and always focussed. However, in constituent questions, the questioned constituent – the wh-word – is focussed. The presence of a wh-word and a NPI verb in the same clause creates an unsolvable conflict:

- (87) * [CP Hvem[FOC] [C [+nonveridical] *aner*[FOC] [T dere at solgte billetter?]]]
 who know you that sold tickets

We can conclude, then, that NPI verbs check their [+nonveridical] feature in C. Constituent questions do not have a nonveridical feature in C – possibly the wh-word in [Spec,CP] carries a feature [+veridical] which would be incompatible with a [+nonveridical] feature in C, a clash being obvious and barring any attempt of Spec-head agreement between the two positions.

6. Conclusion

This paper has focused on negative polarity verbs (NPI verbs) and their licencing. NPI verbs have not been the centre of much attention in the literature, and certainly Norwegian ones have had none in the past. In this paper we have seen that, in Norwegian, this group of NPI verbs is substantial, including simplex verbs as well as complex verbal expressions. We have looked at their licencing conditions, and concluded that they can be classified as weak polarity items, since they can be licenced by many kinds of licensors – generalised to the feature [-nonveridicality]. We have further seen that NPI licensors must be licenced within their local CP domain. This in turn has led to a reclassification of a

different group of verbs from ordinary verbs to modal verbs - a classification is called for at least syntactically.

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33-73

Verner Egerland

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Erik Magnusson

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