
Main point: In (European) French, personne ‘nobody’ undergoes covert (LF) movement into the specifier of a licensing NegP (which is headed by ne or its unpronounced allomorph Ø). In certain cases, where personne has moved into the specifier of a larger phrase, the larger phrase may be “pied-pipped” along with personne.

Structural assumptions about negation (at least in French) (pas is assumed to be base-generated in SpecNegP):

(1) AgrP
   Agr   NegP
   pas
   Neg ne
   TP
   T   VP
   V   obj

Basic distribution of personne…

Personne can appear in direct or indirect object position, in which case there’s no problem embedding it in a (subjectless) NP.

(3) a. Jean n’a vu personne
     Jean neg-has seen nobody
     ‘Jean didn’t see anybody.’

     b. Jean n’a parlé à personne.
     Jean neg-has spoken to nobody
     ‘Jean didn’t speak to anybody.’

(4) a. Jean n’a vu le frère de personne.
     Jean neg-has seen the brother of nobody
     ‘Jean didn’t see anybody’s brother.’

     b. Jean n’a vu le maison du frère de personne
     Jean neg-has seen the house of-the brother of nobody
     ‘Jean didn’t see anybody’s brother’s house.’

Conclusion? It looks like the relation between personne and ne must be one of c-command, but it seems like as long as one c-commands the other, personne is allowed.

Personne can’t be embedded inside what would be an island for movement:

Wh-island:

(5) a. * Je ne me demande quand voir personne.
     I neg myself ask when to-see nobody
     (‘I don’t wonder when to see anybody.’)

     b. ?? L’homme que je me demande quand voir
     the-man who I myself ask when to see
     (‘The man who I wonder when to see...’)

“Specific” island:

(6) a. * Jean n’a vu cette photo de personne.
     Jean neg-has seen this picture of nobody
     (‘Jean didn’t see this picture of anybody.’)

     b. * La personne dont j’ai vu cette photo
     the person of-whom I have seen this picture
     (‘The person of whom I have seen this picture...’)
In a position thematically lower than the agent:

(7) a. * Jules n’a vu la photo de ce photographe (ag) de personne (th)
Jules neg-has seen the picture of this photographer of nobody
(‘Jules did not see this photographer’s picture of anybody.’)

b. * L’homme dont Jules a vu la photo de ce photographe (ag) t_1 
the-man of-whom Jules has seen the picture of this photographer
(‘The man of whom John saw this photographer’s picture’)

Conclusion so far: It seems like personne is disallowed wherever a wh-trace would be disallowed; suggests that there is some kind of movement going on.

But... there are some places that a personne can be that a wh-trace cannot. For example, embedded in an adjunct PP:

(8) a. Jean n’est arrivé avant personne.
Jean neg-is arrived before nobody
‘Jean hasn’t arrived before anybody.’

b. * Qui_1 Jean est-il arrivé [avant t_1 ]?
Who Jean is-he arrived before
(‘Who did Jean arrive before?’)

(9) a. (?) Jean n’est arrivé avant la sœur de personne.
Jean neg-is arrived before the sister of nobody
‘Jean hasn’t arrived before anybody’s sister.’

b. * De qui_1 Louise est-elle partie [avec l’amie t_1 ]?
of whom Louise is-she left with the-friend
(‘Whose friend did Louise leave with?’)

A plausible hypothesis that is nevertheless wrong: personne is an anaphor, getting some kind of reference from ne.

First of all, it is ne that needs to be licensed:

(10) * Jean ne mange.
Jean neg eat
(‘Jean doesn’t eat.’)

Second, why would binding fail in (6a)? The NP cette photo de personne does not have a subject, meaning that the binding domain shouldn’t be limited to the NP—it should be the whole sentence, and in that case ne should be close enough to satisfy Principle A.

(6) a. * Jean n’a vu cette photo de personne.
Jean neg-has seen this picture of nobody
(‘Jean didn’t see this picture of anybody.’)

Third, even with a subject in the way, it is possible to have personne in some cases:

(11) a. Jean n’a vu Marie parler à personne.
Jean neg-has seen Marie to-speak to nobody
‘Jean didn’t see Mary talk to anybody.’

b. Jean ne considère Marie l’amie de personne.
Jean neg considers Mary the-friend of nobody
‘Jean doesn’t consider Mary the friend of anybody.’

c. Jean ne veut PRO voir personne.
Jean neg wants to-see nobody
‘Jean doesn’t want to see anybody.’

Proposal: personne needs to be licensed by being in SpecNegP at some point (by LF).
If personne is in subject position, it must have passed through SpecNegP.
If personne is in object position, it hasn’t traveled there yet (hence: LF)
C-command is relevant (2).

Later fn: In fact, we can even see that-trace effects:

(12) * Je n’exige que personne soit arrêté.
I neg-demand that nobody be arrested
(‘I didn’t demand that anybody be arrested.’)

One reason to think that it is SpecNegP which is relevant for personne-movement:
pas and personne are incompatible: [*] = no NC (single negation) reading.

(13) a. [*] Jean n’a pas vu personne.
Jean neg-has not seen nobody
(‘John hasn’t seen anybody.’)

b. [*] Personne n’a pas mangé de viande.
nobody neg-has not eaten of meat
(‘Nobody ate meat.’)

Footnote: Québec French does seem to allow pas and personne to co-occur, and in fact disallows ne and personne. (Does it disallow ne and pas together? If not, where is ne?)
...but

(14) Je n’ai parlé de rien à personne. Personne n’a jamais écrit de livres.
I didn’t talk about anything to anybody. Nobody has ever written any books.

(absorption, like in Haegeman & Zanuttini—but pas can’t participate, it seems—…?)

Licensing of a non-partitive [Ø de NP].

It is possible for phrases like beaucoup de chocolat ‘lots of chocolate’ to be separated by moving the quantifier beaucoup to a position before the verb. Moritz & Valois analyze this as a case where Ø is “licensed” by a c-commanding element. Beaucoup is one such element that allows Ø of this sort…

(15) a. Jean a mangé [beaucoup de chocolat].
Jean has eaten much of chocolate
‘Jean ate a lot of chocolate.’

b. Jean a beaucoup mangé [Ø de chocolat].
Jean has much eaten of chocolate
‘Jean at a lot of chocolate.’

Jean has seen of-kids much eat
(‘Jean saw kids each much.’)

…and personne or pas (that is, negation) is another; the facts about beaucoup seem to parallel facts about personne and pas (also note that sentential negation licenses [Ø de NP] but not ne alone).

(16) a. Personne ne mange [Ø de pain].
nobody neg eats of bread
‘Nobody eats bread.’

b. Jean ne mange pas [Ø de pain].
Jean neg eats not of bread
‘Jean doesn’t eat bread.’

c. * Jean ne mange [Ø de pain].
Jean neg eats of bread
(‘Jean doesn’t eat bread.’)

Note that personne itself doesn’t have to c-command [Ø de NP] at SS. We assume that c-command is vital to the licensing of Ø, but this provides support for the idea that personne will move (by LF) to a position where c-command will hold.

(17) a. Jean n’a donné [Ø de livres] à personne.
Jean neg-has given of books to nobody
‘Jean hasn’t given books to anybody.’

b. Jean n’a vu d’enfances parler à personne.
Jean neg-has seen of-kids to-talk to nobody
‘Jean didn’t see kids talk to anybody.’

Inconsistencies between personne and wh-gaps…

If personne moves, we should expect a parallelism between the positions in which personne is allowed and the positions in which wh-traces are allowed.

Problem is, it seems to fail miserably… Preposition stranding, complement of NP object of PP, deep embedding in NP (all bad for wh, ok for personne)…

(18) a. * Qui t’as parlé à t_1? preposition stranding
who have-you spoken to
(‘Who have you talked to?’)

b. Tu n’as parlé à personne.
You neg-have spoken to nobody
‘You haven’t spoken to anybody.’

(19) a. * L’homme que j’ai sorti avant t_1 ...
NP inside adverbial phrase
the-man that I am gone-out before
(‘The man I went out before…’)

b. Je ne suis sortis avant personne.
I neg am gone-out before nobody
‘I did not get out before anybody.’

(20) a. * L’homme dont j’ai parlé au frère ...
complement of NP object of PP
the-man of-whom I have talked to-the brother
(‘The man whose brother I talked to…’)

b. Je n’ai parlé au frère de personne.
I neg-have spoken to-the brother of nobody
‘I didn’t talk to anybody’s brother.’
LF pied-piping

On Moritz & Valois’ conception, LF pied-piping licenses cases like the good ones above. This happens because personne moves into SpecIslandP contributes the [+neg] feature via Spec-head agreement, and then IslandP moves to SpecNegP, where it is licensed.

Another example:

(26) Je n’ai vu la photo de la sœur de personne.
   ‘I didn’t see anybody’s sister’s picture.’

We have some reason to believe that the XP that is being pied-piped has to be marked as [+NEG] to do it (that is, that personne has to move into SpecXP as above)—this is why

In this case la frère de personne moved as a whole into SpecNegP on its way to subject position, but that would not have been legitimate, since la frère de personne is not marked [+NEG]—the [+NEG] feature from personne could only be transferred to the full DP if personne moved into SpecDP, and since we see that it hadn’t by the time it reaches sentence-initial position.

Comments.

• Incidentally, this might be a place where the M&V paper doesn’t fit in with the Zanuttini 1994 paper—if it is a very high “PolP” that is licensing personne, then we would have expected that there wouldn’t be a problem with personne embedded in a subject. It really does seem like whatever projection is doing the licensing, it is between the derived position of the subject and the object position.
• A possible complaint to make here with respect to recent syntactic theory: What would drive (or allow) the movement into SpecDP, SpecPP, etc.? (This question will make more sense as you look back over your notes at the end of the semester)

On the A/A′ status of SpecNegP

LF movement of personne is allowed to cross a subject in a case like

(11) b. Jean ne considère Marie l’amie de personne.
Jean neg considers Mary the-friend of nobody
‘Jean doesn’t consider Mary the friend of anybody.’

And, personne seems to be able to travel through SpecCP on its way to SpecNegP:

(28) ?Je n’ai exigé que tu voies personne.
I neg-have demanded that you see nobody
‘I didn’t demand that you see anybody.’

And, movement to SpecNegP seems to create WCO violations

(29) a. Je n’ai vu personne; frapper son père.
I neg-have seen nobody hit his father
‘I didn’t see his father hit anybody.’

b. *Je n’ai vu son père frapper personne;
I neg-have seen his father hit nobody
(‘I didn’t see his father hit anybody’)"

These are all properties of A′ movement.

Fns: concerning improper movement, there is one catch: Supposing that personne in subject position travels through SpecIP on its way to SpecNegP, shouldn’t that be improper movement? Wiggling out: Well, maybe it is an A′ position? That would be weird. Maybe it is underspecified and can be whatever is required?


(30) a. Taroo-sika LGB-o yonde-nai (koto)
Taro-SIKA LGB-ACC read-NEG (fact)
‘Only Taro read LGB.’

b. * Taroo-ga LGB-sika yonde-nai (koto)
Taro-NOM LGB-SIKA read-NEG (fact)
‘Taro read only LGB.’

If you know French, I think the ne…que construction works a lot like this. Something like ‘not…except…’ which more or less winds up meaning ‘only’…

nai seems to have to be above sika… (sika has to be in the c-command domain of nai).

(31) a. Taroo-sika [Hanako-ga LGB-o yonda]-to omowa-nai (koto)
Taro-SIKA Hanako-NOM LGB-ACC read-that think-NEG (fact)
‘Only Taro thinks that Hanako read LGB.’

b. * Taroo-sika [Hanako-ga LGB-o yonda-nai]-to omou (koto)
Taro-SIKA Hanako-NOM LGB-ACC read-NEG that think (fact)
(‘Only Taro things that Hanako read LGB.’)

(32) a. Taroo-ga [Hanako-sika LGB-o yonda]-to omowa-nai (koto)
Taro-NOM Hanako-SIKA LGB-ACC read-that think-NEG (fact)
‘Taro thinks that only Hanako read LGB’

b. (?) Taroo-ga [Hanako-ga LGB-sika yonda]-to omowa-nai (koto)
Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM LGB-SIKA read-that think-NEG (fact)
‘Taro thinks that Hanako read only LGB.’

sika can’t be separated from nai by islands—fact clauses, relative clauses, wh-islands, adjacent islands...

(33) a. [Uma-ga biiru-o nomu-koto]-sika omosroku nai (koto)
horse-NOM beer-ACC drink-fact-SIKA interesting NEG (fact)
‘The only interesting thing is that the horse drinks beer.’

b. * [Uma-ga biiru-sika nomu-koto]-ga omosiroku nai (koto)
horse-NOM beer-SIKA drink-fact-NOM interesting NEG (fact)
(‘Only beer is such that it is interesting that the horse drinks it.’)

(34) a. * Taroo-ga LGB-sika katta hito-ni awa nai (koto)
Taro-NOM LGB-SIKA bought person-DAT meet NEG (fact)
(‘Taro met a person who bought only LGB.’)
b. * Taroo-ga [Hanako-ga LGB-sika yonda]-ka(dooka) sira-nai (koto)  
Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM LGB-SIKA read-whether know-NEG (fact)  
(‘Taro knows whether Hanako read only LGB.’)

c. * Taroo-ga [Hanako-ga LGB-sika yomu]-mae ni sono hon-o yoma-nai (koto)  
Taro-NOM Hanako-NOM LGB-SIKA read-after that book-ACC read-NEG  
(‘Taro reads LGB before Hanako reads only that book.’)

Tanaka proposes that the *sika phrase moves to SpecNegP (more or less).


Sohn argues that Negative Polarity Items in Korean move overtly into SpecNegP; consider

(35)  
 a. John-i *amwuko chayk-to saci ani hayssta.  
 John-NOM any book-also buy not did  
 ‘John didn’t buy any book.’

 I-TOP [John-NOM any book-also bought-that] believe not do  
 ‘I don’t believe that John bought any book.’

(36)  
 a. ?? Na-nun [Mary-ka *amwuko to hwumchiesstako] mitci anhunta.  
 I-TOP [Mary-NOM anything stole-that] believe not-do  
 (‘I don’t believe that Mary stole anything.’)

 anything I-TOP Mary-NOM stole believe not-do  
 (‘I don’t believe that Mary stole anything.’)

It appears that an NPI needs to be at least as high in the structure as NegP. That would make sense if it has to overtly move there (and then perhaps move further).

A further piece of evidence:

(37)  
 a. [John-i ecey chayk-ul saci]-nun ani hayssta.  
 John-NOM yesterday book-ACC buy- TOP NEG did  
 1) ‘It is not John who bought the book yesterday.’

 b. [John-i ecey *amwuko to saci]-nun ani hayssta.  
 John-NOM yesterday anything buy- TOP NEG did  
 1) *John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but someone did).
 2) *John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but he did at some time).
 3) *anything focus—unintelligible
 4) John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but he did something else).

 c. [John-i *amwuko to ecey saci]-nun ani hayssta.  
 John-NOM anything yesterday buy- TOP NEG did  
 1) *John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but someone did).
 2) *anything focus—unintelligible
 3) John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but he did at some time).
 4) John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but he did something else).

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 1) *anything focus—unintelligible
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 4) John didn’t buy anything yesterday (but he did something else).

Conclude? Nothing to the left of an NPI can be in the “focus”… If NPI is overtly in (or at least as high as) SpecNegP, and if we suppose that focused elements need to be inside the *-nun marked phrase, then things to the left of the NPI are unambiguously outside.