

Silvio Cruschina / Katharina Hartmann / Eva-Maria Remberger (eds.)

Studies on Negation

Syntax, Semantics, and Variation

Vienna University Press



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Silvio Cruschina, Katharina Hartmann & Eva-Maria Remberger

Introduction

“Knowledge is two-fold, and consists not only in an affirmation of what is true, but in the negation of that which is false.”

Charles Caleb Colton

1. Presentation of the volume

Negation is a universal feature of human language that has long been the subject of linguistic research from a variety of perspectives thanks to its inherently logical nature, its typologically multiform manifestations, its fundamental role in the mapping from syntactic structure to semantic interpretation, and its recurrent patterns of diachronic change. Work on the functional, lexical, and discursive characteristics of negation, including formal and contrastive approaches and diachronic and synchronic analyses, as well as language acquisition studies and pragmatic and sociolinguistic investigations have all contributed to the broadening of the domain of negation research. Current work on negation owes much to two pioneering monographs: JESPERSEN (1917) and KLIMA (1964). The first is an extensive study of negation, addressing a range of aspects, but particularly renowned for the delineation of the cyclical pattern that characterizes the historical development of the expression of negation in a variety of languages and that has now come to be known as Jespersen’s Cycle (cf. DAHL 1979). KLIMA (1964) is the first attempt at providing a comprehensive grammar of negation within a generative framework, inspiring much subsequent work on sentential negation, relative scope and configurational relations, and the licensing of Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). These two studies provide the model for more recent work on negation that is based on developments in formal syntax and semantics and attempts to account for the distribution and semantics of the various negative expressions (cf., e. g., HORN 1989 and references therein). There is also a long tradition of typological work which, building on the first surveys of DAHL (1979), PAYNE (1985), and DRYER (1988), and more recently MIESTAMO

(2005, 2007) and DRYER (2011), has highlighted the variety of means that natural languages possess to express negation.¹

The aim of this volume is not to compete with the vast body of literature that has been published on negation, but to complement it by providing a further contribution to research on this topic and offering a set of cutting-edge studies on negation. All the contributions are related to recent questions or controversies bearing on the syntax and semantics of negative elements and the variation in their form, and follow the central assumption that a proper understanding of the multifaceted and varied expression of negation is central to our understanding of the grammar as a whole. With this in mind, we have deliberately attempted to include different approaches and a variety of empirical and analytic details.

The event that led to the conception of this edited volume was an interdisciplinary workshop on the syntax and semantics of negation held at the University of Vienna in April 2014, jointly organized by the Departments of German Studies, Romance Studies, and Linguistics. Four of the participants in the workshop are also authors in the present volume (ADAM LEDGEWAY, DORIS PENKA, CECILIA POLETTI and JAKOB STEIXNER); three additional contributors joined the project following the invitation of the editors (MARIA BAROUNI, ANNE BREITBARTH and KAREN DE CLERCQ).

2. Themes of the volume

Since KLIMA (1964) studies on the grammar of negation have largely concentrated on sentential negation (cf. ZANUTTINI 2001), with the associated issues of scope relations and the licensing of NPIs (cf., a.o., LASNIK 1972; LADUSAW 1980, 1996; LAKA 1990; AOUN & LI 1993; ACQUAVIVA 1997; GIANNAKIDOU 2011), and the syntax and semantics of sentential structures with more than one negative element (cf. ZEIJLSTRA 2004, a.o.). Within these major research domains, this volume is organized around three specific key themes:

- 1) The internal structure and featural composition of negative markers, from both a diachronic (BREITBARTH, DE CLERCQ) and a synchronic (DE CLERCQ, POLETTI) perspective;
- 2) The variation in the expression of negation and negative meanings, in particular with respect to lexical and morphosyntactic diatopic variation (POLETTI, LEDGEWAY) and to specific phenomena such as Negative Concord (NC) and Double Negation (DN) (BAROUNI, STEIXNER).

1 On other aspects of negation, see, among many others, the chapters in HORN (2010) and the references therein. See GIVÓN (1978, 2001: Ch.8) for work within a functionalist perspective.

- 3) Scope readings in negative contexts, and more specifically scope readings in the presence of an intervening focus (STEIXNER), as well as the interaction of negative expressions and other scope bearing elements (PENKA).

In the following sections we present a brief overview of the work carried out on these topics (cf. sections 2.1–2.3), followed by a synopsis of the papers (cf. section 3) contained in this volume.

2.1 Syntactic representation of negation

In current syntactic theory, the central issue has been to establish exactly how to represent sentential negation in syntactic structure and whether this formal representation should be associated with the presence of a specific projection (POLLOCK 1989; LAKA 1990; OUHALLA 1990) or with a structural relation between specific elements (HAEGEMAN & ZANUTTINI 1991; HAEGEMAN 1995; ACQUAVIVA 1997). Since POLLOCK (1989), in particular, the syntactic representation includes a fully-fledged functional projection hosting sentential negation within the functional spine of the clause. Based on comparative evidence, mainly from English and French, POLLOCK (1989) arrives at the so-called split IP hypothesis: focusing on word-order variations and on the relative position with respect to negation and adverbs, POLLOCK concludes that functional elements such as agreement, tense and negation should be viewed as independent heads projecting their own phrases. Negation is therefore the head of NegP. In his analysis, the position of negation (and hence of NegP), as well as that of adverbs, functions as a reference point for the parameterization of verb movement: in finite clauses, lexical verbs have to precede the main negation *pas* in French (cf. 1a), while they can only follow the negation *not* in English (cf. 1b) (see also BELLETTI 1990).

- (1) a. Pierre *ne* mange *pas*. (French)
 Pierre NEG eat.PRS.3SG NEG
 b. Pierre does not eat. (English)

French exhibits a case of discontinuous negation in which a clitic-like pre-verbal negative element (i. e. *ne*) co-occurs with the post-verbal negative marker *pas* (in fact, *ne* is optional, although this optionality depends on several factors; cf., e. g., DE CLERCQ this volume). In POLLOCK's analysis, *pas* is assumed to sit in the specifier position of NegP (as *not* in English), while *ne* is the head of NegP that cliticizes onto the verb. Discontinuous negation is just an example of the different methods that languages may adopt to express negation. Negative inflection, for instance in Turkish (see the suffix *-mi-* in *gelmiyor* 'he doesn't come'), is an

example of morphological negation (for a further classification of negative markers into strong, weak, clitic and affixal, cf. BREITBARTH this volume).

An important development of POLLOCK's influential analysis is presented in ZANUTTINI (1997), who distinguishes at least four distinct syntactic positions for sentential negative markers (i. e. NegPs) inside the clause. Her proposal is motivated by the distribution of preverbal, discontinuous and postverbal negative markers in Romance, which interact in various ways with other syntactic phenomena (cf. POLETTO this volume for a brief summary). ZANUTTINI focuses on the synchronic stages of the negation types that can be seen as the consequences of a diachronic tendency for pre-verbal negation to be phonologically weakened, gradually reinforced and eventually replaced by a postverbal negative marker that was originally a polarity item or a minimizer (i. e. an element stemming from an indefinite or classifier-like noun indicating a small amount such as Fr. *pas* from Latin *PASSUM* 'step'). This diachronic tendency, known as Jespersen's Cycle, has been shown to follow a cyclical development in several languages such as English, German and French (cf. 2) (see HANSEN 2011: 52; cf. also JÄGER 2008, VAN GELDEREN 2008, 2011, and the recent articles in MEISNER, STARK & VÖLKER 2014, a special issue of *Lingua*):

- (2) *je ne dis > je ne dis (pas) > je ne dis pas > je (ne) dis pas > je dis pas* (French)
'I do not say ...'

Despite the superficial structural distinctions in the syntactic expression of negative force, semantically, negation is a unitary phenomenon. Studies on the syntax of negation, therefore, have also attempted to capture the relationship between syntactic variation in the manifestation of negation and the semantic negative operator (i. e. \neg), deepening our understanding of both parametric variation and the syntax-semantics interface (HAEGEMAN 1995; ZANUTTINI 1997; ACQUAVIVA 1997; HERBURGER 2011; a.o.). More recent work links the relevant syntactic configurations with two or more negative markers (e. g. DN or NC) to the underlying interpretation by proposing a distinction between interpretable and uninterpretable (or valued and unvalued) formal syntactic features that entertain specific agreement relations (ZEIJLSTRA 2004; see also ZEIJLSTRA 2014 and BAROUNI this volume). Along the same lines, another research tradition dealing more with the variety of negative markers, rather than with DN or NC, has concentrated on the internal structure and featural composition of negative markers, from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective, proposing alternatives to or reformulations of the NegP hypothesis. This is the line of investigation adopted in the first three chapters of this volume, by BREITBARTH, DE CLERCQ, and POLETTO, respectively.

2.2 Types of negative markers

Not every negative element or ‘n-word’ (like English *nobody*, *nothing*, *never*, *nowhere*, *no one*, etc.) is always interpreted as a logical negative operator; nor are all apparent ‘n-words’ etymologically derived from a negative item (see, in particular, Spanish *nadie* ‘nobody’ < (HOMINES) NATI ‘(people) born.MPL’, and *nada* ‘nothing’ < (REM) NATA(M) ‘(thing.ACC) born.FSG(ACC)’). Negative elements can just be morphosyntactic indicators of the presence of a logical negation in the structure. Thus, syntactic configurations with more than one negative element might nevertheless be interpreted as containing one single negation: a phenomenon found in many languages of the world called Negative Concord (NC). NC-languages can in turn be divided into strict and non-strict NC-languages, with the latter showing NC only in certain syntactic configurations but not in others. Italian, for example, exhibits obligatory NC with postverbal n-words (cf. 3a), but not when the n-word appears in a preverbal position (3b), in which case the n-word has a negative force *per se* and need not co-occur with an explicit sentential negation:

- (3) a. Non ha chiamato nessuno. (*Italian*)
 NEG have.PRS.3SG call.PST.PTCP nobody
 b. Nessuno ha chiamato.
 nobody have.PRS.3SG call.PST.PTCP
 ‘Nobody called.’

In non-NC-languages negation is typically interpreted twice, a phenomenon called Double Negation (DN) (German: *Ich habe nicht den Hans nicht gesehen, sondern die Maria* ‘It is not John I didn’t see, but Mary’); this, however, depends on several factors, such as the presence of already negated alternatives in the context. In special circumstances, generally related to information structure, a DN reading is also possible in both strict and non-strict NC-languages, despite the fact that the co-occurring exponents of negation typically participate in NC.

Phenomena such as NC and DN show that the interpretation of negation can apply at different linguistic levels and that it is highly dependent on context. Negation can apply to the semantic interpretation at the level of the proposition that is simply negated ($\neg p$, e.g. *John didn’t buy bread, because he had no money with him*), but it could also apply to the pragmatic level of the utterance in the discourse and, thus, be interpreted metalinguistically (HORN 1989). This is the case when a proposition that is corrected is present in the discourse (e.g. *John didn’t buy bread, but butter; John didn’t buy bread but he stole it, and John didn’t buy bread, but Mary did* in a context containing *John bought/had to buy bread*). Metalinguistic negation differs from semantic negation in that it fails to incorporate morphologically (*This apartment is not clean / *unclean, it is antiseptic*) and does not license NPIs (*Peter didn’t buy some / *any of the comics, he bought*

them all). Information structure and associated intonational patterns play an important role in determining the interpretation of sentences with more negative elements. Focus-marking (e.g. on *buy* vs. *John* vs. *bread* in the examples mentioned above) has significant effects on the interpretation and on the different scope readings of negation, and must therefore be taken into account in morphosyntactic analyses (cf. e.g. BAROUNI, STEIXNER, in this volume).

In addition to the main negative adverbs or clitics expressing sentential negation (called ‘negative markers’ or, often, ‘standard negators’, e.g. English *not*, German *nicht*, Italian *non*, etc.) and n-words variously participating in NC according to the specific language and/or syntactic configuration, we also need to distinguish negative items that, semantically, convey additional components of meaning: presuppositional negation, scalar negative markers, negative complete or intensive negators, and intensifying or emphasizing elements. Presuppositional negation characterizes contexts where a positive version of the proposition is implicitly or explicitly present in the context (e.g. *He didn’t buy bread after all* in the conversational context in which the subject of the proposition was supposed to buy bread). Southern Italian *manco* can express presuppositional negation, but its range of uses also includes a scalar function, corresponding to the English scalar negative marker *not even* (cf. 4), as well as a usage as standard negation (cf. LEDGEWAY this volume):

- (4) Isso nun s’ è nformato manco. (*Neapolitan*)
 he NEG himself= be.PRS.3SG inform.PST.PTCP not-even
 ‘He hasn’t even informed himself.’

Negative complete or intensive negators negate the propositional meaning, adding the information that negation is complete or exhaustive (e.g. *He didn’t think about it at all*) (cf. GARZONIO & POLETTO 2010). Additional intensifying elements can combine with the standard negative marker to produce negative reinforcement: these are so-called minimizers (BOLINGER 1972, HORN 1989), which are typically derived from lexical items indicating small amounts (e.g. *I didn’t eat a thing, She didn’t say a word*). When these elements “occur in negative contexts, the negation denotes the absence of a minimal quantity, and hence the presence of no quantity at all” (HORN 1989: 400). Minimizers tend to become neutralized as simple negative markers in diachrony as in the case of French *pas*, originally meaning ‘step’, which has now become the standard negator, or Italian *mica*, derived from the word for ‘bread crumb’ and now functioning as a presuppositional negator (CINQUE 1976).

2.3 Scope readings in negative contexts

Relative scope is the semantic relation that holds between two or more logical operators in a sentence. The actual scope reading in the presence of more than one logical operator depends on a wide range of factors, including phonological prominence, syntactic relations, and information structure. This also applies to cases where one of the operators at issue is negation. However, as mentioned in the previous sections, the relative scope of logical negation cannot be directly derived from surface structure. This can be attributed to several factors: first, the negative operator may be morphophonologically empty, so that its scope properties can only be established by semantic tests (cf. BAROUNI, STEIXNER this volume); second, the negative element hosting the operator can undergo syntactic movement such that its original scope position must be reconstructed from a lower position in the structure (this is particularly important for DN and NC, but also for discontinuous negation); and, third, negation and its scopal properties can be encoded in one functional morphophonologically realized item, but this element can host more than one operator (e.g. \neg and \exists), which are then interpreted in an distributed way (split scope effects). The latter case is particularly relevant for the interpretation of negative indefinites (see, again, BAROUNI, STEIXNER this volume), but also for elements that contribute a weaker semantic form of negativity like *at most*, which also lead to ambiguity in their interaction with other logical operators (cf. PENKA this volume).

The aim of syntactic and semantic research in this domain is therefore to determine to what extent syntactic structures are responsible for the relative scope of an operator and to identify the semantic principles that lie behind scope and the level of representation at which they apply.

3. Structure and contents of this volume

The volume opens with two chapters on the diachronic evolution of negation which offer new insights into the internal syntactic structure and featural composition of negative markers. The empirical basis of ANNE BREITBARTH's paper ('Jespersen's Cycle = Minimize Structure + Feature Economy') is provided by the historical development of negation in Low German, as well as by novel observations on the typology of adverbial negative markers. In light of this, BREITBARTH proposes a new account of Jespersen's Cycle based on two principles: 'Minimize Structure' (CARDINALETTI & STARKE 1999) and 'Feature Economy' (VAN GELDEREN 2011). These two principles allow the author to identify parallels and similarities between the distribution and typology of pronouns – for which CARDINALETTI & STARKE's (1999) Minimize Structure was

originally proposed – and the diachronic stages and synchronic categorization of negative markers across languages. Depending on their formal features, which are subject to the principle of Feature Economy, negative markers are thus classified into strong, weak, clitic and affixal. In addition to making correct predictions regarding the diachronic paths of development and types of negative marker that are possible crosslinguistically, BREITBARTH's analysis dispenses entirely with the traditional idea that the negation is syntactically associated with one or more functional projections (i. e. the NegP hypothesis).

A different set of data and an alternative approach to the historical evolution of negative markers is adopted in the chapter by KAREN DE CLERCQ ('The nanosyntax of French negation: A diachronic perspective'). Based on French data, DE CLERCQ adopts a nanosyntactic approach (cf. Starke 2009) to the structural composition of negative markers to account for both their diachronic development and synchronic stylistic variation. In particular, under this analysis DE CLERCQ arrives at an explanation for the obligatory presence of the preverbal negator in a specific register/style of French, known as *le bon usage* French (GREVISSE & GOOSSE [1936] 1993), and its disappearance from spoken or colloquial language. The author acknowledges that negation is featurally complex and identifies specific patterns that lead to the splitting up of negation into five different syntactic features. Following and refining an idea already present in the literature (cf., e. g., POLETTO 2008), she claims that all negations start out as a single constituent and that they project a different range of functional layers according to the class they belong to and the features they realize. This proposal is thus able to capture the transition from one stage to the other, both in terms of diachronic development and synchronic stylistic variation, which is attributed to a change in the makeup and featural size of each negative marker. It also sheds new light on the relationship between sentential negation and constituent or lexical negation.

The NegP hypothesis – the idea that negation is syntactically associated with one or more functional projections – is firmly rejected in BREITBARTH's analysis and substantially redefined by DE CLERCQ. In her contribution ('Negative Doubling: In favour of a "Big NegP" analysis'), in contrast, CECILIA POLETTO offers a reformulation of this hypothesis which leads both to a revival of the category NegP and to a refined cartographic account of discontinuous negation. POLETTO's paper, like BREITBARTH's and DE CLERCQ's, pursues the question of the internal structure of negative makers, but the empirical basis of the study is different: northern Italian dialects from a synchronic perspective. Based on an idea originally proposed for French in POLLOCK (1989) and successively built upon in POLETTO (2008), the author further develops the claim that discontinuous negative markers originate from the same projection. This argument constitutes an extension to the negation domain of the big-DP proposal, origi-

nally formulated to account for the pronominal doubling of nominal constituents (KAYNE 1975; CECCHETTO 2000; BELLETTI 2005). Drawing on evidence from northern Italian dialects, POLETTO presents new data and observations in defence of the generalizations outlined in ZANUTTINI (1997) and questioned in recent work, especially in MANZINI & SAVOIA (2011). The apparent exceptions to ZANUTTINI's generalizations are explained here in terms of movement from one single constituent, i. e. the "Big NegP". Problematic cases of negative doubling in northern Italian dialects are therefore derived on the basis of the author's cartographic analysis.

With the chapter by ADAM LEDGEWAY ('Marking presuppositional negation in the dialects of southern Italy'), we move from northern to southern Italy and to the rich lexical and morphosyntactic variation in negation found in these dialects, with a contribution that will definitely fill an apparent gap in the literature: while negation has been widely investigated with respect to northern Italian dialects, the variation in negative markers in southern Italian dialects has so far been neglected. LEDGEWAY starts from the observation that, besides standard negation, there are two types of emphatic negation in Italo-Romance, the 'at all'-type and the 'after all... not'-type. The range of uses of southern Italian *manco* (the type 'after all... not'), mainly in northern Calabrian, is illustrated, together with the theoretical approach that he adopts to capture the interpretation of the syntactic variation concerning negative markers. The discussion then concentrates on Salentino *filu*, and includes an excursus on Florentine *punto* (both originally minimizers) as a necessary preliminary step for a contrastive analysis of the Salentino data. Returning to Calabrian, LEDGEWAY shows that in this dialect the interpretation of emphatic negation depends on syntactic conditions, whereas for other dialects a lexical approach is necessary. In conclusion, three strategies for the variation in the interpretation of emphatic negation in southern Italo-Romance are identified: (i) the grammaticalization of clefts (e.g. in Sicilian), (ii) V-movement (e.g. in northern Calabrian), and (iii) the grammaticalization of minimizers (Salentino). The article introduces a substantial amount of new data on negation in southern Italian dialects, a systematic description of which has previously been missing in the literature; it also represents an important contribution to the empirical and theoretical research into the possible strategies for the implementation of emphatic negation.

The next two chapters, by MARIA BAROUNI and by JAKOB STEIXNER respectively, are also principally concerned with crosslinguistic variation. Both discuss DN-readings in languages which are clearly strict NC-languages, and for the analysis of their data both rely, adapting it to their needs, on the seminal work by ZEIJLSTRA (2004).

In her paper 'Challenging the strict vs. non-strict distinction of Negative Concord: A syntactic proposal', BAROUNI discusses n-words in Greek, a strict

NC-language, where some n-words, like *oudhepote* ('never') and *oudholos* ('not at all'), do not trigger a strict NC pattern. These data would thus contradict ZEIJLSTRA'S (2004) theory on NC-languages, according to which NC-languages can be strict or non-strict depending on whether they license a negative marker with both preverbal and postverbal n-words (strict NCL) or only with postverbal n-words (non-strict NCL). The hitherto undiscussed set of negative *ou*-elements, which behave like n-words in a non-strict NCL, provide a good basis to argue for a distribution and specification of negative features in NCL that differ from those proposed by ZEIJLSTRA. BAROUNI'S claim is then that negative markers (sentential negators like Greek *dhen*) in NCLs carry [iNEG], which is formal but not semantic in nature, and that n-words in non-strict NCLs (like Italian *nessuno* and Spanish *nadie*) and 'transparent' negative words in strict NCLs (like the Greek *ou*-elements) can have both a [uNEG] and an [iNEG] version. With regard to the syntactic head Neg^o, she assumes that in NCLs it is always filled with an operator containing [uNEG], which can be valued either by the negative marker (such as Greek *dhen*) or by an n-word with a [iNEG] feature.

STEIXNER'S chapter ('Focus Intervention and Double Negation in Bavarian') starts with a similar set of data from Bavarian, another strict NC-language. DN-readings are also possible in Bavarian, but, in contrast to Greek, these readings do not depend on the properties of the lexical entries of particular n-words, but on information-structure configurations. The author rejects the analysis proposed in BRUGGER & POLETO (1993) and, in particular, in WEISS (1998, 1999) for Bavarian. For the blocking of NC, these accounts rely on the purely syntactic mechanism of c-command, necessary for the negative marker hosting the negative operator to check the other n-word(s) lower in the structure. For STEIXNER, negative operators in NegP are always silent and thus only interpretable with the help of other visible cues, normally negative markers and n-words, in the syntactic structure. Negative markers in NC-languages, like Bavarian *ned*, are neither hosts of the logical negation nor head of a NegP, but are adjuncts to vP. As for DN, a second silent operator (i.e. a second NegP) is syntactically merged, but this second logical negation can only be interpreted if the information-structural configuration facilitates an interpretation of the negated proposition as given in the discourse. In this case, the blocking of NC can be interpreted as focus intervention. Thus, the author modifies ZEIJLSTRA'S account insofar as he counts on the availability of NegP not only once but twice in negated structures, depending on information-structural properties provided by the context.

Finally, PENKA'S paper ('Splitting at most') mainly tackles the third theme of the volume, namely, scope readings, in a formal semantic perspective. She discusses the interpretations of the expression *at least* and *at most* when used in the context of modal verbs. She first illustrates split scope effects with negative quantifiers (as with English *no* and German *kein*) where modal operators are

interpreted between a negative and an existential quantifier, and shows that split scope readings also arise with weaker negative quantifiers like *few*, *fewer than* and *at most*, the latter being the main topic of the chapter. *At most* seems to be particularly relevant in a volume on negation, since it displays split scope readings for the operators that it hosts, among them the negation operator, but split scope readings only arise with possibility modals and not with necessity modals. The author bases her proposal on former semantic and pragmatic analyses, like GEURTS & NOUWEN (2007) and in particular BÜRING (2008), and SCHWARZ (2013). Whereas these papers struggle with the asymmetrical behaviour of *at least* and *at most* in the modal context, PENKA offers a step-by-step derivation of the readings for both *at least* and *at most* in both modal contexts in a decompositional analysis that yields a solution to the problem. The conclusion of the paper is that *at most* is in fact semantically more complex than *at least*, in that *at most* involves a form of semantic negation that scopally interacts with other logical operators.

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Anne Breitbarth

Jespersen's Cycle = Minimize Structure + Feature Economy

Abstract: In the current paper, I outline a new account of Jespersen's Cycle, mainly concentrating on data from historical Low German, but embedding the proposal into a more general typology of adverbial negative markers and their diachronic connections. Building on proposals by CARDINALETTI & STARKE (1999) and GROSZ (2005; 2007) and CARDINALETTI (2011) regarding the distribution of pronouns and modal particles, I propose to distinguish four classes of negative markers with different amounts of internal structure, representing different diachronic stages in the development of such markers. I argue that the NegP-hypothesis is (a) not necessary to account for the observed distribution, and (b) in fact makes empirically wrong predictions, which are avoided under the proposed NegP-free account.

Keywords: NegP-hypothesis, Jespersen's Cycle, Old Saxon, Middle Low German, third-factor principles

1. Overview

Since POLLOCK (1989), the structural locus of sentential negation within generative approaches to syntax has been assumed to be a functional projection, NegP. The NegP-hypothesis has also been very successful in accounts of the historical development of negation in various languages, more precisely, of Jespersen's Cycle (JC) (after JESPERSEN 1917), as it offers head and specifier positions that can be targeted by new or old negative markers during their grammaticalization. However, while there is general agreement on the existence of NegP, there is much division about the exact number of NegPs, their syntactic position, and precise contribution to interpretation.

In the present paper, taking JC in historical Low German as the empirical point of departure, I will argue for a NegP-free approach to JC. The proposed account starts from the observation of similarities between the typology, distribution and

grammaticalization clines of pronouns/agreement markers and adverbs/modal particles on the one hand, discussed in the literature, and the typology and diachronic stages of negation markers on the other. I argue that both the typology and the diachronic development of negative markers in languages using adverbial negation particles can be accounted for by the interplay of two third-factor principles, Minimize Structure (CARDINALETTI & STARKE 1999) and Feature Economy (VAN GELDEREN 2011).¹

2. Jespersen's Cycle in historical Low German

The empirical background of the current paper is the development of the expression of negation in the oldest attested stage of Low German, Old Saxon (Old Low German; c. 800–1250) (OS), and the subsequent stage, Middle Low German (c. 1250–1650) (MLG). Like all other West Germanic languages, Low German has undergone JC, the development in which a single expression of negation (stage I) is first reinforced by a new negation marker (stage II) and ultimately replaced by it (stage III), and has also undergone changes in the interaction between sentential negation and (negative) indefinites in its scope related to the development of negative markers (JC).

In OS, sentential negation is expressed by a pre-finite negative particle *ni/ne* positionally covarying with the finite verb. In (1) the combination of *ni/ne* + finite verb is found clause-initially, in (2) clause-medially/in verb-second position, and in (3), clause-finally.

- (1) *ni* *bium ic* [...] *that barn godes*
 NEG am I the child God.GEN
 'I am not the child of God.'
 (*Heliand* 915)
- (2) *thu ni* *uest the maht godes* *the ik gifrummien scal*
 you NEG know the power God.GEN REL I serve shall
 'You do not know the power of God that I am to serve.'
 (*Heliand* 3102–3)
- (3) *Ic thes* *uuirdig ne* *bium* [...] *that thu an min hus cumes.*
 I that.GEN worthy NEG am that you to my house come
 'I am not worthy that you come to my house.'
 (*Heliand* 2104–5)

OS is firmly in stage I of JC (BREITBARTH 2014a), but there are a number of cases showing the emergence of an adverbial reinforcer (*io)uuht* 'anything' or

¹ I am not going to address languages using negative auxiliaries or other strategies in the present paper.

niouuiht 'nothing'. The bridging context seems to be a class of verbs allowing an optional extent argument or measure phrase, such as verbs meaning 'harm' or 'benefit', see (4).

- (4) Ne ik thi geth *ni* deriu (*neo*)*uiht* quad he²
 and.not I you also NEG damage nothing said he
 'I will also not harm you (at all), he said.'
 (*Heliand* 3892)

In the entire OS corpus (695 negative clauses), I found one occurrence of *niet* < *niouuiht* used as constituent (narrow focus) negation, in the 11th c. Gregorius glosses, see (5).

- (5) (illorum non solum animae. Sed caro quoque)
 thuo *niet* ekir iro selon neuen ok
 then NEG only their soul but also
 'then not only their soul, but also ...'
 (GG 63, 15–16)

After a gap in attestation of at least 200 years, the expression of negation in MLG³ had already reached the transition from stage II to stage III of JC; the former pre-finite negation particle, now weakened to *ne/en*, is increasingly optional and by the time the MLG is replaced by Early New High German as the written language in the area around the middle of the 16th century, it has all but disappeared. The standard, i.e., neutral and productive, negation marker is the adverbial *nicht* (6–7).

- (6) We des *nicht en*-wete de lat=is sik berichten.
 who this.GEN NEG NEG-know REL let=it REFL report
 'Whoever doesn't know this should get informed about it.'
 (Braunschweig 1349)
- (7) Iß he ohme *nicht* euenbordig, so mag he idt *nicht* theynn.
 is he him NEG equal so may he it NEG tithe
 'If he is not equal to him, he may not tithe it.'
 (Braunschweig 1553)

Present-day Low German has remained in stage III of JC; the adverbial marker, *nich*, continues to be used in much the same way as *nicht* was in MLG, (8), with *nich* occurring at the right edge of the middle field.

2 In the older Monacensis (c. 850), it is *neouuiht* 'nothing', while in the Cottonianus (10th c.) manuscript, the form *uiiht* '(any)thing' is used.

3 The corpus used is described in BREITBARTH (2014a).

- (8) ... dat sik de Akadeemsche Senaat *nich* versammeln kunn.
 ... that REFL the academic senate NEG convene could
 ‘... that the academic senate was not able to convene.’
 (http://www.radiobremen.de/bremeneins/serien/plattdeutsche_nachrichten/plattnachrichten104_date-20150128.html, accessed 29/01/2015)

Before addressing the question of how the different stages are connected, diachronically, it is necessary to look at the interaction between the expression of negation and (morphologically) negative indefinites in the scope of negation at the various stages. This interaction provides important information regarding the interpretability of formally negative markers (ZEIJLSTRA 2004, PENKA 2011). OS for instance with its affix-like negative particle attaching to the finite verb might be expected to have negative concord (NC) (cf. ROWLETT’s 1998 *Jespersen’s Generalization*, after observations in JESPERSEN 1917). Contrary to what one might expect, however, certainly given the typological overview in ZEIJLSTRA (2004), OS NC is not very frequently attested at all in the two largest surviving texts, the *Heliand* epic (c. 830 CE) and the *Genesis* fragments (c. 840 CE). It does not occur in the *Genesis* at all (9a), and only in c. 20 % of the possible cases in the *Heliand*, (9b). Only in the minor texts (10th and 11th centuries CE), all attested indefinites in the scope of negation show concord with the negative marker, but there are only five such occurrences, cf. Table 1.⁴

Table 1: Expression of negation and indefinites in the scope of negation in OS⁵

	<i>ni</i>	<i>ni</i> alone	NMI	NFI	Total negative clauses
<i>Heliand</i>	617	582	35	143	620
<i>Genesis</i>	37	37	0	12	37
Minor texts ⁶	37	32	5	0	38
Total					695

In addition, NC only seems to take the shape of negative doubling – the co-occurrence of the marker of sentential negation with a negative indefinite – in OS; where more than one indefinite occurs in the scope of negation, at most one of them is morphologically negative, (9c–d).

4 The *Heliand* is by far the largest body of Old Low German text with c. 6,000 lines of alliterative verse (c. 80 % of the extant material; Sanders 2000: 1277). The *Genesis* comprises c. 335 lines of alliterative verse. The minor texts (incl. a tax list, a number of glosses, fragmentary psalm translations (from Latin) and commentaries, two short texts on scrolls, a part of a translation (from Latin) of a Homily by Bede, a confession, Baptismal Vows, blessings, and short inscriptions) are of varying length, ranging from a few words to a few pages each.

5 Abbreviations: NMI = n-marked, i. e. morphologically negative, indefinite, NFI = n-free indefinite.

6 From the minor texts, only finite negative clauses were considered. That is, glosses were only taken into account if they formed a full finite clause.

- (9) a. that is *ênig* seg *ni* ginas
 that it.GEN any man NEG was.saved
 'that no one was saved from it'
 (*Genesis* 322)
- b. that thar *nenig* gumono *ni* ginas
 that there no man NEG was.saved
 'that no one was saved there'
 (*Heliand*, 4369–70)
- c. N-is thes tueho *enig* gumono *nigienumu*.
 NEG-is this.GEN.SG.N. doubt any men.GEN.PL none.DAT.PL
 'There is no doubt about it to any of the men.'
 (*Heliand* 3190–1)
- d. It *ni* mag iu te *enigoro* frumu huuergin uuerdan te *enigumu* uuilleon.
 it NEG can you to any benefit at.all redound to any happiness
 'It is not able to do you any good at all, nor bring you any happiness.'
 (*Heliand* 1854–5)

MLG, on the other hand, had extensive NC. Like other languages undergoing JC (cf. HASPELMATH 1997: 203), negative doubling in MLG is restricted to morphologically negative indefinites co-occurring with the old pre-finite particle *ne/en* (in 476 out of 1269 cases⁷); they do not co-occur with the new adverbial negator *nicht*. Negative spread – marking negation on more than one or all indefinites in the scope of negation (DEN BESTEN 1986) – is the norm, (10) (in 98 out of 107 cases of more than one indefinite per clause).

- (10) Und we *en*-willet noch *en*-schullet *nummermer* *neyn* slot darin buwen
 and we NEG-want nor NEG-shall never.more no castle there.in build
 'And we neither intend nor shall build any castle in it.'
 (Uelzen 1397)

The standard view concerning how the stages of JC in languages like historical Low German are connected is that there is a functional projection NegP, typically taking *vP* as its complement, which provides head and specifier positions that the weakening and strengthening negative particles can target during their grammaticalization.

3. NegP approaches to Jespersen's cycle

POLLOCK (1989), comparing English and French, first proposed to split IP into a T(ense)P(hrased), a Neg(ation)P(hrased) and an Agr(eement)P(hrased), see (11).

- (11) [_{TP} [_{NegP} [_{AgrP} [_{VP}]]]]

7 Besides, there are 787 cases of n-marked indefinites without negative doubling, marking the loss of the preverbal particle from negative clauses with indefinites in the scope of negation.