

THE LATIN SYSTEM OF NEGATION AT THE SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE

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Abstract: *This paper proposes an analysis for the syntax of negation and negative indefinites in Classical Latin. A parsimonious account of the diachronic path leading to the Early Romance systems follows from this analysis: just one crucial change in the phrase-structural and featural status of the negative marker, combined with the independent general restructuring of clausal syntax, is argued to be responsible for the (to a large extent) parallel developments of the Romance negative systems. I discuss some Late Latin evidence supporting a relatively early dating of this phenomenon, which would allow for the subsequent development of substantial differences with respect to Latin, as well as the large variation, witnessed already in Early Romance.*

Keywords: *Latin, negation, negative indefinites, n-words, Negative Concord*

1. Introduction: Latin negation in light of Romance

The syntax of negation has traditionally served as salient testing ground for theories of typological variation and change, including generative attempts to parametric formalization (a.o. Haegeman 1995, Zanuttini 1997, Rowlett 1998, Zeijlstra 2004, to cite only some of the most comprehensive works, and Willis, Lucas, Breitbarth 2013 for a recent overview).

This empirical domain has also proved to allow for a straightforward application of the so-called Borer-Chomsky's conjecture (as formulated by Baker 2008: 353), according to which syntactic diversity is due to a limited amount of possible variation in the featural specification of the lexical items involved (variously implemented in the literature).

Moreover, the parameters of negation have been argued to display a complex pattern of interdependencies, further restricting the number of possible 'types' and, consequently, of possible 'changes', as represented in the parametric hierarchy format by Biberauer, Roberts, Sheehan (2014), and in a parameter schemata format by Longobardi (2014).

In this respect, diachronic investigations are instrumental in testing the predictions arising from these theoretical models. To this end, I present here a case study concerning the diachronic shift from the Double Negation system of Latin to the Negative Concord systems of Romance.

Classical Latin shows all the hallmarks of a Double Negation language, i.e. a system where each negatively marked element in a clause contributes semantic negation (the negative adverb *non* in (1a), a negative indefinite in (1b)) and the co-occurrence of multiple negatively marked elements yields a double negation reading (1c).¹

¹ The morpho-syntax of Latin negation has been recently described in Pinkster (2015: Chapter 8); for the semantic aspects I refer to the extensive treatment by Orlandini (2001) and to Bertocchi et al.

Indefinites under the scope of a negative marker (NM) or a negative indefinite (NI) must be negative polarity items (NPIs, e.g. *quisquam* ‘any’, *ullus* ‘any’) in Latin (1d-e).²

- (1) a. interiores plerique frumenta **non** serunt
 inlander:NOM most:NOM corn:ACC not grow:3PL
 ‘most of those living in the inland do not grow corn’ (Caes.BG.5.14.1)
- b. **Nihil** equidem tibi abstuli
 nothing:ACC indeed you:DAT take.away:1SG
 ‘I really didn’t take anything from you’ (Pl.Aul.634)
- c. aperte enim adulantem **nemo non** videt
 blatantly in.fact flattering:ACC no.one:NOM not see:3SG
 ‘no one does not recognize someone who is blatantly flattering’ (Cic.Lael.99)
- d. **non** ante tibi **ullus** placebit locus
 not before you:DAT any:NOM please:3SG place:NOM
 ‘Before that (otherwise) no place will please you’ (Sen.Mor.28.2)
- e. **Non** hercle, adulescens, iam hos dies complusculos
 not by.Hercules boy now this:ACC day:ACC several:ACC
quemquam istic vidi sacrificare
 anyone:ACC here see:1SG sacrifice:INF
 ‘Boy, I haven’t seen anyone sacrificing here for several days now’
 (Pl.Rud.131-132)

The absence of concord readings is a general characteristic of the Latin system of negation, observable also with other markers of negation, like negative complementizers (e.g. *nē* ‘lest’, *nisi* ‘unless’), the negative conjunctions *neque* / *nec* ‘and not’, focusing elements like *ne...quidem* ‘not even’ (but see Gianollo 2016 for some diachronically significant exceptions concerning these classes).³

In double negation readings, both the order NI > NM (1c) and the order NM > NI are attested, in the latter case often in the form of lexicalizations like *nonnullus* ‘some, several’ (lit. ‘not no one’). The lack of co-occurrence between NM and NI in a single-negation reading is independent of the position of the NI before or after the finite verb, a fact that excludes an analysis in terms of non-strict Negative Concord (see §2):

- (2) a. Ratione utuntur ludis poscunt **neminem** (Infl > O)
 reason:ABL use:3PL game:ABL ask:3PL no.one:ACC
 ‘They are reasonable: during the games they don’t demand from anyone’
 (Pl.Cas.27)

(2010), Devine and Stephens (2013: Chapter 8). The examples are cited according to the editions in the LLT-A – Brepols Library of Latin Texts series A.

² I use here the term ‘Negative Indefinite’ in its technical sense, which will become clearer in §2.2.

³ Colloquial varieties sporadically show emphatic single-negation readings of two co-occurring negative elements, see Molinelli (1988). This is, however, possible also in Double Negation languages like English, German or Dutch under the right pragmatic conditions, on which see Zeijlstra (2004: 67-73) and Haegeman and Zanuttini (1996). I think that instances of this type are not the decisive trigger for the development of Negative Concord from Latin to Romance. However, these and similar phenomena of redundancy in emphatic constructions have a clear diachronic import for the grammaticalization of new Romance n-words, as discussed in Gianollo (2016).

- b. De lanificio **neminem** metuo (O > Infl)
 about woolmaking:ABL no.one:ACC fear
 ‘Concerning woolmaking I don’t fear anyone’ (Pl.Merc.520)

In what follows I present the main lines of the developments affecting the syntax of negation in Latin: I argue that an improved understanding of these aspects sheds light on three common traits of Romance for which we would like to offer a historical explanation.

First, all standard Romance languages display a continuation of Latin *nōn* (e.g. It. *non*, Sp. and Cat. *no*, Pt. *não*, Fr. *ne*, Rom. *nu*), located in front of the inflected verb and after the canonical position for the subject XP in declaratives, in the area where pronominal clitics attach (NegP-1 in Zanuttini 1997, see also Ledgeway 2012, Longobardi 2014, Poletto 2014a). The same situation holds for Early Romance (Zanuttini 2010, Parry 2013). As Poletto (2014a) remarks,

‘[i]ts position in this area of the clause seems to be a rather stable feature across the whole Romance domain: there do not seem to be languages where the negative marker deriving from Latin NON has a different position in the sentence [...]’.

(Poletto 2014a: 5)

Post-verbal negative markers are innovations emerging independently in the different varieties.

Second, while Latin is a Double Negation language, Early Romance is characterized by having Negative Concord: this is a puzzling case where all the daughter languages differ from the ancestor, and do so in a fundamentally uniform way. Varieties in which the negative marker has no Concord properties (e.g. Colloquial French *pas*, Milanese *no*) are the result of subsequent developments.⁴ Establishing the precise nature of Early Romance Concord systems and accounting for the frequent optionality observed is a notoriously difficult problem (Posner 1984, Martins 2000, and for Old Italian Zanuttini 2010, Parry 2013, Poletto 2014b: 141-148): I will not try to solve it here, but I hope to contribute to its understanding by presenting and interpreting important evidence from Classical and Late Latin.

Third, Romance varieties witness extensive lexical renewal in the domain of indefinites taking narrow scope with respect to negation. Latin negative indefinites have very few etymological reflexes in Romance (e.g. Romanian *nimeni* ‘nobody’, Old French *nul*, Old Italian *nullo* ‘no (one)’). New indefinites are gradually grammaticalized and manifest ‘polar versatility’ (Martins 2000): most of the elements that behave as n-words in the contemporary varieties originated / went through a stage as negative polarity items (see Haspelmath 1997, Willis et al. 2013 for the frequency of this cycle crosslinguistically). In early texts they are habitually found in non-negative non-veridical contexts (3); signs of this behavior remain in some contemporary varieties (4).

- (3) Old Italian, Poletto (2014b: 147)
 s’io dico **nulla**, sì son ripigliato
 ‘If I say anything, so I am caught again’

⁴ For simplicity, here I am leaving Negative Spread (concord among indefinites) aside.

(4) Modern Italian, Rizzi (1982: 122)

Mi chiedo se Gianni abbia poi contattato **nessuno**

‘I wonder whether Gianni has eventually contacted anybody’

How to interpret this complex interplay of pertinacity and innovation? I argue that the position of the continuations of *non* is indeed a conservative trait already present in Latin; however, I will also show that the phrase-structural status of the negative marker has changed, leading to its featural reanalysis. In my framework, this necessarily has consequences on the indefinites belonging to the negation system (i.e., occurring in the scope of a negation operator) and is, thus, the deep reason for the appearance of Negative Concord as well as for the lexical renewal (they are two sides of the same coin). Since I locate the original change in Late Latin, I account for its uniform transmission to Romance.

In the next section, I will present the theoretical framework, which will guide the analysis of Classical Latin negation (§3) and of some Late Latin developments (§4). Section 5 shortly summarizes the paper.

2. Negation systems

I understand as ‘negation system’ the set of functional elements used in a language to encode the presence of a negative operator in the logical representation. This set contains at least the NM(s) used for plain sentential negation and those indefinites that show a formal dependency on the negative operator, i.e. NIs and n-words.⁵

2.1 The negative marker

A fundamental assumption guiding contemporary research on negation at the syntax-semantics interface consists in assuming an indirect link between morpho-syntactic realization and interpretation of negation. The LF-scope position of the semantic negative operator does not necessarily coincide with the surface position of the morpho-syntactic sentential NM. Moreover, not all negatively marked elements do, in fact, contribute semantic negation: some of them only carry an uninterpretable formal feature, which has to be eliminated in the derivation. Elements carrying such feature do not need to be etymologically / morphologically negative, as well shown by Romance indefinites like Spanish *nada*, French *personne*, etc. In sum, elements belonging to a negation system qualify rather as ‘signals’ for the presence of a semantic operator than as its direct realization, and the operator itself may be covert.

On the other hand, the morpho-syntactic realization of the sentential NM has a direct impact on the way the rest of the negation system is structured. There is a widespread intuition, going back at least to Jespersen (1917: 71-72) that the amount of phonological ‘substance’ in a negative marker has an influence on the ‘doubling’ patterns found in a language: the ‘smaller’ a NM is, the more prone it is to be ‘redundantly doubled’ by other negatively marked elements in the clause, i.e. to give rise to Negative Concord (NC) patterns. In formal treatments, this insight has been factored in by connecting the NM’s phonological weakness with its phrase-structural status, which in turn influences its

⁵ As standard, I take plain sentential negation to have the interpretation of a negative operator scoping over the entire proposition, that is, at least over the existential quantifier binding the event variable (Acquaviva 1997).

distribution. According to Jacobs (1991: 573-574), a NM with head status is part of the functional projections making up the inflectional complex of the verb. A phrasal NM, instead, has a freer distribution and can behave like a syncategorematic element, being able in principle to attach to any verbal projection (as a parameterized NegP projection or as an adverbial adjunct, depending on theoretical persuasions; see the discussion in Cinque 1999: 120-126). Within the generative syntactic tradition, the X^0 status of the NM is explicitly related to the occurrence of NC in Haegeman and Zanuttini (1996), Déprez (1997), Rowlett (1998), Zeijlstra (2004 and following). A unidirectional generalization emerges (5):

- (5) Generalization on phrase-structural status: negative heads (X^0) are predicted not to be available in non-Negative-Concord languages. There is no language without Negative Concord that exhibits a negative marker that is a syntactic head (Zeijlstra 2011: 136).

Zeijlstra proposes that (5) holds because NC is a form of syntactic agreement, i.e. a syntactic dependency, which constitutes crucial evidence for the assumption of a functional projection NegP, headed by the NM, during language acquisition. If the NM is not an X^0 but an XP, two possible grammars are possible: one in which the NM is in the specifier of a NegP (and triggers NC), but also one in which the NM is not part of a NegP projection and attaches as an adverb to a verbal projection. In the latter case, no NC is triggered because the NM is the direct realization of the semantic operator and entertains no further syntactic dependencies with other negatively marked elements: this is the Double Negation (DN) type that we have seen for Classical Latin (§1).

Syntactic dependencies arise through Agree. Zeijlstra's (2004, 2014) feature system is based on the emergentist hypothesis that the acquisition of formal features driving the computation (interpretable [iF] and uninterpretable [uF]) is guided by morpho-syntactic doubling phenomena. Whenever a mismatch between semantic import and morpho-syntactic encoding (as in NC) is detected, a pair [iF] – [uF] is assumed during acquisition; if, instead, a morpho-syntactic realization unambiguously corresponds to the import of a semantic operator, the learner will assume no formal features, but rather a direct mapping between PF and LF, i.e. a semantic feature. Semantic features do not play a role in the computation, unlike formal interpretable features, which are to a large extent the syntactically relevant counterpart of a semantic feature (i.e. of a semantic operator), but do not need to be.

According to Zeijlstra, thus, NegP is only activated when it hosts an element carrying formal negative features and matching those of another element in its c-command domain.⁶ This means that not only the status of the NM, but also that of the indefinites participating in the negation system differ in DN and NC systems.

⁶ As a reviewer remarks, this raises the question whether an 'inactive' projection NegP is nonetheless present at some structural level also in languages where it does not have a syntactic manifestation. The answer largely depends on overall assumptions concerning the syntax-semantics interface and the factors considered responsible for the ordering of functional projections. Zanuttini (1997: 11, 156), for instance, suggests that possibly all languages have a NegP-I projection, with either strong or weak features (the latter requiring an LF-movement operation). Zeijlstra (2004, 2014) excludes this possibility since there would be no acquisitional evidence for such projection.

2.2 *The indefinites*

Many languages have a series of indefinite determiners and pronouns entertaining a privileged or even exclusive relation with (the syntactic encoding of) a negative operator (the ‘direct negation’ context in Haspelmath 1997). These are the indefinites that I take to be part of a negation system. I follow the literature in distinguishing between n-words and negative indefinites in direct negation contexts. Unlike n-words and negative indefinites, a further class represented by NPIs is compatible with a broader set of licensors and is subject to a primarily semantic-pragmatic licensing mechanism, although with important syntactic consequences. NIs and n-words are more ‘grammaticalized’ in the sense that they specialize into negative contexts. I will assume that the variable introduced by NIs and n-words imposes a requirement to be bound by a negative operator in the syntax, whereas NPIs are more liberal with respect to the syntactic-semantic nature of their binder. It is a long-standing research question how to exactly model these differences, and whether it is possible to derive in a principled way the ambiguous behavior of n-words (see (3-4)).

Depending on the overall negation system, a basic distinction has to be drawn between NIs and n-words: NIs, like English *nobody* or German *niemand*, always contribute semantic negation; n-words, instead, are Concord elements and may (non-strict NC) or must (strict NC) co-occur with a NM, while contributing only one semantic negation. More precisely, in strict NC systems (e.g. Standard French, Romanian, Russian, Modern Greek) the co-occurrence between n-word(s) and NM obtains independently of the syntactic position of the n-word (see (6)). In non-strict NC systems (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese) a pre-/post-Infl asymmetry is observed: only n-words following the inflected verb are accompanied by a NM; for those preceding, the co-occurrence is excluded under a single negation reading (see (7)).

(6) Strict NC (Romanian)

- a. **Nimeni nu** a cumpărat cartea
Nobody NM has bought book-the
‘Nobody bought the book’
- b. **Nimeni nu** citește **nimic**
nobody NM reads nothing
‘Nobody reads anything’

(7) Non-strict NC (Italian)

- a. **Non** ha chiamato **nessuno**
- b. **Nessuno** ha chiamato
‘Nobody has called’

In addition to this, the Romance Concord systems also exhibit Negative Spread, i.e. the ability for multiple n-words to co-occur yielding a single-negation reading.

Superficially, we see that the negative import of NIs (i.e. their contributing semantic negation) is independent of the syntactic context, while that of n-words in non-strict NC is variable and crucially depends on the syntactic configuration. This suggests that the two classes are subject to different licensing conditions. Zeijlstra (2004, 2014) proposes that NIs have only semantic features and no formal negative features, while n-words have a formal uninterpretable feature [uNeg] which forces them into a syntactic dependency relation with an operator.

Concord is, thus, interpreted as clause-bound Agree (see a.o. Haegeman and Zanuttini 1996, Weiß 2002, Watanabe 2004 for early proposals along these lines), which does not necessarily trigger overt movement. Unlike ‘canonical’ Agree, in this form of (Reverse) Agree the goal carries the uninterpretable features and the probe the interpretable counterpart. The co-occurrence of multiple n-words in NC languages with a single negation meaning is accounted for as Multiple Agree (but see Haegeman and Lohndal 2010 for an alternative proposal).

NIs, instead, cannot enter Multiple Agree. The status of NIs is particularly debated (Jacobs 1991, Penka 2011, Zeijlstra 2011): their semantic behavior, especially the existence of ‘split scope’ readings, shows that they can be decomposed into two elements, a negative operator and an indefinite, spelled out as a single unit but able to take scope independently.

Since also NMs can carry uninterpretable formal features, a system with three basic types emerges, based on the distinction between semantic features [Neg], formal interpretable features [iNeg] and formal uninterpretable features [uNeg] (Zeijlstra 2004, 2014):⁷

(8) Types of negation systems in Zeijlstra (2004)

Type	Negative Marker	Indefinites
Double Negation	[Neg]	[Neg] (Negative Indefinites)
strict Negative Concord	[uNeg]	[uNeg] (n-words)
non-strict Negative Concord	[iNeg]	[uNeg] (n-words)

In this system, the elements of the Double Negation type do not need syntactic licensing. Formal features of Concord types, instead, trigger licensing operations in the syntax: according to Zeijlstra (2004), the licenser can be either an overt or a covert [iNeg] NM. It is overt in the case of post-Infl n-words in non-strict systems (where the NM co-occurs with the indefinite), and covert in the case of pre-Infl n-words and negative fragment answers in non-strict systems (where co-occurrence in the single-negation reading is excluded) and in general in strict systems (where there is always co-occurrence).

2.3 Proposal

I propose to interpret the facts discussed above as follows (see Gianollo 2016 for more details). As noted, NIs and n-words are subject to different licensing conditions: the former class always brings about a semantic negation and does not enter (long-distance) Agree relations, the latter is forced to do so by the presence of an uninterpretable formal feature in its lexical entry.

I assume that this difference is reflected in the timing of syntactic operations affecting the two classes of indefinites: they both introduce a variable which has to be interpreted within the scope of negation; NIs impose the requirement that the variable be licensed as soon as possible by the negative operator, whereas the variable introduced by an n-word can wait. This is a way of implementing the notion of ‘semantically negative indefinites’ needed for DN languages, together with their well-known requirement of PF-adjacency between the negative operator and the existentially quantified variable (simplifying, their

⁷ An additional system with [iNeg] indefinites and a [uNeg] NM has been proposed by Breitbarth (2014) for a stage of Old Low German, in which there is Negative Doubling but no Negative Spread.

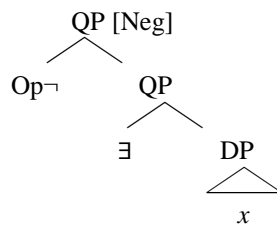
realization as one single item, e.g. German *kein* vs. **nicht...X...ein*, see Jacobs 1991: 593-595, Penka 2011: Chapter 3, Zeijlstra 2011).

With NIs, the structure building operation of merging a negative operator with the indefinite has to happen immediately. This also derives the systematic absence of ambiguity between negative and non-negative readings observed with NIs: unlike n-words, NIs of DN languages never show NPI uses (where they are not associated with a negative interpretation). They combine exclusively with an immediately local negative operator and, thus, cannot be captured by other semantically compatible licensers.

The earliness of the combination between the indefinite and the negative operator is due to the absence of uninterpretable formal features in NI, in the spirit of Zeijlstra, and follows without further stipulations from the nature of syntactic computation: since there is no need to wait for the insertion of the appropriate [iNeg] counterpart, the syntactic operation happens as soon as possible (see Collins 2001 for earliness / ‘ASAP’ economy principles in syntax).

The negative operator is adjoined to the nominal projection (possibly to the DP phase, also containing quantificational (Q) elements), as in the cases of constituent negation. Further LF-movement of negation takes place if negation is to take sentential scope, in principle independently of the existential quantification. The creation of the structure in the syntax ensures, as in Zeijlstra (2011), that this latter operation does not run against Lexical Integrity, as a negative quantifier approach would instead do in the cases of split scope. In (9), the absence of formal [i/uNeg] features is represented by the semantic feature [Neg] next to the nominal QP projection (see 8). Despite the label ‘QP’, the resulting element is not a negative quantifier in the traditional sense, since it is built in the syntax and not in the lexicon.

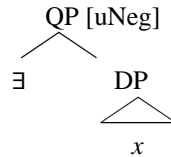
(9) Negative indefinite



With n-words (10), the presence of [uNeg] forces the computation to wait for the appropriate licenser, i.e. the [iNeg] operator in the CP-TP phase.⁸ This captures the idea that n-words are ‘dependent indefinites’ (Giannakidou 1998).

⁸ I assume this to hold for well-known cases of NC like the Romance and Slavic languages. A [iNeg] counterpart of the ‘low’ semantic [Neg] NM of Germanic languages seems to correspond to the NC system of Bavarian, as described in Weiß (2002). The parameterization of the Spell-Out position of the sentential NM is anyway in principle independent of its locus of interpretation, which I take to be universally invariant.

(10) n-word



Possibly a more complex feature structure than the one I provide here accounts for the possibility to bind the variable of n-words by means of other operators creating (Strawson) downward-entailing contexts, in case they c-command the indefinite, i.e. for the NPI uses.

Now the question arises of how the object remains visible for Agree after completion of the ν P phase, if we assume conditions like PIC and intervention effect of phase heads to affect Agree. The issue is in fact common to all n-words remaining in the ν P phase, e.g. low subjects. The valuation requirement of [uNeg] features does not seem to lead to displacement of argument n-words in Romance: if they move to the CP-TP phase, they do so for independent requirements. Thus, the [uNeg] feature of the n-word must remain visible at the phase edge. One way to implement this is to take inspiration from Poletto (2008) in assuming that there is a parallelism between the mechanism seen with clitic doubling and the mechanism of NC. Poletto proposes that, in the same way as clitics originate as part of a ‘big DP’ structure and then raise (Belletti 1999, Cecchetto 2000), the NMs of Romance languages originate in a complex ‘big NegP’, whose internal structure is semantically motivated, and then raise to various clausal positions (for a proposal along these lines extending the analysis to further languages see De Clercq 2013).

My proposal is that, similarly, we can think of n-words as ‘big DPs’ where the ‘doubling’ NM is generated in an outer specifier, in case uninterpretable formal features need to be passed up to the next phase: the NM carries the [uNeg] feature to the edge of the ν P phase and from there to the NegP in the CP-TP phase, where the [iNeg] Operator is hosted, giving rise to concord.⁹

If the n-word itself is at the edge of ν P and then raises for independent (EPP, information-structural) requirements, landing in a position which c-commands NegP, no ‘doubling’ is generated. As mentioned, this is accounted for by Zeijlstra (2004, 2014) by assuming that, when the [uNeg] indefinite is syntactically above NegP, the insertion of a covert negative operator licenses it, as a Last Resort measure. I follow instead Longobardi (2014: 249) for the idea that, under certain conditions, being in the CP phase for independent checking reasons suffices for valuation of the negative feature on the indefinite as well. The n-word carries the [uNeg] feature to the CP-TP phase, where it enters an Agree relation with the [iNeg] Operator in NegP, with no need for doubling. This mechanism can be modeled in different ways: Longobardi (2014) follows Biberauer and Roberts (2011) in assuming a mechanism of feature sharing between the various functional projections building the CP-TP phase (comprising NegP), so that feature valuation may take place in any such projection. Alternatively, a derivation can be proposed in which the n-word passes

⁹ A reviewer asks how to treat Concord elements that are not nominal, like e.g. French adverbial *jamais*. I think that, if we understand ‘doubling’ as a way to discharge features in need of valuation, the strategy should apply cross-categorially to all elements belonging to a series, in Haspelmath’s (1997) sense. Thus, also in the case of adverbs, ‘doubling’ would arise as ‘splitting’ of a complex functional structure, as Poletto (2008) proposes for the NM.

through NegP on its way to the subject or to the Focus position, thereby valuating its uninterpretable feature. Under both scenarios, the NegP position in Romance languages would not induce ‘criterial freezing’ (Rizzi 2007), i.e., would not require the creation of a strictly local Spec-head configuration in which the element is ‘frozen’ after feature valuation. This conclusion seems to be forced anyway by cases noted by Zanuttini (1997), in which the Concord element ends up in a position c-commanding the Neg projection, as in (11):

- (11) Modern Italian (Zanuttini 1997: 156 fn. 9)
Mai sua madre gli avrebbe permesso di comportarsi così
‘Never would his mother have allowed him to behave that way!’

As for the NM inserted (as non-doubled marker of sentential negation) if no n-word is present, I remain agnostic as to whether a Move approach like Poletto’s (2008) is preferable to a more traditional Merge solution: for the time being I will assume that the NM is externally merged as the head of NegP in languages like Italian, Spanish, Portuguese.

Strict NC, where the NM is present independently of the pre-/post-Infl position of the n-word would represent a type where the NM / NegP is part of the inflectional complex of the verb (see Zeijlstra 2004 for evidence concerning verb movement); as such, it may be argued to originate within the verbal projections and to be dependent on the verb for all syntactic operations involving the arguments. Agree with their [uNeg] feature would be parasitic on the remaining Agree operations that the verb entertains with its arguments.

The proposed system maintains a fundamental assumption of Zeijlstra’s analysis, namely that functional projections are activated only if there is acquisitional evidence for formal features participating in syntactic processes (agreement or displacement). The main difference between DN and NC systems remains the fact that this evidence is absent in the former type and present in the latter.

2.4 Diachronic consequences

In the systems surveyed above, if the NM is a head, it projects its own functional category NegP. It follows that changes in the phrase-structural status of the NM can have a deep influence on the negation system. Jespersen’s Cycle describes exactly such recurrent changes: NMs are subject to morpho-phonological and pragmatic pressures, which lead to reduction of the NM and to its substitution, frequently (but not necessarily) through a doubling stage. In the generative tradition, Jespersen’s Cycle has been interpreted as leading from an XP to an X^0 status of the negator. Reinforcers have been shown to be XPs (of various origin, nominal and adverbial), and to be subject, in turn, to reduction once they replace the original negator (see Willis et al. 2013 for a survey). Examples of phrasal NMs originating as reinforcers are English *not*, German *nicht*, French *pas*. We will see below that also Latin *non* shares this origin. Apparently, having a strategy for emphatic / reinforced negation is a general characteristic of negation systems (Kiparsky and Condoravdi 2006); also general is the presence of ‘inflationary effects’ (Dahl 2001), which cause the reinforcer to semantically bleach into a plain NM in course of time.

According to what seen above, if a head NM is implicationaly connected to the presence of NC (recall 5), then changes affecting the NM according to Jespersen’s Cycle are expected to have an effect on indefinites belonging to the negation system: together with the phrase-structural status, also the featural specification of the NM changes, making

it potentially incompatible with the ‘old’ indefinites in a single negation reading. More specifically, I will argue that when a NM changes from XP- to X^0 -status, indefinites in the negation system are expected to concord with it.

In principle, a phrasal NM is compatible with both a DN and a NC grammar. Given the clear adverbial and nominal origin of NMs, it is plausible to assume a directionality in their grammaticalization: they start as a ‘semantic’ [Neg] NM (DN system) and then acquire formal features in course of time (NC system). Crucial evidence for the learner to decide between the two grammars is given by the behavior of narrow-scope indefinites interacting with the NM, i.e. whether they allow ‘doubling’ or not and whether they agree with each other.

Two tendencies, one syntactic and one pragmatic in nature, may undermine the robustness of the evidence for a DN system: the syntactic one consists in the structure-minimizing tendency known as Head Preference Principle (van Gelderen 2004); the pragmatic one is rooted in the role of NPIs in bringing about focused readings (see Chierchia 2013 for a novel formalization of this long-standing observation and §4 below). A combination of these two factors may lead to the reanalysis of the NM as a head (and consequently to the activation of a NegP) and to the further conventionalization of the licensing relation holding between the negative operator and NPIs in its scope, i.e. to the grammaticalization of n-words. This can be the birth of a NC system.

In the next sections, I will move back to the Latin data and argue that this scenario accounts for the change from the Latin DN system to the Romance NC ones, through the intermediate stage of Late Latin. I will conclude that the $XP > X^0$ reanalysis of the NM takes place already in Late Latin and is thus uniformly transmitted to the Romance languages. The grammaticalization of n-words happens, instead, mostly in the individual languages, however Late Latin sheds light also on this aspect, since we clearly see signs of decay of the old NIs.

3. *The position and phrasal status of Classical Latin ‘non’*

In what follows I will restrict myself to the syntax of Latin plain sentential negation¹⁰ and I will concentrate on two dimensions which are well known for showing principled cross-linguistic variation: (i) the position of the NM in the clausal structure, and (ii) its phrase-structural status.

Traditional grammatical research has reached some firm generalizations with respect to (i): in its plain sentential negation function the NM *non* precedes the finite inflected verb.

The fact that its position must be above the TP-level projections clearly emerges with analytical forms of the verb (12): in the perfective deponent and passive conjugation –i.e., a case where the structure is uncontroversially monoclausal–, *non* precedes the auxiliary ‘be’, and not the participle, see Kühner and Stegmann (1966, II.1: 818), Devine and Stephens (2006: 183). The participle itself linearly precedes both the NM and the auxiliary in the unmarked order, and is in turn preceded by the verbal arguments.

¹⁰ Latin also has a modality-sensitive negation *nē* with clause-typing abilities, as well as other complementizer-like items that also introduce a negation (e.g. *nisi* ‘if not’, *quin* ‘why not’): these elements will have to be left out of the present survey.

- (12) a. Romanus equitatus ipsum quidem regem Elatae
 Roman:NOM cavalry:NOM himself:ACCin.fact king:ACC Elatea:GEN
 adsecutus **non** est
 reached:PTCP not is:3SG
 ‘in fact the Roman cavalry did not reach the king of Elatea himself’
 (Liv.36.19.10)

b. unmarked order: S O Participle(=V) Neg Auxiliary(=Infl)

Pre-participle cases are most typically cases of constituent negation or metalinguistic negation:

- (13) **non** profectus est **sed** profugit
 not departed:PTCP is:3SG but bolt:3SG
 ‘he did not depart, but rather he bolted’ (Cic.Phil.5.24)

To account for the pattern in (12), I follow Danckaert’s (2012: 310-313, 2014) proposal, according to which the consistent Infl-final order of Classical Latin is derived by (remnant) v/VP movement to the specifier of a projection in the split-TP area of the clause (14):

- (14) Danckaert (2012: 313)

$$[_{FP[EPP]} [_{VP} S O V] [F^0 [_{NegP} Neg^0 [_{TP} T^0 t_{VP}]]]]$$

The movement of VP to a high TP-position is motivated in terms of the EPP requirement of TP: according to Biberauer and Roberts’ (2005) typology of EPP satisfaction, either the minimal category representing the goal for Agree or a bigger projection containing it (pied-piping) may be moved for EPP reasons. In Latin, the whole projection containing the (trace of the) predicate and the arguments move (VP in Danckaert’s structure). The finite verb (realized either as synthetic form of the lexical predicate or as auxiliary) moves separately to a projection in the split-TP, which is crucially lower than the attachment level of the NM.¹¹ The landing site responsible for EPP valuation is, instead, higher: Danckaert (2012: 304) leaves the nature of this F(unctional) P(rojection) undetermined and tentatively proposes that it may correspond to the SubjP position identified by Cardinaletti (2004). As a reviewer remarks, however, for Cardinaletti this position hosts a special category of subjects, the ‘subject of predication’. In Danckaert (2012), instead, this is the general EPP-position for Latin: it rather corresponds to the standard position for Latin subjects labeled SubjP in Devine and Stephens (2006: 27-28).

¹¹ For the assumption that the Latin finite verb is in a functional projection in the TP-area see Polo (2004), Salvi (2004), Danckaert (2012: 310-319, 2014). For cases where the verb moves even higher, to the CP-layer, see Devine and Stephens (2006: Chapter 2). Empirical arguments for assuming an inflectional projection come mainly from the distribution of auxiliaries in passive and deponent perfective forms. The assumption that also synthetic forms land in this position is motivated by theoretical considerations, to safeguard a uniform mechanism of inflectional feature valuation and a uniform derivation in case of further verb movement to the CP-layer. This analysis has also clear advantages in a diachronic perspective, since it accounts in a parsimonious way for the development towards Romance, see Salvi (2004).

Crucial for the argumentation is that, as in all Standard Romance languages, this position is above the projection hosting the NM.

The movement of the predicative projection as a chunk accounts for the systematic nature of OV and Infl-final order in Classical Latin. In turn, its loss and replacement by means of separate movement of the individual arguments offers a diachronic explanation for the much less systematic nature of the O-V-Infl linearization in later Latin. In fact, the Infl-final Latin grammar shows signs of restructuring at an early age (see Ledgeway 2012: 255-258, Danckaert 2014 for discussion of variation already in Classical Latin): we will come back to this in §4.

Concerning the phrase-structural status of the NM, Danckaert (2012, 2014) treats *non* as the head of a NegP. This raises, however, important complications in view of what we know about the typology of negation: as discussed above, languages with a head NM are consistently Negative Concord systems (see 5). Classical Latin would therefore represent an unwelcome exception. My alternative proposal, safeguarding (5), is that no NegP is projected in Classical Latin: I analyze *non* as a phrasal category sitting in a specifier attached to a projection in the TP-area, above the landing site for the inflected verb.

It is crucial for my argument to establish at which stage of Jespersen's Cycle Classical Latin is situated. My reconstruction is that, at the beginning of our written documentation, Latin has just completed a round of the Cycle. Consequently, Early Latin *non* is a NM originating from a reinforcer and has an XP status. I show that it maintains this status in Classical Latin (CL); the reduction to an X⁰ happens first in Late Latin (LL) and is connected to general changes in clausal structure (§4).

First of all, a phrasal status is diachronically plausible for CL *non*, since we have evidence that it is the product of a recent Jespersen's Cycle (See Fruyt 2011: 708-723 for a thorough discussion). Its etymology is shown in (15): CL *non* has an origin similar to that of e.g. the German short answer particle *nein* 'no', consisting of the original Proto-Latin negation *nē* (from the common Indo-European negative particle **ne*) and the cardinal numeral 'one', here with the pragmatic function of scalar endpoint (comparable to that of minimizers).¹²

(15) *nōn* <*nē*+**oinom* = *oenum* (= *ūnum*) 'not (even) one'

Latin *non* originates as a reinforced negation which bleaches into a plain one. The process must have come to completion just before the beginning of written attestation: in the archaic Twelve Tables, negation is never realized by *non* (Adams 1994: 11); moreover, the unreduced form of the adverb *noenu(m)* is still attested in archaic authors (16), and its emphatic contribution is still appreciable:

(16) *si hodie noenum venis, cras quidem sis veneris*
 if today not.at.all come:2SG tomorrow then please come:2SG
 'if you do not come (at all) today, then please do come tomorrow' (Varro cited by Non. 144.2, from Fruyt 2011: 709)

The process by which a quantificational argument becomes an adverb and, if negative, further proceeds to grammaticalize into a NM is well attested cross-linguistically. Bayer

¹² Note that also NIs (*nemo*, *nihil*, *nullus* etc.) originate from the agglutination of *ne* with a lexical base, see Fruyt (2011).

(2009) has discussed it for German *nichts* and Garzonio and Poletto (2012), Poletto (2014b: 148-165) for Italian *niente*. In Piedmontese *nen* has become a NM. In Greek, the Modern negative marker *dhen* originates from the adverbially used neuter form of the indefinite *oudén* ‘nothing’, see Chatzopoulou (2015). Bridging contexts for this development are represented by verbs whose internal argument may be optional or ambiguous, such as optionally transitive verbs (e.g. *eat*, *read*) or predicates combining with a measure phrase (e.g. motion verbs, psychological predicates), see Willis et al. (2013: 16-18).

In the available Latin documentation there are no traces of a doubling stage, where the old NM *ne* co-occurs with *noenu(m)*. Therefore, a plausible reconstruction of the renewal process involves reinforcement by substitution rather than by doubling. A functional parallel in historical Latin could be represented by the adverbial use of *nihil/nil* ‘nothing’ as reinforcing substitute for *non*:

- (17) ego complexum huius **nihil** moror
 I:NOM hug:ACC this:GEN nothing care:1SG
 ‘but I care nothing about his hug’ (Pl.Asin.642)

Moreover, unlike other well-known instantiation of Jespersen’s Cycle, Latin does not show a shift from a pre-verbal to a post-verbal NM. This conforms to the Infl-final nature of Classical Latin. For similar cases cf. Greek (Chatzopoulou 2015) and, within Romance, *manco* in the variety from Basilicata discussed by Garzonio and Poletto (2014).

A second aspect supporting the XP analysis of *non* comes from its syntactic autonomy. The sentential NM always precedes, but is not necessarily adjacent to the finite verb, cf. (18) and (1d-e). Moreover, it counts as full word for second-position phenomena and can itself host prosodically weak elements, like forms of *esse* ‘to be’ (Adams 1994: 9-12).

- (18) **Non** edepol nunc ubi terrarum sim scio
 not by.Pollux now where lands:GEN be:1SG know:1SG
 ‘I absolutely do not know where of all places I am’ (Pl.Amph.336)

It is plausible that when it is clause-initial, *non* undergoes Operator movement to a C-peripheral Focus position (Adams 1994 notes the emphatic character of these constructions).

This distribution suggests that *non* could carry (focus) stress. The possibility of being stressed seems to be a crucial factor in the development of Jespersen’s Cycle: it allows for the negation to be pragmatically reinforced / emphasized without the addition of further lexical material; it is, thus, a blocking factor in the reanalysis of the negative marker as a weak element / clitic exclusively attaching to the verb.

A third element is provided by the behavior of *non* in the ‘Why not?’-test, first proposed by Merchant (2006); in elliptical constructions, only XP-negators can adjoin to other phrasal elements, whereas heads are excluded.

- (19) a. warum **nicht**? (German)
 b. pourquoi **pas**? (French)
 c. *perché **non**? (Italian)

Latin *non* can indeed appear in structures involving this kind of adjunction, to *quor* (= *cur*) ‘why’ or to *vel* ‘or’:

- (20) a. A: tibi ego credam? B: quor **non**? A: quia...
 you:DAT I:NOM believe:1SG why not because...
 A: ‘Should I believe you?’ B: ‘Why not?’ A: ‘because...’
 (Pl.Pseud.318)
- b. Vel adest uel **non**.
 either come:3SG or not
 ‘Either he comes or he does not’ (Pl.Mil.1019)

However, Merchant (2006) notes a limitation for this test in languages where the NM is homophonous with the particle used in negative answers (e.g. Spanish *¿porqué no?*). Since CL *non* is also used in this function (alone or with repetition of main predicate), this test may be inconclusive, since in principle a homophony between an X⁰ NM and an XP answer particle cannot be excluded:

- (21) A: ‘venitne homo ad te?’ B: ‘**Non!**’
 come:3SG-INT man:NOM to you:ACC no
 ‘A: Is the man not coming to you? B: No!’ (Pl.Pseud.4.6)

A further limitation encountered in Latin in order to establish the phrase-structural status of the NM concerns the difficulty of applying tests related to verb movement known from research on Romance: XP-NMs do not interfere with V-to-C movement, unlike X⁰-NMs, which block it, as is clearest with imperatives (Zanutini 1997). Unfortunately this test cannot be straightforwardly applied to Latin *non*, because in prohibitions, which would represent a clear potential case of V-to-C, a special negation *nē* appears (cf. Pinkster 2015: 682-683).

Despite these limitations, the evidence seen above warrants the conclusion that CL *non* is an adverbial XP behaving like an adjunct in the TP-area, above the landing site for the inflected verb. Accordingly, the structure in (14) should be modified as in (22):

- (22) [FP[EPP] [VP S O V] [F⁰ [TP NegXP [T⁰VP]]]]

4. From Classical to Late Latin

In CL, as long as the NM has an XP distribution, the behavior of NIs, which always introduce a semantic negation independently of their syntactic position, blocks a possible reanalysis of *non* as Spec, NegP: according to the analysis in §2, if a NegP were activated, elements conveying a negative operator would need to establish a visible syntactic relation with it. However, in LL (and starting already in the 1st century CE) the distribution of NIs changes drastically, hinting at a restructuring of the negation system. Despite the general drift towards VO (cf. Danckaert 2012, Ledgeway 2012), NIs start to be found exclusively in pre-verbal position. The corpus investigation by Gianollo (2016) shows that OV order with NIs is even more consistent in LL than in early CL.¹³ Many of these pre-V object NIs appear to be emphatic / focused (23a); they are very often found in replacive (‘not *x* but *y* /

¹³ The result is replicated with the negative adverb *numquam* ‘never’, which in the corpus precedes the inflected verb without exceptions. However, here a difference with CL is less noticeable, since the adverb is pre-Inf also there, with few exceptions.

y not x ') and exceptive ('no one but x ') negation. Often they are fronted with stranding of the remnant NP (23b):

(23) a. levantes autem oculos suos **neminem** viderunt nisi
 raise:PTCP then eyes:ACC their:ACC nobody:ACC see:3PL if.not
 solum Iesum
 only:ACC Jesus:ACC
 'When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus' (Matth.17.8)

b. ego **nullam** invenio in eo causam
 I:NOM no:ACC find:1SG in he:ABL charge:ACC
 'I find no basis for a charge against him' (Ioh.18.38)

The steady OV order for NIs does not seem to be paralleled by similar phenomena affecting NPIs or other quantificational elements in LL: this suggests that their distribution is constrained by their negative value. Note that they keep behaving as non-concord elements.

The persistence of OV orders with negative objects during the shift from OV to VO is well known from the history of Germanic and Romance, and various explanations have been proposed, which I will not be able to discuss here for reasons of space. For LL, I interpret this situation as evidence for a change in the negation system. Specifically, I argue that in LL the NM *non* is reanalyzed as the [iNeg] head of a clausal NegP projection. This is expected given Jespersen's Cycle and is motivated in acquisitional perspective by the diachronic structure-minimizing tendency known as Spec-to-Head principle / Head Preference Principle (van Gelderen 2004): 'Be a head, rather than a phrase'. The new Neg⁰ stays in the same pre-Infl position in the TP-area (the surface pattern is thus compatible with both the old and the new analysis, cf. (22) vs (14)); this high position of Latin negation is transmitted to Romance.

General changes involving clause structure conspire to provide the conditions for this reanalysis. Danckaert (2012: 333-334) presents a number of facts (loss of a form of Left Edge Fronting, decay of VOAux orders, position of adverbs) pointing to the conclusion that the EPP-motivated ν P-movement of CL seen in §3 is lost in LL. This does not lead directly to the demise of OV, but has important frequency effects, since now the individual arguments move separately, and may thus become subject to pragmatically motivated restrictions (cf. Polo 2004), or to new movement requirements. One such requirement, I propose, is the need for NIs bringing about sentential negation to escape the c-command domain of the new NegP and realize the negative operator in the CP-TP phase.

Once *non* is reanalyzed as an X⁰, it acquires a formal [iNeg] feature. A clausal NegP becomes syntactically active: in my analysis this means that, whenever sentential negation has to be conveyed, a semantic negation operator is inserted in NegP and requires overt realization in the CP-TP phase. I propose that this can be achieved by inserting *non* but also by moving the NI to Spec, NegP: both elements can realize the semantic negation operator. This way, I motivate the consistent pre-verbal position of NIs as a way to comply with the new requirement emerging with the activation of NegP in the CP-TP phase.

In the LL system, thus, the absence of co-occurrence of the NIs and the NM in a single negation reading is derived in a way similar to non-strict NC in §2.3: indefinites belonging to the negation system and preceding the inflected verb (i.e. landing in the CP-TP phase) suffice to express sentential negation. Since, due to the activation of NegP, sentential

negation has to be realized in the CP-TP phase, post-Infl NIs are excluded: due to the absence of formal features, they would not be able to create a dependency with the Neg projection in the higher phase and would, therefore, not convey sentential negation.

Under this analysis LL is a ‘concealed Negative Concord language’: the prerequisites for Romance NC (a negative marker at Stage I of a new Jespersen's Cycle, but also an increasing post-verbal order for objects) are already present at this stage.

The ‘visible’ Concord option in the form of doubling is not yet possible, though, for two reasons: (i) NIs are not reanalyzed in their feature composition (they remain [Neg]) and (ii) no n-words are present in the system.

Because of (i), NIs are forced to a pre-verbal position and become obsolete in the new VO grammar. In few cases they end up being featurally reanalyzed in Romance (Old French *nul* and Old Italian *nullo* < Latin NULLUM are Concord elements), but mostly they are ousted by new, more flexible products of grammaticalization (n-words and NPIs). In my account, the absence of featural reanalysis motivates the extensive lexical replacement in this domain taking place in Romance.

As for (ii), the negative operator licenses NPIs in its c-command domain. As mentioned in §2.4, NPIs can bring about a focused reading and thus function as reinforcers of negation.

The conventionalization of the privileged relation with the negative operator (a form of grammaticalization) takes NPIs to gradually develop into non-emphatic [uNeg] n-words. This process affects old NPIs (*aliquis* ‘some or other’ is a good example, cf. Gianollo 2013), but also prompts the creation of new ones. Latin never becomes a full-fledged NC language in our written documentation, and new n-words develop to a large extent in the individual Romance languages. However, there are some signs of a common inheritance: a shared pattern is observable, for instance, in the various Romance versions of the combinations NECUNUM (e.g. Old Italian *niuno*, Italian *nessuno*, Old French *negun*, Spanish *ningun*) and NEC (G)ENTEM (e.g. Italian *niente*, Old French *nient*); *nec* (here ‘not even’) functions as a focus particle, and the ensuing indefinite can be argued to have originally been an emphatic reinforcer of negation (Gianollo 2016). Some early traces of this process are already found in LL texts:

- (24) Ramessen civitas nunc campus est, ita ut **nec** **unam**
 Rameses:NOM city:NOM now field:NOM is so that not.even one:ACC
 habitationem habeat
 dwelling:ACC be:3SG
 ‘the city Rameses is now a level site without a single dwelling’ (Itin. Eg.8.1, from Bertocchi et al. 2010: 82)

Clearly, sociolinguistic factors connected to text transmission do not give us the full picture here: the documents, to a great extent, reproduce a conservative system and allow us only a glimpse into the seeds of Romance grammaticalization phenomena. It is all the more significant that a strong hint to the restructuring of the system, like the pre-verbal positioning of NIs, is clearly observable in LL texts.

5. Conclusions

I provided a formal analysis for the Double Negation system of Classical Latin, and discussed how we can reconstruct the crucial change that forms the prerequisite for the Negative Concord systems of the Romance languages. This change, the reanalysis of the

negative marker *non* as a head, happens in Late Latin and is thus a common inheritance in Romance. In Late Latin we also see that the old negative indefinites are increasingly subject to distributional restrictions that lead to their decay. New strategies to express existential quantification in the scope of negation emerge in the form of old and new NPIs; these elements will further develop into n-words, giving rise to full-fledged Negative Concord systems in Romance.

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