

## **The syntax of unambiguously expressed metalinguistic negation**

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This talk investigates expressions that convey ‘objection’ in the sense of Horn (1989), dealing with data from Portuguese, Spanish, French and English (plus a note on Hungarian). It shows that such expressions, which include idioms/swear words, locative/temporal deictics, *wh*- words and lexical instantiations of ‘nothing’, behave as metalinguistic negation (MN) markers. It then provides information on their availability across languages (according to the extant literature) and describes the different word order patterns associated with them. It is proposed that the sentential left periphery (under the cartographic approach of Rizzi 1997 and further subsequent developments) provides the unifying link behind the crosslinguistic variety of MN markers and can also explain aspects of microvariation related to word order, presence/absence of overt complementizers and cooccurrence of MN markers in a single responding move (discontinuous or in clusters). Farkas and Bruce’s (2010) concepts of ‘responding’ assertions and ‘relative polarity’ features are considered crucial to understand the distinctive polarity characteristics of MN sentences. Intended next steps in the current investigation will be to broaden the crosslinguistic typological coverage of unambiguous MN markers and extend the proposed analysis to integrate the syntax of MN sentences with ‘not’.