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Yet *as a negative perfect marker in English*

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In English, *yet* can serve a number of functions. One form of *yet* that has not been discussed in the literature is given in (1) (henceforth INF-*yet*). In (1), *yet* conveys 'negative perfect' aspect; (1a) can be glossed as 'Up until the time of speech, it is not the case that John ate the apple' with relevant presuppositions. Although *yet* in (1) has a similar meaning to its NPI counterpart in (2), there are obvious differences in distribution.

(1) a. John has yet to eat the apple.
b. John is yet to eat the apple.

(2) a. John didn't eat yet.
b. John hasn't eaten yet.

INF-*yet* occurs in a specific infinitival construction, and it always occurs linearly after an auxiliary verb, either *have* or *be*. When INF-*yet* is not present ((3)), *have* and *be* lose their status as auxiliaries and function as modals.

(3) a. John has to eat lunch.
b. John is to eat lunch (at 1 o'clock).

Diagnostics show *have* in (1a) is an auxiliary. Modal *have* does not undergo subject-verb inversion ((4)), but inversion is required with *have* and INF-*yet* ((5)).

(4) a. Do you have to eat lunch?
b. *Have you to eat lunch?

(5) a. Have you yet to eat lunch?
b. *Do you have yet to eat lunch?

Modal *have* requires *do*-support with negation ((6)), but negation is not available with INF-*yet* ((7)). However, INF-*yet* functions as negation because it licenses NPIs in its scope ((8)), including the strong NPI *a red cent*, which requires true negation and not just a downward entailing licenser (van der Wouden 1997).

(6) John doesn't have to eat lunch.

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(7) a. *John hasn't yet to eat lunch.
    b. *John doesn't have yet to eat lunch

(8) a. John has yet to eat anything today.
    b. John has yet to earn a red cent in his new sales job.

Diagnostics for the perfect indicate that constructions containing INF-*yet* involve the perfect. Present perfect constructions in English cannot occur with definite past-oriented adverbials, while past perfect constructions are fine with such adverbials ((9)). The case is identical for constructions involving INF-*yet* ((10)).

(9) a. *John has eaten lunch yesterday.
    b. John had eaten lunch yesterday.

(10) a. *John has yet to eat lunch yesterday.
     b. John had yet to eat lunch yesterday.

The availability of the perfect is restricted to situations that are still currently possible ((11)) (McCawley 1971). Likewise, INF-*yet* is ungrammatical in similar contexts ((12)).

(11) [??]Einstein has visited Princeton.

(12) [??]Einstein has yet to visit Princeton.

The above data show that INF-*yet* truly functions as negation, induces a perfect reading, and appears with an auxiliary in an infinitival context. However, several questions about the nature of INF-*yet* remain:

What is the structure associated with (1)?
What is the denotation of INF-*yet*? What difference in meaning exists between (1a) and (1b)?
Is negation part of the lexical entry of INF-*yet* or does negation come from another source?
How does INF-*yet* condition the auxiliary/modal contrast with *have* and *be*?
What is the nature of *have* and *be* (Kayne 1993)?
What other phenomena are related (e.g., reduced relatives)?

References
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