

*So-inversion as Polarity Focus*¹

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1. Introduction

So-inversion:

1. John plays guitar and so do I.

Proposal: *So*-inversion is best analyzed as parallel to *neither*-inversion. Both constructions are examples of **polarity-focus**. *So* in *so*-inversion is an affirmative polarity marker, accompanied by the focus particle *too*. However, *too* is not always pronounced.

1.1 Additivity

So-inversion clearly means something like ‘**also**’. It is only felicitous in circumstances where *also*, *too*, or *as well* are also felicitous.

I will refer to this property as **additivity**. Thus, (2a-b) is additive while (2c) is not. *So*-inversion is also additive (see 1).

2.
 - a. I also play guitar
 - b. I play guitar too.
 - c. I play guitar.

¹ I am utterly indebted to the following people for inspiring discussion of the material here: Mark Baltin, Inna Livitz, Jeroen van Craenenbroeck, Richard Kayne, Tricia Irwin, Oksana Laleko and Sara Schmelzer, as well as others I can’t think of at the moment. In addition, a huge thanks to Melinda Kaye Wilson for extensive discussion of the data presented in section 4.

1.2 *So* and Polarity

So-inversion generally requires an affirmative antecedent (Klima 1964), unlike other additive constructions (3b).

3.
 - a. John does not play guitar and * so do I not (play guitar).
 - b. John does not play guitar and I also do not (play guitar).
4. * John doesn’t play guitar and so do I.

So-inversion itself must be affirmative, unlike other additive constructions (5b).

5.
 - a. John plays guitar but *so don’t I/*so do I not.²
 - b. John plays guitar but I don’t < also > play guitar < also >.

Conversely, *neither*-inversion requires a negative antecedent.

6.
 - a. John doesn’t play guitar and neither do I.
 - b. John plays guitar and *neither do I (play guitar).

Neither itself must be negative, just as *so* must be affirmative.

1.3 *So* and *Too*

- *So*-inversion clearly has additive meaning.
- The focus particle *too* also induces additive meaning.

² Though see below on *so don’t I*.

But interestingly, *too* can be added to the construction **without any extra additive meaning**:

- 7. a. John plays guitar, but **so too** does Mary.
= John plays guitar, but so does Mary.
- b. Just as some children ignore their parents, **so too** do some parents ignore their children.
= Just as some children ignore their parents, so do some parents ignore their children.

Additive-*too* cannot occur alone in the preposed position (8a).
Additive-*so* can only occur in the preposed position (8b).

- 8. a. So/*Too do I
- b. I do *so/too

1.4 *So* and *Neither*

Huddleston & Pullum (2002:1539) claim that there are two crucial differences between *so* and *neither*:

First claimed difference: *so* must contrast subjects, but *neither* need not do so.

This seems to be incorrect: *so* does not have to contrast the subject.³

- 9. a. **The Druze** will continue as individuals to play their policing role, but so will **they** continue as a group to protest it indirectly through democratic channels.

³ These examples were found on the Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA; Davies 2008). Many more can be found.

- b. For this divorced father, as **women** demand equality in the workplace, so too must **they** demand equality in child support.⁴

Another example comes from Barack Obama's nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2008:

- 10. Just as **we** keep our promise to the next generation here at home, so must **we** keep America's promise abroad.

Second claimed difference: *so* can occur with *too*, but *neither* stands alone.

Relates to the impossibility of something like *not/nor/neither* in sentences such as (11b).

- 11. a. John plays guitar, but so (too) does Mary.
- b. John doesn't play guitar, but neither (*not/*nor/*either) does Jim.

I would like to claim that this difference stems from a decomposition of *neither* in to at least *n* + *either*.

Table 1

	Polarity Marker	Focus Particle
Affirmative	so	too
Negative	n-	either

The reason *neither* cannot co-occur with a focus particle, then, is that the focus particle is always there: *either*.

This is analogous to analyzing *so*-inversion as involving *so* + *TOO*.

⁴ The object of the preposition *for* in (b), *this divorced father*, appears to be the speaker, a phenomenon discussed in detail by Collins & Postal (2008).

2. What do we have to account for?

Any analysis of *so*-inversion should explain:

- Why it induces subject-aux inversion
- Its obligatory affirmative polarity, and antecedent polarity matching
- Its co-occurrence with *too*
- The similarities with *neither*-inversion
- Its additive meaning

I will first show how my analysis accounts for these properties.

2.1 Polarity Focus Constructions (PFCs)

Polarity Focus Focus of the affirmative or negative polarity of the sentence.

- At first glance, PFCs seem to vary greatly across languages.
- Recent work in many languages, however, seem to converge on the idea that they involve a polarity focus projection, ΣP , which dominates the inflectional domain (e.g. TP).

Two Conceptions of ΣP

1. ΣP is a Polarity Phrase, which can be Affirmative, Negative or Emphatic.
2. ΣP is a Polarity Focus Phrase, which either attracts the Pol(arity)P to its specifier or generates a particle there.

The first conception was originally introduced by Laka (1990).
The second is used by Holmberg (2001) and others.

Liptak (2003) and van Craenenbroeck (2004) call this projection VFocP, for *Verum Focus Phrase*. Here, this is understood as ΣP , following the second conception of ΣP .

A summary of ΣP in various languages

Oevdalian	Σ realized as subject-doubling in the presence of a finite set of adverbials when polarity is focused (Rosenkvist 2007).
Russian	Σ licenses ellipsis with additive <i>tozhe</i> 'also' only when Σ bears contrastive focus (Laleko 2006).
Basque	Σ is a unified polarity projection with three possible settings: affirmative, negative, and emphatic (Laka 1990).
Finnish	Σ is a polarity focus projection which attracts Pol(arity)P to its specifier and licenses ellipsis in Yes-No answers (Holmberg 2001).
Hungarian	Σ /VFoc involves contrastive sentential emphasis, with a strong role for <i>is</i> 'also' and <i>igenis</i> (Lipták 2003).
Dutch	Σ /VFoc hosts emphatic polarity particle <i>toch</i> , which is followed by <i>wel</i> 'AFF' or <i>nie</i> 'not' (van Craenenbroeck 2004).

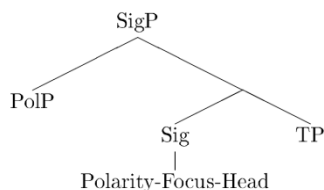
A parametric difference between various analyses of Σ :

12. a. Σ is in complementary distribution with polarity markers
Examples: Russian, Basque, Finnish, (and English)
- b. Σ is realized by a separate polarity focus particle, and is not in complementary distribution with polarity markers.
Examples: Dutch, Hungarian, Oevdalian

A possible account of this variation, which I do not pursue in detail here:

Languages in (12a) PolP (AffP/NegP) moves to ΣP to focus polarity
Languages in (12b) ΣP realized by separate lexical item

13. Languages in (12a)



I will now sketch an account of how this works for *so-/neither-* inversion in English.

2.2 *So*-inversion as Polarity Focus

General framework: the Minimalist Program (Chomsky 1995, 2008, Collins 1997), assuming Antisymmetry (Kayne 1994) and no covert movement (Kayne 1998).

Step 1: *Too* merges with VoiceP and attracts the focused constituent to its specifier.⁵

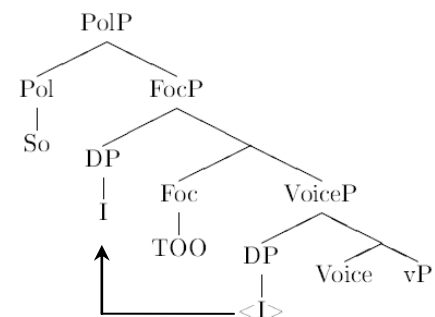
Too, as a focus particle, is a focus head which merges in the left periphery of the extended verb phrase. This is in line with Kayne’s (1998) analysis of focus particles, including *too*.

Step 2: Merge affirmative polarity particle *so* with FocP, creating AffP (or, more generally, PolP; see Culicover 1991).⁶

⁵ On VoiceP see Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (2004), Collins (2005), and Baltin (to appear).

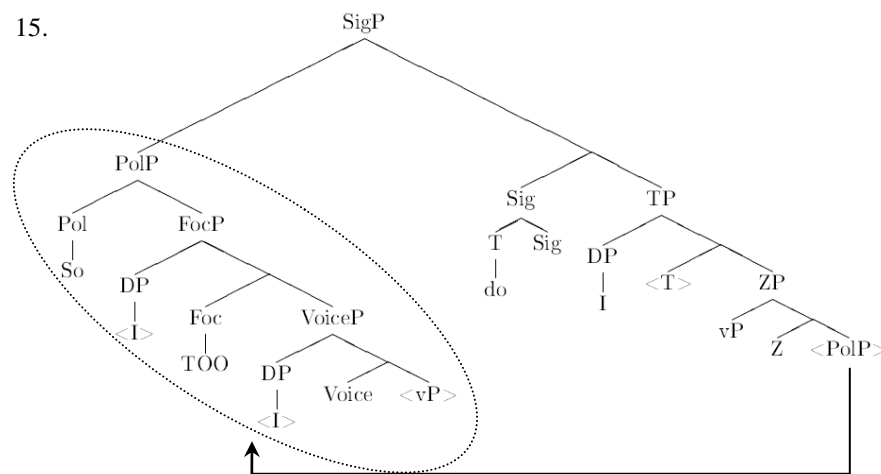
⁶ Alternatively, there may be reasons to believe that *so* is in Spec,PolP. See Haddican (2004).

14.



Step 3: Move PolP to SpecΣP after vP has evacuated it to an intermediate functional projection.⁷

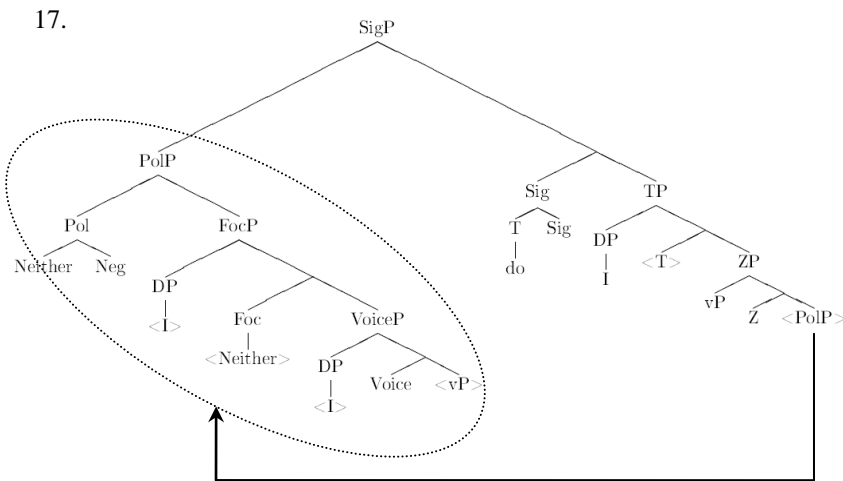
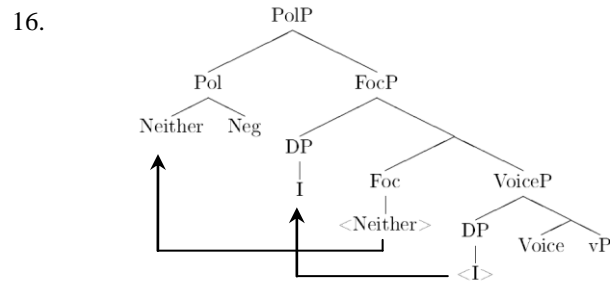
15.



- Before considering how this analysis accounts for the properties illustrated above, consider *neither*-inversion.

⁷ See Baltin (2006), Kayne (2005), and Bentzen (2005) for the possibility of a position between T and Pol to which vP moves.

- The key to accounting for the differences between *so* and *neither* is the decomposition of *neither* into *n-* + *either*.
- The one ‘word’ *neither* does the work of the two words *so too* in negative contexts.⁸ The rest proceeds the same.



⁸ Here I show this as a result of movement – the idea is that negative constituents like *neither* must move to NegP to establish clausal negation (see Kayne 1998, den Dikken 2006). Another possibility is that nothing moves and *n-* realizes Neg.

3.2 Polarity Focus and the Facts of *So*-inversion

Here’s how this accounts for the properties above.

Subject-aux inversion This is a general property of polarity focus. Whatever the account of (18), this will extend to *so-/neither*-inversion.⁹

18. Never have I seen such a hideously ugly car.

Polarity restrictions This follows directly. If *so* is affirmative polarity particle, it should not be compatible with negative polarity.

Additive meaning This comes from (sometimes silent) focus particle *too*, or (the always present) *either*. The latter cannot be silent because it forms a prosodic word with *n-*.

Too* and *either Focus particles are tightly connected with polarity focus. This connection seems cross-linguistically ubiquitous.

Neither *So*-inversion in this analysis is directly analogous to *neither*-inversion. The differences stem from decomposition of *neither* into *n-* + *either*.

⁹ See Haegeman (2000) for discussion. It is not clear how this would extend to the system in Sobin (2003).

3. Previous Analyses

I now consider some previous analysis of *so*-inversion, and show that they fail to capture the properties outlined above. Further, they make incorrect predictions of their own.

3.1 *So* as a pro-form

A recent analysis: *so* is a pro-form that **replaces** a preposed VP (Toda 2007). This has intuitive appeal, since VP-ellipsis is very common with *so*-inversion: if *so* replaces the VP, this is explained.

Drawbacks

- Subject-aux inversion must be stipulated
- No reason to expect a polarity restriction
- No obvious relationship with *too* or *neither*
- Additive meaning actually has to be denied (Toda 2007:fn6)

While Toda's analysis gets many facts right for a few examples, it doesn't extend, within the language, beyond the construction itself.

A more general problem: the verb phrase material still seems to be there, either overtly or as ellipsis. Consider some of the sentences discussed above.

19. a. Just as some children ignore their parents, so do some parents ignore their children.
- b. Just as we keep our promise to the next generation here at home, so must we keep America's promise abroad.
- c. The Druze will continue as individuals to play their policing role, but so will they continue as a group to protest it indirectly through democratic channels.

In other sentences, the fact the VP is still present can be shown. Compare the behavior of *so*-inversion with a more clear verbal pro-form *do so*.¹⁰

Wh-echo words can be recovered:

Context: Matt knows John has never met Mary.

Matt: Fred visited Mary yesterday.

20. a. **Fred:** So did John. c. **Fred:** John did so too.
- b. **Matt:** So did John what? d. **Matt:** * John did so what too?
- e. **Matt':** So did John visit who? e. **Matt':** John did what too?

So-inversion can co-occur with a **Hanging Topic** (Cinque 1977):¹¹

Mary: I never kill animals.

Fred: Really? I kill bugs.

21. a. **Mary:** Oh bugs, so do I, but I never kill anything furry.
- b. **Mary:** * Oh, bugs, I do so too, but I never kill anything furry.

If *so* were a pro-form, we would not expect (20b) and (21a) to be grammatical, since *so* would replace:

- i. the constituent containing *what* in (20b)
- ii. the constituent containing *bugs* in (21a).

¹⁰ It is worth noting that Toda (2007:fn3) explicitly argues that his pro-form *so* has nothing to do with the pro-form *do so*. This doesn't affect the arguments here, though: pro-forms usually don't occur with the constituents they supposedly replace, and in Toda's analysis, the VP is swallowed up whole, derivationally, by the pro-formalization process.

¹¹ The important thing here is the contrast. Thank you to van Craenenbroek (p.c.) for pointing out some reasons to believe that this is something like Hanging Topic, rather than Topicalization or Left Dislocation.

3.2 *So* is an adjunct

Various proposals, such as Huddleston & Pullum (2002) and Quirk et al. (1985) take *so* to be an adjunct.

Huddleston & Pullum (2002): Connective Adjunct
 Quirk et al. (1985): Additive Adverb

A **connective adjunct** establishes a relationship between two sentences. Examples include *moreover*, *nevertheless*, etc.

Connective Adjunct Approach

Subject-aux inversion	Unexpected. Other connective adjuncts don't do this (22).
Polarity restrictions	Unexpected (23).
<i>Too</i> and <i>either</i>	Could on this view be considered connective adjuncts as well. However, * <i>too do I</i> would require an explanation.
Additive meaning	(Partially) explained. ¹²

22. a. He likes dogs. Moreover, his whole family likes dogs.
 b. * He likes dogs. Moreover does his whole family.

23. They (don't) like gerbils. Moreover, I (don't) like gerbils.

Further, most connective adjuncts can appear in multiple places throughout the phrase, unlike *so* in *so*-inversion.

¹² That is, connective adjuncts seem to be additive in the clausal sense. For example, *moreover* could be replaced by *also* in many cases. In most cases, though, *so* focuses a specific sub-constituent of the clause, such as the subject, and not the clause itself. It seems much harder to get *moreover* to do this.

24. a. <Moreover> The committee <moreover> disagrees <moreover> with his opinion <moreover>.
 b. *(So) does (*so) the committee (*so).

An **additive adjunct** is an adverbial which is additive in the sense defined above. Examples include, *also*, *as well*, and *too*.

This is closer to the present analysis, since here there is an additive element present (i.e. *too*).

Additive Adjunct Approach

Subject-aux inversion	Unexpected. Most other additive adjuncts don't do this (25). ¹³
Polarity restrictions	Unexpected (26).
<i>Too</i> and <i>either</i>	Partially expected, though <i>so too</i> in (7) might be expected to be odd.
Additive meaning	Explained.

25. a. * Also do I. b. * As well do I. c. * Too do I.

26. a. John does not play guitar and * so do I not (play guitar).
 b. John does not play guitar and I also do not (play guitar).
 c. * John doesn't play guitar and so do I.
 d. John plays guitar but *so don't I/*so do I not.
 e. John plays guitar but I don't < also > play guitar < also >.

Conclusion: Neither the adjunct or pro-form approach to *so*-inversion construction capture the facts of the construction.

¹³ An exception is the very interesting case of *as do I* and *nor do I*, which also arguably involve polarity in some important way. See Potts (2002) for some discussion.

4. New England *So don't I*

In most of Eastern New England, there exists a construction usually referred to as the *so don't I* construction.¹⁴

→ It is important to note that *so don't I* is **affirmative**.

Some naturally occurring examples from Google are shown below.

27. a. Went here the other night with a girlfriend. Sure it's trendy, but **so aren't most NYC clubs**.¹⁵
b. I so agree - we do need to let go and laugh and live. And we so need our gal pals - hubbys and kids and other family are essential for most of us, **but so aren't the gals in our lives**.¹⁶
c. Yes, the "Somalis" should be treated with respect but **so shouldn't the Americans**.¹⁷
d. National healthcare would be great, but **so wouldn't everybody actually paying taxes**.¹⁸

No similar construction exists for the negative (28a), it is obligatorily affirmative and cannot take a negative antecedent (28b), and there is no non-inverted version (28c).

28. a. * He can('t) touch the ceiling, and neither can't I
b. * He can't touch the ceiling, but so can't I.¹⁹

¹⁴ See Lawler (1974), Labov (1972), Pappas (2004), Freeman (2004), Horn (1978, 2008), and Gilman (1989).

¹⁵ <http://www.yelp.com/biz/runway-new-york-3>

¹⁶ <http://stampinangeljenn.blogspot.com/2008/06/girls-daynight.html>

¹⁷ http://www.sunjournal.com/story/258000-3/LewistonAuburn/Students_grades_to_go_online/

¹⁸ http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2008/07/mccain_sharpens.html

¹⁹ In some dialects, sentences of this kind are acceptable and negative. Speakers who judge these as acceptable are not hard to find, nor are examples on the internet. Unfortunately, I do not have time to discuss such speakers here. Importantly, they are ungrammatical for speakers of the dialect in question. All of my informants

- c. * Bill is going to school, and Harry isn't too.

The *n't* does not license NPIs.

29. a. * I play guitar, but so doesn't John at all.
b. * I play guitar, but so doesn't anybody else.
c. * I play guitar, but so doesn't John ever.

Unlike standard *so*-inversion, *so don't I* does not allow an optional *too*.

30. a. He plays guitar, but so (*too) don't I.
b. He plays guitar, but so too do I.
31. a. Just as some parents ignore their children, so (*too) don't some children ignore their parents.
b. Just as some parents ignore their children, so (too) do some children ignore their parents.

Finally, notice that for no speaker is an unreduced negative *not* allowed.

32. a. * He plays guitar, but so do not I.
b. * He plays guitar, but so do I not.

In other work, I argue that the pragmatic force of *so don't I* is one of implicature cancelling. That is, (33a) is only pragmatically felicitous when there exists an implicature like (33b).

33. a. He plays guitar, but so don't I.
b. It is not the case that I play guitar too.
a cancels b

unequivocally rejected such sentences, often asking what such an expression could possibly mean.

While I do not have time to go into the details, I would like to argue that this implicature cancellation is syntactically represented by an abstract negation morpheme, which constituent negates the verb phrase. Thus, *so don't I* is similar to double negation.

34. **Mary:** I didn't know that you played guitar too!
Fred: Well, I don't really play guitar too, **but I don't not play guitar** too.
35. I don't not pay attention in class, but some people certainly do Δ .
 $\Delta = \text{not pay attention in class.}$

If this is on the right track, then the impossibility of *neither can't I* would relate to the impossibility of *neither* as constituent negation in double negation sentences.

36. a. * I don't not pay attention in class, and John doesn't pay attention in class **neither**.
Intended reading: John doesn't **not** pay attention in class **either**.

Since *neither* must move to the clausal negation position, bypassing *not*, we predict that *not* can be the constituent negator, and *neither* the clause negator, but this would preclude *n't*. This prediction is borne out:

37. I don't not pay attention in class, and **neither does John** Δ .
 $\Delta = \text{not pay attention in class.}$

The ungrammaticality of (36) and (37) are then related: *neither* must be the clausal negator, at the expense of *n't*. In *so don't I*, the lower polarity operator *so* is not negative, allowing merger of *n't* but with

scope only over the lower implicature similar to metalinguistic negation (Carston 1996).

5. Conclusion

So-inversion involves polarity focus, where *so* is best understood as an affirmative polarity particle.

The properties of *so*-inversion, which extensively differentiate it from pro-forms and adjuncts, are very similar to *neither*-inversion specifically and polarity focus in general.

The differences between *so* and *neither* can be shown to follow from the fact that *neither* is composed of (at least) two morphemes, *n-* and *either*.

Dividing the functions of polarity and additivity into two separate elements allow for a clearer understanding micro-parametric variation in New England *so don't I*.

Finally, analyzing *so*-inversion as polarity focus invites interesting connections with polarity-focus constructions crosslinguistically, which very often involve additive particles like *too* or *also*, as well as a high polarity focus position.

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