

1. Introducing Sentential Negation in Romance Languages from both a synchronic and diachronic perspective

2. Ways of expressing negation in the clause structure

- 2.1. pre-verbal negation
- 2.2. post-verbal negation
- 2.3. negative doubling
- 2.4. Emphatic Negation and the *left-periphery* of the clause

3. Negative markers and some inverse scope phenomena

4. Cyclic change

- 4.1 *the (extended) Jespersen's cycle*
- 4.2 *the quantifier's cycle*

5. Negative concord

- 5.1 *Negative concord in Strict and Non-strict varieties*
- 5.2 *Interpretation and distribution of the N-words*

Summary

Negation in Romance offers a wide array of cross-linguistic variation. For what concerns sentential negation, three main strategies are employed depending on the position of the negative marker with respect to the finite verb: some varieties (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese) adopt a pre-verbal particle, others (e.g. Gallo-Italic varieties) a post-verbal one and some others (e.g. French) a combination of both. Negation can also surface in the left-most clausal positions, generally carrying an additional meaning expressed by *emphatic polarity particles*. The diverse options available in contemporary varieties stemmed from their common ancestor, Latin, through a sequence of (potentially) cyclical grammatical changes captured by the Jespersen's cycle. A further dimension of variation concerns negative indefinites (N-words) and their interpretation when combined with negation, resulting into *strict* and *non-strict negative concord* depending on the availability of double negation readings in both pre- and post-verbal positions or only post-verbally. Despite the great variability found in Romance, the interpretive properties of negation are not fully constrained by superficial variations. Logic scope in particular is not bound to the syntactic position where negation surfaces and inverse scope readings are generally possible.

186 words.

[150-500 words]

1. Introducing Sentential Negation in Romance Languages from both a synchronic and diachronic perspective

The goal of this chapter is to present an overview of the grammar of negative sentences across the Romance family, trying to provide an inclusive picture of the different ways negation can be expressed, or interpreted. Examples from many non-standard varieties will be also discussed, so to represent the rich typological diversity that is found across Romance languages. The chapter begins (Section 2) with a general discussion on the clausal positions of the negative markers, considering their variable distribution with respect to verbal forms, clitic pronouns and adverbials. This variability opens up two very general types of questions: the first is related to the meaning of negative sentences, and to whether their interpretation is dependent on the surface realization of the negative marker; the second concerns the dynamics that, from a common ancestor, have led to diversity. Section 3 covers the first issue, looking at the interpretation of negative markers with respect to other logic operators. We will discuss some examples of *inverse scope readings* that indicate that logic scope is not rigidly constrained by the surface order and that certain interpretations are equivalent to the ones expected if negation would have surfaced in higher or lower positions. For what concerns a wider diachronic perspective, a different way to look at the typological variants found today across Romance is to consider them as distinct stages along the temporal dimension. Section 4 presents some (cyclic) changes that have occurred from the Classic Latin period onwards, including the well-known oscillations in the morpho-syntax of negative markers that have been first noticed by Otto Jespersen. Finally, the chapter concludes with a consideration of the theoretical challenge posed by negation in the nominal domain. The last section is dedicated to a brief survey on the unique properties of N-words, that collocate them halfway between negative polarity items and negative quantifiers.

2. Ways of expressing negation in the clause structure

One way to approach the typological classification of Romance languages is to consider the position of their negative markers in accordance to the position of finite lexical verbs and auxiliaries. This path, already taken in Zanuttini (1991) and Bernini & Ramat (1996), leads to a three-partite distinction between (i) varieties that employ a pre-verbal negation, (ii) varieties that adopt instead a post-verbal negation and (iii) others that show both together. An example of the

latter strategy is the well-known “*discontinuous negation*” found in Standard French. We will slightly depart here from this classical distinction: while still maintaining the one between pre- and post-verbal negation, we will widen the third category in order to also include varieties that use two (or more) pre-verbal negative markers. We will therefore adopt, beside pre-verbal and post-verbal negation, the more comprehensive label of *negative doubling*. In the following section we will present a broad overview of these three main strategies, exemplifying them and grouping languages in accordance to the position of their sentential negative marker(s).

2.1. *pre-verbal negation*

A widely attested strategy in most standard varieties is to use a preverbal negative marker, whose etymology is directly linked to the Latin ‘*non*’. This type of markers form the most homogeneous class, all sharing the following three main properties: the first is, by definition, their position to the left of the inflected finite verb; the second is that they not only precede finite verbs, but also all the complement clitics that may be part of the verb cluster; the third is that they are incompatible with so-called true imperatives. We will briefly illustrate them in turn.

Preverbal negative markers can be exemplified using the variants of sentence (1) in many standard varieties (1a-e), in which negation always precede the lexical verb “buy” inflected for the 3rd person singular:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| (1) | a. Maria | <i>non</i> | compra | il biglietto | (It) |
| | b. A Maria | <i>não</i> | compra | o bilhete | (Eu Por) |
| | c. Maria | <i>no</i> | compra | el boleto | (Sp) |
| | d. La Maria | <i>no</i> | compra | el bitllet | (Cat) |
| | e. Maria | <i>nu</i> | cumpără | biletul | (Rom) |
| | Maria | neg | buy _{3rd,s} | the ticket | |
| | | <i>“Mary doesn’t buy the ticket”</i> | | | |

the examples above show that the sentential negative marker, at least in the standard SVO sentences with an overt lexical subject, always appears between the subject and the inflected verb. This however does not hold in general when subject-clitics are considered. In fact, in other non-standard varieties with pre-verbal negative markers, the position between negation and subject clitic pronouns depends on a variety of factors. For example, even within the same variety, negation can either precede or follow the subject-clitic. The example below is from the variety of Veneto reported in Poletto (1993, 2000):

- | | | | | |
|--------|---------------------------|-------|------|------------------|
| (2) a. | <i>no</i> | la | vien | (Basso Polesano) |
| | neg | s.cl | come | |
| | <i>“she doesn’t come”</i> | | | |
| b. a | <i>no</i> | vegno | | |
| | s.cl | neg | come | |
| | <i>“I don’t come”</i> | | | |

According to Poletto, Basso Polesano has two series of subject clitics, agreement (2a) and vocalic (2b). The two series occupy different clausal positions and negation may surface in-between them: either to the left in the case of agreement clitics, or to the right in the case of vocalic clitics. This situation shares some similarities with other Italic varieties in which the position of negation with respect to subject clitics depends on person’s distinctions, as in Florentine (Antelmi 1993), where 3rd singular clitics precede (3a) the negation while 2nd singular follow (3b):

(3) a. lei la un mangia (Florentine)
s.cl s.cl neg eats
“she doesn’t eat”

b. te un tu mangi
s.cl neg s.cl eat
“you don’t eat”

With complement clitics, instead, we observe that all pre-verbal negative markers behave alike and they all precede them. For instance, consider first sentence (4a) with a full lexical direct and indirect object. The example (4b) shows that the clitic cluster precedes the finite verb, with dative and accusative pro-clitics. To negate sentence (4b), the sentential negative marker does not appear next to the verb, as in (4a), but must precede the verbal cluster as a whole, to the left of both the finite verb and the accusative-dative clitics (4c), with any other order being ungrammatical:

(4) a. Maria non compra il biglietto a Gianni
Maria neg buys the ticket to Gianni
“Maria doesn’t buy the ticket to Gianni”

b. Maria glielo compra
Maria to-him,it buys
“Maria buys it to him”

c. Maria non glielo compra
Maria neg to-him,it buys
“Maria doesn’t buy it to him”

This pattern is not unique to Italian, but is common for the Romance varieties using pre-verbal negative markers and it seems to be one of their invariant properties (but see Galician for potential counterexamples to this generalization, with sentential negation between object clitics and finite verbs. Álvarez et al.,1995)

The last property, already noticed in Zanuttini (1991), that characterizes pre-verbal negative markers in Romance is their incompatibility with “true imperatives”, namely dedicated verbal forms used only in the imperative mood (See Poletto 2016, for varieties that do not straightforwardly align to this generalization). Consider the case of Italian or Spanish, where a dedicated imperative form is used for the 2nd singular person (5a/6a). These forms, *parla* and *habla* cannot be used in combination with the negative marker to express a negative command (5b/6b) but instead some other forms have to be borrowed from other paradigms: the infinitive in Italian (5c) or the subjunctive in Spanish (6c)

(5) a. Parla! (Italian)
speak_{2nd,s}
“Speak!”

b. *Non parla!
neg speak_{2nd,s}

c. Non parlare!
neg speak_{inf}
“Don’t speak!”

(6) a. Habla! (Spanish)

 speak_{2nd,s}
 “*Speak!*”

b. *No habla!
 neg speak_{2nd,s}

c. No hables
 neg speak_{2nd,s, subj}
 “*Don't speak!*”

2.2. Post-verbal negation

A second group of languages is the one in which the negative markers follow inflected lexical verbs and auxiliaries. Post-verbal markers that can negate a clause without the co-occurrence of other preverbal negative elements are well documented in North-Western Gallo-Italic dialects of Piemonte, Valle d’Aosta and Lombardia and also in some varieties of Catalan spoken in the Eastern Pyrenees (Gómez-Duran 2011). Negation in these varieties shares many characteristics to the way negation is expressed in Contemporary Colloquial French and French-based creoles (Posner 1985, Rowlett 1998, Déprez 1999).

This group of languages can be further split in two, depending on whether the negative marker occupies the syntactic space comprised between the finite verb and the past participle (and low adverbs), or the lower one between the past participle and the verbal complements. We will separately consider examples from both groups.

Among varieties in which negation follows finite verbs but precedes the past participles, we find Piedmontese and Valdaotain. In both, the negative marker follows the auxiliary and the low adverb ‘already’ but it precedes the past-participles. Consider the position of *nen* and *pa* in the examples (7a-b/8a-b) below (see Zanuttini 1997 on the presuppositional use of *pa* in Valdaotain and its alternative distribution):

(7) a. Maria a l’ha *nen* mangia la carn. (Piedmontese)
 Maria s.cl s.cl’has neg eaten the meat
 “*Maria hasn't eaten the meat*”

b. A l’avia gia *nen* salutami cul di la
 s.cl s.cl’had already neg greeted-me that day there
 “*Already on that day he had not greeted me*”

(8) a. Maréia l’a *pa* mèndzà la tsear. (Valdotain, Cognen)
 Mareia s.cl’has neg eaten the meat
 “*Mareia hasn't eaten meat*”

b. L’a dza *pa* volu-lu adon
 s.cl’has already neg wanted-it then
 “*Already then he didn't want it*”

A further common feature of these post-verbal negative markers is that they do not interfere with verb movement. Similar to unmarked positive questions, negative questions are also grammatical when the verb is fronted. The following examples are from Brero (1988):

(9) *it veddes-to nen?* (Piedmontese)
 cl see-you neg
 “*don’t you see?*”

(10) *A-te pa minzà?* (Valdaotain)
 have-you neg eaten
 “*haven’t you eaten?*”

Beside languages in which negation is in-between finite verbs and past-participles, there is also a second sub-group of Northern Italian dialects that have negative markers to the right of past-participles and lower adverbs. One such case is the Lombard variety spoken in Milan, where *no* follows both the participle and the low adverb ‘already’ (11a-b):

(11) a. *El l’ha scrivuu no* (Milanese)
 s.cl s.cl’has written neg
 “*He hasn’t written*”
 b. *Ei funsiona gemo no prima de vess fini*
 s.cl works already neg before of to-be finished
 “*Already before being finished it doesn’t work*”

The Milanese particle ‘*no*’ expresses plain negation with no special presuppositional meaning, for which another particle (“*minga*” similar to the Italian *mica*, see section 2.3) has to be used. Moreover, its low sentence-internal position is confirmed by the fact that it is not sentence final, but may be naturally followed by verbal complements, as in the example below where the direct object is expressed:

(12) *U vist no la tuza*
 have seen neg the girl
 “*I haven’t seen the girl*”

This sets apart the low Milanese-type negation from other negative markers that appear sentence-finally and carry a pragmatically enriched presuppositional meaning, as the sentence-final *não* in Brazilian Portuguese that will be discussed in the next paragraph. We remand instead to section 3 for some interpretive properties of the low negation in Milanese with respect to other higher elements in the functional structure.

2.3. Negative Doubling

A last group of languages is characterized by a redundancy in their negative system, with the co-occurrence of multiple particles in distinct and non-adjacent positions. Following the preverbal/postverbal distinction, three logic possibilities of reduplication are possible in principle:

(13) a. preverbal + postverbal particles
 b. two (or more) preverbal particles
 c. two (or more) postverbal particles

while the first two possibilities in (13a-b) are well-attested in Romance and will be considered next in more detail, the third (13c) is virtually absent, with no documented case. Before discussing the cases in (13a) and (13b), an important clarification must be made: we focus here on the syntax of particles that express standard negation, only touching in passing other particles that can be optionally used to reduplicate negation and introduce some extra pragmatic import that will be discussed in more details in section 2.4.

Regarding the first type of Negative Doubling, the most well-known case is the so-called “discontinuous negation” in French exemplified in (14) and (15):

(14) Jean *n’ a pas* embrassé Marie. (Standard French)
 Jean ne has pas kissed Marie
 “Jean didn’t kiss Marie”

(15) Jean ne vient jamais
 Jean ne comes never
 “Jean never comes”

in the written standard language (Grevisse & Goosse 1936/2016) the preverbal particle *ne* must be obligatorily realized, as in (14) and (15). Only exceptions are certain special contexts that include pseudo modal verbs (Martinon 1927, Rowlett 1998) and the expletive use of negation (Rowlett 1998, De Clercq 2017, Zeijlstra 2004). The example (14) shows that *ne* cannot stand on its own in negative sentences and it has to be combined with an additional element with a negative meaning, in this case the lower particle *pas*. Other elements that can be combined with *ne* are adverbs with a negative meaning like *jamais* ‘never’ in (15) or N-words (see section 5). The distribution of *ne* has been subject to extensive research and many different factors influence its large diaphasic and diatopical variation. Just to mention some, clause structure (Martineau & Vinet 2005) or the subject’s properties (Ashby 1976, Culbertson 2010, Meisner & Pomino 2014) seems to modulate the realization of *ne* in the spoken language.

Although Standard French presents the clearest case of ‘discontinuous negation’, other varieties show a similar reduplication of negative elements, with the preverbal marker accompanied by a postverbal one. However, in many cases the second postverbal negator is pragmatically enriched and it carries an additional emphatic meaning, indicated in boldface (see section 2.4). An example is the Italian particle *mica* (Cinque 1976, Pennello & Pescarini 2008, Frana & Rowllins 2016, Thaler 2016):

(16) Gianni **non** ha **mica** mangiato (Italian)
 Gianni neg has mica eaten
 “Gianni has **NOT** eaten”

A similar reduplication, with the additional meaning carried by a second sentence-final instance of *não* is also observed Portuguese. Example (17) is from Brazilian Portuguese, discussed in Schwenter 2005 (see Martins 2013 for similar constructions in European Portuguese)

(17) A Cláudia não veio à festa não (Brazilian Portuguese)
 the Cláudia neg come.past.3sg to party neg
 “Claudia did **NOT** come to the party”

particular, *Emphatic Negative Particles* can be used in the complementizer system of embedded clause. One example comes from European Portuguese (from Martins 2013) where the first negative particle *não* is in-between the two complementizers *que... que*. The second *não* instead arguably sits in its lower unmarked position:

- (22) Ele vem? Ele disse que *não* que não vem
 He comes? He said that no that not comes
 'Is he coming? He said that he is NOT coming'

Negative emphatic constructions are also widely attested in matrix clauses, where the element used for anaphoric negation precedes the finite complementizer. An example is given by the construction *no che/ no que* attested in contemporary Italian (Poletto & Zanuttini 2013) and Catalan (Badia Margarit 1995) but also in 16th century Castillian (Keniston 1937). Examples (23) illustrates it, as a possible answer to the question "do you know the news?":

- (23) a. No che non la so, la notizia (Italian)
 no that neg o.cl know the news
 "No I do NOT know it (the news)"
 b. No que no la sé, la notícia (Catalan)
 no that not o.cl know-1SG, the news
 "No I do NOT know it (the news)"

What is special in the examples in (23) is that the particle used for anaphoric negation *no* is part of a more articulated sentence where it precedes the finite complementizer *che/que* and it is obligatorily paired with a lower negative element, resulting in a concord reading. This construction seems to be more general and not simply reducible to partially similar sentences that only lack the overt complementizer (e.g. "No, I don't know the news"). This is supported by the fact that, at least in Italian, the pre-complementizer position is not restricted to Yes/No answer particles. The same position can be also occupied by other particles (Moscati 2006) that introduce a downward entailing operator (Ladusaw 1980):

- (24) *Non/mai /senza/prima* che tu riesca a fermare Gianni
 Not/never/without/ before that you manage.subj to stop Gianni
 "Not/never/without/ before that you manage to stop Gianni"

Before concluding this section, a further property of Emphatic Negative Particles that must be listed is that they can occupy a left peripheral position without an overt complementizer. Italian *mica* or Catalan *poc/poca* and *pla* (Batllori & Hernanz 2013, Rigau 2004, 2012) show this property. Considering the Italian *mica*, the examples in (25) show that it can surface in a clausal position to the left of the lexical subject (25a). From this higher position, arguably in the complementizer, it does not need a licenser and can licence a lower negative polarity item itself (25b)

- (25) a. *Mica* Gianni ha capito il problema
 Mica Gianni has understood the problem
 "Gianni has NOT understood the problem"
 b. *Mica* Gianni ha *mai* capito il problema
 Mica Gianni has ever understood the problem
 "Gianni has NOT ever understood the problem"

Thus the examples in (26) and (27) suggest that cross-linguistic variation in the expression of sentential negation do not rigidly constrain its interpretation in terms of logic scope. We remand to Cinque (1999) for justification of the assumption that modal scope is fixed and to von Stechow & Iatridou (2003), Iatridou & Zeijlstra (2013), and Hacquard (2009) among others for important issues about the interaction between negation and modality.

Notice that *inverse narrow-scope* readings are reminiscent of another type of reconstruction of negation in a lower scope position, namely Fillmore's (1963) "transportation of NOT" or "Neg Raising", traditionally observed also in Romance (Rivero 1971, Prince 1976). With a special class of predicates (Horn 1989) expressing psychological attitudes, volition, or other subjective states in general, negation appears to be lowered from the main clause to the embedded one(s). Consider the sentences in (29):

- (29) a. Gianni *non* crede che Maria arriverà
 Gianni neg believes that Maria will-come
 "Gianni doesn't believe that Maria will come"
- b. Gianni crede che Maria *non* arriverà
 Gianni believes that Mary neg will-come
 "Gianni believes that Maria won't come"

The two sentences are near synonyms, with (29a) equivalent to (29b) where negation is in the embedded clause. This effect does not hold with all embedded predicates and substituting *credere* 'believe' with *dire* 'say' does not give rise to the same parallel interpretation: (30a) does not imply (30b), neither in Italian nor in the English paraphrases:

- (30) a. Gianni non dice che Maria arriverà
 Gianni neg says that Maria will-come
 "Gianni doesn't say that Maria will come"
- b. Gianni dice che Maria non arriverà
 Gianni says that Maria neg will-come
 "Gianni says that Maria won't come"

Moreover, a further argument, often invoked to support the view that neg is interpreted lower, comes from NPI licensing, whereas again only Neg-Raising predicates licence an NPI in the embedded:

- (31) a. Maria non crede che Gianni solleverà un dito per aiutarla
 Maria neg believes that Gianni will-lift a finger to help her
 "Maria doesn't believe that Gianni will lift a finger to help her"
- b. * Maria non dice che Gianni solleverà un dito per aiutarla
 Maria neg says that Gianni will-lift a finger to help her

For a thoughtful discussion of these examples see Collins & Postal (2014) and their account in terms of syntactic lowering. For an alternative explanation, based on the semantics of the Neg-Raising predicates, see Bartsch (1973) and works inspired by it (Gajewsky 2007, Romoli 2012)

4. Cyclic change

4.1 the (extended) Jespersen's cycle

If observed from the diachronic point of view, the various expressions of negation in Romance can be – at least partially - interpreted as different stages along a continuum of cyclical oscillations from a single negative marker to negative doubling, and back. The cycle was first noticed by Jespersen (1917), who proposes in this famous passage, a succession of three different stages:

“The history of negative expressions in various languages makes us witness the following curious fluctuation: the original negative adverb is first weakened, then found insufficient and therefore strengthened, generally through some additional word, and this in turn may be felt as the negative proper and may then in course of time be subject to the same development as the original word”

The original 3-stage cycle, dubbed “*Jespersen's cycle*” after Dahl (1979), has been observed in many unrelated varieties and adapted accordingly to describe the fluctuations in their negative system. In particular, it has been expanded to include the intermediate transitional stages, so that the original cycle is often presented as a 5-stage model (See van der Auwera 2009 for a recent survey). Partial cycles are found across many Romance varieties, sometimes with more options coexisting. This has been argued to be the case in Brazilian Portuguese (Schwenter 2005), Cairese (Parry 1985) and Catalan (Tubau et al. 2017), where a certain degree of optionality could be considered as a consequence of an on-going transition between single and discontinuous negation.

Across the many cycles observable in Romance, French is the most notorious and well-documented case, with a full transition from the preverbal *ne* to the postverbal *pas* spanning across about ten centuries. The French cycle is presented here adopting the chronology proposed in Hansen (2013), dividing it into three main stages (1-3), roughly corresponding to Jespersen's insight, plus two intermediate transitional ones where different stages overlap.

STAGES	Example	Period
1. Single preverbal	je ne dis	Old French 9-13 b.c.
1.5. Postverbal (Emphatic)	je ne dis (pas)	Middle French 14 th -16 th
2. Discontinuous Negation	je ne dis pas	Classical French 17 th -18 th
2.5 Optional Preverbal	je (ne) dis pas	Modern French 19 th -20 th Contemporary French 20 th -21 th
3. Single post-verbal	je dis pas	Quebecois French creoles

Table 1. The Jespersen's cycle in French

The schematic presentation in Table 1 only summarizes the principal milestones, overlooking many important issues about French diachronic change that would otherwise need a finer-grained analysis. An important one, that cannot be addressed here, would be a closer observation of *ne* deletion through the lenses of a more accurate consideration of clausal types (Martineau & Vinet 2005).

Going back to the general unfolding of the French cycle, the first stage in Table 1 presents the first innovation, from the Classic Latin negation *non* (itself part of a cycle, from *ne oenum* “not

one”> *non*) to the novel particle *ne* attested in Old French. This element was, a few centuries later (Stage 1.5), ‘reinforced’ and accompanied by the post-verbal *pas*, giving rise to the discontinuous form of negation becoming the standard in Classical French (Stage 2). Since the 19th century (Stage 2.5), Continental French witnessed a further transformation, with the progressive optionality of the original negative marker *ne*, at least in the spoken language. A further stage, the one that ideally closes the cycle, is the one in which *ne* disappears, with *pas* left as the sole negative marker. A construction already present in contemporary Quebecois French.

The sequence illustrated here captures a long dynamic of linguistic changes in French, but it also illustrates more general processes of grammaticalization that are common to other varieties as well. Consider for example the passage from the initial stage with a single negative marker to a discontinuous form of negation. Elements that can be recruited to ‘reinforce’ the original marker belong to a closed class that counts minimizers, indefinites, temporal adverbs and anaphoric negations.

The passage from “minimizers” (i.e. nouns denoting small quantities) to negative particles is well documented. The French *pas* itself was derived from the original meaning ‘step’. This transition is also common to Piedmontese *pa*, with the same etymology. Another widely diffused example is *mie* ‘crumb’, found in many varieties like the Italian *mica*, Milanese *minga*, and Modenese *brisa*. Other elements that can be recruited to start off the Jespersen’s cycle (see next section 3.2) are indefinite pronouns. Many Italo-Romance varieties show a transition from negative indefinites to negative markers, like the Piedmontese *nent* or the Venetian *gnente* derived from the Latin *ne (c) gente (m)* ‘no people’.

Grammaticalization into negative morphemes not only involved nominal elements, but also recruited temporal adverbs, like in the Cape Verdean Portuguese Creole. Teyssier (1986) and Baptista (2002) describe the preverbal negator *ka* (32) derived from the reduction of the Portuguese adverb *nunca* ‘never’:

- (32) Bu *ka* paga kel renda (Cape Verdean Portuguese Creole)
 you neg pay that rent
 “You didn’t pay rent”

A further type of re-analysis involves anaphoric negation. Constructions in which negation was originally linked to a proposition expressed or presupposed in the previous clause were later used to reinforce a weakened negative marker. This has been claimed to be the source of Brazilian Portuguese’s final doubling of *não* (Schwenter 2005, Teixeira de Sousa 2015):

- (33) Speaker A: Você desligou o fogão, né?
 “You turned off the stove, right?”
 Speaker B: Nossa! Não desliguei não!
 “Damn! I didn’t turn it off!”

The variety of the elements and processes considered pose the interesting challenge of determining what was the common driving force behind the “incipient” Jespersen cycle (Breitbarth et al. 2013). This question was already present in Jespersen (1917), who essentially proposed a phonological trigger. In short, when the standard morpheme became phonologically weak, speakers felt the need to reinforce it with a stronger form, one that could also carry stress. Beside the phonological explanation, an alternative one, already proposed at the time when Jespersen wrote (Meillet 1912), considers instead the beginning of the cycle as related to emphasis (see Larriveè

2010, 2011 for a recent discussion). New negators were initially used with a pragmatically enriched meaning, as emphatic expressions used to deny contextually salient presuppositions. They were thus restricted to special contexts, with a narrower distribution if compared to standard negation. Only later (at Jespersen’s Stage 2) these new forms underwent a grammatical ‘bleaching’ and lose their original meaning, becoming plain negative markers.

Perhaps both the phonological and the pragmatic explanations played a role in the incipient Jespersen cycle between Stages 1.5 and 2 and the issue might not receive a single answer, as pointed out by Van der Auwera (2009). He frames this transition in a broader view where several factors conspired, including the competition between dialects and registers and also the simultaneous recruitment of different post-verbal markers such as the French *pas*, *personne*, *jamais*, *plus*, ... that could have mutually supported the insurgence of a new grammatical form of negation. Moreover, the appearance of new elements that could carry stress could have had the advantage of serving the emphatic function. In this sense, the phonological explanation feeds the pragmatic one, so that the two factors may have conspired instead of being mutually exclusive. Other factors could have been at play in later stages. Consider the progressive disappearance of the original negative marker *ne*. Its decline in use, documented in Ashby (2001) and Hansen and Malderez (2004) might not have been independent from additional syntactic factors (see Rowlett 1998, Roberts & Roussou 2003), as for example the presence of subject clitics. Phonological, pragmatic and syntactic factors could all have given momentum to the cycle, explaining the transitions from one stage to the next. However some important residual issues remain. One unresolved question is why the cycle proceeded at different speeds in different varieties, and why it actually stopped at some intermediate stages (Willis et al 2013). For example, whereas in some Italic dialects the particles derived from *mica* ‘crumb’ have been almost fully grammaticalized as postverbal negative markers, in Standard Italian this option is still unavailable and the distribution of *mica* is still pragmatically constrained.

3.2. The quantifier’s cycle

Beside the grammaticalization of negative markers described by Jespersen’s cycle, indefinites may also undergo a redefinition of their semantics, acquiring a progressive negative meaning and sharing many properties with negative quantifiers. Ladusaw (1993) proposed what he called the “*argument cycle*”, in which negation-expressing argument phrases developed from regular indefinites through the following stages: first the argument is a regular indefinite, then it becomes a co-occurring ‘supporter’ of the clausal negation, and finally it becomes an independent expresser of negation. A way to look at the argument cycle is to consider it through the changes in the fine-grained specification of the grammatical features associated to each particular lexical item (a direction pursued in Martins 2000 for Romance languages). A general pattern of diachronic changes has been captured by Haspelmath (1997) who proposed a semantic map of indefinites on the basis of an extensive typological survey. The most important insight expressed by the diagram in Table 2 is that the indefinite pronoun series will always express a set of functions that are adjacent on the map. So that the English any-series covers functions (4)-(9), but no indefinite could cover simultaneously function (7) and (4) without also (6).

			(4) question	(6) indirect negation	(7) direct negation
(1) Specific known	(2) specific unknown	(3) irrealis non-specific	(5) conditional	(8) comparative	(9) free choice

Table 2. Haspelmath’s (1997) implicational map for indefinites

The prediction that follows from the map in Table 2 is that “when markers gradually acquire new functions, they will first be extended to those functions that are adjacent to the original functions on the map, and only later to functions that are further away”. According to Willis et al (2013), the quantifier cycle represents a contraction in the range of environments available for an indefinite, so that it could ultimately be available only under direct negation. Using again French to illustrate, this is exactly what happens with *rien*, derived from Latin *rem* ‘thing.acc’. Thus an item that was once used to denote a specific indefinite (1-2) transited from intermediate stages in which it was attested with a distribution similar to polarity items (4-6) to finally retreat to negative clauses (7). Other examples involve *nada* “nothing” in Spanish, stemmed from the Latin affirmative, *res nata* ‘a born thing’ or Catalan *res* ‘anything’ having gone from being generic nouns to n-words occurring in questions and conditionals (Sandanya 2004).

5. Negative Concord

A last issue that we will consider is the widespread reduplication of negative morphology shown by sentences with one or more indefinite pronouns, belonging to the so-called N-word series (Laka, 1990). This particular kind of doubling is found in all Standard Romance varieties and it can take two different forms: the first (34a), is the combination of N-words with the sentential negative marker; the second (34b), also referred to as *Negative Spread* (den Besten 1986), describes sentences with multiple N-words stacked:

- (34) a. Gianni non ha visto nessuno
 Gianni neg has seen N-body
 “Gianni hasn’t seen anybody”
- b. Nessuno ha mangiato niente
 N-body has eaten N-thing
 “Nobody has eaten anything”

the cover term *Negative Concord* (Baker 1970, Labov 1972) has been used to denote both situations in (34a) and (34b), in which the co-occurrence of more than one (apparently) negative element generates only a single instance of negation. This kind of doubling poses an interesting challenge for syntactic and semantic theories, since it cannot be straightforwardly reduced neither to standard cases of polarity nor to negative quantifiers. In the next section we will look at the very general pan-Romance pattern and at the distinction between *double negation*, *strict* and *non-strict negative concord languages*. The last section (5.2) concludes the chapter presenting a more detailed close up on the distinctive properties of N-words.

4.1. Negative concord in Strict and Non-strict varieties

To illustrate the distribution of N-words in Romance, a good vantage point is to observe it in contrast with a Double Negation language, that is, a language where the semantic Principle of Compositionality (Janssen, 1997) is strictly respected and each additional negative element contributes to the sentence’s meaning with an additional negative operator. With a narrow focus on Romance, such a variety is hard to find since all contemporary standard varieties show some form of negative concord. Probably the best example of a Double Negation language is their common ancestor, Classic Latin. To illustrate, consider the following example reported by Giannollo (2016):

- (35) aperte enim adulantem nemo non videt
 blatantly in.fact flattering:ACC no.one:NOM not see:3SG
 “no one does not recognize some one who is blatantly flattering” (Cic.Lael.99)

in (35) we have the co-occurrence of *nemo* ‘nobody’ and *non* ‘not’. This combination results in a double negation reading, where two negatives cancel each other out and the corresponding interpretation is roughly equivalent to ‘*everybody recognizes who is blatantly flattering*’ which paraphrases the litotes in (35).

The Latin example also allows us to peek into the rise of negative concord through a diachronic perspective, observing the puzzling innovation occurred in Proto-Romance. In fact, whereas Classic Latin was a double negation language, all the daughter varieties soon differentiated from their common ancestor.

Just to provide some examples (for more, also including Proto-Romance examples with post-verbal N-words see Martins 2000), consider the innovation introduced before the 15th century in Old Spanish and Old Portuguese (Llorens 1929, Haspelmat 1997) or in coeval Italic varieties (Parry 2013):

- (36) Vio que *ninguno non* pud ffallar (Old Spanish)
 saw that nobody NEG could speak
 “*She saw that nobody could find*”
- (37) *Nenhuu o nom* podia acordar de seu pensar (Old Portuguese)
 nobody him NEG could wake from his thought
 “*Nobody could awaken him from his thoughts*”
- (38) *Niente non* m’ è romagnudo (Venetian)
 nothing neg to.me is remained
 “*Nothing is left to me*”
- (39) ... e *nullo non* volea gire in Yspangia (Romanesco)
 ... and nobody neg wanted go.inf in Spain
 “*... and nobody wanted to go to Spain*”

All the examples from 36-39 illustrate cases of negative concord, with a pre-verbal N-word co-occurring with the negative marker and resulting into a single-negation interpretation. This behaviour is similar to what happens today in Romanian (see Manea 2016 for a diachronic perspective), a *strict* negative concord language. In Romanian (and also optionally in Modern Catalan) N-words always need to be licenced by the negative marker, being either pre- or post-verbal (Falaus 2008):

- (40) a. Niciun student *(*nu*) a citit cartea (Romanian, strict NC)
 No student neg has read book.the
 “*No student has read the book*”
- b. Paula *(*nu*) a citit nicio carte
 Paula neg has read no book
 “*Paula hasn’t read any book*”

The examples in (40) show that the nominal phrases with ‘*niciun*’ and ‘*nicio*’ need the presence of the negative maker *nu* for the sentence to be grammatical.

This contrasts with what happens in other varieties, in which the presence of the negative marker is required only if the N-word occurs post-verbally. Italian is an example of a *non-strict*

negative concord language. The example below shows that an N-word in preverbal subject position has to occur alone without the negative marker, whereas its presence is instead obligatory with an N-word in post-verbal subject position:

- (41) a. Nessuno ha letto il libro (Italian, non-strict NC)
 N-body has read the book
 “Nobody has read the book”
- b. Il libro non l’ha letto nessuno
 The book neg o.cl-has read N-body
 “The book, nobody has read it”

A three-partite typology is then the one illustrated by the examples from Latin, Romanian and Italian, which are respectively a *Double Negation*, a *Strict Negative Concord* and a *Non-Strict Negative Concord* language. In table 3 the main varieties are reported according to the type of concord that they show. In the case of more than one negative marker, as in French, the two markers have been kept distinct. For a proposed correlation between the specifier status of *pas* and the lack of concord, see Zeijlstra (2004) and Moritz & Valois (1994) (but also Depréz 1999 for counterexamples based on Quebecois *pas* and Louisiana French Creole *pa*).

Double Negation	Strict	Non-Strict
Latin	Romanian French <i>ne</i> Venetian, Friulan Catalan <i>no</i> (optional)	Italian Spanish Portuguese French <i>pas</i>

Table 3. Typology of Concord shown by the main standard varieties.

Table 3 presents only a very general classification, overlooking many important issues related to the syntactic and semantic properties of the N-words series. In the next paragraph, we will consider some of them in more detail.

5.2. Interpretation and distribution of the N-words

The term N-word was initially proposed to designate a series of pronominal elements that begin with *n-*, like the Italian *nessuno*, the Spanish *nadie*, Portuguese *ningu* or Romanian *nimeni*. This definition clearly leaves out many other items, like French *personne* or Catalan *res*, just to mention some. We will retain here the original terminology, since it is widespread in the literature, but a broader and more inclusive criterion has to be identified. The best candidate is the one that capitalizes on the two main attributes that are shared by all N-words in Romance (Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017): namely their ability to appear in fragments and, by definition, the generation of concord readings. A further core property is their differentiation according to whether *negative concord* arises independently from the clausal position of N-words, or if concord is contingent on their pre-/post-verbal distribution. These three main properties are listed in (34) below:

- (34) Properties of N-words
- they are allowed in fragment answers
 - they can be stacked (*negative spread*) or used in sentences with the negative marker yielding a single-negation reading
 - in negative sentences, N-words must be licenced: both pre- and post-verbally in *strict NC*, only post-verbally in *non-strict NC*.

Properties (34 b-c) have already been introduced in the previous paragraph. Regarding fragment answers, a defining property of N-words (34a) is that they can be uttered in isolation, as felicitous and grammatical answer to a wh-question, as in (35):

- (35) Question: *who came?*
- a. nobody (English)
 - b. nessuno (Italian)
 - c. nadie (Spanish)
 - d. ningu (Portuguese)
 - e. nimeni (Rumanian)
 - f. ningú (Catalan)
 - g. personne (French)

the example shows that, for what concerns fragments, N-words pattern with English-type negative quantifiers in that they do not require any other overt licenser. This sharply contrasts with the distribution of Negative Polarity Items (NPI), that are instead disallowed in fragments:

- (36) *who came?*
*anybody

This small dataset *prima facie* suggests that N-words have properties similar to negative quantifiers. This is only partially correct, since N-words also share many analogies with polarity items. The distinction between N-words and NPI is not clear-cut and their distribution may in fact, at least partially, overlap. Many series of N-words can appear in the same environments where the English *any*-series is licit, including sentences with no negative meaning at all. So, in addition to negative sentences, N-words can be also found in direct and indirect questions, clausal comparatives and in the scope of *before* and *without*. In (37) we report some examples, acceptable with some degree of individual variation, in Italian:

- (37) a. Hai visto nessuno? (direct questions)
"Have you seen anybody?"
- b. Ti ho chiesto se hai visto nessuno (indirect questions)
"I asked you if you saw anybody"
- c. Quel libro era più interessante di quanto nessuno si aspettasse (clausal comparat.)
"That book was more interesting than anyone would have expected"
- d. Chiedi il permesso prima di parlare con nessuno (before- clauses)
"Ask permission before speaking with anybody"
- e. Entra senza guardare nessuno (without- clauses)
"Enter without looking at anyone"

In all the examples (37), N-words show a typical NPI distribution. This is not an idiosyncrasy of the Italian series and very similar examples have been reported also for Spanish by Bosque (1980) and in other Romance languages (Martins, 2000).

A comparison between the pattern in (37) where N-words resemble the NPI distribution and the fragments in (35) clearly illustrates the puzzle posed by Romance N-words. This ambivalence

has been analysed differently, capitalizing either on their similarity with NPIs or with negative quantifiers. In both cases, however, some extra assumptions must be made to account for their atypical behaviour. The literature on N-words is too vast and articulated to be presented here. The different hypotheses could however be grouped into three main families so to provide a cursory overview.

The first group of proposals essentially considers N-words as indefinites, sharing many properties with NPIs plus some mechanisms able to explain their distribution in preverbal positions and in fragments. Ladusaw (1992) and Laka (1990) proposed that a covert operator could be generated in higher functional positions, so to ensure proper licensing. A more recent approach, also capitalizing on the availability of covert operators, has been advocated in Zeijlstra (2004), who departs from the NPI analysis and reduces licensing to a grammatical feature-checking mechanism, the same responsible for checking agreement features.

A second idea capitalized instead on the properties shared by N-words and negative quantifiers. This view was pioneered by Haegeman & Zanutini (1991, 1996), who treated N-words like negative quantifiers. They explained the concord readings by assuming a grammatical operation that conflates more negative elements into a single one by means of a ‘neg-factorization’ rule. Following this line of reasoning, Corblin (1996) and Corblin & Tovenca (2001) also proposed that when a threshold of complexity is reached more negative elements can be ‘parasitic’ on the same operator, resulting in a single negation. In the same vein, Depréz (1999) proposed that in Standard French N-words are a special type of quantifiers and that concord readings are obtained through the formation of a polyadic quantifier that binds multiple variables. Another similar account is the one presented in De Swart & Sag (2002), who used a different semantic account to obtain concord, one similar to the pair list-reading generated in multiple wh-questions.

Finally, the third approach considers the distribution of N-words spurious and rooted into a lexical ambiguity. According to this view, what appears to be a single series is in fact an epiphenomenon created by the coexistence of two different series in a (partially) complementary distribution. Seeds of this idea were already in Longobardi (1987), and later very differently reformulated in Longobardi (2014). A more explicit proposal in this sense came in Herburger (2001), who argued in favour of the superior empirical coverage of the lexical ambiguity hypothesis against the alternatives, both the NPI and the negative quantifier approaches. In the same spirit is the formulation in Moscati (2006, 2010) who combines Herburger’s insight with the feature-checking mechanisms in Pesetsky e Torrego (2004) and Zeijlstra (2004). The proposal is that the negative quantifier series has a syntactic negative feature that, in Romance, must and can be checked only preverbally. This is the only difference between the Romance-type and the English-type negative quantifiers. The second series of homophonous N-words is instead subject to the same licensing constraints that rule the distribution of NPIs. One of the advantages of the dual-series explanations is that it could also account for some ambiguous readings. There are in fact certain syntactic environments where both series, the NPI and negative quantifier one, could be licensed and compete. One example is given by pre-verbal N-word in embedded clause (so that the negative quantifier reading is allowed) but also c-commanded by a higher negation in the matrix (so that NPIs are also licensed). In sentences like (38), for example, many Italian and Spanish speakers allow, besides the double negation (DN) reading, the negative concord (NC) reading:

- (38) a. Dubito che nessun_{NPI/NQ} sia venuto DN/NC
 “I doubt that nobody/anybody came”
- b. Dudo che nadie lo sepa DN/NC
 “I doubt that nobody/anybody would know that”

The apparent optionality between NC and DN reading in certain environments is a very important issue that has not received full attention until recent years. There are many constructions beside the one in (38) in which speakers report the availability of both readings. Another example is the French example in (39) from van der Wouden & Zwarts (1993) also discussed in Corblin et al (2004):

- (39) Presque personne n'a rien dit. DN/NC
Almost no one NE -has nothing said.
= Almost no one said anything [NC]
= Nearly everyone said something [DN]

What determines the prominence of one interpretation over the other is still controversial but, beside individual and dialectal variation, discourse pragmatics and intonations seem to be crucial factors that must be better understood. The importance of tonal information was already noticed in Zanuttini 1991, but the issues did not receive much attention in the successive literature until recent years. A promising stream of research in this direction is in Espinal et al. (2016) and Tubau et al (2017), who empirically investigate the intonation contour as an experimental factor in determining the interpretive switch between NC and DN reading in both Catalan & Spanish. These results suggest that tonal information should be integrated in the linguistic representation to facilitate (or block) negative concord.

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