

Ça n'est pas sans nous rappeler quelque chose :
Counter-refutation in French

This paper deals with 'counter-refutation' as a pervasive type of speech act, as conveyed by such constructions as:

- (C1) **NO ne va pas sans N1**, ex. *La liberté de voyager ne va pas sans quelques restrictions*
- (C2) **NO ne va pas sans INF**, ex. *La publication de ce document n'alla pas sans créer quelques remous.*
- (C3) **NO n'est pas sans N1 (Prep N2)**, ex. *La fabrication des conserves de viande n'est pas sans analogie avec celle des conserves de légumes.*
- (C4) **NO n'est pas sans INF**, ex. *Cet au-delà de la toile n'est pas sans évoquer l'au-delà des miroirs cher au poète de Cocteau.*

Counter-refutation turns out to be a discourse-specific construction. The relative frequency of the constructions (C1-C4) varies across three different corpora: the daily newspaper *Le Monde* (2005), novels and essays gathered in the textual data-base FRANTEXT (1950-2000). However certain semantic regularities emerge. A detailed analysis of C4 reveals that in the essays as well as in *Le Monde* {NO<qn/qc> n'est pas sans rappeler N1<qn/qc> (à N2<qn>)} is by far the most frequent instantiation of that construction, and more generally that the verbs appearing in the INF construction are basically psych-verbs.

Finally, three concepts of Cognitive Linguistics may be helpful in order to clear up the cognitive and pragmatic function of counter-refutation: mental spaces and the interplay of presupposition (Fauconnier), force dynamics and attention windowing (Talmy). And the proeminence in French of such constructions across essays and high-level newspaper articles suggests a cultural script (Wierzbicka).