Not only contrastive but also mirative? Additive negation constructions in English

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Negation and exclusive particles (e.g. *only*, *just*) are classic topics in linguistics (e.g. Horn 1989; König 1991) but their combinations (e.g. *not only*, *not just*), which I will call additive negations, have received only sporadic attention. In one of the few studies to pay attention to these constructions, Horn (2000: 148–153) notes that there are semantic and syntactic differences between *not only* and *not just*. Semantically, *not only* presupposes that the element in its scope is true, while *not just* does not:

(1) She isn't {just/#only} an ASSISTANT professor—she's a FULL professor. (Horn 2000: 149)

Syntactically, *not only* is possible before the finite verb or even the whole clause, contrary to other similar constructions. In these marked configurations, it is obligatorily combined with an affirmative continuation, rendering the constructions a case of contrastive negation (cf. McCawley 1991):

(2) a. He doesn't {only/just/merely/simply} like her (—he loves her).
     b. He not {only/*just/*merely/*simply} likes her, he loves her.
     c. Not {only/*just/*merely/*simply} does he like her, he loves her.
     d. He {doesn't only like/*not only likes} her.
     e. *Not only [does he like her]. (Horn 2000: 151)

Such observations hint at the existence of an intricate constructional network (Goldberg 1995; 2006), but its full details have not been studied until now. This is the starting point for the present study, which is a comprehensive corpus study of additive negations. I will focus on the four central cases: [*not only*], [*not just*], [*not merely*] and [*not simply*]. The data for the study comes from the British National Corpus and the methodological approach is quantitative corpus linguistics. The aim is to characterize the formal and functional properties of the constructions and to map out this part of the English constructicon.

Previous accounts of additive negations have characterised their meanings in terms of scalarity, foregrounding/backgrounding as well as surprise (Horn 2000: 148–157; Quirk et al. 1985: 941). The linguistic encoding of surprise has recently been discussed under the notion of mirativity (DeLancey 1997). One goal of this presentation is to see whether and to what extent additive negation participates in the expression of mirative meanings.

On the formal level, I focus on the constructional environments of additive negation, especially on the syntactic position of the negation (e.g. fronted or not) and on whether it is part of a contrastive construction together with a corresponding affirmative, as in (2a,b,c) above. Preliminary analysis suggests that the constructions differ in terms of their attraction to contrastive environments. This is evidence of some larger additive contrastive constructions (in particular [*not only X but also Y*]) being constructionalised further than others. On the functional level, I characterise the similarities and differences between the four additive negation constructions based on an analysis of their usage patterns.

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