

## 1 Introduction

A pair of clauses such as *It is raining* and *It isn't raining* are said to differ in **polarity**. The first is a **positive clause** or a clause with **positive polarity**, while the second is a **negative clause** or a clause with **negative polarity**. For the most part positive represents the default polarity, in the sense that positive constructions are structurally and semantically simpler than negative ones. To a very large extent, therefore, a description of polarity is a matter of describing the special properties of negatives – and it is for this reason that we have called this chapter ‘Negation’ rather than ‘Polarity’.

### 1.1 Tests for clause polarity

Negation is marked by words (*not, no, never, etc.*) or by affixes (e.g. *·n't, un·*), but very often the effect of adding a negative word or the suffix *·n't* is to make the whole clause negative. Hence the distinction drawn above between *It is raining* and *It isn't raining* as positive and negative clauses. We will therefore begin by surveying four useful diagnostic tests for determining the syntactic polarity of a clause. They are illustrated in [1]:

[1]	NEGATIVE CLAUSE	POSITIVE CLAUSE
i	a. <u>He didn't read it</u> , <u>not even</u> the abstract.	b. * <u>He read it</u> , <u>not even</u> the abstract.
ii	a. <u>He didn't read it</u> ; <u>neither/nor</u> did I.	b. <u>Ed read it</u> ; <u>so</u> did I.
iii	a. <u>Ed didn't read it</u> , <u>did he</u> ?	b. <u>Ed read it</u> , <u>didn't he</u> ?
iv	a. <u>Not once</u> did Ed read it.	b. <u>After lunch</u> Ed read it.

Single underlining marks the clauses whose polarity is indicated in the headings, while the double underlining in [i–iii] marks the crucial feature of the diagnostic.

#### ■ Clause continuations with *not even*

Negative clauses allow a continuation with *not even* + complement or adjunct, as in [1ia]. This is comparable to *Ed didn't even read the abstract*, but instead of *the abstract* being integrated into the structure of the clause, it is added on, as a prosodically detached supplement. When the clause is negative, the following *even* is commonly preceded by *not*, as here, but *not* is inadmissible after a positive clause. (For the meaning of *even*, see Ch. 6, §7.3.)

#### ■ Connective adjuncts

In [1ii] the underlined clause is followed by an anaphorically reduced clause introduced by a connective adjunct. Following a negative clause we find *neither* or *nor*, whereas a