Negated tautologies and copular contradictions
Interpretive strategies

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Abstract

This paper investigates utterances with the structure *A is not A*, showing that they can be fully informative and are felicitously used and understood in discourse. Relying on the notions of metalinguistic and metarepresentational negation, we argue that the class of utterances *A is not A* is heterogeneous and differs in regard to the lower-order representation under the scope of the negative operator. Specifically, we distinguish negated tautologies and copular contradictions. The understanding of negated tautologies involves identifying the corresponding affirmative deep tautology (Bulhof & Gimbel, 2001) and rejecting the assumptions derived from it. The interpretation of copular contradictions is based on distinguishing each of the occurrences of the repeated constituent as describing (a) one single referent with different properties; (b) two different referents satisfying the same description in different evaluation worlds; (c) two different referents, with different properties, which are accessed by means of the same linguistic expression.

Keywords

contradictions – tautologies – metalinguistic negation – metarepresentation

1   Introduction

The usage of tautologies and contradictions in both formal and informal regis-
ters constitutes an important challenge to theories of language use and inter-
pretation. Sentences like *War is war*, on the one hand, and *Bob is a man and not
a man* (Kamp & Partee, 1995) or *Kevin is not Kevin* (Snider, 2015), on the other,
state propositions that are either necessarily true or necessarily false. However,
as we all know perfectly well, we do use them in both speech and writing, and
they are not regarded as nonsense. As Lyons puts it: 'tautologies and contra-
dictions are, in principle, uninformative (…) but [this] is not to say that they
are meaningless or semantically unacceptable' (Lyons, 1977: 417). Explaining
how interpretation proceeds in order to make tautological and contradictory
utterances meaningful and informative is of foremost importance for a bet-
ter understanding of how human cognition works to find suitable interpretive
repair strategies.

Both tautologies and contradictions represent heterogeneous classes, and
these different varieties have received varying amounts of attention in the
literature. For tautologies, the most broadly discussed pattern is *A is A* (cf.
Grice, 1975; Levinson, 1983; Nikolina, 1984; Wierzbicka, 1987, 1988, 1991; Fraser,
1988; Escandell-Vidal, 1990; Gibbs & McCarrell, 1990; Ward & Hirschberg, 1991;
Farghal, 1992; Okamoto, 1993; Apresjan, 1995; Miki, 1996; Autenrieth, 1997; Buly-
gina & Shmelev, 1997; Bulhof & Gimbel, 2001, 2004; Paducheva, 2004; Meibauer,
2008; Rhodes, 2009; Kwon, 2014; Snider, 2015; Escandell-Vidal & Vilinbakhova,
2018). Other patterns include disjunctions (*p or not-p*), conditionals (*if p, then
p*), relative, adverbial, and causal clause tautologies (*what p, p; when p, p; p
because p*) (cf. Horn, 1981; Ward & Hirschberg, 1991; Meibauer, 2008; Snider,
2015; Sonnenhauser, 2017). As for contradictions, most authors analyse struc-
tures of the form *p & ~p* (cf. Allan, 1986; Escandell-Vidal, 1991; Kamp & Par-
tee, 1995; Ripley, 2011; Cobreros et al., 2012; Alxatib et al., 2013; Snider, 2015,
among others). There is another type of contradiction, *A is not A*, which has
received scarce attention. This is precisely the pattern that will be addressed
here.

Structures of the form *A is not A* are regarded by most authors as related to
the corresponding tautologies *A is A* (cf. Horn, 1989; Bulygina & Shmelev, 1997;
Li, 2004; Giora, 2007; Meibauer, 2008). Specifically, it is suggested that they are
negated tautologies, i.e. tautologies under the scope of the negative operator.
However, even at first glance, it appears that examples given in the literature
are not of the same kind. Consider (1)–(3):

(1) A: What brand of motor oil do you use?
     B [starting car engine]: Motor oil is motor oil.
     [Smoke belches out of B's exhaust.]
     Voice-over: Motor oil is definitely NOT motor oil (from a commercial for
     Quaker State Motor Oil). (example from Horn, 1989: 562)

(2) A rose is a rose but a home is not a home. (from a poem of Hilda Domin;
     example from Giora, 2007: 136)

(3) *Die Stones sind nicht die Stones* (Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, 20.01.95)
     'The (Rolling) Stones are not the (Rolling) Stones.' (example from Mei-
     bauer, 2008: 448)

Horn's example is the direct denial of a previously introduced tautology *Motor oil is motor oil*, so the final utterance in (1) achieves its relevance as a rejection of the set of assumptions conveyed via the corresponding affirmative tautology: more precisely, the rejection of quantity-based implicature of sameness of motor oils notwithstanding their brand (Horn, 1989: 562). This path of interpretation does not seem, however, to be activated in the other examples. In (2), some specific features of the negated concept 'home' are highlighted (Giora, 2007: 137), though it is not clear whether the tautology 'A home is a home' should play any role in the interpretation of its negative counterpart. Finally, the example in (3) indicates a distinction "between the "old" [Rolling] Stones and the "new" ones" (Meibauer, 2008: 448). Here, the idea that 'The Stones are the Stones' plays no role at all in the interpretation. This contrast strongly suggests that the negation of the corresponding affirmative tautology is not a necessary step in the interpretation of all *A is not A* structures.

The purpose of this paper is to account for the different interpretation of utterances of the form *A is not A* observed in (1)–(3). More specifically, we want to show that utterances of the form *A is not A* fall into two distinct subsets, namely, negated tautologies and copular contradictions. The semantics of the negative operator is always the same and the observed difference concerns its scope, i.e., the representation on which negation operates. This distinction draws and elaborates on the classical contrast between *descriptive* and *metalinguistic* uses of negation (Horn, 1985, 1989; Burton-Roberts, 1989; Foolen, 1991; van der Sandt 1991; Chapman, 1996; Carston, 1996; Carston & Noh, 1996; Noh, 1998; Geurts, 1998; Moeschler, 2010, 2013, 2017, 2018; Albu 2017; Blochowiak & Grisot 2018; Larrivée 2018; among others). While the interpretation of the latter draws on the understanding of formal and interpretive properties of their affirmative counterparts, this is not the case for the former subset. Our theoretical

proposal is supported by examples from Spanish and Russian corpora,[1] examples drawn from the Internet (Google Search Engine), as well as examples from English and German attested in literature. Still, we believe that our findings can be extended to other languages as well.

2   Descriptive negation, metalinguistic negation and beyond

It goes without saying that the topic of negation in natural languages is pervasive in linguistic studies. Among the most widely discussed issues are the following: the marked status of linguistic negation both on morphosyntactic and psychological levels, as opposed to the logical symmetry of affirmative and negative propositions (cf. Horn & Wansing, 2015 for references); matters of scope, regarding wide- (sentential) vs. narrow-scope (constituent) negation; relations of contrariety and contradiction; presupposition-preserving vs. presupposition-cancelling negation; double negation, in particular, in the form of negative concord; negative polarity items; and finally, the distinction between ordinary descriptive negation and so-called metalinguistic negation.

Horn's (1985, 1989 ch. 6) purpose is to account for the classical distinction between internal and external, or marked, negation as a sort of pragmatic ambiguity: natural language negation can be used descriptively or metalinguistically. Descriptive uses of negation are primarily 'world-oriented', whereas metalinguistic negation is used to register "objections to a previous utterance (not proposition) on any grounds whatever, including the way it was pronounced" (Horn, 1985: 121) (for further discussion see Horn, 1989; Burton-Roberts, 1989; Foolen, 1991; van der Sandt, 1991; Chapman, 1996; Carston, 1996; Carston & Noh, 1996; Noh, 1998; Noh et al. 2013; Geurts, 1998; Pitts, 2009; Moeschler, 2010, 2013, 2018; Albu, 2017; Blochowiak & Grisot 2018; Larrivée 2018; among others).

A classic example of the ambiguity between descriptive and metalinguistic uses of negation is (4), where the first follow-up "makes a consistent statement about the world: that is, we didn't see one set of animals, we saw another distinct set" (Carston & Noh, 1996: 2), while the second objects to the incorrect use of the plural suffix.

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1 Mark Davies' Corpus del Español, http://www.corpusdelespanol.org/ [CE] 13th–20th centuries; and Russian National Corpus, http://www.ruscorpora.ru [RNC], 18th century to present.

(4)   We didn't see the hippopotamuses.
  a. We saw the rhinoceroses. (not P; Q)
  b. We saw the hippopotami. (not P; P')

Other aspects that can be objected to in metalinguistic negation include phonetic properties, conventional and scalar implicatures,[2] connotations or implications, and presuppositions (Carston & Noh, 1996: 3)

In the literature it has been argued that instances of metalinguistic negation (a) occur in rejoinders to previous utterances; (b) generate truth-conditional contradictions in their literal readings; (c) produce a garden-path effect, so hearers have to reanalyse the utterance after finding the descriptive reading infelicitous; (d) are followed by a correction-clause; (e) have special, marked prosodic properties; (f) involve the echoic use of at least some of the material under the scope of negation (Carston, 1996: 312). These characteristics could in principle count as criteria for distinguishing metalinguistic and descriptive negation. However, Carston (1996: 320–322) has shown that only the last property is essential, while the presence of other features is frequent, but by no means necessary.

In Carston & Noh (1996) it is argued that "metalinguistic negation (or, rather, implicitly echoic negation) occurs much more widely than is usually recognized",[3] and in Carston (2002) metalinguistic negation is included within a broader class of cases of *metarepresentational* negation, closely connected with the basic relevance theoretic concept of *metarepresentation*.

A metarepresentation is a representation of a representation, as opposed to a representation of a state-of-affairs, which is considered as a case of descriptive use (Wilson, 2000). In (5) the utterance represents Peter's (descriptive) thought about a certain state of affairs: namely, that the film was fantastic; in (6), in contrast, the utterance represents Mary's (interpretive) thoughts about Peter's utterance.

(5)   Peter: That was a fantastic film.

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2 Chapman (1996) argues that particularized conversational implicatures cannot be negated metalinguistically; we will come back to this matter in 3.2.

3 Still, it is not an easy task to find it in corpora, cf. Larrivée (2018: 18) who observes, that "MLN [metalinguistic negation] is so rare that looking for it in a corpus can be a long and frustrating affair. A preliminary look at a corpus of French political speeches where MLN should be prevalent point to a rate well under 0.5% of MLN usage among clausal negatives."

(6) Mary: a. [happily] Fantastic.
             b. [puzzled] Fantastic?
             c. [scornfully] Fantastic! (examples from Wilson, 2000: 148)

As Wilson puts it:

> Metarepresentation, then, involves a higher-order representation with a lower-order representation embedded inside it. The higher-order representation is generally an utterance or a thought. Three main types of lower-order representation have been investigated: public representations, e.g. utterances; mental representations, e.g. thoughts; and abstract representations, e.g. sentences, propositions.
>
> WILSON, 2000: 130

So, low-order representations (henceforth LOR) can be *public* (i.e., utterances), as in (6), but also *mental* (for instance, the thoughts that Mary attributes to Peter, inferring them from his behaviour), as in (7), and *abstract* (for example, the mention of a French word) as in (8):

(7) Mary (seeing Peter walk towards the door): Just a minute. You're going shopping?

(8) 'Abeille' is not a word of English (examples from Wilson, 2000: 152–153)

Considering that LORs can refer both to propositional content as in (6)–(7) and to linguistic form as in (8), Carston (2002: 297–298) argues that metarepresentational negation should include cases of rejection of form (*metalinguistic* negation) and of content (*metaconceptual* negation). The example in (9) is an instance of the latter type, which "is not understood as an objection to A's previous utterance, but rather rejecting a thought or view someone (perhaps A) could be holding" (Carston, 2002: 298).

(9) A: Their contributions were important.
     B: Right, but YOUR contributions were not important, they were invaluable. (example from Noh, 1998: 154)

Another important point is that metalinguistic and metaconceptual negation can coincide when the speaker rejects both form and content of the utterance or thought.

Recent elaborations of the notion of metalinguistic negation (MN) are suggested in Noh et al. (2013); Albu (2017); Moeschler (2010, 2013, 2018); Blochowiak

& Grisot (2018); Larrivée (2018). The issues under discussion include the existence of different types of metalinguistic negation, the kind of criteria (semantic or pragmatic) for distinguishing descriptive and metalinguistic negation, and the way they are processed by the addressee. Let us look at them in more detail.

First, the acknowledgement of heterogeneity of MN could be traced back to Horn (1985) who argues, as stated above, that the objection to a previous utterance can occur on different grounds,[4] also Carston (1996: 319) explicitly says that Horn's examples 'do not form a natural class, linguistically or pragmatically'. In Geurts (1998: 275) it is suggested that Horn's metalinguistic uses of negation, which are labeled 'denials', adopting van der Sandt's (1991) terminology,[5] fall into three distinct classes: presupposition denials, implicature denials, and form denials, to which he adds another (fourth) class of proposition denials, corresponding to Carston's (2002) metaconceptual negation. Geurts (1998) argues that there are no deep differences between descriptive negation and proposition denials,[6] and focuses on the three other classes and their properties. He notes that presupposition denials come close to proposition denials in that "they often serve to downright reject a preceding utterance rather than amend it, as implicature and form denials typically do" (Geurts (ibid: 276)).

In a similar vein Moeschler (2018) agrees on the existence of three types of metalinguistic negation: form negation, implicature negation and presuppositional negation. He provides a detailed description of cases where scalar implicatures are suppressed (upward metalinguistic negation 1, or MN_1) and cases

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4 Cf. Pitts (2011: 347 and ff.) for an extensive list of examples of objection to social and/or regional differences in pronunciation, features of grammar, such as morphology, or typographical form, the implied pragmatic upper-bounding of scalar and other Gricean implicatures, like the implied causal relations/temporal ordering, or implied (exclusive) disjunction, specific stylistic features, as in the conveyed connotation of primacy through ordered elements, as well as dissociation from specific phraseology or terminology.

5 Although it is not stated explicitly (cf. Geurts 1998: 275), we assume that Geurts avoids using Horn's term 'metalinguistic negation' because of its association with form, since, in his opinion, 'rejection of a proposition' has exactly the same properties, and therefore all the related examples should be included in this class. Basically, for the same reason Carston includes 'metalinguistic negation uses' within the broader class of 'metarepresentational negation' uses: so as to be able to include in this new class of 'metaconceptual negation' cases.

6 Cf., or instance, observations in Noh (1998, 2000) and Wilson (2000) who suggest, as Carston (2002: 316) puts it: "that descriptive negation may involve metarepresenation (and denial) of just such an abstract entity" and further: "An advantage of this idea is that it captures the widespread intuition that negative sentences/ utterances are marked, relative to their corresponding positives, and that the processing of a negative in some sense assumes the availability of the corresponding positive." (see Horn 1989, chapter 3)

TABLE 1   Criteria for distinguishing DN from MN from Moeschler (2018: 16, t. 4)

Types of negation	Entailments	Scope	Connectives	Discourse relations
DN	$COR \rightarrow NEG$	POS	*au contraire, main$_{SN}$*	Correction
MN1	$COR \rightarrow NEG$	SI_{POS}	*mais$_{PA}$, parce que*	Contrast
MN2	$COR \rightarrow \neg POS \wedge \neg PP_{POS}$	$POS \wedge PP_{POS}$	*parce que, puisque*	Explanation

where a presupposition is cancelled (presuppositional metalinguistic negation 2, or MN$_2$),[7] as well as their inherent properties, and the semantic and pragmatic criteria distinguishing the two types from each other and from descriptive negation. While in Carston's metarepresentational analysis the difference between descriptive and metalinguistic negation is a question of complexity (single representation in case of DN vs. metarepresentation in case of MN), for Moeschler it could be explained in terms of the scope of negation in the negative clauses (or NEG, in Moeschler's abbreviation), the entailments of possible corrective clauses (or COR, in Moeschler's abbreviation), and the way in which different kinds of negation function with various connectives. The table 1 above from Moeschler (2018: 16), summarizes his findings.

The descriptive negation scopes over the positive counterpart (or POS, in Moeschler's abbreviation) of the negative clause, i.e. for (10) the proposition that falls under the scope is 'Abi is beautiful'; the entailment of the corrective clause coincides with the proposition in the negated utterance, i.e. '⟨Abi⟩ is ugly' entails that 'Abi is not beautiful'.[8]

(10)   Abi is not beautiful, she is ugly (from Moeschler 2018:5, ex. 24)

On the other hand, the metalinguistic (scalar[9]?) implicature negation scopes over the implicature of the positive counterpart 'Abi is beautiful', i.e. in (11), it

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7   Moeschler leaves beyond the scope of his paper the case of form negation, since it has no specific meaning issues either semantic or pragmatic, and the only relevant analysis is Carston's (1996) echoic use or Horn's (1985) speech act interpretation, cf. Moeschler (2018: 11).

8   We leave aside the comments on connectives and discourse relations and suggest the interested reader to see Moeschler's (2018) paper for further details.

9   Moeschler's metalinguistic implicature cases include only scalar implicatures that involve Horn's scales (Moeschler, 2018:13), not other Gricean implicatures (causal relations/temporal ordering, or implied (exclusive) disjunction).

is 'only' or 'no more than' interpretation, and the corrective clause entails the positive counterpart: '⟨Abi⟩ is gorgeous' entails that she is beautiful.

(11) Abi is not beautiful, she is gorgeous (from Moeschler 2018:13, ex. 61)

Finally, metalinguistic presuppositional negation scopes both over the positive counterpart and its presupposition, i.e. for (12), 'the King of France is not bald' and 'There exists a king of France', and this is precisely the entailment of the corrective clause, cf. (Moeschler 2010) for further details.

(12) The king of France is not bald; there is no king of France.

Another elaboration of Geurt's account is suggested in Larrivée (2018). In his account there are three types of negation: descriptive negation, denial (≈ Geurt's proposition denial), and metalinguistic negation (≈ Geurt's presupposition, implicature and form denial). The difference between the former two types consist in that the descriptive negation is 'an initiative move', while denial is described 'as a reactive move that rejects the entire sentence' (Larrivée 2018: 3).[10] As to metalinguistic negation, Larrivée focuses mainly on cases of form negation like (ex. 4) and its properties, arguing that "their function is to assert a correction brought about by an inappropriate designation in the antecedent context" (ibid.: 9) (much in line with Horn's (1985) initial definition, see above).

(13) They do not have *kids*, they have *children* (Larrivée 2018: 1a)

Larrivée makes some useful observations about such cases from the speech act and information structure perspective. The first important point is that metalinguistic negation is a **single** speech act, and, as Larrivée (2018: 10) puts it, "even in bi-clauses, the clauses are integrated and cannot independently express a different speech act", cf. (14) compared to denial (15), where such a constraint does not hold.

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10   Note, however, Geurts' caution about the cases where it is not clear whether we are dealing with initiative or reactive replica (or, in his terms, with rejection). For (i) Geurts argues: "If is it is mutually known to the interlocutors that A believes that the cook is guilty, although A hasn't made this explicit, then B's *the cook is not guilty* might still count as a denial. But if B isn't quite sure whether A holds this belief, then it is simply unclear whether or not B's utterance should count as a denial."
      (i) The cook is not guilty (from Geurts, 1998: 275, ex. 4).

(14) *They don't have *kids*, do they have *children*? [MLN] (from Larrivée 2018:9,
     ex. 22a)

(15) They don't have *kids*, but do they have *pets?* [Denial] (from Larrivée
     2018:9, ex. 23a)

Another issue brought up in these analyses is how to account for the marked-
ness of metalinguistic uses, found not only in negative clauses, but also in cases
like (16).

(16) Since when have you been eating tom[eiDuz] and getting stressed out?
     (Carston, 1996: 320, ex. 17b)

Larivée proposes an explanation of this fact in terms of information structure,
specifically, since "MLN, contrastive structures and metalinguistic configura-
tions share the largely acknowledged property of ranging over discourse-old
material that is explicitly present in the antecedent context" (Larrivée, 2018:
12), in metalinguistic configurations this discourse-old material is turned into
discourse-new material by virtue of being focused as a corrected segment.
As Larrivée (2018: 15) puts it, "turning old information into new is what dis-
tinguishes it ⟨metalinguistic negation along with analogous cases⟩ both from
descriptive ⟨negation⟩ and denial".

   Larrivée (2018: 16) also points out some difficulties met when applying his
account to cases like (17), where "there is no clearly identifiably corrected seg-
ment" and what is concerned is "the responsibility of an action".

(17) A: 'You left the door open.'
     B: 'I didn't leave the door open—you can close it yourself if you wish.'
        (from Geurts (1998: 6 example (12)) as cited in Larrivée (2018:16))[11]

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11   We were unable to find this particular example in our version of Geurts' (1998) paper (cf.
      references for link to Researchgate). In our version an example Geurts provides is (i), dis-
      cussing it along with cases like (ii) where the issue under discussion is the impossibility of
      metalinguistic negation of relevance implicatures, and in his opinion, what is conveyed
      by A in (i) is "an indirect request for B to close the door" (Geurts 2018: 281) that cannot
      obviously be refused by metalinguistic negation. We will discuss this issue below.
      (i)   A: The door is open.
             B: The door is not open—you can close it yourself if you wish (from Geurts 1998:
                281, ex. 21)
      (ii)   He was able to solve the problem = 'he solved the problem' (from Geurts (1998: 281,
             ex. 20))
             He wasn't able to solve the problem ≠ 'he was able to solve the problem but did not
             do it.'

However, we believe that it should not count as difficulty, as long as Larrivee's findings are not extended from form metalinguistic negation cases on which his reasoning is based to other types of metalinguistic negation, since, as Geurts (2018: 281) puts it, "certain aspects of information content of an utterance cannot be objected to in this ⟨metalinguistic⟩ way", including that from Larrivee's example, namely, "the responsibility of an action".

In sum, the different types of negation can be summarized in Table 2 below.

Before concluding this section, we will mention another issue discussed in the literature: namely, how exactly the hearer interprets the negation as metalinguistic or descriptive. While theoretical modeling of this process was already put forward by Burton-Roberts (1989) (followed by Carston (1996, 2002); Noh (1998, 2000); Davis (2011); Albu (2017); Moeschler (2010, 2013, 2018), among others), the number of experimental studies that could test the validity of the suggested accounts is still limited; these studies have been conducted by two groups headed by Eun-Ju Noh (Noh et al., 2012, 2013), and Jacques Moeschler (Blochowiak & Grisot, 2018). Both groups advocate for an account based on the relevance-theoretic framework (referred to as *cognitive* in Noh et al. (2013: 3), and *non-ambiguist*, in Blochowiak & Grisot (2018:1), the latter term adopted here). The interpretation of negation is explained in terms of optimal relevance, i.e. the hearer's choice of an appropriate interpretation (either descriptive or metalinguistic) depends on its accessibility (the hearer will follow a path of least processing effort in computing it) and its communicative profit (the hearer will aim to achieve maximum of cognitive effects). This account is opposed to Burton-Roberts' (1989) semantic account, which claims, as Noh et al. (2013: 1) put it, "that negation is interpreted as descriptive by default and that a MN ⟨metalinguistic negation⟩ interpretation is taken only after the DN ⟨descriptive negation⟩ interpretations turns out to be a semantic contradiction to the clarification clause".

In Blochowiak & Grisot (2018: 18) it is suggested that the non-ambiguist account could be further split into the non-ambiguist cognitive account represented by Carston, Noh and her colleagues, and the non-ambiguist contextualist account, proposed by Moeschler. The former predicts no difference between the processing time of metalinguistic and descriptive negation. The latter, on the contrary, predicts that processing time would be shorter for scalar implicature metalinguistic negation with clarification clause, than for descriptive metalinguistic negation with clarification clause[12] since the metalinguistic

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12   "Since scope and entailments are identical in DN, COR is not informative, and when

interpretation yields, in this case, greater cognitive effects: in (10) repeated here as (9) the corrective element specifies the information the hearer already obtained from the negative clause and, hence, brings up one cognitive effect, while in (11) repeated as (19) it reinforces the positive counterpart and at the same time suppresses the scalar implicature, i.e., it brings up two cognitive effects.

(18) Abi is not beautiful; she is ugly (from Moeschler, 2018: 5, ex. 24)

(19) Abi is not beautiful; she is gorgeous (from Moeschler, 2018: 5, ex. 23)

Experimental studies by both groups, specifically, Noh et al. (2012) and Noh et al. (2013) on the Korean data using eye-tracking techniques, on one hand, and Blochowiak & Grisot (2018) on the French data using two self-paced reading tasks and one offline elicitation task, on the other hand, provide no support for the semantic account and favor the non-ambiguity account, while the distinction between the non-ambiguist cognitive account and the non-ambiguist contextualist account, as Blochowiak & Grisot (2018: 20) put it, "should be considered in more detail in further experimental investigation".

To conclude, in this section, taking as a starting point Horn's (1989: 562) analysis of the negated tautology *Motor oil is NOT motor oil* as an instance of metalinguistic negation, we had a brief, and by no means exhaustive,[13] look at the current state of the studies on this matter. It turns out that the issue of metalinguistic negation is back in vogue now, with many authors focusing on its different types and their properties, looking at the phenomenon from new perspectives (such as information structure), and drawing on experimental techniques to investigate its interpretive processes. But how exactly does it help to account for different types of negated tautologies? This issue will be addressed in the next section.

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it occurs, it allows for the specification of NEG at the level of the explicature. On the other hand, with MN1, scope and entailments are not identical. As far as quantitative scales are concerned, while negation scopes over a specific degree d of a property P— here d(beautiful)—with an 'only' or 'no more than' interpretation, entailments include all lowerbound degrees of P" (Moeschler, 2018), cf. also Blochowiak & Grisot (2018: 19–20).

13   For instance, due to lack of space we have had to leave aside Davis's (2011) idiomatic account of metalinguistic negation, and the interaction between contrastive and metalinguistic negation, cf. McCawley (1991), to name just a few.

TABLE 2   Terminology for different types of negation

Examples of cases of negation	Horn 1985	Geurts 1998	Carston 2002	Moeschler 2018	Larrivee 2018
(1) At least, they do not have kids (from Larrivée 2018:2, ex. 5c)	Descriptive negation	Descriptive negation	Descriptive negation	Descriptive negation	Descrip- tive negation
(2) A: The cook is guilty. B: The cook is not guilty (from Geurts, 1998: 275, ex. 4)		Proposition denial	Metacon- cept.negation (subset of metarepres. negation)		Denial[a]
(3) The King of France is not bald—(because) there is no King of France (Horn, 1989: 362, ex. 1)	Metaling. negation	Presuppo- tion denial	Metaling. nega- tion (subset of metarepres. negation)	Presupposi- tional Metaling. negation	Metaling. negation
(4) Abi is not beautiful; she is gorgeous (from Moeschler, 2018: 5, ex. 23)		Implicature denial		Scalar implica- ture Metalin- guistic negation	
(5) Mozart's sonatas weren't for violin and piano—they were for piano and violin (from Horn, 1989: 373, ex. 24b)					
(6) I do not wear *pants*, but *trousers* (from Lar- rivée, 2018:1, ex. 1c)		Form denial		Form Metalin- guistic negation	

a   It could be argued that criteria distinguishing DN and denials, from one hand, and denials and form MN, suggested in Larrivée, (2018) are set on different grounds. Obviously, denials share a number of properties with descriptive negation—for instance, they scope over propositions (which do not need enrichment)—as well as with form metalinguistic negation (sharing precisely, their "reactive" nature); that is why in some accounts denials are viewed as a sub- set of descriptive negation (Horn, 1985, 1989; Moeschler, 2018), or along with MN, form part of a wider class of "reactive" / "echoic" cases, i.e. Geurt's (1998) denials or Carston's (2002) metarepresentational negation. The decision depends on each researcher's ranking of cri- teria. Still, recognizing denials as a third independent class seems an unexpected solution, as, for instance, 'presuppositional metalinguistic negation' can hardly be distinguished from 'form metalinguistic negation'. It seems that with negation there exists a kind of family resem- blance, and negation cases could be presented as a continuum from (1) to (6), where descrip- tive negation in (1) and form metalinguistic negation in (6) share the least number of common properties.

3   Negated tautologies

3.1   *Preliminary remarks*

Now, coming back to negated tautologies *A is not A*, it can be noted that, apart from Horn's (1989) analysis, they have not received further attention in the literature on metalinguistic negation, and indeed, cannot be considered a prototypical case. First, the examples encountered in the literature, cf. (1–3), do not have a clarifying follow-up, and what is more, a potential corrective clause cannot always be easily reconstructed. Next, while the negated informational content in the analysed patterns is, as Horn (1989: 562) argues, a Q-implicature, it is obviously not derived from Horn's scales, hence Geurts' and Moeschler's accounts of implicature metalinguistic denial / negation cases based on the examples with scalar implicatures are not fully applicable. Note also that Larrivée's proposal, as we saw above, is founded mostly on 'form metalinguistic negation' cases, and encounters difficulties when dealing with other cases like (17). Therefore, it turns out that the most appropriate account, along with Horn's, is Carston's metarepresentational analysis, which does not have the constraints just mentioned. Since the latter has also been found to be experimentally viable (cf. section 2), we will adopt it for further study.

As stated above, Carston's metarepresenational account explains the difference between descriptive and metarepresentational negation in terms of complexity: single representation vs. metarepresentation. Hence, our initial assumption will be that in *negated tautologies* the negative operator has scope over an affirmative tautology in the form of a public or mental lower-order representation. We suggest that the difference in the understanding of *A is not A* utterances is somehow connected with the difference in their positive counterparts; in other words, distinct types of negated tautologies would match with parallel types of affirmative tautologies. For this reason, the next step is to consider affirmative tautologies.

3.2   *Bulhof and Gimbel's taxonomy of affirmative tautologies*

While most authors agree that *A is A* tautologies can receive various interpretations in discourse, how exactly they arise has been a matter of considerable debate. Since late 1980s, three approaches have been developed. The pragmatic approach developed by Grice (1975) suggests that the interpretation of tautologies is based on universal pragmatic principles (cf. also Levinson, 1983; Ward & Hirschberg, 1991; Paducheva, 2004). The semantic approach presented in Wierzbicka (1987, 1988, 1991) says that tautologies are language-specific constructions associated with conventional meaning. Finally, the hybrid approach, put forward in Fraser (1988), claims that tautologies have a default interpreta-

tion which can be enriched or modified in communication (cf. also Escandell-Vidal, 1990; Gibbs & McCarrell, 1990; Farghal, 1992; Okamoto, 1993; Apresjan, 1995; Rhodes, 2009; Kwon, 2014). Most authors support the hybrid approach and focus on descriptions of various kinds of tautologies and their meanings in the authors' native languages. A few contrastive studies show that there are indeed similarities in how tautologies are interpreted in various languages, but claims of universality are rarely put forth.

An important work that makes some generalisations about several distinct interpretations available to *A is A* structures, independently of any specific language, is Bulhof & Gimbel (2001). Bulhof & Gimbel distinguish three classes of tautologies, namely, (1) tautologies that require implicatures to be considered meaningful *à la* Grice; (2) tautologies-pointers with fixed form and content that are used as clichés; and (3) deep tautologies, which mean what they say. Another category is that of pseudo-tautologies, which include cases where two repeated constituents bear different meanings (cf. section 4 below).

The central claim presented in Bulhof & Gimbel (2001) is that only the subset of *deep tautologies* represents a "genuine tautology"; i.e. both uses of noun phrase have the same meaning, and are used "literally", pointing to the non-vague use of a linguistic expression. Their pragmatic function is to draw attention to the satisfaction of one or both of these conditions:

(A) [monotonicity condition] once an entity satisfies a set of conditions sufficient for being A, additional properties cannot remove it from the set of all A's, and/or

(B) [binary condition] being an A does not admit of degrees
BULHOF & GIMBEL, 2001: 287

Their examples of deep tautologies are given in (20) and (21):

(20) A: Don't worry about oppressing those people, they are just poor Africans.
     B: People are people.

(21) A: Would you like this new computer with a 1.7 gigahertz processor and 256 megabytes of RAM or do you want to keep your old machine?
     B: A computer is a computer. (Bulhof & Gimbel, 2001: 287–288)

While A in both examples draws attention to the distinctions between African and European people or technical characteristics of the two computers, speaker B's use of a deep tautology indicates that she uses the expressions differently.

> If "people" is used in this precise sense, then there are no degrees of personhood and so members of the group at issue are not more or less of a person than anyone else. Further, the additional qualities that qualify one to be in the subgroup in question, e.g., skin color or class, do not eliminate one from being human.
>
> BULHOF & GIMBEL, 2001: 288

Note that deep tautologies have a lot in common with Wierzbicka's tautologies of value, which "stress the interchangeability and the equal value of things (within a kind)" (Wierzbicka, 1991: 416), as shown in her example (22), similar to (21):

(22) – Do you want Nescafe or Maxwell House?
      – It does not matter. Coffee is coffee. (example from Wierzbicka, 1991: 417)

The difference between Wierzbicka's and Bulhof & Gimbel's approach lies in their explanation of how the interpretation arises. While for Wierzbicka focus on equal value is the semantic meaning of a particular tautological construction, for Bulhof & Gimbel it is the non-vague use of the word that points to the monotonicity and/or binary condition. This interpretation is constant across contexts.

The second class includes tautological utterances that gain meaning through conversational implicatures. Here Bulhof & Gimbel provide a brief overview of Ward & Hirschberg (1991) and Wierzbicka (1987, 1988, 1991) as representatives of radical pragmatic and radical semantic accounts and give the example (23) with the implicature of the lack of concern for civilian causalities.

(23) A: Isn't it terrible that so many civilians are killed in modern military conflicts?
      B: War is war.

In contrast with deep tautologies, these tautologies are entirely dependent on context, and their interpretation can vary even for the ones that are sometimes considered conventional (Wierzbicka, 1991: 404), as in (24):

(24) Speaker A: Ken bought the enterprise for next to nothing.
      Speaker B: Business is business.
            Context 1: + >'That was very clever of Ken'
            Context 2: + >'There is nothing one can do about it' (example from Meibauer, 2008: 444)

Bulhof & Gimbel also distinguish "tautologies as pointers", with examples as (25) and (26) where tautologies imply a directive interpretation:

(25) First things first

(26) A man's got to do what a man's got to do (Bulhof & Gimbel, 2001: 284)

As they put it,

> Pointers are idioms, not implicatures, as there is no inference that leads the listener to the utterance's meaning. The sentences (20) and (21) are to be considered clichés because the imperatives they point to are not context dependent.[14]
>
> BULHOF & GIMBEL, 2001: 284

In Bulhof & Gimbel's account, these are not *A is A* equative tautologies, and therefore cannot appear as negated in *A is not A* utterances. It should be noted, however, that the directive interpretation can also appear in equative tautologies, cf. example (27) from Spanish with the same meaning[15] as (25) and (28) from Russian synonymous to (26):

(27) *Lo primero es lo primero*
      Lit. 'The first is the first'

(28) *Tak vot. Dolg est' dolg. My dolžny vypolnit' svoj dolg* [RNC]
      'And so. Duty is duty. We should accomplish our duty'

Thus, the directive interpretation cannot be considered a distinctive feature for this type. Probably, a better criterion is their nearly-fixed content that has become conventionalised in a particular linguistic community.

Besides tautologies proper, Bulhof & Gimbel point to the existence of the so-called pseudo-tautologies that "are not actually tautologies but say what they

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14   Though the directive interpretation is in fact the most salient one, some speakers are not convinced that these tautologies are regularly understood as directive independent of the context (Aoife Ahern, p.c.).

15   Cf., for instance, an entry of the online language dictionaries at WordReference.com, where this Spanish tautology as given as a direct translation for English phrase *First thing first* (http://www.wordreference.com/es/translation.asp?tranword=first%20things%20first).

mean" (Bulhof & Gimbel, 2001: 282). They provide the example in (29) taken from Wittgenstein (1974), where "words do not merely have different meanings: they are different symbols":

(29) Green is green

The example may mean "that the person with the surname Green possesses the property of being inexperienced, envious, seasick, or the color of grass" (Bulhof & Gimbel, 2001: 282).

In sum, according to Bulhof & Gimbel's (2001) taxonomy, there are two classes of affirmative tautologies that can in principle appear as positive counterparts in *A is not A* utterances: (i) deep tautologies that indicate the non-vague use of the linguistic expression and (ii) tautologies that require implicatures. We will also keep in mind that some *A is A* utterances have tautological structures, but are not real tautologies, since their repeated constituents have different interpretations, and examine whether they can appear as positive counterparts, too.

3.3   *Revising negated tautologies*

Now if we analyse utterances with the pattern *A is not A* as negated tautologies according to a metarepresentation-based approach, we will expect at least two classes: 'negated deep tautologies', where the speaker objects to the non-vague understanding of the concept carried by the corresponding deep tautology, and 'negated tautologies-that-require-implicatures', where it is precisely the implicatures that will be the target of rejection. Hence, the negative operator takes scope over the representation of an affirmative tautology, a negated tautology being, thus, a higher-order representation.

A possible example of 'negated deep tautology' would be (30), derived from (21), where A rejects a tautology uttered by B that points both to monotonicity and binary conditions ('computers do not cease to be computers when they become old', and 'old computers are no better than new ones') on the grounds of the functional incapability of B's old computer.

(30) A: Would you like this new computer with a 1.7 gigahertz processor and 256 megabytes of RAM or do you want to keep your old machine?
      B: A computer is a computer.
      [Three days later B's old machine breaks down]
      A to B: A computer is NOT a computer

Note that this example is reminiscent of Horn's example (1), where B is also drawing attention to both the monotonicity condition ('if it is motor oil, it will

not cease to be one regardless of the brand, and will serve its function anyway')
and the binary condition ('no motor oil is better or worse than other motor
oils'), while the voice-over rejects it.

Another example of 'negated deep tautology' is the one in (31), given by
Meibauer, where the positive counterpart 'Turks are Turks'—presumably a
mental lower-order representation attributed to the hearer—is a deep tautol-
ogy similar to Bulhof & Gimbel's example of a deep tautology in (20) above,
pointing to the equal value of people regardless of their nationality or social
status:

(31) *Natürlich sind Türken nicht gleich Türken.* (ZEIT, 30.09.04)
      'Of course, the Turks do not equal the Turks.' (example from Meibauer,
      2008)

Now let us consider the possibility of metarepresentational negation of tau-
tologies that require implicatures, keeping in mind that, unlike deep tautolo-
gies, their understanding is induced by context, and the implicatures required
are thus particularised conversational implicatures, PCI (cf. above). In this case,
one would probably expect that the negation of the tautology should bear on
the implicatures. However, Chapman (1996) claims that PCI cannot be negated
metalinguistically:[16] for instance, the classic Gricean example (32) suggests that
Smith might have a girlfriend in New York, and, as Chapman shows, this impli-
cature cannot be cancelled: (33) sounds contradictory, since the hearer "is not
able to reanalyse it as a use of metalinguistic negation to object to B's utterance
on the grounds of the PCI it conveys" (Chapman, 1996: 396).

(32) A: Smith doesn't seem to have a girlfriend these days.
      B: He has been paying a lot of visits to New York lately.

(33) !He hasn't been paying a lot of visits to New York lately; he's been paying
      a lot of visits there in order to see his accountant.

Chapman indicates that metalinguistic negation can only reject those prop-
erties that relate directly to the linguistic expression used, but not those that
are non-linguistic, or entirely dependent on context, and "cannot be applied to

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16   Horn (1989: 388 ff.) himself argues that nonconventionalized R-based implicatures cannot
      be cancelled by metalinguistic negation, and Geurts (1998: 282) shows that some Q-based
      implicatures cannot be negated either.

aspects which are dependent on the particular use of the expression, not on the expression itself" (Chapman, 1996: 397).

To examine this issue with respect to the utterances *A is not A*, we will look at Meibauer's example (24), repeated here as (34), and imagine that the enterprise Ken bought was actually the property of a local mafia clan. The mafia is not happy with the situation and is inclined to resolve it at any price. Thus, in context 1, two friends of Ken are talking about him, and only A knows about the mafia's plans. Here, A cannot disagree with B's implicature with pattern *A is not A*, as Chapman (1996) correctly predicts, cf. (35). In context 2, members of a local mafia clan are discussing the situation and B's denial of the uncontrollability of the situation in (36) does not sound perfectly natural either.[17]

(34) Speaker A: Ken bought the enterprise for next to nothing.
      Speaker B: Business is business.
                 Context 1: + > 'That was very clever of Ken'
                 Context 2: + > 'There is nothing one can do about it'

(35) Speaker A: Ken bought the enterprise for next to nothing.
      Speaker B: Business is business. 'That was very clever of Ken'
      Speaker A: #Business is NOT business. It belonged to the local mafia clan, and now Ken will have problems.

(36) Speaker A: Ken bought the enterprise for next to nothing.
      Speaker B: Business is business. 'There is nothing one can do about it'
      Speaker A: ??Business is NOT business. We will have a serious talk with him and force him to sell it back.

Finally, it seems that Spanish and Russian equivalents of Bulhof & Gimbel's tautologies-as-pointers cannot be negated without losing their 'imperative' interpretation. Thus, the utterance in (37a), which is the negation of (27), is not understood as a negative command (cf. (37b)), but as the negation of a statement of strict identity (cf. (29c)):

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17   While negation in (36) sounds better than in (35), it might be the due to the fact that the uncontrollability implicature is not entirely dependent on context, cf. Snider (2015: 596) who claims that the "uncontrollability implicature is present across all shapes of tautologies, with only minor differences from the propositional conditional tautology explored in depth here".

(37) a. *Lo primero no es lo primero.*
          'First things are not first'
      b. #Don't do first things first.
      c. It is not true that first things should be first.

Therefore, it could be argued that out of Bulhof & Gimbel's (2001) classes of tautologies of the form *A is A* only deep tautologies can appear as a lower-order representation in *A is not A* structures. If this is true, then negated (deep) tautologies are expected to inherit some constraints from their affirmative counterparts. First, as follows from the definition of deep tautologies, the class of elements used as repeated constituents is limited to potentially vague linguistic expressions: for instance, proper names are excluded as they do not have meaning, let alone vague and non-vague readings. Next, being genuine tautologies, deep tautologies license only repeated constituents with identical meaning and, what is more, identical use, either descriptive or interpretive.

    However, as can easily be shown, not all the utterances *A is not A* have the indicated constraints. Let us again look at examples (2)–(3), repeated here as (38–39)

(38) A rose is a rose but a home is not a home (from a poem of Hilda Domin)

(39) *Die Stones sind nicht die Stones.*
      'The (Rolling) Stones are not the (Rolling) Stones.'

In (38) we are dealing with two different meanings of the word *home*, corresponding to 'one's place of residence' and 'congenial environment'. Since there is no identity between two repeated elements, the positive counterpart cannot be a deep tautology, and therefore (38) is not a negated tautology. The same applies to (39), which denies identity between the old (Rolling) Stones and the more recent ones, its positive counterpart.

    Whereas it is clear that all these cases are not negated (deep) tautologies, it could be argued that they are negated pseudo-tautologies. Such a solution has some drawbacks though. While the pseudo-tautological interpretation of the pattern *A is A* is not the most natural and, as shown in Bulhof & Gimbel (2001), requires very specific contextual cues, pseudo-tautologies seem to be less frequent than their alleged negated counterparts *A is not A*, which "occur very often" (cf. Noh, 1998: 193). The uncommonness of pseudo-tautologies could also be the reason why they have not been described properly in the literature yet: comments on the Wittgenstein's example in (29) and ff., presented in Bulhof & Gimbel's paper, are not generalisable, i.e. they do not explain what

interpretations can arise for pseudo-tautologies, whether such interpretations are subject to any constraints, etc. It appears more complicated to investigate affirmative pseudo-tautologies first in order to then draw the analysis of *A is not A* patterns from the results, than to study negated utterances directly, for the simple reason that there are much more data available (at least for Spanish and Russian).

Another counterargument against this explanation comes from Russian. In Russian there are two patterns with the structure *A is A*: (i) *X est' X*, with verbal copula *est'* (be.PRS) and (ii) *X eto X*, with pronominal copula *eto* 'this'[18] (cf. Bulygina & Shemlev, 1997; Vilinbakhova & Kopotev, 2017). Now, only the latter can be understood as a pseudo-tautology establishing referential identity. Consider the examples in (40)–(41):

(40)   *V etom filme Hitchcock eto Hitchcock*
        'In this movie Hitchcock (this) is Hitchcock'

(41)   *V etom filme Hitchcock est' Hitchcock*
        'In this movie Hitchcock is Hitchcock'

The interpretation 'In this movie Hitchcock plays the role of himself' is fine only for the sentence in (40) with copula *eto*, but not for (41) with *est'*. However, its negated counterpart *A ne est' A* can successfully indicate to the lack of referential identity, as in the following example:

(42)   *Tak že proishodit i s poširivšimisia v poslednee vremia sluhami "Putin ne est' Putin". Nastojaššij Putin budto by ubit davno* (Internet)
        'The same thing happens with recently increased rumours "Putin is not Putin". Allegedly, the real Putin has been killed a long time ago'.

Therefore, the alleged positive counterpart *Putin est' Putin* 'Putin is Putin' for (42) cannot convey the content 'The person who we consider Putin is indeed the real Putin' with this particular metalinguistic form.

To sum up, the distinctions in the interpretive strategies of *A is A* utterances, as described in Bulhof & Gimbel (2001), which could in principle account for the different interpretations of *A is not A* utterances, are not helpful enough to do so. First, only one of Bulhof & Gimbel's types of affirmative tautologies,

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18   Some authors consider copular *eto* a particle homophonous with demonstrative *eto*, cf. references in Partee (2010).

namely, deep tautologies, can be systematically negated. The other subtypes, as soon as they occur as lower-order representations in negated structures instantiating the metarepresentational formula [NOT (*A is A*)], tend to receive an interpretation as negated deep tautologies: it seems that the metarepresentational negation forces the strict identity reading, as expressed by means of both the monotonicity condition and the binary condition. As shown before, this is so for both tautologies triggering context-based implicatures and tautologies-as-pointers. As a result, we can have only one type of negated tautologies, i.e. negated deep tautologies. And although it could be claimed that all other *A is not A* utterances are derived from another one of Bulhof & Gimbel's types, that of pseudo-tautologies, such a proposal would encounter problems, both in terms of meaning computation and of typological plausibility.

Therefore, within the set of *A is not A* utterances, negated tautologies constitute only a subset, while the rest of the cases have nothing to do with affirmative tautologies. While the strategy of interpretation of negated tautologies could be derived from the way in which deep tautologies are processed and understood, it is not the case for the rest of the *A is not A* utterances. This issue is addressed in the following section.

4   Copular contradictions

4.1   *Initial considerations*

As mentioned above, most work on contradictions has focused on (propositional) conjunctive contradictions, typically of the form $p \& \sim p$. Though inherently false from a formal point of view, contradictions actually occur in conversation and can indeed be useful and felicitous, as pointed out in the literature (Allan, 1986; Escandell-Vidal, 1991; Kamp & Partee, 1995; Ripley, 2011; Cobreros et al., 2012; Alxatib et al., 2013; Snider, 2015). It has been argued that making them informative involves reinterpreting each occurrence of the proposition in a different way:

(43) It rains and it doesn't rain (from Chierchia, 2013, ex. 68)

> [it] can be used to mean many things: that it rains on and off, that there is such a fine precipitation that while it makes you wet it does not qualify as rain, etc. What it can't mean is that in a given place at a given time there both is and is not perceivable water precipitation.
>
> CHIERCHIA, 2013: 53

After having shown that some *A is not A* utterances are interpreted as negated tautologies, with metarepresentational negation bearing on an affirmative equative tautology, NOT (A=A), in this section we want to focus on the interpretation of copular contraditions, i.e., utterances of the form *A is not A* where the negation takes narrow scope and affects the predicate only. They are cases of descriptive negation (cf. Horn 1985, 1989; Moeschler, 2018 for an overview) and are not relevant as denials or rejections of an affirmative tautology; rather, they express a negative predication A ≠ A. The examples in (44)–(49) illustrate this structure:

(44) *Porque Siria ya no es Siria. Es un manicomio* [CE]
      'Because Siria is no longer Siria. It's a madhouse'

(45) *Trabajar no es trabajar si amas lo que haces* [Internet]
      'To work is not to work if you love what you are doing'

(46) *Para ellos, una meseta no es una meseta, sino un antepasado lagarto que descansa allí* [CE]
      'For them, a plateau is not a plateau, but a lizard ancestor that sleeps there'

(47) *Da nikakoi on ne hoziain v etom dome. Tak, terpiat i ždut, čto pomriot. Žena davno uže ne žena, dočeri ne dočeri.* [RNC]
      'He is not a master of this house anyway, They are tolerating him and waiting for his death. His wife is no longer his wife, and his daughters are no longer his daughters'

(48) *Staruha ikonu prodavat' otkazalas'—greh. Da I bez ikony izba ne izba* [RNC]
      'The old woman refused to sell the icon—it is a sin. Besides, without an icon *izba* (*peasant's house—VE, EV*) is not *izba*'

(49) *Tak značit moj papa vovse ne moj papa? Značit moj papa voobšče neizvestno kto …* [RNC]
      'So my dad is not at all my dad? So nobody knows who my dad is …'

It has been suggested that the interpretation of copular contradictions is related to stereotypes. Bulygina & Shmelev (1997), for instance, put forward an account relying on the notion of expectations. In their view, (50) means that in this situation the positive expectations associated with the concept 'man' are not fulfilled:

(50) *Bez detej čelovek—ne čelovek* (Countryside. I. Bunin)
       'Without children a man is not a man'

A similar idea can be found in Meibauer (2008), where the negated copular
clause has a predicative import and the predication relies on the idea of stereo-
typical knowledge. In his analysis of (3) and (31), after stating that it is quite
surprising that tautologies may be negated, he considers that

> What is denied is the applicability of the (stereotypically interpreted)
> predicate. In these cases, it is implicated that one should make a dis-
> tinction between the "old" Stones and the "new" ones, between different
> social groups within the Turkish people, etc.
>   MEIBAUER, 2008: 448

The above characterizations seem to work for the intended examples, but they
are *ex-post facto* comments that do not provide a real explanation about how
the intended meaning is expressed by the speaker and recognised by the hearer.
Why in (50) should the interpretation depend on expectations about the con-
cept 'man', whereas in (3) it is supposed to rely on considering a particular
stereotype of the Stones at different times?

4.2   *Outline of the proposal*

In this section we will argue that copular contradictions of the form *A is not
A* (hereinafter, CC) are used and interpreted along the same lines as conjunc-
tive contradictions, i.e., they obtain their informative import by establishing
some kind of contrast in the interpretation of each occurrence of the same con-
stituent (cf. Chierchia, 2013). Whilst in the case of propositional contradictions
the difference has to do with whole events and situations, in the case of CCs, as
we will see in detail later, it involves referents, properties and descriptions.

   As for the interpretation of the copular structure (see Mikkelsen, 2005, 2011
for a recent overview), we want to argue that CCs do not necessarily behave
like (anti-)predicational clauses (i.e., they are not used to reject a membership
relation between a referent and a class, as in *John is not tall* or *Mary is not a
doctor*). Rather, CCs are preferably interpreted either as (anti-)equative clauses
(i.e., to deny the identity of two referents) or as (anti-)specificational clauses
(i.e., to deny the identity of a referent with a description, as in (49) *My dad is
not at all my dad*).

   The idea we want to pursue is quite simple. The speaker who utters sentences
such as (44)–(50) does not intend to assert the plain contradiction 'A ≠ A', i.e.,
she does not commit herself to entertaining a contradictory thought by deny-

ing the basic principle of identity. On the contrary, she has a clear distinction in mind between the referents or the concepts associated to either occurrence of the linguistic expression A, so she actually intends to communicate the assertion $A_i \neq A_{ii}$, where each instance of A has its own import. By conveying her intended meaning *via* an apparent contradiction (i.e., by uttering $A \neq A$, instead of a more explicit form $A_i \neq A_{ii}$), the speaker may put the hearer to an extra processing effort to determine what she intended to communicate. But in doing so, she is not trying to be unnecessarily obscure or uncooperative; rather, she is inviting the hearer to consider the difference between the two instances of A as well as their similarities. In this way, she can convey a larger set of assumptions in a more economical way.

As for the hearer, driven by the presumption of optimal relevance, he will discard the idea that the speaker intends to communicate the false thought 'A ≠ A'—in the absence of evidence to the contrary. The hearer will then figure out what the speaker is actually trying to convey by means of the $A \neq A$ structure. The only way to escape the contradiction is to search for an interpretation in which it does not arise at all, namely, by assigning a slightly different import to each instance of A. This is, in fact, the only available interpretive option. Conceptual content can be involved in inferential processes of sense modulation or adjustment (and referents evolve in time); whereas, neither the copula nor the negative operator, given their procedural nature can (cf. Escandell-Vidal & Leonetti, 2011; Carston, 2016). Now, once the difference between the two instances of A has been found, the fact that they have been accessed through the same linguistic expression will be also worth considering, so this will encourage the hearer to notice the underlying similarities as well. Thus, the extra effort invested in this process is balanced by the extra effects gained by considering both the similarities and the differences at the same time.

The contradiction in A ≠ A structures can be detected only at the level of the sentence, of its surface form, but does not arise in utterances, because there is no contradiction in the speaker's mind, nor in the hearer's interpretation.

Establishing that the two occurrences of A must be different is, however, not enough. If we want our proposal to have explanatory power, we have to add some conditions on how different the two occurrences of A can or must be. After all, the ways in which two things can differ are, in principle, infinite, so if there were no restrictions at all, the prediction would be that any kind of difference would do. Of course, as we know, this is not the case. There are three strategies to differentiate the two occurrences of the same constituent:

– The referent is the same for both occurrences, but its properties are different for each of them depending on the circumstances of evaluation.

- The referents are different for each occurrence depending on the circumstances of evaluation, but the set of properties is the same.
- Both the referents and their properties are different for each occurrence, but the linguistic expression used happens to be the same.

This means, therefore, that the difference between the two occurrences of A is not totally free or unconstrained: it has to be a kind of difference that makes it possible for the speaker to merge A_i and A_{ii} under a single common expression A, and for the hearer to use the common linguistic label A to infer the difference between A_i and A_{ii}. In fact, in most cases, the utterance contains explicit clues about how to reach the intended interpretation by making explicit the conditions under which the non-identity between the two occurrences obtains. The interpretation of CCs in discourse, then, exploits the way in which our processing systems work, i.e., on how we humans conceive and manage referents, concepts and situations (and the relations among them). In what follows we will present these three possibilities in detail.

4.3   *Strategy #1: Same referent, different properties*
Any referent can be associated to a number of attributes (linguistic and encyclopaedic) and some of these attributes can change when circumstances change. Thus, if one considers different stages of the same referent, it is very likely that there are differences in the set of properties for each evaluation situation. This is, we claim, what the first strategy to avoid the contradiction exploits. One can safely assert that *A is not A* if *A* is considered under different circumstances. Thus, the basic identity will not change (which legitimates the use of the same linguistic label *A* to access the same referent *r*), but the set of properties *P* of this referent *r* will not be the same (which legitimates the non-identity assertion). This strategy can be formulated as in (51)

(51) $\lambda P, P(r)=1$ in $w_0 \neq \lambda P', P'(r)=1$ in w_1

What the formula means is that the set of properties $P = \{P_1, P_2, P_3\}$ that are true of the referent *r* in the world w_0 is different from the set of properties $P' = \{P'_1, P'_2, P_3\}$ that are true of *r* in the world w_1.

   To understand how this proposal works, some clarifications are in order. Evaluation worlds can contrast along three basic logical domains: temporal, modal and epistemic. The various readings arise as the result of supplying different values for the different worlds:
- Temporal readings. The difference between w_0 and w_1 can be conceived of as referring to different temporal moments. Following the classical insights by Reichenbach (1947) and Prior (1967), time can be conceived as a set of

ordered points along a temporal arrow, from past to present (and maybe extending to the future): t_{-3}, t_{-2}, t_{-1}, t_0, t_{+1}, t_{+2}, t_{+3}. Each temporal point defines a world. The actual world in the present is but one of such worlds. A cc can be used to underline that some of the properties of the referent r have changed from time T_0 (typically, the speech time) to time T_1 (typically, a past world).

– Modal readings. The difference between w_0 and w_1 can be modal. This means considering, in addition to the current, "real" world, a set of other possible, alternative worlds where things can be different from the way they are in the "real" world. Alternative worlds in the past are counterfactuals; alternative worlds in the present are mostly understood as possible (Kratzer, 1991; von Fintel, 2006; von Fintel & Gillies, 2007). When invoking two different modal worlds, the formula indicates that the cluster of properties that are true of the referent r in the world w_α (typically, the real world) is different from the cluster of properties that are true of r in an alternative world w_β where certain conditions hold.

– Epistemic readings. For each individual (or group of individuals), the worlds can be divided into those that are compatible with the individual's knowledge (or belief) and those that are not. As a consequence, any proposition can be evaluated as belonging or not to the set of propositions forming the individual's epistemic state. We can also imagine a full array of different evaluation worlds related to the knowledge and beliefs of individuals, roughly along the lines developed in Hintikka (1962). The idea here is that the set of properties that are true of the referent r in the world of beliefs B_s of an individual (or a set of individuals) s is different from the set of properties that are true of r in the epistemic world B_z of a different individual (or a set of individuals) z.

Accessing these worlds is not unconstrained either. As our examples show, most of the times the utterance contains an overt indication about the kind of evaluation worlds involved, which can guide the hearer towards the intended interpretation.

What we claim, then, is that to keep referential identity and, at the same time, obtain a different interpretation for the two constituents linked by the copula in utterances of the form *A is not A*, the strategy is to change the evaluation world for each occurrence, so as to place the same referent in different times, different situations or different worlds of beliefs.

4.3.1   CCs with proper names

To illustrate how this proposal works, we will begin by considering the behaviour of cc with proper names. What is interesting about these cases is that

the difference between the two occurrences of the proper name cannot be accounted for in terms of differences in meaning, because proper names have no meaning at all; they are merely rigid designators, which can only identify a referent by virtue of a conventional link (cf. Kripke, 1972). The interpretation of the CCs in which they occur has then to exploit features of the referent that do not belong to linguistic knowledge, but to encyclopaedic knowledge.

For proper names and entities that are univocally identifiable, one of the most frequent ways to establish some contrast is to consider two different stages of them, i.e., by locating each of the two occurrences of the repeated constituent at a different time. Most of the examples found include explicit indications that favour a temporal interpretation (Sp. *ya no* 'no longer', Ru. *uže ne*, 'no longer'). Consider (52) and (53):

(52) *No solo Atenas ya no es Atenas ... nada es como era en Grecia ...* (CE)
      'Not only Athens is no longer Athens. Nothing is as it was in Greece'

(53) *Moskva uže davno ne Moskva. Ja smotriu sovetskie filmy i mečtaiu popast' v tu pustuiu i spokoinuiu Moskvu* [Internet]
      'Moskva is no longer Moscow. I watch Soviet films and dream about getting into that empty and peaceful Moscow'

In these examples the two occurrences of the same constituent point to the same referent with a different set of properties at different temporal moments. Thus, by uttering (52) the speaker wants to convey that many things have changed in Athens, maybe to an extent that one can hardly identify the Athens of the past with that of the present days. It is most likely that the speaker knows what the relevant properties are that make it possible to distinguish "old" Athens at time t_1 from "new" Athens at time t_0, so she would surely be prepared to list some of them if required; however, it is enough if she just has a vague impression. The same goes on the side of the hearer: of course, a well-informed individual may know in what sense Athens has changed, but it could be equally possible, however, that the hearer is not able at all to identify a precise set of properties for each instance of the name, let alone to identify the specific set of these properties that the speaker may have in mind. If he is not familiar with Athens and Greece he probably will not know what Athens was like before and how it is nowadays. This does not necessarily result, however, in communicative failure: it might be enough to grasp the general idea that Athens has changed a lot—the details being perhaps of secondary interest. The *A is not A* structure can thus achieve relevance by evoking a non-specific array of weak implicatures (cf. Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995, ch. 4).

Indeed, the interpretation of CCs is not predefined in advance, but shows a very high degree of context dependence. Consider the sentence *Paris is no longer Paris*, uttered by US President on Feb 25, 2017. In (54) the full context is provided:

(54) "Take a look at what's happened in France. I have a friend, he's a very, very substantial guy, he loves the city of lights. He loves Paris. Hadn't seen him in a while," Trump told the audience.
"And I said, 'Jim, let me ask you a question, how's Paris doing?' 'Paris? I don't go there anymore. Paris is no longer Paris.'" (http://www.euronews.com/2017/02/25/paris-is-no-longer-paris-trump-takes-aim-at-french-capital)

Here Trump's friend was not relying on any particularly salient shared set of assumptions, including that Paris is typically a safe city. By stating that *Paris is no longer Paris* after Trump's having drawn attention to what happened in France in the preceding weeks, the utterance strongly suggests the idea that Paris is no longer a safe city. The idea that Paris was safe before can be considered neither stereotypical, nor shared knowledge, nor even particularly salient in other contexts. What the CC does is to force an *a posteriori* accommodation based on the discourse context.[19]

CCs focusing on the existence of a change across time have often been understood as indicating a change for the worse. It is probably so in a high number of occasions (cf. (42–53)), but this is not an inherent feature of CCs. Imagine a fictitious degraded and dangerous neighbourhood called *Dodgy-town*. Imagine then that the city council has undertaken a series of measures to clean the area and make it safe. If these improvements are effective, under the appropriate contextual circumstances, it is felicitous to assert that *Dodgy-town is no*

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19 This is another reason why the interpretation of copular contradictions cannot be derived from the interpretation of equative tautologies. For the latter, the evocation of common knowledge is said to be crucial (cf. Miki, 1996) or else they show the speaker's reluctance to provide the information, cf. Meibauer's (2008: 447) example:

(i)   Speaker A: *Was ist dein Vater für ein Mensch?*
                    'What kind of person is your father?'
       Speaker B: *Oh, mein Vater ist mein Vater ...*
                    'Oh, my father is my father.'

On the contrary, for copular contradictions the lack of commonly known properties, as shown above, does not prevent the speaker from providing a piece of new information, namely, in (47)–(49) that the corresponding cities have changed.

longer Dodgy-town, with the intention of conveying that the area is clean and safe now. A CC can perfectly well be used to convey a change for better.

Copular contradictions can also make reference to individuals:

(55) Gage is no longer Gage.

(56) *Vdrug on uvidel jasno: Arsiuška daleko uže ne Arsiuška. ⟨…⟩ Arsenij Iusti-*
      novič Florinsky, deistviteľnyi tainyi sovetnik, senator, vhož k gosudariu, odin
      iz zapravil departamenta
      'Suddenly he understood clearly that Arsiuška (*short name for Arsenij- VE,*
      EV) is not at all Arsiuška ⟨…⟩ Arsenij Iustinovič (*full name with patronymic*
      name—VE, EV) Florinsky, a privy councillor and a senator, is allowed to
      address the monarch and is one of the most important people in the
      Department' (*practically, the Ministry—VE, EV*).

(57) *Pero yo ya no soy yo*
      Ni mi casa es ya mi casa (*Romance sonámbulo*. F. García Lorca)
      'But now I am no longer myself,
      nor is my house any longer my house'

The interpretation follows the same path as the examples with place names. The example in (55) is what Phineas Gage's friends said about him after he suffered a horrible accident that cause the loss of his social ability. According to his doctor, first he was "hard-working, responsible, efficient and capable"; after the accident he became "fitful, irreverent, indulging at times in the grossest profanity … capricious and vacillating" (Macmillan, 2000). The same goes for contradictions involving pronouns or definite descriptions, as in (57): some change has taken place, so the individual can hardly recognise, or be recognised, as himself.

The temporal dimension is not the only one that makes it possible to contrast two stages of the same referent. CCs can also get an informative interpretation by relating the difference to alternative modal worlds, where things would be different. The features that make it possible to identify the alternative world are usually introduced overtly by conditional clauses (Ru. *kogda* 'when'; Sp. *si*, 'if'). Consider the example in (58):

(58) Venice is not Venice when you return alone.

The interpretation of this example emphasises the fact that the properties of a city can change depending on the conditions holding in the worlds of eval-

uation, not on the temporal dimension. In (58) the contrast between the two occurrences of the proper name does not depend on any sort of linguistically determined set of properties, nor is it necessary to have any pre-existing set of shared expectations or stereotypical assumptions. The difference is elaborated on the basis of contextual assumptions. For instance, if we borrow the ideas from Charles Aznavour's song "How sad Venice can be", the interpretation of (58) can be elaborated in terms of the contrast between a happy Venice and a sad Venice when certain alternative worlds are activated by varying circumstances, such as being alone.

Finally, the third strategy to elaborate a contrast between two occurrences of the same name is to relate the difference to the epistemic states of an individual or group, thus invoking a switch to their epistemic world, as opposed to the epistemic world of others (perhaps including the speaker). The example in (59) illustrates this situation:

(59)   *Inogda oboim, i Mure i Lokkartu, kazalos', čto v sušsnosti London uže ne London* [RNC]
       'Sometimes it seemed to both of them, to Mura and to Lokkart, that, in fact, London is no longer London'

Notice that (59) is felicitous even if we only have a vague impression about how the perception of London has changed in the characters' mind, without the need to invoke any particular stereotype.

In our proposal, then, the contrast between the same referent at two different temporal moments, in two different sets of circumstances and related to two different epistemic states is a simple and economical way to explain how CC are used and interpreted. It makes it possible to account for the interpretation without resorting to notions such as 'stereotypical interpretation' or 'expectations'. The exact import and argumentative direction of the utterance is not necessarily linked to a pre-existing, shared stereotype.

The analysis presented here can cast some light also on the issue of the nature of the second occurrence of the proper name. Following Autenrieth (1997), Meibauer (2008) claims that the second NP is predicative, whereas the first one is referential.[20] With proper names, the paraphrases show that both

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20   Still, while elaborating on predicative analysis for affirmative and negated tautologies, Meibeuer (2008: 445) indicates that the suggested approach is relevant for German data. Later (Meibauer 2008: 446) he points out that for French it appears problematic as in French it is possible to say *Jean est (un) docteur* and *Un docteur est un docteur* but not **Docteur est docteur*. Predicative analysis is not supported by Russian data either, as verbal

instances are referential and unequivocally pick the same referent (say, the city of Athens, the Stones, etc.). What is different is not the referential status of the two NPs, but the temporal points at which the referents are considered. The very same referent is examined at two different moments in time and the speaker notices that its properties are not exactly the same. Notice that these properties cannot be part of the descriptive meaning of the proper name. In fact, when proper names are involved, it would be difficult to understand them as acting as predicates, given their lack of descriptive content. There are, of course, some proper names that have become common labels for certain behaviours, thus acquiring descriptive features as stereotypes. This is the case, for example, of the proper name *Quixote* (and the related adjective *quixotic*) to refer to someone "having or involving ideas or plans that show imagination but are usually not practical" (OED). What is relevant to the present discussion is that, when used predicatively, proper names no longer behave as proper names and necessarily adopt the syntax of common names. Therefore, they should be obligatorily construed with the indefinite article:

(60) a. *Alonso Quijano es Don Quijote.*
      'Alonso Quijano is Don Quixote.'
  b. *Alonso Quijano es un don quijote*
      'Alonso Quijano is a Don Quixote (i.e., a quixotic individual).'

(60)a is an equative clause asserting the identity of the referent of the two expressions, while (55)b, with the indefinite article, is a predicational clause where the proper name behaves as a common noun. Note that the same goes for English: cf. *Eric was *(a) Don Quixote when he thought he could save Gina from drugs.* If the indefinite article were missing, the only possible interpretation would be that Eric is actually Don Quixote (and not merely a quixotic individual). Nothing of the sort is found in CCs, which in the present case are unequivocally a subclass of equative clauses.

4.3.2   CCs with other categories

The same path of interpretation that has been suggested to account for the interpretation of CCs involving proper names can be extended to the analysis of CCs where other categories occur, such as definite and indefinite NPs,

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copular est' (be.PRS) is very common for equative tautologies, cf. *Vrac est'vrač* 'A doctor is a doctor' but cannot appear in sentences like **Sasha est' vrač* 'Sasha is a doctor' in present tense, cf. Pereltsvaig (2007) and above references for a comprehensive analysis of copulas in Russian.

infinitives, adverbials, quantifiers, etc. In these cases, the referent is not to be identified with an entity of the real world, but rather with a more abstract conceptual representation. Consider the following utterances:

(61) *Teper' žizn' ne žizn',—skazal korčmar' i vzdohnul* [RNC]
      'Now life is not life,'—said the innkeeper and sighed'

(62) *Trabajar no es trabajar si amas lo que haces* [Internet] (= 45)
      'To work is not to work if you love what you are doing'

(63) *Una caloría no es una caloría si la mides mal* [CE]
      'One calorie is not one calorie if you measure it badly'[21]

(64) *Mañana no es mañana si hoy no es hoy* [Internet]
      'Tomorrow is not tomorrow if today is not today'

(65) *Esli dvaždy dva ne ravno četyrjom, to libo dva—ne dva, libo "ždy"—ne "ždy", libo četyre—ne četyre* [RNC]
      Lit. 'If *dvaždy* ('twice') two is not four, then either *dva* ('two and at the same time the first syllable of *dvaždy*') is not *dva*, or *ždy* ('second syllable of *dvaždy*') is not *ždy*, or four is not four' (a joking phrase)
      'If twice two is not four, then either twice is not twice, or two is not two, or four is not four'

(66) *I den' ne den', i noč ne no noč, kogda o krasote dumaju* [RNC]
      'And a day is not a day, and a night is not a night when I am thinking about beauty'

In (61) the innkeeper regrets the way in which life has changed. Life as he experiences it in the present is not the same as it used to be in the past. The basic concept is similar, but the attributes across times are not. In (62) the same

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21 A response to this utterance was *Una caloría es una caloría y un coche es un coche y un árbol es un árbol 'A calorie is a calorie and a car is a car and a tree is a tree …',* which are close to *deep tautologies,* so (63) could in principle be regarded as negated deep tautology (cf. 2.3). Our main objection to this point is that (58) is equivalent to its paraphrase

(i)   *Una caloría que está medida mal no es una caloría*
         'One calorie measured badly is not one calorie'

This indicates that the condition applies only to the first member, and therefore, it cannot be a deep tautology which, by definition, requires identity of its two constituents. That could be applied to other similar examples.

activity can be conceptualized as 'work' or not, depending on the world of eval-
uation you select, namely, on whether you love what you are doing. In (63) the
same amount of energy can or cannot be measured as one calorie depending
on the way and the circumstances in which you measure it. The same goes for
the rest of the examples, the generalisation being that both referents and con-
ceptual representations can be different (i.e., can have properties that make
them different) depending on the world in which they are evaluated.

As in the cases examined in the previous sections, it is not necessary that the
alternative worlds are part of shared knowledge or have stereotypical features.
On the contrary, an alternative world always can be created *ad hoc* simply by
establishing a defining condition, and even by means of a tautology or a con-
tradiction, as shown in the examples in (63)–(66).

4.4 *Strategy #2: Different referents, same set of properties*

There is a second strategy to elaborate a contrast between the two occurrences
of the same constituent in a CC. It consists in keeping a single description
(which legitimates the use of the same linguistic label *A*); this description,
which initially picked out a certain referent *r*, turns out to select a different
referent when the circumstances change (which legitimates the non-identity
assertion). This strategy can be seen as the mirror image of the previous one. It
can be formulated as in (67):

(67) $\lambda r, P(r){=}1$ in $w_0 \neq \lambda r', P(r'){=}1$ in w_1

What the formula means is that the set of referents *r* that have the properties
$P = \{p_1, p_2, p_3\}$ in the world w_0 is different of the set of referents *r'* that have the
same properties P in the world w_1.

By means of this strategy the speaker can acknowledge a case of mistaken
identity. The clearest cases correspond to examples such as those in (68)–(69):

(68) *El asesino no es el asesino como tres veces ...* [CE]
      'The murderer is not the murderer three times in a row'

(69) *Tak značit moj papa vovse ne moj papa? Značit moj papa voobšče neizvestno
      kto ...* [RNC] (= 40)
      'So my dad is not at all my dad? So nobody knows who my dad is ...'

In these cases, which can be reminiscent of the referential/attributive distinc-
tion, the referent that was initially identified as being the murderer, or the
speaker's dad, turns out not to be the one that fits in with the given descrip-

tion after some circumstances have changed. A contrast is established, then, between two referents (whether fully identified or not), which are related to different epistemic states of the individual. This typically happens across different temporal moments. In (68) the speaker is talking about a fiction book in which a detective has to identify a murderer. As the plot develops, the reader is led to think that a certain individual is the murderer, just to learn that this was not true a few pages later. This misidentification happens three times, so the epistemic state of the reader has to change accordingly several times. In (69), presumably after many years of believing that a certain person is her dad, the speaker suddenly knows that she was wrong: it turns out that the individual she had identified as her dad no longer fits that description.

Notice that these clauses are not predicational, but specificational. The clause is "used to specify who (or what) someone (or something) is, rather than to say anything about that person (or entity)" (Mikkelsen, 2011: 1809). A negative specificational will, then, indicate that the subject referent does not correspond to the specification given. Being a singular definite description, the description can only have a legitimate referent, so this referent—even if it is not known to the speaker by the time of her utterance—has to be uniquely identifiable.[22]

The occurrence of corrective clauses is an invitation to replace the way in which a concept is understood. Thus, in (70), the speaker's proposal is to change

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22   Here we would like to make some clarifications about the specificational nature of Russian examples. The fact is that while for Russian it is argued that copular *eto* "is excluded from specificational sentences" (Geist, 2007: 95; cf. also Partee, 2010: 30), there are examples equivalent to (69) precisely with *eto*:

(i)   *Tetia Izol'da, ty uverena, čto ničego ne naputala? Moj otec—eto ne moj otec?* [Internet]
       'Aunt Isolda, are you sure you have not confused anything? My father is not my father?'

This could be viewed in favor of considering (69) an equative, and not specificational, clause. However, specificational contradictions with copular *eto* are not unique; in fact, we find many other examples with undoubtedly specificational semantics and copula *eto*. For instance, an example similar to Geist's sentence (45a), which she regards as unacceptable (2007: 94), appears in an Internet discussion:

(ii)   *Ved' v postsovetskoj morali ubijca—eto Raskolnikov*
       'After all, in post-Soviet morality, the murderer is Raskolnikov'

The example in iii) is similar to Partee's (2010: 28) example (5a) *The winner is Susan*.

(iii) *Itak, vtoroj pobeditel—eto Katia @panovocka* [Internet]
       'And the second winner is *Katia @panovocka*'

Thus it appears that in modern Russian this constraint for copula *eto* is commonly violated and, whereas the explanation of this phenomena lies beyond the scope of the paper, the distribution of the copula cannot be regarded as an argument against our analysis.

the way in which we perceive a certain concept in a discursive context and change its content by using the features of the concept suggested in the correction.

(70) *Želanije smerti ne est' želanije smerti. Éto tol'ko poisk lučšego sostojanija* [RNC]
      'The desire of death is not the desire of death. It is only a search for a better condition'

When no explicit indication about the source of the belief is given, it is understood by default that it is the speaker's:

(71) *Y el euro no es el euro. Es el MARCO al que le han cambiado el nombre* [CE]
      'A euro is not a euro. It is a MARK that changed its name'

In (71) the speaker is putting forward her own belief: for her, the set of properties we attribute to the euro are not actually the ones she would attribute to the European currency; rather she thinks that these properties are merely those of the former German mark.

    The difference can be related to the epistemic states of larger groups of individuals or language varieties. This is in fact the case of (72):

(72) A: The first floor is not the first floor, it's the second floor.
      B: Oh, now I remember that the first floor is the ground floor in London
         (example from Noh, 1998: 193)

Here, the referent that will be picked out by a speaker of American English for the NP *the first floor* does not correspond to the description 'the first floor' for a British speaker. The correction clause offers the description that better translates the set of features of the intended referent.

    Generic indefinites can be used and interpreted along these lines. The example in (46) is intended as a characterization of the world of beliefs of a certain culture (different to that of the speaker and addressees), where things are not interpreted in the same way as we interpret them in our own. The difference is related to the epistemic states of a group, thus invoking a switch to their epistemic world, as opposed to the epistemic world of others (perhaps including the speaker's own).

    There is a subclass of CCs that may instantiate a predicational relation. This possibility, however, is not the most common case. The examples include an overt contrast between the two occurrences of the NP by adding

further requirements on the features a referent should have in order to be
ascribed to the class denoted:

(73) *Bez detej čelovek—ne čelovek* (Countryside. I. Bunin) (= 50))
       'Without children a man is not a man' (example from Bulygina & Shmelev,
       1997)

(74) *Bez molodoj hoziajki dom ne dom, i radost' ne radost'* [RNC]
       'Without a young housewife a house is not a house and joy is not joy'

(75) *Desde la saga de* El señor de los anillos *parece que se han grabado a fuego
       en la mente del espectador dos reglas: 1._ una película no es una película sin
       una batalla multitudinaria* [CE]
       'From the saga of "The Lord of the Rings" two rules seem to be engraved in
       the spectators' mind: 1_ a movie is not a movie without a massive battle'

These examples are an invitation to change one's beliefs about the class de-
noted by the NP by adding an extra defining feature, which is overtly expressed:
in the examples under discussion, 'having children', 'having a young housewife',
and 'having a massive battle'. Thus, according to a certain individual, any refer-
ent that one could select as a member of the class denoted by the NP will not be
a legitimate member of that class unless it has the suggested property. In the
case of (73), *pace* Bulygina & Shmelev, there is not necessarily a pre-existing
stereotype stating that, in order to be complete, a man should have children;
rather, the utterance tries to establish this new standard. Similarly, in (74), it
is emphasized that the presence of young housewife is necessary for a house
to be a proper house, for joy to be real joy, and, as follows from the context,
for a life of a man to be a decent life. Finally, the idea in (75) is that calling
something 'a movie' requires that the cluster of properties includes a specific
feature, namely, that of having a massive battle. This addition is related in time
to a certain moment: after *The Lord of the Rings*. Again, the idea is that the set
of entities that can be considered movies varies across individuals, standards
and times.

4.5   *Strategy #3: Different referents, different properties, same linguistic
        expression*
Finally, there is a subclass of CCs where a single linguistic expression can refer
to two different referents that happen to be accessible by means of the same
expression, though they are not identical. The general pattern for this strategy
can be formulated as in (76):

(76) $A \neq A > r_1 \neq r_2$

When proper names are involved, this use gives rise to anti-specificational interpretations. Consider the example in (77):

(77) *Si Borges dice "Borges y yo", entonces Borges no es Borges.* (CE)
   'If Borges says "Borges and me", then Borges is not Borges.'

The Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges wrote a short story with the title "Borges y yo" ('Borges and me'), dealing with consciousness and the Self. Now, if Borges-the-author creates a character out of himself, calls it "Borges" and talks to him, then Borges-the-author ($Borges_0$) is not the same individual as Borges-the-character ($Borges_1$), or vice versa, though both of them can be called *Borges*, and then accessed through the same label. This is precisely what we find in (77).

   When used with common nouns, this strategy is based on the existence polysemy (i.e., with various meanings associated to the same lexical entry). Each one of the different meanings can give access to a different concept, instantiated by a different kind of referent. Consider the examples in (78)–(80):

(78) *... volvemos a nuestra segunda regla. Composición: el centro no es el centro.* [CE]
   '... we come back to our second rule. Composition: the centre is not the centre.'

(79) *y el problema no es el problema sino cómo reaccionamos al problema.* [CE]
   and the problem is not the problem, but how we react to the problem

(80) *A čto že za gazeta? Ah, "Pravda"! Daže "Kazahstanskaia pravda"! Net, takaia "Pravda"—ne pravda!* [RNC]
   'And what newspaper is it? Ah, it is "Truth"! Even "Truth of Kazakhstan"! No, such "Truth" is not truth'

In (78) the speaker is talking about rules of photographic composition. She then suggest a rule of composition according to which the centre of interest of the picture (i.e., the main subject, the most important aspect) should not be placed in the geometrical centre of the picture (i.e., the middle of the square). Thus, two different meanings of the word *centre* are used, each picking out a different kind of referent. What the CC states is that these two referents are not to be equated. The same goes for (79), where the first instance of the NP *the problem* is understood as indicating a general difficulty, whereas the second identifies a

specific situation; what can be problematic here is the way in which this specific situation is dealt with. In (80) the speaker—a famous Soviet, then Russian, singer Alla Pugačova—finds some unpleasant gossips about her in the regional Soviet newspaper *Kazahstanskaia Pravda* 'Truth of Kazakhstan'. At her concert in Kazakhstan she reads aloud some pieces of the article and then declares that "Truth" does not tell the truth, tearing the newspaper into pieces and throwing it to the audience.

5   Conclusions

In this paper we have shown that contradictions with the structure *A is not A* are not interpreted as expressing a plain falsehood; on the contrary, they can be fully informative and are felicitously used and understood in discourse. Relying on the notions of descriptive and metarepresentational negation, we have argued that the class of utterances with the structure *A is not A* is heterogeneous and differs in the scope of the negative operator. Specifically, we distinguish negated tautologies with the formula NOT (A=A) and copular contradictions with the formula A≠A. The choice between the two kinds of interpretations is strongly dependent on the context, particularly on the mutual manifestness of certain representations and/or assumptions.

The interpretative process can then follow two different routes.

1.   The understanding of negated tautologies involves identifying the corresponding affirmative tautology and rejecting some of the assumptions that one could derive from it. This strategy is particularly accessible when the corresponding affirmative tautology A=A is present, or mutually manifest in the context, so the formula NOT (A=A) is relevant as a rejection of the set of assumptions conveyed by *A=A*. Adopting Bulhof & Gimbel's (2001) taxonomy of tautologies, we demonstrate that only deep tautologies, which are used literally and point to the non-vague use of a word, can appear as lower-order representations in tautological utterances, while other classes, namely, tautologies that trigger other implicatures and directive tautologies, are not admissible in this position. Therefore, negated tautologies inherit some constraints from their affirmative counterparts, such as non-acceptance of constituents that are not potentially vague, i.e. proper names, or linguistic expressions with different meaning or use, and represent only a subset of utterances with the structure *A is not A*.

2.   The interpretation of copular contradictions (*A≠A*) is based on distinguishing each of the occurrences of the repeated constituent in a way that

can both explain the similarities (in order to legitimate the use of a single linguistic expression for both of them) and the differences (as required to eliminate the contradiction). This strategy is preferred when the representations involved, or some instances of these representations, are active in the discourse. There are three main ways to obtain this result:

2.1. A single referent with different properties. The same linguistic expression is interpreted as selecting the same referent, but emphasising its differences depending on the evaluation world; variation can involve the temporal, the modal or the epistemic domain (cf. (46)).

2.2. Two different referents satisfying the same description (i.e., the same set of properties) in different evaluation worlds. The same linguistic expression is interpreted as selecting different referents in different circumstances, including the temporal, the modal and the epistemic domain (cf. (62)).

2.3. Two different referents, with different properties, which are accessed by means of the same linguistic expression (cf. (72)).

These strategies exploit the way in which we humans conceptualise and manage situations. Temporal relations, alternative situations and knowledge management are indeed at the foundations of grammatical relations like those encoded in natural languages by tenses, modalities and epistemic/evidential markers. They are independently needed and represent the common format in which we deal with situations. In the interpretation of CCs, the access to the relevant evaluation world is usually overtly indicated in the surrounding discourse fragment. In this way, the hearer is efficiently guided towards the set of assumptions that the speaker intended to communicate.

The analysis we have put forward can explain the data in an appropriate way. In addition, it has various interesting theoretical consequences:

– It shows that use and interpretation of *A is not A* structures in discourse is highly sensitive to contextual information, whether overtly expressed or not. Thus, the fatalistic view associated with the interpretation of tautologies and contradictions in the literature (in any of its possible guises, such as change-to-worse, unfulfilled expectations, abnormality or resignation; cf. Wierzbicka, 1987, 1988, 1991) is not a built-in component in their interpretation. The direction chosen depends on contextual factors.

– It strongly suggests that the idea that the second occurrence of the NP has to be predicative does not extend to all the cases under consideration. Moreover, what our analysis shows is that most of the cases are actually instances of equative and specificational readings.

– It offers an explanation of the interpretation of *A is not A* utterances based on general principles of how human cognition works, with a motivated account of how and why these structures are used and interpreted in discourse. We have shown that there is no need to invoke *ad hoc* notions such as those of shared expectations or stereotypes. The contrast between the two occurrences of the same constituent is established in terms of more abstract and general notions of reference, conceptual attributes, linguistic expressions and logical domains (temporal, modal, epistemic), all of which are independently needed to account for many other communicative phenomena.

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