Are Indefinites or Disjunctions PPIs in German?

Holm Braeuer, March 2001, a working paper

Part 1

The behavior of indefinites jemand (someone), etwas (something), ein (a/n), nominal disjunction DP oder DP (DP or DP) and verbal disjunction VP oder VP (VP or VP) in contexts of clausesemate antiadditive operators like nicht (not), nie (never), niemand (no one) and ohne (without)

Introductory remarks

Most of the examples include five lines. The original German sentence appears in the first line, which is in italics. The second line gives a word by word translation; the third (bracketed) line gives a paraphrase in English. This line is only introduced for the ease of reading. It doesn’t always match exactly what the German sentences mean; the correct meanings can, however, be recovered by looking at the forth and fifth lines, where the different scopal readings are explained more comprehensively. Asterisks mark either ungrammatical sentences, if they appear in the first line, or impossible scopal readings, if they appear in the forth or fifth line, question marks label slightly bad or less acceptable sentences, if they appear in the first line, or less prominent or marked scopal readings, if they appear in the last two lines.

Generalizations

1) In German, indefinites and disjunctions (nominal or verbal) are usually happy below clausemate antiadditive operators. They are not PPIs.
2) Sentences, where nicht (not) appears above the object DP, give rise to a slightly bad reading. The meaning of such sentences is nevertheless almost always – as far as we can abstract away from issues like specificity – one where nicht (not) scopes above the indefinite or disjunction. It can be argued by independent reasons that this behavior of sentences of the form ‘… nicht … indefinite/or …’ is due to some peculiar facts about nicht (not) and has nothing to do with features (such as PPI-hood) of the indefinite or disjunction itself.
3) Sentences with indefinites below negative quantifiers like ‘no one’ are usually ambiguous. The inverse reading is highly dispreferred (or even impossible), if the indefinite has a non-specific reading.
4) Licensing of [AA-Op > indefinite/or] doesn’t play any role at all.

Main Data

- nicht (not)

(1.a) 7 John hat nicht jemanden angerufen  
  John has not someone up-called  
  (John didn’t call someone)  
  √ nicht>jemand: John didn’t call anyone  
  * jemand>niecht: There is someone, whom John didn’t call

(1.b) 7 John hat nicht etwas gegessen  
  John has not something eaten
(John didn’t eat something)
√ nicht>etwas: John didn’t eat anything/ John ate nothing
* etwas>nicht: There is something, which John didn’t eat

(1.c) "John hat nicht einen Mann angerufen"
John has not a man up-called
(John didn’t call a man)
√ nicht>ein Mann: John didn’t call any man / John called no man
? ein Mann>nicht: There is a man, whom John didn’t call

(1.d) "John hat nicht London oder Paris besucht"
John has not London or Paris visited
(John didn’t visit London or Paris)
√ nicht>oder: John didn’t visit neither London nor Paris
* oder>nicht: John didn’t visit either London or he didn’t visit Paris

(1.e) "John hat nicht gegessen oder geschlafen"
John has not eaten or slept
(John didn’t eat or sleep)
√ nicht>oder: John neither ate nor slept
? oder>nicht: John either didn’t eat or he didn’t sleep

• nie (never)

(2.a) "John hat nie jemanden geliebt"
John has never someone loved
(John never loved someone)
√ nie>jemand: John never loved anyone
* jemand>nie: There is someone, whom John never loved

(2.b) "John hat nie etwas verheimlicht"
John has never something kept-secret
(John never kept something secret)
√ nie>etwas: John never kept anything secret
* etwas>nie: There is some special thing that John always let out (and never kept secret)

(2.c) "John hat nie einen Mann angerufen"
John has never a man up-called
(John never called a man)
√ nie>ein Mann: John never called any man
? ein Mann>nie: There is a certain man, whom John never called

(2.d) "John hat nie Paris oder London besucht"
John has never Paris or London visited
(John has never been to Paris or London)
√ nie>oder: John never visited Paris and never visited London
* oder>nie: Either John never visited Paris or he never visited London

(2.e) "John hat nie geschummelt oder die Schule geschwänzt"
John has never cheated or skipped school
(John never cheated or skipped school)
√ oder>nie: John never cheated and never skipped school
* oder>nie: John either never cheated or he never skipped school
• **ohne** (without)

(3.a)  
*John schwieg, ohne jemanden anzusehen*

John was silent without someone to glance at

- ohne>jemand: John didn’t glance at anyone
- jemand>ohne: There was someone, at whom John didn’t glance

(3.b)  
*John kam ohne etwas Besonderes*

John came without something special

- ohne>etwas Besonderes: John came without anything special
- etwas Besonderes>ohne: There is something special, with which John didn’t come

(3.c)  
*John verspätete sich, ohne einen Ausrede zu haben*

John came late without having an excuse to have

- ohne>eine Ausrede: John came late without having any excuse
- eine Ausrede>ohne: There is a certain kind of excuse, so that John didn’t have it when he came late

(3.d)  
*John kam ohne Freunde oder Verwandte*

John came without friends or relatives

- ohne>oder: John came without friends and without relatives
- oder>ohne: Either John came without friends or he came without relatives

(3.e)  
*John hat hart gearbeitet, ohne zu essen oder zu schlafen*

John has worked hard without eating or sleeping

- ohne>oder: John worked hard whereby he neither ate nor slept
- oder>ohne: John worked hard whereby he either didn’t eat or he didn’t sleep

• **niemand** (no one)

(4.a)  
*Heute hat niemand jemanden angerufen*

Today has no one someone up-called

- niemand>jemand: No one called anyone
- jemand>niemand (with focus on ‘jemand’): There is someone, whom no one called

(4.b)  
*Niemand hat etwas gegessen*

No one has something eaten

- niemand>etwas: No one ate anything
- etwas>niemand: There is something, which no one ate

(4.c)  
*Niemand hat einen Mann getroffen*

No one has a man met

- niemand>ein Mann: No one met any man
- ein Mann>niemand: There is a certain man, whom no one met
(4.d) \[ \text{Niemand hat London oder Paris besucht} \]
No one has London or Paris visited
(No one has been to London or Paris)
\[ \sqrt{\text{niemand}} \text{oder: No one has been to London nor has someone been to Paris} \]
* \[ \text{oder} \text{niemand: Either no one has been to London or no one has been to Paris} \]

(4.e) \[ \text{Niemand hat gegessen oder geschlafen} \]
No one has eaten or slept
(No one ate or slept)
\[ \sqrt{\text{niemand}} \text{oder: Nobody neither ate nor slept} \]
* \[ \text{oder} \text{niemand: Nobody either didn’t sleep or he didn’t eat} \]

Comments

(1) Comparing clausemate negation with \textit{nicht} (not) and \textit{nie} (never)

a) There are two possible places for \textit{nicht} (not) and \textit{nie} (never). They can appear either to the left or to the right of the object DP. (I abstract away from scrambling or any other topicalization processes.)

\[ \begin{align*}
&\left[ \text{CP} \text{DP}_{\text{subject}} \ldots \left[ \text{IP} \text{DP}_{\text{object}} \ldots \text{\textit{nicht}} \ldots \text{VP} \right] \right] \\
&\left[ \text{CP} \text{DP}_{\text{subject}} \ldots \left[ \text{IP} \text{\textit{nicht}} \ldots \text{DP}_{\text{object}} \ldots \text{VP} \right] \right]
\end{align*} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
&\left[ \text{CP} \text{DP}_{\text{subject}} \ldots \left[ \text{IP} \text{DP}_{\text{object}} \ldots \text{\textit{nie}} \ldots \text{VP} \right] \right] \\
&\left[ \text{CP} \text{DP}_{\text{subject}} \ldots \left[ \text{IP} \text{\textit{nie}} \ldots \text{DP}_{\text{object}} \ldots \text{VP} \right] \right]
\end{align*} \]

We have seen that the sentences, where \textit{nicht} stays before the object, are usually slightly less acceptable then the ones where it stays between object DP and VP. Although this could be seen as an PPI effect in the first place, I would claim that it isn’t.

There are at least four reasons why this seems not to be a PPI effect:

(i) The behavior of indefinites and ‘or’ under all other antiadditive operators, especially under \textit{nie} (never), shows that the behavior of ‘nicht’ seems to be a peculiarity of \textit{nicht} rather than a question of PPI-ood.

(ii) We can find this peculiar behavior of \textit{nicht} in other contexts as well, which are entirely independend of PPI effects. In general, it seems that different DPs and quantifiers phrases are allergic to pre-object \textit{nicht} in different ways. Definites like definite descriptions, proper namens, pronouns as well as singular indefinites are unhappy below sentence negation, whereas quantifier phrases, plural indefinites and bare plurals are pretty comfortable in this position. With post-object \textit{nicht} it seems to be exactly the other way around.

(5.a) \[ \text{John hat } \langle \text{\textit{nicht}} \rangle \text{ den Mann } \langle \text{\textit{nicht}} \rangle \text{ angerufen} \]
John has <not> the man <not> up-called
(John didn’t call the man)

(5.b) \[ \text{John hat } \langle \text{\textit{nicht}} \rangle \text{ Maria } \langle \text{\textit{nicht}} \rangle \text{ angrufen} \]
John has <not> Maria <not> up-called
(John didn’t call Maria)

(5.c) \[ \text{John hat } \langle \text{\textit{nicht}} \rangle \text{ ihn } \langle \text{\textit{nicht}} \rangle \text{ angrufen} \]
John has <not> him <not> up-called
(John didn’t call him)
(5.d) \textit{John hat }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{einen Mann }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{angufen}
John has \textit{not} a man \textit{not} up-called
(John didn’t call a man)

(6.a) \textit{John hat }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{alle Männer }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{angerufen}
John has \textit{not} all men \textit{not} up-called
(John didn’t call all men)

(6.b) \textit{John hat }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{mehr als drei Frauen }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{angerufen}
John has \textit{not} more than three women \textit{not} up-called
(John didn’t call more than three women)

(6.c) \textit{John hat }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{zwei Männer }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{angerufen}
John has \textit{not} two man \textit{not} up-called
(John didn’t call two man)

(6.d) \textit{John hat }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{Kirschen }\ '\textit{nicht}\textit{ }\textit{gegessen}
John has \textit{not} cherries \textit{not} eaten
(John didn’t eat cherries)

Whatever these data may show, it seems highly unlikely that an explanation in terms of PPI-hood is in order here.

(iii) The appearance of \textit{nicht} above an indefinite object DP is sometimes o.k. The first case I want to mention is when \textit{nicht} has a marked appearance. In the following dialogues of exx (7.a) and (7.b) \textit{nicht} (not) above an indefinite gives an entirely good sentence (the upper case letters are intended to mark stress), whereas the sentences with post-object negation are impossible:

(7.a)
A: Du hast irgendjemanden angerufen! Gib’ es doch endlich zu!
(You called someone or other! Go on, admit it!)

B: Das ist nicht wahr! \textit{Ich habe NICHT (irgendjemanden angerufen)!} * \textit{Ich habe jemanden nicht angerufen!}
That is not true! I have not someone up-called! I have someone not up-called!
(That’s not true! I didn’t call someone!)
\sqrt{\textit{nicht}>jemand}: I didn’t call anyone / I called no one
* \textit{jemand>nicht}: There is someone, whom I didn’t call

(7.b)
A: Du hast doch (irgend)etwas versteckt! Zeig’ es endlich her!
You have prt something hidden! Show it prt prt!
(You hide something or other! Go on, show it to me!)

B: Das ist nicht wahr! \textit{Ich habe NICHT etwas versteckt!}/* \textit{Ich habe etwas nicht versteckt!}
That is not true! I have not something hidden!/ I have something not hidden!
(That’s not true! I didn’t hide something!)
\sqrt{\textit{nicht}>etwas}: I didn’t hide anything / I hided nothing
* \textit{etwas>nicht}: There is something, which I didn’t hide
The second case in point is when negation is related to sentence adverbials and particles like *sofort* (immediately), *auf der Stelle* (straightaway) or *doch* (adverbial but/after all):

(8.a) *John hat nicht sofort jemanden angerufen*  
John has not immediately someone up-called  
(John didn’t call someone immediately)

(8.b) *John hat ja doch nicht Paris oder London besucht*  
John has prf prf not Paris or London visited  
(John hasn’t been to Paris or London after all)

(8.c) *John hat nicht auf der Stelle etwas geantwortet. Es sah so aus, als denke er nach.*  
John has not straight-away something answered. It looked so prf, as thought he prf.  
(John did not answer something straightaway. It seemed that he thought about something)

These examples speak not by themselves for or against German indefinites/or being PPIs. The question to ask is, what status these expressions could have. I haven’t checked it yet, but intuitively these phrases should be non-decreasing, if such concepts work here at all. But, on the other hand, all of them are presuppositional, so that the possibility of Strawson-decreasingness isn’t excluded. I didn’t have time to check this and thus, I will leave the discussion at this stage.

(iv) Scabolcsi’s thesis was that antiadditive operators and PPIs merge to a complex, nonlexical NPI of the form [AA-Op > PPI] which has to be licensed. Licensing can be done by deceasing operators in a higher clause or in contexts of operators which are Strawson-decreasing. If this is true, and if we assume that the bad readings of [not > indefinite] and [not > or] are due to their being PPI items, then these bad readings should disappear in NPI-licensing contexts. But this isn’t so, as the examples under (9) and (10) show:

- deceasing quantifiers in a higher clause

(9.a) ?Höchstens drei Jungen behaupten, dass sie nicht jemanden <einen Mann> angerufen haben  
At most three boys claim that they not someone <a man> up-called have  
(Approximately three boys claimed that they didn’t call someone <a man>是怎么说的)  
\( \forall \text{nicht>jemand} \): At most 3 boys claimed that they didn’t call anybody <any man>  
* jemand>nicht: At most 3 boys claimed that there is someone <a man>, whom they didn’t call

(9.b) ?Wenige Jungen behaupten, dass sie nicht Paris oder London besucht haben  
Few boys claim that they not Paris or London visited have  
(Approximately few boys claimed that they haven’t been to Paris or London which)  
\( \forall \text{nicht>oder} \): Few boys claimed that they haven’t been neither to Paris nor to London  
* oder>nicht: Few boys claimed that they haven’t been to Paris or that they haven’t been to London

- contexts with Strawson-decreasing operators

(10.a) ?John hat oft nicht jemanden <einen Mann> angerufen  
John has often not someone <a man> up-called  
(Approximately John didn’t often call someone <a man>是怎么说的)  
\( \forall \text{oft>nicht>jemand} \): It was often, that John didn’t call anyone <any man>  
* nicht>oft>jemand: It was not often, that John called someone <some man> (or other)  
* oft>jemand>nicht: It was often, that John didn’t call a certain <man> person
It seems to me that the foregoing arguments are strong enough for safely concluding that neither indefinites nor disjunctions are PPIs in German, and that the slightly unacceptable readings where nicht (not) appears above the object DP are due to some peculiarity of nicht (not).

(2) Two possible explanations for the exceptional behavior of nicht:

(i) It may be that German nicht is a VP-adverb and doesn't emerge in NegP. Thus, it is happy in this position when it comes to spell-out, so that by moving it to NegP (which is situated between the subject and object agreement projections) results in a slightly bad sentence. The difference to nie (never) could just be that they have different morphosyntactic features so that moving nie to NegP hasn't this result. Stress or other means of contextually marking nicht may have an effect in feature strength (or something like that), so that it results in a sentence which is totally o.k. with nicht in NegP, as the examples in (7.a) and (7.b) show. This would, moreover, explain why in sentences with nicht (not) and verbal negation (see 1.e) the mentioned effect doesn't appear at all, because, considering verbal disjunction, there just is no question about not being below or above an object DP.

Such an explanation cannot be entirely successful, because of the differential behavior of nicht wrt. different kinds of DPs (compare exx 5 and 6). Here, we must add something to the suggestion just given. If nicht stays (almost) always in its internal VP-position, then the two possible positions of nicht could be due to the effect of moving out or not moving the object DP. The differential behavior of the object DPs
could then be explained by saying that some of them are forced to move out, i.e. the non-quantifier
definite and indefinite DPs which are case marked, and others want to stay, i.e. the quantifier and
quantifier-like DPs in (6), which are not overtly case marked. With this explanation at hand, the slightly
bad readings are due to the fact of not moving DPs out of VP, which like to be moved out because of case
reasons. The difference between nicht (not) and nie (never) could then be explained by saying that nie but
not nicht likes to be moved to NegP, so that nie can be moved to a position above AgrOP, in which
specifier position the case of the object DP can be checked.

(ii) Usually nicht (not) but not nie (never) merges locally with an indefinite phrase to build a negative
phrase:

\[(11.a) \quad \text{nicht (not) + jemand (someone) } \rightarrow \text{ niemand (no one)} \]
\[\land \]
\[\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
\text{`John hat nicht jemanden angerufen } \rightarrow \text{ John hat niemand angerufen}\\
\text{John has not someone up-called} \rightarrow \text{ John has no-one up-called}\\
\text{(John didn’t call someone)} \rightarrow \text{ (John called no one)}
\end{array} \right. \]

\[(11.b) \quad \text{nicht (not) + etwas (something) } \rightarrow \text{ nichts (nothing)} \]
\[\land \]
\[\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
\text{`John hat nicht etwas gegessen } \rightarrow \text{ John hat nichts gegessen}\\
\text{John has not something eaten} \rightarrow \text{ John has nothing eaten}\\
\text{(John didn’t eat something)} \rightarrow \text{ (John ate nothing)}
\end{array} \right. \]

\[(11.c) \quad \text{nicht (not) + ein (a/n) } \rightarrow \text{ kein (no)} \]
\[\land \]
\[\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
\text{`John hat nicht einen Mann gesehen } \rightarrow \text{ John hat keinen Mann gesehen}\\
\text{John has not a man seen} \rightarrow \text{ John has no man seen}\\
\text{(John didn’t see a man)} \rightarrow \text{ (John saw no man)}
\end{array} \right. \]

It could be argued that the slightly bad readings of sentences with ‘not>indefinite’ are due to the fact that
merging didn’t take place. Although it is true that the second sentences of the exx in (11) are highly
preferred over the first ones and that not merging ‘not+indefinite’ is in general a much more clumsier way
of expressing the meanings which both sentences have, I’m not entirely convinced by this argument for
two reasons.

First: It doesn’t explain the effects of ‘not over object DP’, where the object DP isn’t an indefinite but a
definite DP as f.i. in exx (5), and in ex (1.d) with nominal disjunction in place of indefinites. In these
cases, there is nothing to merge, but the sentences exhibit nevertheless the same slightly bad reading.

Second: This way of merging ‘not+indefinite’ is semantically acceptable, only if the indefinite has a non-
specific meaning. In the foregoing exx we considered ‘light’ indefinite phrases, which are not likely to get
a specific reading. ‘Heavier’ indefinites, however, can have a specific reading, and for obvious reasons,
merging ‘not’ with specific indefinites would result in a change of meaning:

\[(12.a) \quad \text{`John hat nicht einen Mann gesehen} \]
\[\land \]
\[\left\{ \begin{array}{l}
\text{John has not a man seen} \rightarrow \text{ John has no man seen}\\
\text{(John didn’t see a man)} \rightarrow \text{ (John saw no man)}
\end{array} \right. \]

The striking feature of (12.b) is that the first sentence gives the very same bad reading as the first sentence in (12.a), although merging ‘not+indefinite’ is not possible without changing the meaning of the sentence, i.e. turning a specific reading into a non-specific.

(3) The interpretation of clausemate negation under the two positions of nicht (not) and nie (never)

After having looked at constructions where AA-Op stays higher than indefinites or conjunction, we should go on looking at examples with indefinites and nominal ‘or’, where nicht (not) and nie (never) appear below the object DPs. The following examples, which are just the corresponding variants of the examples in (1) and (2), show that the interpretation depends on surface order. While AA-Op c-commanding an indefinite/or surface order gives a AA-Op>indefinite/or reading, the indefinite/or c-commanding AA-Op surface order gives the corresponding indefinite/or>AA-Op reading, which means that the scope of the indefinites and nominal disjunction is determined by the surface appearance of nicht (not) and nie (never).

(1.a)' John hat jemanden nicht angerufen
John has someone not called
(John didn’t call someone)
√ jemand>nicht: There is someone, whom John didn’t call
* nicht>jemand: John didn’t call anyone

(1.b)' John hat etwas nicht gegessen
John has something not eaten
(John didn’t eat something)
√ etwas>nicht: There is something, which John didn’t eat
* nicht>etwas: John didn’t eat anything/ John ate nothing

(1.c)' John hat einen Mann nicht angerufen
John has a man not up-called
(John didn’t call a man)
√ ein Mann>nicht: There is a man, whom John didn’t call
* nicht>ein Mann: John didn’t call any man / John called no man

(1.d)' John hat London oder Paris nicht besucht
John has London or Paris not visited
(John hasn’t been to London or Paris)
√ oder>nicht: John hasn’t been either to London or he hasn’t been to Paris
* nicht>oder: John hasn’t been neither to London nor to Paris

(2.a)' John hat jemanden nie geliebt
John has someone never loved
(John never loved someone)
√ jemand>nie: There is someone, whom John never loved
* nie>jemand: John never loved anyone
(2.b)'  John hat *etwas nie gegessen
    John has something never eaten
     (John never ate something)
     $\sqrt{\text{etwas}>\text{nie}}$: There is something, which John never ate
     $^\star \text{etwas}>\text{nie}$: John never ate anything

(2.c)'  John hat einen Mann nie angerufen
     John has a man never up-called
     (John never called a man)
     $\sqrt{\text{ein Mann}>\text{nie}}$: There is a certain man, whom John never called
     $^\star \text{nie}>\text{ein Mann}$: John never called any man

(2.d)'  John hat Paris oder London nie besucht
     John has Paris or London never visited
     (John has never been to Paris or London)
     $\sqrt{\text{oder}>\text{nie}}$: Either John never has been to Paris or he never has been to London
     $^\star \text{nie}>\text{oder}$: John never has been to both Paris and London

(4) The scopal effects of specific vs. non-specific readings of indefinites

Sentences with clausemate negative quantifiers and indefinites in object position are usually ambiguous. The exception is *etwas* (something), which cannot have inverse scope. (See ex 4.b. – This is btw again a bit of evidence that *etwas* is not a PPI.) It can also be seen that the inverse scope readings of *jemand* (someone) and *ein NP* (a/n NP) are always dispreferred. This feature, however, seems to have nothing to do with the kind of quantifier we use – whether it is an antiadditive, a merely decreasing or even an increasing one. The dispreferred inverse scope of indefinites has rather to do with the descriptive richness of the indefinite itself. It has been argued by many authors that descriptive poverty and richness parallels with the likelihood of being interpreted non-specifically and specifically. Although naked *etwas* can’t have inverse scope, sentences with ‘heavier’ indefinites like *etwas Bestimmtes* (something particular) or *etwas, das ich mag* (something that I like) in object position are ambiguous again:

(4.a)'  Niemand hat jemanden, mit dem ich zur Schule ging, angerufen
     No one has someone, with whom I to school went, up-called
     (No one called someone with whom I went to school)
     $\sqrt{\text{niemand}>\text{jemand}}$: No one called anyone
     $\sqrt{\text{jemand}>\text{niemand}}$: There is someone, whom no one called

(4.b)'  Niemand hat etwas Bestimmtes <etwas, das ich mag> gegessen
     No one has something particular <something I like> eaten
     (No one ate something particular <something I like>)
     $\sqrt{\text{niemand}>\text{etwas Bestimmtes}}$: No one ate anything particular
     $\sqrt{\text{etwas Bestimmtes}>\text{niemand}}$: There is something particular, which no one ate
These remarks can easily be conferred to all examples in which we have not a negative quantifier above an
indefinite but operators like \textit{nicht} (not) and \textit{nie} (never). The example in (1.c) was already ambiguous,
although the reading with ‘indefinite\textgreater\textit{nicht}’ is highly dispreferred. I would argue that in contexts with
sentence negation above \textit{jemand} (someone) and \textit{etwas} (something) behave like \textit{etwas} under negative
quantifiers, due to the fact that their descriptional content is too poor to support a specific reading, which
gets wider scope over sentence negation.

(1.c)’ \textit{John hat \textit{nicht} einen Mann, den er gestern gesehen hat, angerufen}
John has not a man, whom he yesterday seen has, up-called
\begin{itemize}
\item nicht\textgreater\textit{ein Mann}: John didn’t call any man he saw yesterday
\item ein Mann\textgreater\textit{nicht}: There is a man, John saw yesterday, and John didn’t call him
\end{itemize}

(1.b)’ \textit{John hat \textit{nicht} etwas, das ich mag, gegessen}
John has not something, which I like, eaten
\begin{itemize}
\item nicht\textgreater\textit{etwas}: John didn’t eat anything I like
\item etwas\textgreater\textit{nicht}: There is something I like, which John didn’t eat
\end{itemize}

(2.a)’ \textit{John hat \textit{nie} jemanden, mit dem er zur Schule ging, geliebt}
John has never someone, with whom he to school went, loved
\begin{itemize}
\item nie\textgreater\textit{jemand}: John never loved anyone with whom he went to school
\item jemand\textgreater\textit{nie}: There is someone, with whom John went to school, and John never loved him/her
\end{itemize}

(5) \textbf{Verbal negation}

The last fact I want to point at briefly in this first part is that verbal negation usually scopes happily below
any operator you can think of. And usually there is no question about ambiguity. I say ‘usually’, because
there is one exception, which is seen in example (1.e). (1.e) seems to be ambiguous, though the reading
with narrow scope ‘or’ is more prominent.

(1.e)’ \textit{John hat \textit{nicht} gegessen oder geschlafen}
John has not eaten or slept
\begin{itemize}
\item nicht\textgreater\textit{oder}: John neither ate nor slept
\item \textit{oder}\textgreater\textit{nicht}: John either didn’t eat or didn’t sleep
\end{itemize}

My highly speculative assumption is that this could be due to some kind of ellipsis, so that (1.e) could be
read as “John didn’t eat or (John didn’t) sleep”. But, of course, this would not explain why the other
examples in (2.e)-(4.e) are \textit{not} ambiguous in the same way.

(6) \textbf{Conclusion}

I would like conclude this section with some more speculative remarks. We saw that German behaves wrt.
disjunction much like English-type languages and very unlike Hungarian-like ones, but that there is a
remarkable difference between English and German wrt. to indefinites. It seems that German indefinites
are neither PPIs, nor do they have NPI counterparts like English ‘any’. This might not be entirely
accidental, because such an distinction of two kinds of indefinites would be pretty \textit{redundant}, because
there is always the possibility to express different scopal reading by overt syntactical order. What can be
expressed by different lexical items in English may be expressed in a similar way by scopal variation in
German. Compare:

\begin{itemize}
\item John didn’t call \textit{someone}. – John hat \textit{jemanden nicht} angerufen.
\end{itemize}
John didn’t call anyone. – John hat nicht jemanden angerufen.

This difference between German and English may have to do with the fact that clausal negation ‘not’ in English seems to be generated in NegP and thus cannot exhibit scopal variety wrt. object DPs, whereas it is very likely that German ‘nicht’ is an ordinary VP-adverb and thus has different options of taking scope wrt. object DPs. (I know, that such a reasoning is very speculative; and it seems to work just in this single case of crosslinguistic PPI differences, so that there is no hope of a valuable generalization – apart from saying that redundancy is likely to be avoided.)
Part 2

What phrases could possibly be PPIs in German?

Introductory remarks

I’m just going to check the German counterparts of the short list of Dutch PPIs from van der Wouden (1994). I didn’t add the examples from the van der Wouden list, if the PPI-hood tests came out negative. In case they were positive, I listed the main data and checked whether the [AA-Op>PPI] phrase can be licensed in decreasing contexts.

Main Data

- **gar nicht** (not at all) – sensitive to decreasing contexts

  1. (a) *Wenige Mädchen sind gar nicht weggegangen*
      Few girls are not at all away-gone
      (Few girls left not at all)

  1. (b) *Höchstens drei Jungen haben gar nicht geschummelt*
      At most three boys have not at all cheated
      (At most three boys didn’t cheat at all)

  1. (c) *John ist gegangen, ohne gar nicht zu bezahlen*
      John is gone without not at all to pay
      (John left without to pay at all)

  1. (d) *Ich bedauere, daß wenige Mädchen gar nicht weggegangen sind*
      I regret that few girls not at all away-gone are
      (I regret that few girls left not at all)

  1. (e) *Nur John ist gegangen, ohne gar nicht zu bezahlen*
      Only John is gone without not at all to pay
      (Only John left without to pay not at all)

- **eher** (rather) – sensitive to AA-Op

  2. (a) *Niemand hat eher geschwiegen als geredet*
      No one has rather been-silent than spoken
      (No one rather was silent than spoke)

  2. (b) *John hat nicht eher geschwiegen als geredet*
      John has not rather been-silent than spoken
      (John rather was silent than spoke)

  2. (c) *John ging, ohne eher zu schweigen als zu reden*
      John left without rather to be-silent than to speak
      (John left without rather being silent or speaking)

  2. (d) *Wenige Jungen haben eher geschwiegen als geredet*
      Few boys have rather been-silent than spoken
      (Few boys rather were silent than spoke)

  2. (e) *Ich bedauere, daß John nicht eher geschwiegen als geredet hat*
I regret that John not rather been-silent than spoken has
(I regret that John rather was silent than spoke)

(2.f) Nur John hat eher geschwiegen als geredet
Only John has rather been-silent than spoken
(Only John rather was silent than spoke)

- **doch** (‘adverbial’ but, after all) – sensitive to AA-Op

  (3.a) *Niemand hat doch geantwortet
  No one has after-all answered
  (No one answered after all)

  (3.b) *John hat nie doch Tee getrunken
  John has never after-all tea drunk
  (John never drank tea after all)

  (3.c) *John ist gegangen, ohne doch zu bezahlen
  John is gone without after-all to pay
  (John left without to pay after all)

  (3.d) Wenige Jungen haben doch geschummelt
  Few boys have after-all cheated
  (Few boys cheated after all)

  (3.e) Ich bedaure, daß John gegangen ist, ohne doch zu bezahlen
  I regret that John gone is without after-all to pay
  (I regret that John left without to pay after all)

- **schon** (already) – seems to be sensitive to AA-Op

  (4.a) ?Niemand hat schon geantwortet
  No one has still answered
  (No one still answered)

  (4.b) *John hat nie schon Tee getrunken
  John has never already tea drunk
  (John never drank tea already)

  (4.c) *John ist gegangen, ohne schon zu bezahlen
  John is gone without already to pay
  (John left without to pay already)

  (4.d) ?Wenige Jungen haben schon geschummelt
  Few boys have already cheated
  (Few boys already cheated)

  (4.e) Ich bedaure, daß John gegangen ist, ohne schon zu bezahlen
  I regret that John gone is, without already to pay
  (I regret that John left without already to pay)

- **noch** (still) – works in some contexts better and in some worse

  (5.a) ?Niemand hat noch getrunken
  No one has still drunk
  (No one still drank)
(5.b) *John hat nie noch Tee getrunken
John has never still tea drunk
(John never still drank tea)

(5.c) *John ist gegangen, ohne noch zu fluchen
John is gone without still to curse
(John left without still to curse)

(5.d) Wenige Jungen haben noch geschrieben
Few boys have still written
(Few boys still wrote)

(5.e) Ich bedauere, daß niemand noch getrunken hat
I regret that no one still drunk has
(I regret that no one still drank)

(5.f) Ich bedauere, daß John nie noch Tee getrunken hat
I regret that John never still tea drunk has
(I regret that John never still tea drank)

• und (and) – no PPI

(6.a) John hat nicht Paris und London besucht
John has not Paris and London visited
(John hasn’t been to London and Paris)
∨ nicht>und: John either didn’t visit Paris or he didn’t visit London
* und>nicht: John didn’t visit both Paris and London

(6.b) John hat nicht gegessen und geschlafen
John has not eaten or slept
(John didn’t eat or sleep)
∨ nicht>und: John either didn’t eat or he didn’t sleep
* und>nicht: John neither ate nor slept

(6.c) John hat nie geschummelt und die Schule geschwänzt
John has never cheated and skipped school
(John never cheated and skipped school)
∨ nie>und: John did never both cheating and skipping school (at the same time)/ If John cheated then he didn’t skip school, and if he skipped school he didn’t cheat
* und>nicht: John did never both cheating and skipping school

(6.d) Niemand hat Paris und London besucht
No one has Paris and London visited
(No one has been to London and Paris)
∨ niemand>und: No one is such that he visited both, London as well as Paris/ If he visited London, then he didn’t visit Paris, and if he visited Paris, then he didn’t visit London
* und>niemand: Paris and London were visited by no one

• einige DP (some DP) - PPI

(7.a) ?John hat nicht einige Freunde angerufen
John has not some friends up-called
(John didn’t call some friends)
?t nicht>eine Freunde: John didn’t call any friends
?t einige Freunde>nicht: There are some friends of John, who John didn’t call

(7.b) *John hat nie einige Frauen geliebt

Conclusion

From these examples it can be seen that the [AA-Op>PPI] phrase can always be licensed in decreasing contexts. The examples with verbal and nominal conjunction as well as plural indefinites of the form \textit{eineige DP} (some DPs) might be especially interesting compared to the discussion of singular indefinites and disjunction in the first part of this presentation. From the exx in (6) it can be seen that conjunction isn’t different to disjunction wrt. PPI-hood: de Morgan is not problematic in German. Astonishing are the exx in (7), however, which show that plural indefinites of the mentioned form \textit{seem to be PPIs}. The sentences with AA-Op over plural indefinites are either illformed and semantically barely interpretable or, if wellformed, they have an indefinite>AA-Op Interpretation. Both effects disappear, if they are embedded in Strawson-decreasing contexts. So far, I have no clue, why plural indefinites are so different to singular ones wrt. PPI-hood.