***Not* as *might***

Emotive doxastics (*fear*, *hope*), inquisitive predicates (*ask*), negated veridical responsive predicates (*know, remember*), dubitatives (*doubt*) and negative predicates (*prevent, refuse,* etc*.*) may select for sentential complements with Expletive Negation (EN), namely a negative marker (sentential negation or C0) that does not reverse the polarity of the embedded proposition. EN has been argued to be semantically vacuous (Espinal 2000), the same as real negation (Abels 2005), or to have some semantic contribution different than that of real negation (e.g. evaluative mood (Yoon 2011)). In this talk I identify some new *necessary conditions for EN-licensing* and I show that EN has the *meaning* of a weak epistemic modal.

A comparative analysis of Classical Greek, Russian, Hebrew, Spanish and French data with EN challenges existing analyses that EN in attitude complements is licensed by (subjunctive) mood (Abels 2005, Yoon 2012, a.o.) as EN can actually be licensed in non-Subjunctive complements. On the other hand, several diagnostics show that EN is only licensed in complements with free or dependent tense (for tense specifications cf. Landau 2004, Grano 2012, a.o.). In other words, EN is ungrammatical in sentences with anaphoric tense. Assuming Grano’s (2012) analysis where sentences with anaphoric tense lack a TP layer, the correlation between Tense and EN implies that EN scopes above TP and predicts that EN is ungrammatical in obligatory control/restructuring contexts.

EN has long been supposed to be licensed by predicates with some negative import (Espinal 2000, van der Wooden 1994 a.o.). Yoon (2011) was the first to observe that EN can be licensed after non-negative predicates like Korean *hope* and she argues that EN is licensed by non-veridical predicates. In this study, I adopt current analyses of emotive doxastics, dubitatives (Anand & Hacquard 2013), rogative predicates (Uegaki 2012), and negative predicates (White et al. 2014), and I argue that EN is selected only by predicates that select for complements of type <<s,t>,t > which introduce a bipartition of the doxastic alternatives of the epistemic subject (i.e. they have existential force Ǝ or ¬∀).

Finally, I present new asymmetries between complements with and without EN. More specifically, I show that EN is in complementary distribution with epistemic modals, that a sentence with EN is an infelicitous answer to a question and that matrix negation can target the desirability ordering introduced by an emotive doxastic only in the presence of EN. I argue that these new puzzles can only be explained if we assume that EN has the import of a weak epistemic modal, which denotes the attitude holder’s lack of evidence regarding the truth of the complement clause. Corroborative evidence that EN has the meaning of a weak epistemic comes from Modern Greek counterfactuals where EN can be used instead of epistemic *tha* (will).