

# On negative doubling

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## 1. Introduction

In this work I aim at accounting for a complex set of phenomena and empirical generalizations which have been observed in work connected to the ASIS project (Atlante Sintattico dell'Italia Settentrionale 'Syntactic Atlas of Northern Italy') by means of a unitary framework which stems from the cartographic approach initiated by Rizzi (1997) for the CP layer and Cinque (1999) for the IP.

The first set of data I will discuss in section 2 is the one described in Zanuttini (1997), who discovered that the NIDs (Northern Italian dialects) display four distinct positions where a sentential negative marker can occur, as they are differently distributed with respect to the inflected verb and past participle and with respect to lower adverbs. She adopts Cinque's theory according to which adverbs are located in the specifiers of functional projections in the IP and cannot be moved unless they are focalized. Given that focalization has clear interpretive and phonological properties, it is easy to control for this variable; hence, sentential adverbs have become in the cartographic approach the most reliable test to determine where a given DP (or QP, pronoun etc.) is exactly located. Her work constitutes a starting point for further questions we can ask ourselves. If syntactic structure were the direct reflection of semantics, we would expect all languages to encode sentential negation in the same position, which should be a very high one in the clause structure, as it encodes the truth value of the whole proposition. On the one hand, such a high position is not realized in any of the dialects examined by Zanuttini or present in the ASIS data base. On the other hand, one could hypothesize that sentential negation can be realized in any position in the IP, but again on 150 dialects only four positions are found.

Furthermore, I will show that there exists a parallel between the syntactic distribution of the types of negation and their etymological origin, which is uniform for each type of negation.

This fact also deserves an explanation which goes beyond the historical accident.

A third set of data comes from the observation that in some syntactic contexts it is possible to have doubling or tripling of negative markers. This will be presented in section 3. The whole geographic domain presents all logical combinations of doubling negative markers, as we will see. It is worth

noticing that in all cases, there is no double (or triple) negation reading, but one of negative concord, a fact which needs to be integrated into the general framework.

In section 5 I also deal with facts that are known as exceptions to well known descriptive generalizations on negation formulated in the literature. A general framework of negation should be flexible enough to explain even exceptional cases.

The theoretical proposal I intend to put forth is illustrated in section 4 and can be seen as an extension of the cartographic approach to the syntax of negation: I will hypothesize that what is commonly referred to as a single functional projection NegP is a complex set of projections, a “circuit”, each with its own semantic value and with a distinct element lexicalizing it., They all contribute to the interpretation of the clause as negative. The whole complex (which I will still refer to as NegP, much in the way we refer to IP or CP layers although we know they are made up by several projections) containing all the n-words found in the clause originates in the specifier position of a very low projection located on top of the VP, as some negative markers show sensitivity to Aspect, which is located quite low in the IP. The general idea behind this hypothesis is that Italian dialects do not mark negation as a syntactic counterpart of the formula ‘ $\neg$  P’ but do it rather in a compositional way by means of several syntactic projections whose activation contributes to the meaning of the sentence as negative. This proposal has been made by several authors for sentence typing, and I apply it here to negation.

Furthermore, I will propose that each projection internal to the NegP has its own counterpart in the IP where unvalued features require either movement or agree of the corresponding interpretable feature located inside the NegP. The mechanism is the standard one for the evaluation of features in the minimalist framework, namely either movement or agree. Therefore, the mechanism according to which each element located inside the NegP moves to check its position in IP is similar to the one found in doubling contexts according to the theory put forth for DP doubling by authors like Kayne (1975), Uriagereka (1991), and more recently updated by Belletti (2004) and Poletto (2007): the relevant projection inside the complex NegP is moved to its target in the IP. The IP-projections in the clause which host negative elements correspond to the four NegPs found by Zanuttini in her survey. However, far from being independent they all host elements coming from the same complex NegP.

## **2. The distribution of negative markers**

### *2.1 The internal structure of NegP*

Zanuttini (1997) provides evidence for at least four positions for negative markers in the clause structure:

- (1) [NegP1 non [TP1 V+Agr [NegP2 mica [ TP2 [AdvP already] [NegP3 niente [ Asp perf. V<sub>past part</sub> [Asp gen/progr  
[AdvP always] [NegP4 NO]]]]]]]]]]

She establishes the position of the negative markers with respect to the position of the verb and to (low) adverbs located in TPs and AspPs following Cinque’s hierarchy of adverbs. The results of ordering tests concerning the relative position of negative markers and the adverbs indicated in (1) provide the above structure. Moreover, Zanuttini’s work shows that negative markers located in distinct positions have different properties. I will summarize them here: the first element taken into account is the preverbal negative marker (NegP1 in Zanuttini’s terms) corresponding to standard Italian *non*, which I will refer to as the “scalar” negative marker, as it displays scalar properties, as shown in a very convincing way in Roorick (2008).

Scalar negative markers (defined by their position higher than the inflected verb) are always heads and often also display clitic properties, as they occur in positions inside the clitic field and interspersed with object or different subject clitics. In all dialects, they are obligatory with postverbal negative quantifiers (sometimes also with preverbal negative quantifiers).<sup>1</sup> This type of phenomenon is also referred to as negative concord. There are reasons to believe that the negative concord phenomenon found in cases of negative doubling like the one in (2) are different from the negative concord phenomenon which occurs between a negative marker and a negative quantifier exemplified in (3). For the sake of clarity, I will refer to cases like (2) as negative doubling and cases like (3) as negative concord

- (2) No la go miga magnada NO!  
Not it have not eaten not  
‘I really did not eat it’

- (3) a **No** 'l è lugà **nogugn**  
No the is come nobody  
‘No one came’  
b **Nisun no** vien più casa mia *Venice*  
Nobody not comes more my home

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<sup>1</sup> Note incidentally that the case in which the preverbal negative marker cooccurs with a preverbal negative quantifier is also a counterexample to the empirical generalization that the head is always higher than the XP, in this case the negative quantifier precedes the negative marker.

‘No one ever comes to my place’

Moreover, scalar negation cannot occur with true imperative forms, only with ambiguous ones or suppletive forms (which are generally infinitives, but Zanuttini reports cases of Southern Italian dialects where a gerund is used and in Spanish a subjunctive form is used)

- (4) \*no va  
not go+imperative  
‘Don’t go’

This type of negative marker also induces a block on V to C movement, as the following example

shows: subject clitic inversion is blocked in negative contexts, which are only grammatical when a postverbal negative marker is inserted (see Zanuttini (1997):68)

- (5) \*No vienlo? Padova  
Not comes-he?

- (6) No vienlo miga?  
Not comes-he not?  
‘Isn’t he coming?’

The second type of negative morphemes, those located in NegP2 according to Zanuttini’s work, are referred to as “minimizers” here, as their etymological source is uniform in the sense that they all derive from elements originally indicating a small quantity.<sup>2</sup> They are also often phonologically reduced, but they are probably weak pronouns, not clitics, as they do not interfere with verb movement in interrogative clauses and do not occur inside the clitic field:

- (7) Magnelo mina? S. Anna (VE)  
Eat-it not  
‘Isn’t he eating?’

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<sup>2</sup> they derive from the word meaning “step” *pa*, “crumble” *brisa*, *mina/miga/minga*, “morsel” *bucca*

The pattern of negative concord and minimal negation is varied: in the majority of the dialects this type of negation does not allow for negative concord, but in some dialects this is possible, though generally not obligatory. I report here a case of two very close dialects spoken in the same village which illustrate the point (for an extensive examination of minimizer negation in Emilian dialects, see Colombini (2007))

- (8) a E'n m'a *briza / mia* vest *endsun* (Zocca 1)  
 SCL not me has not/not seen nobody
- b E'n m'a vest *entsun* (Zocca 2)  
 SCL not mne has seen nobody  
 'Nobody saw me'

In the first example the negative quantifier cooccurs with scalar and minimizer negation, in the second example only scalar negation is found.

Moreover, minimizers are perfectly compatible with true imperative forms, as the following test shows:

- (9) Movat mia! S. Antonino (CH)  
 Move not!  
 'Don't move!'

It is worth noticing that in some dialects this type of negative marker also requires an infinitival form, though it is not preverbal:

- (10) Movrat mia! Albinea (Emilian)  
 Move-infinit.yourself not! 'Don't move!'

This phenomenon will be discussed in section 5.

The distribution of the third type of negation, the morphemes located in Neg3 in Zanuttini's work lower than the adverb 'already' but higher than 'always' is the following:

- (11) A l'avia già nen volu 'ntlura *Piemontese* (Zanuttini (1997) 3:(29))  
 He it had already not wanted then  
 Already at that time he had not wanted to

(12) A l'ha nen dine sempre tut (Zanuttini (1997) 3: (32))

He he has not said-us always everything

‘He did not always tell us all’

I will term this type of markers “quantifier negation”, because the negative marker is originally the negative quantifier meaning ‘nothing’. This type of negative markers are always compatible with true imperative forms, i.e. there are no recorded cases similar to (10) in which the negative marker still changes the verbal form although it is not scalar negation. They can be compatible with negative quantifiers, although there are restrictions, they can also be found in the CP layer followed by a complementizer

(13) A parla nen cun gnun (Zanuttini (1997) 3: (55))

He speaks not with nobody

‘he does not speak with anybody’

(14) Parla nen! (Zanuttini (1997) 4: (20b))

Talk not!

‘Do not talk’

(15) par nen ch’a s stofeissa

so not that he himself get-tired

‘in order for him not to get tired’

The last type of negative marker is the one I will term Focus negation, because it is always stressed and has the same form of the negative marker indicating a pro-sentence negation ‘no’. This type of elements, which are always located right at the end of the clause, never undergo negative concord with a negative quantifier and can be used in imperatives:

(16) a Su no *Milan*

(I) know not

‘I do not know’

b L'è rivà nisun

It is come nobody

‘No one came’

c Piof pu

Rains more

‘It stopped raining’  
 d L’a mangià no  
 he has eaten not  
 ‘He is not eating’

(17) Vusa no!  
 Shout+imp not  
 ‘Don’t shout’

These four types of negative markers are etymologically uniform across dialects, this does not mean that they all derive from the same item, but that their development is similar: for instance all dialects which have developed minimizer negation did it by means of words originally indicating a small amount, like *brisa*, *mica* ‘crumble’ *pa(s)* ‘step’ “morsel” *bucca*. Similarly, all dialects that have developed quantifier negation formed it through the negative quantifier corresponding to ‘nothing’.

(18) each negative marker singled out by Zanuttini corresponds to an “etymological type” in the sense that all elements found in a given position have developed from homogeneous classes.

Scalar negation, namely preverbal *no(n)* (which can be either a clitic or an independent head) which all derives from Latin *non* (which was originally a complex item). Minimal negation derives from polarity items indicating a minimal quantity like French *pas* (Lat. *passum* ‘step’) Emilian *brisa* ‘crumble’, Lombard *minga* ‘crumble’, Northern Lombard *bucca* ‘morsel’. The class of postverbal negative markers including Piedmontese *nen* and Rhaetoromance *nia* derives from (and in some dialects still are homophonous with) the negative quantifier corresponding to ‘nothing’.

The postverbal negative marker *NO*, which corresponds to pro-CP negation in all dialects that have this form.

The distribution of the four types of sentential negation and the descriptive generalization formulated in (18) give rise to a number of questions, which I will try to provide an answer for in this work:

- a) why do we have four types and not three or five, or just one?
- b) why just these etymological types and not others?

- c) why are those types distributed in the way they are in the structure of the clause? One could postulate out that either there is only one position for sentential negation or that each FP of the clausal structure hosts a NegP at the top. In the latter case, NegP is then interpreted in a given position (perhaps in CP?) in all languages

The basic idea that should account for at least part of the data seen above is a development of the Pollock's (1989) idea that NegP is complex. Pollock places *ne* in the head and *pas* in the Spec position of a NegP, thus assuming that NegP has an internal layering. I would like to push this idea even further and assume that NegP has an internal functional structure and I would like to use the generalization in (18) on the etymological origin of negative markers to identify what the structure of NegP is. The second ingredient of the analysis is the assumption that the structure of the clause contains NegP positions which corresponds to those located in the internal structure of the NegP and which need checking by the negative marker(s).

If all negative markers found in the NIDs are originally part of a single constituent, the internal layering of NegP is the following:

(19) [NEGP [ Focus/Operator NO [ScalarP non [MinQ mica [QP niente [ExistentialP ]]]

Thus, in order to maintain Pollock's original intuition that negative markers start out as a unit and integrate the data coming from the observation of NIDs, the structure of NegP has to be enriched as shown above: thus, NegP is not a simple syntactic projection, but needs various layers: an existential one, a minimizer, a scalar one, and an operator of some sort (see below).

Notice that the idea that all elements that we see interspersed in the sentence form a unit is independent from the idea that negation is compositional.

## 2.2 *Doubling and Tripling*

I will now examine the features and position of each of these elements, represented in the structure above by standard Italian morphemes.

Although the NegP starts out as a complex unit, each item contained in it moves to a different projection located at a different height in the sentence structure. In other words, what I propose here is that double (or triple) negative markers are instances of doubling in a technical sense: as clitic doubling has been proposed to be due to a splitting procedure of a unit made of a DP and a clitic, usually referred to as "big DP" (see a.o. Belletti (2004)), the phenomenon of double



negative markers located in different points of the syntactic tree is due to the splitting of the complex NegP illustrated above.

If this is so, we expect to find all possible combinations of negative markers in some dialects, and even cases of tripling or quadrupling.

This is in fact the case, although in the majority of the dialects doubling or tripling has semantic import in the sense that it expresses the speaker's attitude towards the event not taking place.

There are also dialects where the combination of two negative markers does not give rise to any special reading, (as it is the case of standard French).<sup>3</sup> The combination of scalar negation with a minimizer, similar to French, is attested in the Emilian area, rather in the central part of Northern Italy.

- (20) *A n magn menga la cherna* (Carpi)  
SCL note at not the meat 'I do not eat meat'

The combination between scalar negation and quantifier negation is attested in the Rhaetoromance area (in the Badia valley).

- (21) *Dytaurela n el nia gny* (S. Leonardo di Badia)  
Yet not is- he not come 'He has not come yet'

The combination between scalar negation and focus negation is attested in the Trentino area (although this type of negation is going back to a system where only preverbal negation is found, or focus negation is only used in special contexts), and is known to have existed in Milanese in the XVI century (see Vai (1996)), which has nowadays only Focus negation.

As far as I know, there are no dialects where it is possible to combine minimizers and quantifier negation, minimizers and focus negation or quantified and focus negation without any special semantics (i.e. without giving rise to non standard negation). This might be due to a historical

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<sup>3</sup> The geographical distribution of standard negation (i.e. non presuppositional negation) is the following: In the Eastern Area standard negation is provided by a preverbal negative marker of the *no(n)* type. This area includes Veneto, Friuli, Trentino and partly Romagnolo, and the Rhaetoromance dialects of the Fassa Valley and Cortina. In the Western area standard negation is provided by a postverbal negative marker of different types (in Lombard Focus negation, in Piedmont quantifier negation) except for the Ligurian area which pattern with the East. Emilian dialects display doubling negation with a combination of scalar and minimizer negation of the standard French type, (which is also a stage attested in all dialects which nowadays have postverbal negation (this confirms Jespersen's cycle). Some Rhaetoromance dialects (Badia and Gardena) also display discontinuous negation but of the type scalar+ quantifier negation type. Hence, there is no real homogeneous trend from East to West, although this is the rough situation at first sight.

accident, as all dialects started out with a “high” type of negation, the scalar one, or it might be a meaningful lack in the paradigm. With the data base used here, it is not possible to make a choice between these two options, because other language types should be taken into account.<sup>4</sup>

However, the combinations which are not found for standard negation are all attested in different dialects when a special attitude of the speaker is signalled, which I will refer to as “non standard negation”.<sup>5</sup> Even dialects that are considered to have only preverbal negation display all the types of negation, in special pragmatic contexts (which I will not analyze here).<sup>6</sup>

I will illustrate the point with Veneto dialects: scalar negation can be combined with any other type provided the right context is given

- |      |   |                                                    |                     |
|------|---|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| (22) | a | Nol me piaze<br>Not-it me likes ‘I do not like it’ |                     |
|      | b | Nol me piaze miga<br>Not-it me likes not           | scalar + minimizer  |
|      | c | Nol me piaze gninte<br>Not-it me likes nothing     | scalar + quantifier |
|      | d | Nol me piaze NO<br>Not-it me likes no              | scalar + focus      |

The sentences in (22) show that doubling is always possible with preverbal negation with all other negation types. Tripling obtained either by the combination of scalar, minimizer and focus negation or by scalar quantifier and focus is also attested:

- (23) No la go miga magnada NO!  
Not it have not eaten not ‘I did not eat it’
- (24) No-l me piaze gninte NO!  
Not-it me likes not NOT ‘I do not like it at all’

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<sup>4</sup> For instance some Dutch dialects display the occurrence of what seems to be quantified and focus negation as standard negation. Therefore, the lack in the paradigm would be accidental and due to the fact that we are looking at languages which are all undergoing a similar diachronic process.

<sup>5</sup> I will make use of the distinction between standard negation and non standard negation, meaning by that negative markers that can only occur under certain pragmatic conditions related to the speakers or addressee expectations.

<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, non standard negation is the key into the different stages of Jespersen’s cycle, a topic I will not undergo here.

Notice however that in Veneto, the combination of minimizer and quantifier negation is not possible, probably due to the different implicatures the two types of negative markers instantiate in these dialects:

- (25) \*Nol me piaze miga gninte  
Not-it me likes not NOT

Therefore, Veneto dialects do not display quadrupling cases either:

- (26) \*Nol me piaze miga gninte NO  
Not-it me likes not not NOT

However, the combination between minimizers and quantifier negation is by no means impossible in other dialects. In Piedmontese, where quantifier negation is the standard negative marker, the combination with minimizer negation is indeed possible, so there is no a priori ban against this combination, it just depends on the implicature they are associated with in the relevant dialect.

- (27) Fa pa nen sulì (Zanuttini (1997:46))  
Do not not that 'Don't do that'

The conclusion we can draw is that any type of negative markers is compatible with any other, in some cases the combination gives rise to standard negation, but in no case do we find .

### 2.3 *Negative splitting*

Having seen that all possible combinations are attested, we can ask how doubling is to be explained. If we pursue the idea that negative doubling is analogous to DP doubling, then our analysis should consist of two parts a) the internal layering of the original unit, in our case NegP, which has already been illustrated above b) a splitting procedure of the complex NegP with different pieces moving to different projections in the clause structure (corresponding to the feature of the projection they are merged in). In recent work I have proposed that the mechanism of DP doubling works as follows:

- (28) [[KP [K° cl] [DP]] →

(29) [[<sub>XP</sub> DP [<sub>X°</sub> [<sub>KP</sub> [<sub>K°</sub> cl] ] **[DP]**]] →

(30) [IP [<sub>clP</sub> [<sub>KP</sub> [<sub>K°</sub> cl] ] **[DP]**... [VP V [[<sub>XP</sub> DP [<sub>X°</sub> [<sub>KP</sub> [<sub>K°</sub> cl] ] **[DP]**]]]]]

The first step is a complex structure which contains the two (or more) pieces, here represented by a clitic and a DP (however, as Belletti (2004) proposed, the doublers of a DP could also be a quantifier or a tonic focussed pronoun). The second step is movement of the lower portion of the structure out of the big DP, probably first moving through the specifier of the highest projection in the DP and then to a Specifier projection in the IP (labelled as XP in (29) and (30)); the third step is movement of the remnant containing the clitic to the position attracting clitics in the IP, as in (30).

Originating the two “pieces”, the clitic/tonic/quantifier and the DP, as one single item solves the problem of a single thematic role and case for what is now a discontinuous constituent. Moreover, if this view is correct, clitics are not heads, but XPs, which include the trace/copy of the (small) moved DP.

The same type of mechanism can be applied to NegP. Let us just try to illustrate one case, namely the most widespread one of discontinuous negation which has a scalar and a minimizer negative marker:

(31) NEGP: [ Focus/Operator NO [<sub>ScalarP</sub> non [<sub>MinQ</sub> mica [<sub>QP</sub> no [<sub>ExistentialP</sub> thing ]]]]]

Here the only two projections occupied by lexical elements inside the complex unit labelled as NegP are ScalarP and MinP. The derivation proceeds as follows:

- a) movement of MinP to the highest specifier of NegP (here XP as in (26)),

[<sub>XP</sub>[[<sub>MinQ</sub> mica [<sub>QP</sub> [<sub>ExistentialP</sub> ]]] [<sub>Focus/Operator</sub> [<sub>ScalarP</sub> non [**MinP** mica [<sub>QP</sub> [<sub>ExistentialP</sub> ]]]]]

- b) movement of MinP out of NegP in the IP projection where minimizers occur (namely higher than TanteriorP where adverbs like ‘already’ are located, but lower than TP where the inflected verb occurs).<sup>7</sup>

[<sub>FinP</sub>... [<sub>ScalarP</sub> [<sub>TP</sub>... [**MinP** [[<sub>MinQ</sub> mica [<sub>QP</sub> [<sub>ExistentialP</sub> ]]]]... [<sub>TanteriorP</sub>... [...NEGP[[**MinP** mica [<sub>QP</sub> [<sub>ExistentialP</sub> ]]]] [<sub>Focus/Operator</sub> [<sub>ScalarP</sub> non [**MinP** mica [<sub>QP</sub> [<sub>ExistentialP</sub> ]]]]... [<sub>VP</sub>]]]]]]

<sup>7</sup> Here both MinP and TanteriorP are signalled in bold

- c) movement of the remnant containing the scalar marker to a higher position in the IP located above TP:<sup>8</sup>

[FinP... [ScalarP [...NEGP [ Focus/Operator [ScalarP non [MinQ mica [QP [ExistentialP ]]]]]] [TP... [MinP [[MinQ mica [QP [ExistentialP ]]]... [T anteriorP... [... [NEGPT [MinQ mica [QP [ExistentialP ]]]] [Focus/Operator [ScalarP non [MinQ mica [QP [ExistentialP ]]]]... [VP]

The derivation is thus entirely parallel to the one of DPs: in both cases a complex unit is split and the two pieces move to different projection in IP to check the feature they have in a position of the same type indicated by the same label. As in the case of DPs and clitics sharing one case and one thematic role, making the hypothesis that the two negative markers originate as one single unit solves a very major interpretive problem, as the sentence is interpreted as having only one negation and not two as it might be expected.<sup>9</sup> So, negative doubling, which is often considered to be a case of negative concord, is doubling in a technical sense.<sup>10</sup> Notice that what I have termed here ScalarP and MinimizerP correspond entirely to NegP1 and NegP2 in Zanuttini's work. However, this is more than a notational variant: what is meant here is that these two positions do not have the same features, although both contribute to mark as the sentence as negative. In order to render the analysis more precise, we also have to investigate the position of the other two negative markers, which have received much less attention in the literature, probably due to the fact that they do not occur in standard Romance languages (though Portuguese might have a negative marker similar to focus negation NO).

### 3. The highest negative marker NO

The highest element in the internal structure of the complex NegP above is the pro-sentence negative marker NO, which I will claim is located in a very high position in the clause structure. Zanuttini (1997) already reports that NO is related to Focus in Pavese and Milanese. It is definitely related to Focus in the North-Eastern dialects, where it can occur either at the end of the clause (in some dialects even after an embedded clause) or at the beginning:

<sup>8</sup> Here both ScalarP and TP are signalled in bold

<sup>9</sup> This should be the structure of languages having real double negation, the two negative markers are not analyzed as part of one single unit.

<sup>10</sup> I do not think that negative concord with negative quantifiers is the same type of phenomenon, because there are dialects where negative doubling is possible while negative concord with quantifiers is not. One such case is Milanese, see Vai (1996).

- (32) No ghe so ndà NO  
 Not there are gone NOT ‘I did not go there’
- (33) NO che no ghe so ndà  
 NOT that not there are gone ‘I did not go there’

Notice that when NO occurs at the beginning of the clause, a complementizer is present, while this is not the case if it occurs at the end. I propose that the two sentences above are connected by movement in the following way: NO is always moved from within the NegP to a Focus position, which, following standard assumptions on the structure of the clause in Italian is located low in the CP area. When NO is in first position, the sentence follows it, when NO is in sentence final position, this is the result of a movement of the whole CP to a position, GroundP, which is located in the Topic field, higher than Focus (again following standard assumptions on the CP layer)

- (34) [ GroundP [CPFocus NO [FinP [Fin° che ...[IP no ghe so ndà]]]]
- (35) [SpecGroundP [IP no ghe so ndà] [Ground° [CPFocus NO] [FinP [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]] [Fin° [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]]

In favour of the idea that in both cases NO occupies a left peripheral position there are several arguments: the first is that NO occurs in sentence final position and only right dislocated items can occur after it:

- (36) No ghe so ndà NO, al cinema  
 Not there am gone NOT, to the cinema  
 ‘I really did not go to the cinema’
- (37) \*No ghe so ndà NO, da nisuna parte  
 Not there am gone NOT, to no place  
 ‘I really did not go anywhere’
- (38) \*Non mi ha detto NO su  
 Not me has told NO off  
 ‘He did not tell me off’

According to the hypothesis formulated in (35), this is due to the fact that the whole IP has to be moved, hence all IP-internal material has to occur before NO, and only elements which can be right dislocated (like definite PPs, but unlike Quantified PPs or verbal particles) can be found to the right of the negative marker.

The second argument is that NO is incompatible with elements whose position is typically associated to the lower portion of the CP layer, like wh-items:

- (39) \*Dove                                  non                                  sei                                  andato                                  NO?  
 Where not are gone NO?  
 ‘Where didn’t you go?’
- (40) \*Il ragazzo a cui non ho telefonato NO, è Gianni  
 The boy to whom not have phoned NO, is John  
 ‘The boy I did not phone is John’

NO is both incompatible with interrogative wh-items and with relative pronouns, which is expected if the two types of elements are banned by a minimality effect.

The third argument in favour of the idea that NO is located in the CP layer has to do with structures like the following:

- (41) Gianni sì che \*(l)’ho visto  
 Gianni YES that (him)have seen  
 ‘I saw Gianni indeed’
- (42) A Gianni NO che non lo darei  
 To Gianni NO that it not would-give  
 ‘I would never give it to Gianni’

Here we see that the whole clause has not moved, what has moved is a DP, or a PP hence movement to Ground is optional and GroundP can host different types of elements, the IP, a DP or a PP, as expected by a projection of this sort.

Notice that when NO is sentence initial, a complementizer appears, while this is not the case when the sentence is moved to SpecGroundP. In order to explain this asymmetry, I will simply propose that CP projections are subject to the Doubly filled comp filter, according to which the head and the specifier of the same projection cannot be both occupied at the same time. In the case of sentence final NO, the IP has moved to the SpecFin position before moving to SpecGround,

hence the ban against the occurrence of the complementizer. If the sentence does not move, FinP has to be realized, and this is done by means of merging a complementizer. Therefore, I will assume that NO is moved from its internal position inside the NegP to a Focus position in the CP layer. From there, the sentence or an XP can be moved to a position in the Topic field yielding the sentence final or second position of NO.

#### 4. Quantifier negation

The other type of negative marker which has received little attention in the literature, apart from Zanuttini's work, is quantifier negation. As mentioned above quantifier negation can be the standard negative marker in dialects like Piedmontese and Badia Rhaetoromance. In this case it is compatible with any verb type.

In the dialects in which quantifier negation is not the standard negative marker, but is a negative marker roughly meaning 'at all', the element 'nothing' seems *prima facie* incompatible with a direct object of transitive verbs and with some inaccusative subjects:

- (43) a Nol lavora gnente  
Not-he works nothing
- b Nol dorme gnente  
Not-he sleeps nothing
- c \*Nol leze gnente i libri  
Not-he reads nothing the books
- d \*Nol magna gnente la me torta  
Not-he eats nothing my cake
- e \*Nol riva gnente  
Not-he arrives nothing

This set of data might at first sight lead the observer to the conclusion that, though quantifier negation is not an object but a sort of adverbial element, it is still merged in object position and this is the reason why it is incompatible with objects (or inaccusative subjects). This is actually the hypothesis formulated by Bayer (2008) for *nichts* in German varieties or *nothing* in spoken English. However, a closer look at the phenomenon in the NIDs reveals a more complex picture, as some inaccusative verbs are indeed compatible with quantifier negation, and the same is true of subjects of psych-verbs (which, according to Belletti and Rizzi (1988), should be parallel to inaccusative subjects in being generated in the object position):



- (44) a No la crese gnente  
 Not she grows nothing  
 b Nol me piaze gninte  
 Not-it me likes nothing

Moreover, some types of objects are also compatible with quantifier negation, as the following contrast shows:

- (45) a \*Nol leze gnente i libri  
 Not-he reads nothing the books  
 b Nol leze gnente libri, solo giornai  
 Not-he reads nothing books, only newspapers

On the other hand, even some intransitive verbs are incompatible with quantifier negation, or require a special reading (as illustrated by the translations in the following examples)

- (46) a %Nol salta gnente  
 Not-he jumps nothing  
 \*It does not explode  
 Ok (said of a long jump athlete) He does not jump much  
 b %Nol impara gnente  
 He learns nothing (only object interpretation)

Hence, we cannot conclude that the relevant property in banning quantifier negation is the presence of an object. Rather, it is some type of aspectual distinction (or better *Aktionsart*), which can be activated by the presence of a definite object, or be intrinsic to the type of verb or required by the presence of some verb modifiers. The following pair is particularly clear: while *zolar* ‘fly’ is atelic, *zolar via* ‘fly away’ is telic, and quantifier negation is only compatible with the first verb, though in neither of the two cases is there an object.

- (47) No-l zola gnente, sto aereo di carta  
 Not-it flies nothing, this plane of paper ‘This paper plane cannot fly at all’  
 (48) \*Nol zola via gnente, sto aereo de carta

Not-it flies away nothing, this plane of paper ‘This paper plane cannot fly away at all’

One could conclude that telicity is the relevant notion required here to distinguish the subset of verbs which are compatible with quantifier negation.

However, the fact that *niente* is incompatible with telic verbs seems to be only a byproduct of a deeper property of the negative marker, as not all atelic verbs allow for *niente* to occur. *Cercare* ‘to look for’ is for instance atelic, but it is still incompatible with the negative quantifier.

(49) \*Non cerca niente libri

Not looks nothing books ‘He does not look for books at all’

In his work on adverbs, Cinque (1999) notes that quantifiers like *tutto/tutti* ‘everything/everybody’ occupy a Specifier position of aspectual projections. Apparently, the element ‘nothing’ does the same, it is located in the low position above the vP, a position where the relevant aspectual distinction is marked, so a connection to some aspectual feature must be somehow involved in the explanation.

One additional side which might shed some light on the puzzle and which needs to be further investigated is the fact that we do not find cases of “nobody” or other negative words which can be reanalyzed as the sentential negative marker.<sup>11</sup> On the one hand, the fact that ‘nothing’ is selected among the negative quantifiers to become the negative marker is part of a more general process which has to do with grammaticalization as loss of lexical features by the element becoming functional. On the other, this quantifier must have some syntactic/semantic special property which singles it out in the domain of negative quantifiers. Notice that the same type of process can be seen with wh-items, where the element becoming a wh-clitic (as the interrogative wh-item *que* in French, see Poletto and Pollock (2004)) or a complementizer is always the semantically (and syntactically) barest operator; in the sense that it has the smallest set of features because its lexical restrictor is virtually non-existent (see Obenauer (1994)).<sup>12</sup> So, while a wh-item like ‘who’ or ‘where’ contain a lexical restrictor which is respectively [+human] and [+place] the element corresponding to ‘what’ has no lexical restrictor, and thus it is the barest and more functional element, in a sense the ‘purest’ operator and most functional one due to lack of semantic

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<sup>11</sup> There seems to be cases of sentential negation formed with no+ever in the Germanic languages. It is however a fact that in Romance the corresponding element *mai* ‘never’ has not become a negative marker in any of the dialects present in the ASIS data base. The difference between the Germanic and its Romance counterpart, if a true one, still remains obscure.

<sup>12</sup> Notice that however, the element corresponding to the inanimate object is not the only one which can become a clitic, or a complementizer (see for instance cases of clitic whs corresponding to ‘where’ or complementizers like Bavarian *wo* ‘where’), it is only the most frequent one.

features and consequently to a different internal structure with no lexical restrictor. Hence, while elements like ‘noone’ etc. have a Q projection inside, followed by an existential one and a restrictor, ‘niente’ lacks the restrictor.<sup>13</sup>

But, if ‘niente’ has no lexical restrictor to quantify over in its internal structure, this means that it must be parasitic on the external structure (namely IP) to find a restrictor. Given that the position of niente is inside the aspectual field (as already shown by Zanuttini (1997)), I propose that the restrictor is provided by the event itself.

I would like to propose that *niente* is a scalar element and that the scale is provided by the event itself. In this sense, *niente* is parasitic on the predicate for a scale to quantify over, hence only predicates which can be scalar are compatible with *niente*. In order to be compatible with the type of scale required by *niente*, the predicate must first be apt to be split into a set of discrete smaller events, which can then be placed onto the scale. Activity verbs can be interpreted as a set of different but similar events and thus are indeed compatible with a scalar interpretation. Punctual verbs or verbs indicating a single process which cannot be split into smaller entities is not compatible with *niente* because they cannot convey scalarity.

Therefore, the link between quantifier negation and the direct object needs not be a direct link in the sense that quantifier negation and the object compete for the same position, but an indirect one, due to the fact that the presence of a referential object somehow prevents the relevant type of uniform scalarity necessary for *niente* to be interpreted.

Notice furthermore that there is a distinction between niente ‘nothing’ and per niente ‘at all’, though they seem at first sight to be very similar, as per niente’ is compatible also with non scalar predicates.

(50) Non è malato per niente

Noti s sick at all ‘He is not sick at all’

Hence, if scalarity is necessary for the licencing of quantifier negation, what is the link to telicity noted at the beginning of the section? I propose that telicity, describing an event as bounded, requires a single event and not a scale. The event can be split into subevents, but they are not of the type which can build a uniform scale. Therefore telic verbs and ‘niente’ are incompatible.

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<sup>13</sup> A similar type of process is also reported for the formation of object clitics in Benincà and Poletto (2005): direct object clitics are always the most frequent clitics even in languages which do not have any other type of (dative, nominative, partitive or locative) clitic.

The distinction between dialects where quantifier negation is the standard marker for negation and those where it is a special marker has to do exactly with the fact that in those dialects (and languages) where nothing has a non standard value, it enforces a scalar reading, while in the dialects where it is standard negation it does not require it. Anyhow, the position of quantifier negation seems to be the same in all dialects.

It seems to be a general fact that non-standard and standard negation occupy the same position, so the position is not determined by its status (standard/non-standard). If it were so, we would expect to find a change in the position of items which are realized as standard negative markers. On the contrary, the position of negative markers coincides with their etymological type. This, as originally pointed out by Zanuttini (1997), shows that sentence negation is not related to a single position in the sentence. However, it forcedly leads to the following question: how can elements located in different points of the structural tree still license the same reading? The answer I put forth here is that negation is a complex phenomenon and involves the activation of several projections in the clause structure. Each of them is checked by a different type of element, a scalar, a minimizer a quantifier or a focus one. The presence of only one of these elements can “re-construct” all the others. In other words, what we call NegP is a complex set of projections, the lexicalization of just one element is enough to activate the whole NegP. This in turn implies that, although according to the analysis put forth here there are at least four projections in the clause which have to be checked by elements located in the four corresponding projections inside the complex NegP, only one of these projections needs to be lexicalized, the others can be phonologically silent, but still be there. In the following section I show that there are clear cases of silent negative markers which still have a visible syntactic effect.

## **5. Negative ghosts**

Given the above, we are forced to assume that one element belonging to the complex NegP is sufficient to trigger the interpretation of sentential negation, because it renders the whole NegP visible in the syntax, though each negative marker maintains the same position when it is alone as well as when it is doubled or tripled. A legitimate question is then what happens to the other projections inside the complex NegP, are they totally empty or is there any phonetically null element occupying them?

I think that both answers are correct: in some cases there is syntactic evidence that an empty negative marker associated to the lexical one. I will assume that only in these cases the visible negative marker has invisible companions, where there is not syntactic evidence for postulating

them I will simply assume that the other projections internal to the NegP are present (and participate into the interpretation of the clause as negative) but contain nothing.

Notice that the very idea of extending a doubling approach to negation provides us with the possibility of generating null negative markers inside the complex NegP structure and then raise them to the projection where we usually see their overt counterpart in other dialects.

This means that in some dialects there should be some “ghosts” of preverbal or postverbal negations although we do not see any overt one. It is well known that there are exceptions to Zanuttini’s generalizations presented above, namely cases of negative markers of one type acting like negative markers of another type. I will present some of these cases and interpret them in the light of the idea that covert doubling exists not only for DPs (in the case of clitics doubling *pro*), but also for negative markers.

The first case concerns imperative clauses: a distinction first noted by Benincà (1992) and then developed in Zanuttini (1997) is the one between preverbal and postverbal negation in imperative contexts: while all postverbal types of negative markers (the minimizer, quantifier negation and Focus negation) can negate a morphologically unambiguous imperative forms, preverbal negation cannot and the imperative form must be changed into an infinitival one in order to get a negative imperative. In Benincà and Poletto (2004) we notice that an exception to this generalization is the one found in Emilian dialects, where there also exist some cases of postverbal negation that is not compatible with a true imperative form (Emilian *mia*, Rhaeto-Romance *buca*: cf. AIS VIII, 1647): (the following example is from Emilian)

- (51) *Movrat mia!*                                      Albinea (Emilian)  
Move-infinit.yourself not!    ‘Don’t move!’

Here the infinitive substitutes for the true imperative even if the negative marker is postverbal. It seems that the generalization concerning the compatibility between postverbal negative markers and a true imperative form is challenged. However, these cases are not very frequent, and the generalization is correct for the vast majority of the dialects. How can we accommodate for these facts without discarding the generalization? The idea put forth in Benincà and Poletto, which I will follow here, is that there is a null preverbal negative marker which doubles the postverbal one, which originates inside the complex NegP and is then moved to the preverbal NegP within the clause. It is this null companion that provokes the change in the morphology of the verb, not the visible postverbal negative marker.

Another case in which a silent negative marker has clear syntactic effects is the one of I to C contexts in yes/no interrogative clauses. Benincà and Vanelli (1982) and Zanuttini (1997) note preverbal negation blocks V to C movement in main interrogative clauses in Veneto, while this is not the case when a postverbal negative marker is added. Hence, cases of double negation do not block I to C, while cases of real preverbal negation do:

- (52) a \*No vien-lo? Paduan (from Benincà and Poletto (2004:37))  
not comes.he? ‘Isn’t he coming?’  
b No vien-lo miga? Paduan  
not comes.he not? ‘Isn’t he coming?’  
c Vien-lo miga? S. Anna di Chioggia  
comes.he not? ‘Isn’t he coming?’

This effect is really a puzzle for the theory, and I will not attempt to explain it here, but only use it to show how the doubling hypothesis works. Although the pattern illustrated above is the usual one, there is a set of Friulian (and Central Rhaetoromance) dialects where a simple preverbal negative marker does not block V to C.

- (53) a No mangeta al meil? Barcis (Friulian)  
b No magneste l pom (de èlber) Campitello di Fassa (Rhaetoromance, Fassa Valley)

Whatever the explanation for the ‘deblocking effect’ of postverbal negation is, the doubling system can account for it by assuming that the visible preverbal negative marker has a null postverbal doubler generated in the complex NegP. Evidently, this means that there must be other empirical evidence for the presence of a silent postverbal negative marker in these dialects, a topic which I leave to future research.

One additional case of silent doubling which can be addressed in this perspective are cases of negative concord between low negations and quantifiers. As already discussed in section 2, it is well known that scalar negation requires negative concord when the negative quantifier is located in postverbal position in all languages that possess such a negative marker, moreover, there are few dialects where negative concord is also found when the negative quantifier is preverbal (as it is the case in several Slavic languages). As for Focus negation, I have not found dialects where NO is the one only negative marker which require negative concord. The only cases of negative concord

where NO occurs are cases where also scalar negation is present and can therefore be interpreted as deriving from the presence of scalar negation. We can formulate the following generalization:

- (54) a Scalar negation always requires negative concord with the NegQP is postverbal  
 b Focus negation never requires negative concord

The generalization is illustrated on the basis of two dialects which display respectively scalar and focus negation:

- (55) a *No vien nisun* Paduan and Venetian  
 not comes nobody 'Nobody is coming'  
 b \**A l' à vist no nisun* Milanese  
*cl cl* has seen not nobody 'He has seen nobody'

However, in some of the dialects where minimizer and quantifier negation are the standard negative marker, it is possible to find cases of negative concord:

- (56) a *A l' à nen vist gnun* Turinese (Zanuttini )  
*cl cl* has not seen nobody 'He has seen nobody'  
 b *L' è cà ruat nigù* Albosaggia (Sondrio)  
*cl* is not come nobody 'Nobody came'

Interestingly, negative concord with minimize and quantifier negation seems to undergo the same restrictions as negative concord with scalar negation: if the negative quantifier is preverbal, the majority of the dialects does not display negative concord:

- (57) *Nigù l' è ruat a tep* Albosaggia  
 Nobody *cl* is come on time 'Nobody came on time'

One might think that the phenomenon of negative concord is not triggered by minimizer or quantifier negation, but by a silent scalar negative marker associated with the visible one. Maybe this is the correct analysis for some dialects, however, this cannot be true in all dialects. The first argument showing that the two types of negative concord are not the same has to do with optionality versus obligatoriness of negative concord: with scalar negation negative concord is

always instantiated when the negative quantifier is postverbal (see above) but this is not always the case for minimizer negation:

- (58) Al me capis la nigù  
CL me understands there no one ‘noone understands me’

We could still salvage the hypothesis that negative concord is due to a null scalar negative marker by saying that the null element is only optional, and it is only contained in the derivation of (56b), but not in the derivation of (58). A stronger argument showing that the two type of negative concord are different is

Consider the following example in the dialect of Albosaggia which I have used to illustrate the point up to now:

- (59) Al compra mai nient            Albosaggia  
CL buys never nothing

Here negative concord is not present when the element corresponding to ‘never’ is present. This is not the case for scalar negation, which still requires negative concord even when never is present:

- (60) \*(No)l compra mai gnente            Venetian  
Not-cl buys never nothing

Therefore, there is at least one different between the two types of concord. Instead of assimilating negative concord to the cases of silent (scalar) negative markers, I adopt the solution already proposed in Brugger and Poletto (1995) and in Haegeman (1995), who propose that negative quantifiers are moved to a negative field located between minimizer and quantifier negation. The negative feature is interestingly also found on adverbs, which in some dialects agree with negation: Veneto *gnancora* (which is also found in regional Italian in the form of ‘neancora’) is a case of this type: the adverb *ancora* meaning ‘still’ or ‘again’ has a nasal palatal consonant represented by ‘gn’ in negative contexts. The same is true of Piedmontese *piugn*, where the nasal is found on the adverb meaning ‘(any)more’.

That negative concord is triggered by movement of negative quantifiers to a set of positions is shown by dialects like Bavarian, where the limits of the Negative field are clearly visible (the data



from Brugger and Poletto (1995)). The contrast between (61) and (62) shows that negative quantifiers can only precede the negative marker *nit* (which I analyze as being of the same type as quantifier negation):

- (61) a. daß da Hons koa Buach (nit) glesn hot  
 that the H. no book(acc) not read has  
*H. did not read any book*
- b. daß da Hons koan Freind (nit) ghoifn hot  
 that the H. no friend(dat) not helped has  
*H. did not help any friend*
- c. daß eam koa Mensch (nit) gseng hot  
 that him no man(nom) not seen has  
*nobody saw him*
- (62) a. \*daß da Hons nit koa Buach glesn hot  
 that the H. not no book(acc) read has
- b. \*daß da Hons nit koan Freind ghoifn hot  
 that the H. not no freind(dat) helped has
- c. \*daß eam nit koa Mensch gseng hot  
 that him not no man(nom) seen has

Notice that this is also true of PPs, which do not move because of case:

- (63) a. daß da Hons auf koan Freind nit gwoat hot  
 that the H. for no friend not waited has  
*H. did not wait for any friend*
- b. \*daß da Hons nit auf koan Freind gwoat hot
- (64) a. daß Hans nicht auf den Berg gestiegen ist  
 that H. not on the mountain climbed is  
*H did not climb on the mountain*
- b. \*daß Hans auf den Berg nicht gestiegen ist

- (65) a. daß da Hons auf koan Berg nit gsteign is  
 that the H. on no mountain not climbed is  
*H. did not climb on any mountain*
- b. \*daß da Hons nit auf koan Berg gsteign is

As (66) shows, it is possible to have more than one negative preceding the negative marker.

- (66) a. daß woi neamt koa Buch nit glesn hot  
 that probably nobody no book not read has  
*nobody probably read any book*
- b. daß neamt koan Madl koa Bussl nit gem not  
 that nobody no girl(dat) no kiss(acc) given has  
*nobody gave any girl a kiss*

Interestingly, negative quantifiers respect the unmarked word order, just as positive nominal arguments. In (67), the nominative negative quantifier has to precede the accusative one; in (68), the dative negative quantifier has to precede the accusative one.

- (67) a. #daß koa Buch neamt nit glesn hot  
 that no book(acc) nobody(nom) not read has
- b. daß neamt koa Buach nit glesn hot  
 that nobody(nom) no book(acc) not read has  
*nobody read any book*
- (68) a. daß da Hons neamt koa Bussl nit gem hot  
 that the H. nobody(dat) no kiss(acc) not given has  
*H. did not give a kiss to anybody*
- b. \*daß da Hons koan Bussl neamt nit gem hot

(69) shows that multiple negative quantifiers asymmetrically c-command each other.

- (69) a. daß koa Madl koan Freind von si nit busslt hot  
 that no girl no friend of herself not kissed has  
*no girl kissed any friend of herself*
- b. \*daß koan Freind von si koa Madl nit busslt hot  
 that no friend of herself no girl not kissed has  
*no friend of herself kissed any girl*

As the lower limit of the negative field is the negative marker nit, corresponding to quantifier negation, the upper limit of the field is in Bavarian the position of the negative quantifier corresponding to ‘never’:

- (70) a. daß da Hons nia koa Madl nit busslt hot  
 that the H. never no girl not kissed has  
*H. never kissed any girl*
- b. daß mi nia neamt nit angruafn hot  
 that me never nobody called has  
*Nobody ever called me*
- (71) a. #daß da Hons koa Madl nia nit busslt hot  
 that the H. no girl never not kissed has
- b. #daß mi koa Mensch nia nit angruafn hot  
 that me no man never not called has  
*Nobody ever called me*

The sentences in (71) are possible but not under a reading of negative concord. Therefore, we can conclude that negative concord is due to negative quantifiers entering a field in IP located between quantifier negation and the position of the adverb ‘never’, and that negative concord is not necessarily connected only to scalar negation.

## 5. Conclusion

In this work I have tried to discuss some of the empirical arguments in favour of two main points: negation is a compositional process in the NIDs and all negative markers start out as a complex NegP which is then split in order to check the corresponding features inside the IP structure.

I have exploited etymology to look into the internal structure of NegP and derive a complex distribution of the four negative markers singled out by Zanuttini by proposing that the internal layering of NegP contains a FocusP, a ScalarP, a MinimizerP and an ExistentialQP. The doubling analysis which allows movement of the different portions of the NegP to different projections in the clausal structure explains why the different pieces of the NegP are found at different heights in the IP structure. Notice that this work makes a clear prediction of which lexical items can be grammaticalized and used as possible negative markers, not only in Romance, but more generally.

This framework also integrates cases of tripling and even quadrupling, which are in fact attested in some dialects. Addressing such complex questions obviously leaves a lot of open questions which cannot be solved in a single article. However, I hope I have provided a general overview of the picture which now has to be made more precise by investigating each phenomenon in the light of the theory outlined here.

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