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NEGATIVE CONCORD AND THE MINIMALIST APPROACH

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0. Introduction

Romance languages exhibit Negative Concord. Thus, two or more negative items may co-occur within a single syntactic domain without cancelling each other, contributing to form a sole instance of negation. On the contrary, in standard English, and other Germanic languages, the presence of two negative elements yields Double Negation. In order to express that in some domain several constituents are involved in negation, standard English uses polarity items which acquire a negative interpretation under the c-command of an intrinsic negative element.

Concentrating mainly on Sentence Negation, approaches to Negative Concord in Romance have either related this phenomenon to the cases of negative polarity licensing or emphasised its specificity, assuming that some process of Agreement or Absorption takes place.

According to the first perspective, negated items, or N-words (Laka 1990), are not inherently negative, acquiring their negative interpretation under the licensing of an external negative element. However, as often mentioned, N-words do not behave like underspecified polarity items in many contexts.

Accepting that N-words present intrinsic negative content, the analyses based on the Neg-Criterion or the Checking Theory claimed that Negative Concord is mostly subsumed under a Specifier-Head Agreement relation which directly or indirectly requires the presence of functional projections specific to sentence negation, NegP or PolP. Still, these approaches do not adequately deal with Negative Concord in many Romance languages. Besides, the data show that, in spite of the Specifier-Head Agreement or the checking relations, these analyses cannot dispense with an independent device, Neg-Absorption, an LF operation which converts different instances of negation into a single negative constituent.

Empirical evidence seems to argue for a minimalist approach which does not posit specific functional projections for sentence negation and where the Specifier-Head Agreement relations do not have a privileged status. On the

contrary, it favours less complex derivations, where the elementary operation Merge plays a significant role. According to this analysis, sentence negation does not radically differ from phrasal negation, a result which seems to be supported by the fact that phrasal constituents may also display Negative Concord effects.

Considering that in most Romance languages N-words present intrinsic negative polarity, I will assume that Neg-Absorption is the crucial mechanism to deal with Negative Concord. This operation applies at LF to a single negative domain. Concerning the sentence, this domain is delimited by a negative element overtly having local scope over the verbal item that heads the sentence.

This paper is structured as follows: in section 1, some evidence on the intrinsic negative nature of N-words in some Romance languages is presented; in section 2, the ability of Specifier-Head approaches to deal with Negative Concord is discussed, especially the proposals of Haegeman (1995) (cf. 2.1) and Zanuttini (1994a) (cf. 2.2); section 3 presents an analysis of Negative Concord which makes no use of the Checking theory or of additional sentence projections; in 3.1, I will argue for a similar approach of negation in sentence and phrasal constituents; 3.2 focuses on the compulsory presence in certain romance languages of the negative sentence maker when N-words occur in post-verbal position; 3.3 deals with the variation across romance on the possibility of co-occurrence of the negative sentence marker with preverbal N-words. Section 4 summarises the main conclusions of the analysis.

1. Negative Concord, N-words and underspecified polarity items

The contrasts in (1) and (2), from Portuguese and Italian, respectively, may suggest that Negative Concord in Romance can be accounted for in terms of the licensing of multiple underspecified polarity items by an independent negative operator (see Rizzi 1982, Laka 1990, among others).

- (1) a. *Não vi ninguém*
not saw nobody
‘I did not see anybody’
b. **Vi ninguém*
saw nobody
‘I saw nobody’
- (2) a. *Non ho visto nessuno*
not have seen nobody
‘I did not see anybody’

- b. **Ho visto nessuno*
have seen nobody
‘I have seen nobody’

However, N-words in languages like Portuguese behave differently from expressions with underspecified polarity value, since they may occur where no negative item c-commands them, while keeping their negative content. So, *ninguém* ‘nobody’, an intrinsic negative item, retains its negative interpretation when it appears in isolation, as in (3a), or is outside the scope of an overt negative item, as in (3b); by contrast, underspecified polarity expressions, such as *um único N* ‘a single N / any N’ or *qualquer N* ‘any N’, only acquire their negative content under c-command of a non null negative element (see (4)), otherwise, they are interpreted as positive indefinite phrases, as in (5).

- (3) a. *Ele telefonou a alguém?* — *A ninguém*
he telephoned to somebody — to nobody
‘Did he call anybody? — Nobody’
b. *Ninguém lhe telefonou*
nobody him telephoned
‘Nobody called him’
- (4) a. *Ele não telefonou a uma única pessoa*
he not telephoned to a single person
‘He did not call anybody’
b. *Ela não vê qualquer problema nessa situação*
she not see any problem in that situation
‘She does not see any problem in that situation’
- (5) a. *Uma única pessoa não telefonou*
a single person not telephoned
‘Only one person did not call’
b. *Qualquer problema perturba a Maria*
any problem upsets the Maria
‘Any problem upsets Maria’
c. *Ele telefonou a alguém?* — *A uma única pessoa*
he telephoned to somebody — to a single person
‘Did he call anybody? — Just a single person’

In this respect, as shown in (6) vs. (7), languages like Portuguese resemble English, where a distinction is drawn between negative quantifiers and (underspecified) polarity items:

- (6) a. Nobody called
 b. Did he call anybody? — Nobody
- (7) a. He did not call anybody
 b. *Anybody called
 c. Did he call anybody? — *Anybody

The intrinsic negative value of N-words is particularly evident in Modern European Portuguese: in this language N-words may only occur in negative domains, being excluded from interrogative and declarative sentences where they occur in Italian and Spanish.¹ In these contexts European Portuguese uses indefinite items with no negative content, as shown in (b) vs. (c) of the following examples:

- (8) a. *Ha telefonato nessuno?*
 "Did anybody call?"
 (Zanuttini 1991: 109)
 b. **Telefonou ninguém?*
 called nobody
 "Did nobody call?"
 c. *Telefonou alguém?*
 called anybody
 "Did anybody call?"
- (9) a. *Mi chiedo se Gianni abbia contattato nessuno*
 "I wonder whether G. has contacted anybody"
 (Rizzi 1982:122)
 b. **Pergunto-me se o João contactou ninguém*
 ask-myself whether the João contacted nobody
 "I wonder whether João has contacted nobody"
 c. *Pergunto-me se o João contactou alguém*
 ask-myself whether the João contacted anybody
 "I wonder if João has contacted anybody"

¹Martins (1997, 1999) remarks that in Old and Classical Portuguese, n-words displayed underspecified polarity features, thus appearing in non negative contexts:

- (i) *Viste-me nunca andar em demanda com ninguém senão hua em Santarém?*
 saw-me never be in fight with nobody except one in Santarém
 "Have you ever seen me fighting with anyone except for once in Santarém?"

- (10) a. *Pedro duda que venga nadie*
 "Pedro doubts that anybody will come"
 (Laka 1990: 109)
 b. **O Pedro duvida que venha ninguém*
 the Pedro doubts that comes nobody
 "Pedro doubts that nobody will come"
 c. *O Pedro duvida que venha alguém*
 the Pedro doubts that comes anybody
 "Pedro doubts that anybody will come"
- (11) a. *En esta reunión, todo aquel que tenga nada que decir tendrá ocasión de hablar*
 "In this meeting, everyone who has anything to say will have a chance to talk"
 (Laka 1990:110)
 b. **Nesta reunião, todo aquele que tenha nada a dizer*
 in this meeting, everyone who has nothing to say
 terá ocasião de falar
 will have chance to talk
 "In this meeting, everyone who has nothing to say will have a chance to talk"
 c. *Nesta reunião, todo aquele que tenha alguma coisa a dizer*
 in this meeting, everyone who has anything to say
 terá ocasião de falar
 will have chance to talk
 "In this meeting, everyone who has anything to say will have a chance to talk"

These data allow us to conclude that in some Romance languages, in particular in European Portuguese, Negative Concord may not be reduced to the licensing of (multiple) items, exhibiting underspecified polarity value, by an external negative element, namely the negation marker. Consequently, the requirement of the presence of the negative sentence marker in sentences like (1) and (2) must be explained otherwise.

2. The Spec-Head approaches to Negative Concord

While assuming that N-words in Romance are inherently negative, syntactic analyses involving specific negative sentential projections try to reduce Negative Concord to a Specifier-Head Agreement relation. This is the case for the approaches based on the Neg-Criterion (cf., for instance, Zanuttini 1991, Haegeman 1995, Rowlett 1997) or on the Checking Theory (cf. Zanuttini 1994a).

2.1 *The Neg-Criterion*

Haegeman (1995) presents one of the most extensive studies on the syntax of negation based on the Neg-Criterion. According to Haegeman (1995), the Neg-Criterion, defined as in (12), is a universal condition which applies before Spell-Out.

(12) Neg-Criterion

- a. A NEG-operator must be in a spec-head configuration with a X^o [Neg].
- b. An X^o [Neg] must be in a spec-head configuration with a NEG operator.
(Haegeman 1995: 106)

Where:

- c. NEG-operator: a negative phrase in a scope position.
- d. Scope position: left-peripheral A'-position [Spec, XP] or [YP, XP].
(Haegeman 1995: 107).

In Haegeman (1995) this condition is not restricted to NegP and operates whenever the negative elements may establish a Specifier-Head Agreement relation. Adopting Belletti's (1990) proposals, Haegeman considers that this is what happens when a negative subject in [Spec, AgrSP] agrees with a negative head raised into AgrS^o to incorporate in the verbal head (cf. (13)):

- (13)a. *Personne n' a téléphoné*
nobody Neg has telephoned
"Nobody has called"
- b. [AgrP NEG-operator [Agr^o Neg^o [Agr^o]] ...]

Additionally, Haegeman assumes that each of the negative elements involved in the Specifier-Head relation may be overt or null. Thus, in (14), a null negative head marker is assumed and in (15) a null expletive operator, identified by the post-verbal negative phrase, is posited in [Spec, NegP].

- (14)a. *Nessuno ha telefonato*
"Nobody has called"
- b. [[AgrP [Nessuno] [Agr^o [Neg^o∅] Agr^o] ...]]
- (15)a. *Gianni non telefona a nessuno*
Gianni not telephones to no one
"Gianni does not call anyone"
- b. [[NegP [Neg-operator ∅]i [Neg^o Neg]] ... [NEG-phrase]i]]

Haegeman (1995) argues that Negative Concord is a consequence of the Neg-Criterion. Assuming that each head has only one specifier, multiple negative specifiers must undergo Neg-Absorption to be interpretable as one single specifier.²

Neg-Absorption is conceived as an LF operation which involves a negative head marker and a negative quantifier, or two negative quantifiers, and converts them into a single negative constituent.³

We may, thus, conclude that in Haegeman (1995), it is Neg-Absorption, not the Neg-Criterion that ultimately accounts for Negative Concord. In fact this operation should be dissociated from the Neg-Criterion for several reasons.

Firstly, the Neg-Criterion is a universal condition operating in languages exhibiting both Negative Concord and Double Negation; on the contrary, Neg-Absorption only operates in Negative Concord languages.

Secondly, the Neg-Criterion raises two major problems: It predicts that the core cases of sentential Negation are those where an overt negative phrase in

² This proposal is incompatible with the analysis of French sentence negative markers presented in Pollock (1989). Since Neg-Absorption is possible, the compatibility of *pas* 'not' with a XP-neg in [Spec, NegP] is predicted.

³ Higginbotham and May (1981) and May (1985) consider that Absorption deals with multiple quantifiers. According to May (1985), it operates in configurations where a quantifier c-commands another one and derives structures in which the two quantified phrases constitute a complex constituent. May (1989) distinguishes the cases of Quantifier Absorption from those displaying Resumptive Quantifiers. He assumes that it is the latter operation that is involved in (i) as well as in the non-double negation reading of the example (ii):

- (i) Exactly one person loves exactly one person
- (ii) Nobody loves nobody

According to May, while Quantifier Absorption derives an n-ary quantifier from n-many unary quantifiers, Resumptive Quantifier takes place when different instances of the same single quantifier occur. This proposal seems to suggest that Negative Concord configurations should be interpreted as Resumptive Quantifier manifestations (cf. Deprez 1997). However, this analysis faces one problem: Negative Concord may involve negative items that are not usually characterized as quantifiers. This is the case for the negation marker in (iii) and the two conjuncts presenting the negative conjunction *nem* 'neither' in (iv).

- (iii) *A Ana não viu nada*
the Ana not saw nothing
"Ana saw nothing"
- (iv) *[Nem o João nem a Ana] leram esse livro*
neither the João neither the Ana read that book
"Neither João nor Ana read that book"

Zanuttini (1991) considers that Neg-Absorption involves two different operations: quantifier Absorption and factorisation of negation. I will assume Neg-Absorption as negative factorisation, postponing the discussion of the correlation between Neg-Absorption and Resumptive Quantifiers, in the sense of May (1989), to later work.

preverbal position co-occurs with a non null negative head in a Specifier-Head Agreement relation. Yet, data from Portuguese, Italian and Spanish show that this assumption may not be accepted across languages (cf. (16), (17) and (18)).⁴

- (16) **Nenhum aluno não leu esse livro*
 no student not read that book
 "No student did not read that book"

- (17) * *Niente di buono non potrà accadere*
 "Nothing good not can happen"
 (Zanuttini 1991: 112)

- (18) * *Ninguno no vino*
 "No one not came"
 (Jaeggli 1982: 129 apud Zanuttini 1991:122)

Moreover, the Neg-Criterion presupposes that negative sentences that do not present any N-word display a null expletive negative operator, as in (19).

- (19)a. *Ele não viu a Maria hoje*
 he not saw the Maria today
 "He did not see Mary today"
 b. [NegP [OP —] [Neg° não]]

However, it is difficult to imagine the content of such an expletive operator or conceive the variable it binds. In fact, under economy considerations, this kind of representations should be excluded at LF by Full Interpretation, since it contains non interpretable elements.

In summary, there is no evident correlation between Neg-Absorption and the Neg-Criterion; concerning Negative Concord, only Neg-Absorption seems

⁴ Rowlett (1997) proposes a different version of the Neg-Criterion. According to Rowlett, Spec-Head Agreement involves a null expletive operator with no intrinsic negative content in [Spec, NegP], otherwise Double Negation would occur. This proposal seems to capture the unacceptability of (i) but it is unable to explain the availability of (ii), where [Spec, NegP] is arguably occupied by an operator with intrinsic negative value, and there are no Double Negation effects.

- (i) **Ninguém não leu esse livro*
 nobody not read that book
 (ii) *Ninguém leu nunca esse livro*
 nobody read never that book
 "Nobody has ever read that book"

to play a relevant role; besides, the Neg-Criterion presents some problems we would like to avoid.⁵

2.2 The Checking Approach

Adopting the Checking theory, Zanuttini (1994) and Haegeman (1998) propose sentence structures like (5), where the negative sentence marker originates in NegP.

- (20) [CP...[PolP [Spec] Pol° ...[TP/FP ...[NegP [Spec] Neg° ...
 [VP]]]]

According to Zanuttini (1994), the checking of Pol°, which occurs in overt syntax whenever it has strong features, may be accomplished either by moving the negative sentence head into Pol° or by raising a negative phrase into [Spec, PolP]. If at least a negative constituent remains in post-verbal position, a

⁵ Negative Islands (cf. Ross 1983, Rizzi 1990) apparently argue in favour of the Neg-Criterion, since they seem to show that the extraction of a nonargument or nonreferential phrase over a negative sentence marker produces ill-formed sentences even when this marker is a head —see the English examples in (ia), (iia) and their Portuguese counterparts, in (ib), (iib).

- (i) a. *How much money_i didn't he earn e_i?
 (Kuno and Takami 1997:558)
 b. **Quanto dinheiro_i não tinha ele ganho e_i?*
 How-much money not has he earn e_i?
 (ii) a. *How_i didn't you behave e_i?
 (Kuno and Takami 1997:558)
 b. **Como_i é que não te comportaste e_i?*
 how is that not yourself behave e_i?
 "How_i didn't you behave e_i?"

However, Kuno and Takami (1997) show that these island effects are not related to the nonargument or nonreferential status of the extracted phrase and may be accounted for by a condition against the extraction of the focus of negation and by a pragmatic requirement excluding questions which demand non informative answers— contrast (i) and (ii) with the following examples, where these conditions have been met.

- (iii) How much money_i wasn't he willing to contribute e_i?
 (Kuno and Takami 1997: 558)
 (iv) I know that cultures and customs in your country are different from those in my country. Since I don't want to be considered rude or impolite, please tell me how_i I shouldn't behave e_i.
 (Kuno and Takami 1997:558).

Negative Concord configuration obtains, as in (21) and (22), from Portuguese and Italian.⁶

- (21)a. *Não disse nada*
not said nothing
‘I did not say anything’
b. *Ninguém disse nada a ninguém*
nobody said nothing to no one
‘Nobody said anything to anyone’

- (22)a. *No ho detto niente*
not have said nothing
‘I did not say anything’
b. *Nessuno ha detto niente*
nobody has said nothing
‘Nobody said anything’

The checking approach seems attractive because, accepting that N-words may vary across languages in negative polarity strength, as argued in Martins (1997, 1999), it apparently explains the contrasts in (23), where preverbal negative phrases co-occur with sentence negative markers in Portuguese and Catalan.

- (23)a. *Ninguém (*não) disse tal coisa*
nobody not said such thing
‘Nobody said such a thing’
b. *Ningú (no) m’ ha vist*
nobody not me has seen
‘Nobody saw me’

According to Martins (1999), in languages like Portuguese, in opposition to Catalan, N-words present strong negative features; thus, by economy, their co-occurrence with a sentence negative marker with intrinsic negative value is not allowed.

However, examples like (24) and (25) show that the Checking theory is not able to deal with Negative Concord and that economy may not explain the contrasts in (23).

⁶ Notice that Zanuttini (1994, 1997) does not directly correlate the need of a preverbal element when a post-verbal n-word occurs with Negative Concord. This need is attributed to the configuration required for sentence negation in languages with preverbal negative markers.

- (24)a. *Nunca ninguém disse isso*⁷
never nobody told that
‘Nobody has ever told that’
b. *Nessuno mai mi aveva parlato così*
nobody never me had spoken like that
‘Nobody has ever spoken to me like that’
(Zanuttini 1991)
- (25)a. *A quem não tem ninguém ultimamente oferecido livros?*
to whom not has nobody lately given books
‘To whom hasn’t anybody given books lately?’
b. **A quem tem ninguém ultimamente oferecido livros?*
to whom has nobody lately given books
‘To whom has nobody given books lately?’

In (24) two negative phrases occur in preverbal position contra economy predictions, showing that Negative Concord may not dispense with Neg-Absorption.⁸

In (25a), an I⁰-to-C⁰ configuration, the presence of the overt negative head is required (cf. (25a) vs. (25b)), in spite of the presence of the negative phrase *ninguém* ‘nobody’, which occupies [Spec,PolP], according to the sentence structure proposed in (20) — see (26):

⁷ Notice that before LF, *nunca* ‘never’ and *ninguém* ‘nobody’ do not form a unit and some constituents may occur between these n-words, namely temporal adverbs like *ainda* ‘yet’ in (i):

- (i) *Nunca ainda ninguém disse isso*
never yet nobody told that
‘Nobody has ever told that yet’

⁸ The examples (i) and (ii) do not challenge the relevance of Neg-Absorption. As shown in (iii) and (iv), independently of Negative Concord, the structures in (i) and (ii) are problematic in European Portuguese, because of the position occupied by the n-word — in fact, in this language, scrambling of an argumental complement of the verb is not allowed (cf. (iii)) and topicalization of negative phrases is prevented (cf. (iv)).

- (i) ??*Ninguém nada leu*
nobody nothing read
(ii) ??*Nada(.) ninguém leu*
nothing nobody read
(iii) a. ?*Ele nada leu*
he nothing read
b. **Ele o livro leu*
he the book read
(iv) ??/**Nada(.) ele leu*
nothing he read

- (26) [CP a quem [C [não[tem]]i] [PolP ninguém [Pol ti] [TP ultimamente oferecido presentes]]]

The ill-formedness of (25b) is unexpected under checking considerations: the negative phrase in [Spec, PolP] should be able to check the strong negative features of Pol° and identify the null negative head.

- (27) * A quem tem [PolP ninguémi [Pol°]...[NegP [Neg° ø]i [VP]]]]

Turning now to (25a), we must assume that the negative head marker does not originate in Neg° nor does it raise from this position into C°. In fact, as previously mentioned, in languages like Portuguese, preverbal negative phrases may not co-occur with an overt negative head (cf. (28)).

- (28)a. *Ninguém tem ultimamente oferecido livros ao Pedro*
nobody has lately given books to the Pedro
‘Nobody has given books to Pedro lately’
b. **Ninguém não tem ultimamente oferecido livros ao Pedro*
nobody not has lately given books to the Pedro
‘Nobody has not given books to Peter lately’

Hence, in the derivational step previous to the raising of the tensed verb to C°, a null head should occupy Pol° and Neg° in (25a). However, considering the unavailability of (25b), we must conclude that the raising of a covert Neg° into C°, is not enough to turn the sentence into a negative one (see (29)).

- (29) * [CPa quem [C°[Neg°]i tem]j [PolP ninguém [Pol°t]j...[NegP [Neg° ø]i [VP]]]]

Consequently, I assume that in (25a), the negative sentence marker *não* ‘not’ has been directly inserted by Merge in adjunction to the tensed verb in C°.

We may conclude that the Checking theory is not able to deal with Negative Concord, nor with the (un)availability of preverbal negative phrases with the overt negative sentence marker across languages.

Notice that this analysis crucially relies on the assumption that the negative subject *ninguém* ‘nobody’ occurs in the specifier of a functional projection bellow CP which c-commands the final landing site of the verb within the core sentence projections — let us call this landing site I°, for the sake of simplicity. Note that this claim does not specifically imply the existence of PolP, but of any projection whose specifier c-commands I°. This is the case of PolP in

Zanuttini (1994a, 1997), ΣP in Laka (1990), TP in Pollock (1989) or AgrsP in Belletti (1990), Haegeman (1995).

The problem now is to prove that the negative constituent *ninguém* ‘nobody’ in (25a) occurs in such a specifier position. Would it be in a projection lower than the one occupied by the verb that heads the sentence, and the presence of the negative marker preceding the verb should be expected under checking considerations; hence, the Merge of this negative head with C° would not be required.

The presence of the adverb *ultimamente* ‘lately’ may give us some help to locate *ninguém* ‘nobody’. In (25a) and (28a) *ultimamente* occupies a position bellow the functional projection headed by the inflected verb and above VP.⁹ In fact, *ultimamente* follows the tensed auxiliary verb *ter* ‘have’ and precedes the past participle projection that *ter* subcategorises as well as the projection originally headed by this auxiliary, as in (30).

- (30)a. *Ninguém temi [ultimamente [[V ti] [oferecido livros ao*
nobody has lately given books to the
Pedro]]]
Pedro
‘Nobody has given books to Pedro lately’
b. *A quem não temi ninguém [ultimamente [[V ti] [oferecido*
to whom not has nobody lately given
livros]]]?
books
‘To whom hasn’t anybody given books lately?’

The claim that *ultimamente* ‘lately’ c-commands the projection originally occupied by the auxiliary in these sentences is based on the different behaviour of this adverb and *bem* ‘well’, a monosyllabic adverb that typically occurs in the left periphery of the VP containing the main verb (cf. Cinque 1995, Costa 1998).¹⁰ The contrast between (30a) and (31b) shows that *ultimamente* affects a projection higher than the main VP.

⁹ I will not discuss whether the adverb occurs in the specifier position of a independent projection or whether it projects a phrase which is left adjoined to a maximal projection.

¹⁰ Costa (1998) assumes that monosyllabic adverbs may only be left adjoined to the VP (of the main verb). They are excluded from the sentence-final position unless they bear heavy stress or are included in a phonologically heavier constituent:

- (i) John (*well) has (*well) been (*well) reading (well) to his children (*well)
(Costa 1998:37)
(ii) John read the book WELL (Costa 1998:38)
(iii) John read to his children very well (Costa 1998:40).

- (31)a. *Ninguém tem_i [[V t_i] lido_j [bem [[V t_j] [ao Pedro]]]]*
 nobody has read well to the Pedro
 "Nobody has read well to Pedro"
 b. **Ninguém tem_i [bem [[V t_i] [lido ao Pedro]]]*
 nobody has well read to the Pedro

Notice that *ninguém* 'nobody' in (25a) does not occur inside the projection that *ultimamente* c-commands — compare (25a) with (32), a sentence also possible in European Portuguese.

- (32) *A quem não tem ultimamente ninguém*
 to whom not has lately nobody
oferecido livros?
 given books
 "To whom hasn't anybody given books lately?"

Thus, we may accept that in (25a), *ninguém* in (25a) is in a projection above VP, higher than the one originally headed by the auxiliary verb.

The distribution of modal adverbs like *(in)felizmente* '(un)fortunately' — which occur in the left periphery of the sentence preceding the landing site of the inflected verb within the sentence, as shown in (33) — will allow us to determine how high in (25a) *ninguém* 'nobody' is.

- (33)a. *Infelizmente ninguém tem oferecido livros ao Pedro*
 unfortunately nobody has given books to the Pedro
 "Unfortunately nobody has given books to Pedro"
 b. *Ninguém infelizmente tem oferecido livros ao Pedro*
 nobody unfortunately has given books to the Pedro
 "Unfortunately nobody has given books to Pedro"
 c. *??Ninguém tem infelizmente oferecido livros ao Pedro*
 nobody has unfortunately given books to the Pedro
 d. **Ninguém tem oferecido infelizmente livros ao Pedro*
 nobody has given unfortunately books to the Pedro

Contrary to what happens in (33a) and (33b), the only way to convert the examples in (33c) and (33d) into well-formed sentences is to assign a parenthetical interpretation to the adverbial:¹¹

Based on examples like the previous ones, Costa further assumes that English main verbs overtly raise out of the VP into a functional projection.

¹¹ The distribution of modal adverbs like *(in)felizmente* '(un)fortunately' has been studied in English and Italian. Jackendoff (1972:50) includes *unfortunately*, *evidently* and *probably* in the same class of adverbs and claims that they occur in initial position in the sentence, after an

- (34)a. *Ninguém tem, infelizmente, oferecido livros ao Pedro*
 nobody has, unfortunately, given books to the Pedro
 "Nobody has, unfortunately, given books to the Pedro"
 b. *Ninguém tem oferecido, infelizmente, livros ao Pedro*
 nobody has given, unfortunately, books to the Pedro
 "Nobody has, unfortunately, given books to the Pedro"

As shown in (35), the occurrence of this modal adverbial in sentences like (25a) suggests that *ninguém* 'nobody' occupies the specifier position of the highest IP projection in the sentence.

- (35)a. *A quem não tem infelizmente ninguém oferecido livros?*
 to whom not has unfortunately nobody given books
 "To whom hasn't unfortunately anybody given books?"
 b. *A quem não tem ninguém infelizmente oferecido livros?*
 to whom not has nobody unfortunately given books
 "To whom hasn't unfortunately anybody given books?"

In fact, the contrast between (33c) and (35b) shows that (35b) is derived from a configuration like the one presented in (33b), by raising of the auxiliary into C°, thus confirming the analysis of (25a) which places *ninguém* 'nobody' in the specifier of a functional projection that c-commands I°.

Summing up, the data analysed in the previous subsections support the following assumptions:

- (i) Specifier-Head Agreement does not play any privileged role in licensing Negative Concord.
- (ii) Checking Theory cannot subsume Neg-Absorption, an LF operation still required to form a single negative constituent from multiple negative items in a syntactic domain.

auxiliary, or in final position "if separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause and accompanied with a drop in pitch" (Jackendoff 1972:50). Cinque (1995) and Zanuttini (1997) show that the corresponding adverbs in Italian, *fortunadamente* 'fortunately' and *certamente* 'certainly', belong to different classes, since they may co-occur. As far as the class of *fortunadamente* 'fortunately' is concerned, the data presented show that in Italian, as in European Portuguese, these adverbs may follow the preverbal subject and precede the inflected verb that heads the sentence:

- (i) *Gianni fortunatamente oggi dirà di no*
 Gianni fortunately today will-say of no
 "Luckily John today will say no"
 (Zanuttini 1997:136)

(iii) Sentence negation may not imply the projection of any special negative category (NegP or PolP); it may be accomplished by pure Merge of the negative marker with the relevant (verbal) head.

3. *A proposal on the syntax of Negative Concord*

The empirical evidence presented above is in line with most of Chomsky's (1998) proposals. In particular, it suggests that languages dispense with projections containing only uninterpretable features to be erased during the derivation, as it seems to be the case of PolP in Zanuttini (1994a), and favours less complex derivations, where the elementary operation Merge plays a significant role.

Within this framework, several questions must be taken into account: firstly, the structure of negative sentences must be reconsidered; secondly, concerning Negative Concord configurations, two major problems must be accounted for: (i) the requirement for a preverbal negative element with post-verbal negative constituents in some Romance languages; and (ii) the variation across Romance in allowing for the occurrence of the sentence negative marker with preverbal negative constituents.

3.1 *Negative sentences and negative phrases*

The fact that the presence of the overt negative sentence marker does not imply the existence of NegP or PolP (cf. (25a) above) challenges the relevance of these sentence specific projections for sentence negation. So, I will tentatively propose that sentences do not radically differ from other phrase projections as far as negation is concerned. Notice that this is what is expected when we characterise sentence as IP or TP, where P = phrase.

In fact, to get sentence or phrase negation, all that seems to be required is that the heads of these constituents be locally under the scope of a negative element. This is what happens in the following examples, where the negated phrases are under the local scope of the negation markers *não* 'not' and *sem* 'without'.

- (36)a. *Ele [não [I°/T° vai] ao restaurante habitualmente]*
he not goes to the restaurant usually
"He does not usually go to the restaurant"
- b. *Ele falou de um assunto [não especialmente [A°agradável]*
he talked about a subject not specially pleasant
para a Maria]
to the Maria
"He talked about a subject not specially pleasant to Mary"

- c. *A [não [N°conclusão] desse capítulo] preocupa a Maria*
the not/non conclusion of that chapter worries the Maria
"The non conclusion of that chapter worries Mary"

- (37)a. *Ele fez o trabalho [sem [D°a] ajuda da Ana]*
he did the assignment without the help of the Ana
"He did his assignment without Ana's help"
- b. *Eles partiram para férias [sem [C°que] se despedissem da Ana]*
they left on vacation without that themselves.CL
said good-bye to the Ana
"They left on vacation without saying good-bye to Ana"

Notice that many of these negated phrases are not usually assumed to project PolP nor NegP — this is the case of AP (cf. (36b)), NP (cf. (36c)) or DP (cf. (37a)).

The correlation between sentence and phrase negation is supported by the Negative Concord data, which are not restricted to sentence domains as shown in (38):

- (38)a. *Ele fez o trabalho [pp sem nenhuma dificuldade]*
he did the assignment without no trouble
"He did his assignment without any trouble"
- b. *Ele falou de um assunto [não especialmente agradável para ninguém]*
he talked about a subject not specially pleasant
to nobody
"He talked about a subject not specially pleasant to anybody"
- c. *A [não conclusão de nenhum dos capítulos] preocupa a Maria*
the not/non conclusion of none of the chapters worries the Maria
"The non conclusion of any chapter worries Mary"

Considering now the kind of (pure) Merge¹² involved in building up the negated phrases, the analysis of the examples in (36) and (37) suggests that it may be either set-Merge (i.e., selection, in which case the resulting object takes

¹² In Chomsky (1998), Merge is involved in the derivations, either alone, as pure Merge, or as an element of the composite operation Move. Move is analysed as a combination of Merge, an operation that takes two syntactic objects to form a new one, and Agree, a feature-deletion operation which operates under matching.

the label of the selector) or pair-Merge (i.e., adjunction, where the adjoined element does not alter the category of the object to which it adjoins). Set-Merge is present in (37a), where the negative preposition *sem* 'without' selects the DP and projects as a PP, *sem a ajuda da Ana* 'without Ana's help'.

In the remaining examples, it is pair-Merge that is apparently at work. In fact, in these cases the negative marker, in particular *não* 'not', does not seem to select a specific kind of categorial phrase — it may co-occur with IP/TP, AP, NP, etc.

Besides, concerning (36c), we would have to posit that D° may select NegP instead of NP, if set-Merge rather than pair-Merge were involved in the derivation of this example.

Finally, only pair-Merge allows us to deal with sentences like (25a), repeated in (39), assuming that they are representative of I° to C° raising.

- (39) *A quem não tem ninguém ultimamente oferecido livros?*
to whom not has nobody lately given books
"To whom hasn't anybody given books lately?"

As previously shown (cf. 2.2), the Merge of the negative head marker is only required after the raising of the verb into C°. If the merged negative head then projects, the resulting derivation is non-convergent, because the uninterpretable features of C° will not be checked by the wh-phrase *a quem* 'to whom', since Agree fails to apply in the domain of C°.

Notice that the relation between a negative marker and the head of a negated sentence does not involve Agree. For Agree to apply, these heads should present uninterpretable polarity features to be deleted under feature matching with the negative head. This would prevent us from accounting for sentences like those in (40), where the percolation of the polarity value to the top of the sentence licenses the occurrence of polarity expressions in the second conjunct of the coordination:

- (40) *Ele não viu a Ana e a Maria também não / *também*
he not saw the Ana and the Maria neither / *also
"He did not see Ana and neither (did) Mary / *so (did) Mary"

So far I have claimed that the existence of sentence negation does not compel us to posit PolP or even NegP as sentence functional projections. However, these projections have been claimed to account for phenomena other than sentence negation — this is the case of true imperatives and emphatic affirmation (Laka 1990, Zanuttini 1994b). In order to dispense with these projections we should be able to show that there are alternative explanations for these phenomena.

Based on the incompatibility in Spanish between true imperative verb forms and sentence negation (cf. (41a) vs. (41b)), Laka (1990) considers that in this language, the imperative is one of the values of Σ° , Pol° in Zanuttini (1994a). In Spanish, as in other Romance languages, negative sentences with imperative meaning must be expressed in the subjunctive, which Laka assumes to be generated under a modal projection.

- (41) a. *Ven aqui*
"Come here"
b. **No ven aqui*
not come.IMP.2SG here
c. *No vengas aqui*
not come.PRES.SUBJ.2SG aqui
"Do not come here"
(Laka 1990:246)

Notice that this proposal leaves open the possibility of not correlating Σ P/PolP with Imperatives: the imperative is not in complementary distribution with sentence negation in many languages, suggesting, in Laka's terms, that it may not be an intrinsic value of Σ° /Pol°, hence occurring independently of the Σ P projection. This is what happens in French (cf. (42b)) and Basque (cf. (43b)).

- (42) a. *Vas-t-en!*
"Leave!"
b. *Ne t'en vas pas!*
"Do not leave!"
(43) a. *Jan esasu hori!*
eat you-imp that
"Eat that!"
b. *ez esasu hori jan!*
not AUX that eat
"Do not eat that!"
(Laka 1990:247)

Additional evidence for the independence of negation and imperatives comes from Spanish and Portuguese. These languages exhibit the suppletive imperative in positive sentences for all grammatical persons but the 2nd person forms. So, while in European Portuguese the imperative of *sair* 'to leave' is *sai* 'leave', for the second person of the singular, and *saíde* 'leave', for the second person of the plural, the polite forms of the imperative to address the listener are expressed in the 3rd person and in this case the subjunctive occurs:

- (44) a. *Saia* *imediatamente!*
 leave-PRES.SUBJ.3SG immediately
 "Leave immediately!"
 b. *Saiam* *imediatamente!*
 leave-PRES.SUBJ.3SG immediately
 "Leave immediately!"

Thus, whatever the adequate treatment of the imperative, it does not seem to imply the existence of PolP or NegP.

In fact, several alternative accounts of imperatives have been proposed (among others, Zanuttini 1991, 1996, Rooryck 1992, Rivero 1994 and Rivero and Terzi 1995). I will not try to discuss these proposals here, since imperatives are a matter beyond the aim of this paper.¹³

Laka (1990) relates Σ P to the occurrence of emphatic affirmation. She considers that the position of Σ P is subject to parametric variation — it is subcategorised by TP in English and generated above IP/(TP) in Basque and Spanish. Laka assumes that emphatic affirmation and sentence negation constitute the fundamental values of Σ P. So, the head of Σ P may be occupied by an affirmative or negative marker (overt or null) and the specifier of this

¹³ Some of these alternatives for Romance have been presented in work by Zanuttini. Still, they seem not to be entirely adequate. So, Zanuttini (1991, 1996) emphasises that in languages where a preverbal negative head negates the sentence by itself, negative imperatives do not occur, while in languages with post-verbal negative markers they do. Considering that preverbal sentence negation subcategorises TP, the exclusion of sentence negation from true imperatives is explained, assuming that they occur in sentence structures that do not project TP. Post-verbal negative markers do not select TP as complement; so, the absence of TP does not affect them. However, examples like (i), show that the true imperative is compatible with a sentence preverbal negative head, whenever the imperative affects an auxiliary instead of a main verb.

- (i) *No sta (a) crodi!* (Friulian)
 neg stay to-believe
 "Don't believe that!"
 (Zanuttini 1997:121)

Thus, Zanuttini (1997) presents an alternative proposal. She assumes that Imperative is an illocutionary force of C° and claims that the negative marker selects MoodP. Following to Rooryck (1992), Rivero (1994) and Rivero and Terzi (1995), Zanuttini assumes that imperative forms raise to C°. The non co-occurrence of true imperative main verbs with preverbal negation is explained as follows: when the negative marker is absent, Mood° is not active and does not have features to check, so the verb raises directly to C°. In negative imperatives, the illocutionary imperative force is checked by the negative preverbal head and the features of Mood°, either by the imperative auxiliary or by the imperative suppletive forms in the subjunctive or indicative. However, the correlation between sentence negation and the presence of an active Mood° is not exclusive, since it is assumed that suppletive imperatives in the positive form check their mood features against the relevant functional projection, before checking their illocutionary imperative force in C°.

projection, may be filled by a fronted n-word or an emphatic constituent as in (45):

- (45) *MAÑANA viene Pedro*
 "Peter arrives TOMORROW"
 (Laka 1990:128)

According to Laka, short polarity answers make crucial use of this projection, as represented in (47), for the Spanish examples in (46), from Laka (1990:165-166). The representation (47) does not include the initial *si* 'yes' and *no* 'no' separated from the answers by a comma.

- (46) Q: *Llovió ayer?*
 rained yesterday
 "Did it rain yesterday?"
 A: a. *Si, ayer si llovió*
 yes yesterday yes rained
 "Yes, yesterday it did rain"
 b. *No, ayer no llovió*
 no yesterday not rained
 "No, yesterday it didn't rain"

- (47) [Σ P *ayer* [Σ° *no/si llovió*]_i] [IP [I° *t_i*] VP]]

The contrasts between these examples and the European Portuguese corresponding ones, corroborate the idea that Σ P, characterised as a functional projection above IP, instantiates emphatic affirmation. The Portuguese data also suggest that the negative marker that heads Σ° should be conceived an emphatic element as well (cf. (48)).¹⁴

- (48) Q: *Choveu ontem?*
 rained yesterday
 "Did it rain yesterday?"
 A: a. *Sim, ontem choveu*
 yes yesterday rained
 "Yes, yesterday it rained"
 b. **Sim, ontem sim choveu*
 yes yesterday yes rained

¹⁴ I will make no claims about English, where SP is dominated by TP, according to Laka (1990), hence occurring inside the sentence domain.

- c. *Sim, ontem sim, choveu*
yes yesterday yes, rained
"Yes, yesterday yes, it rained"
- B: a. *Não, ontem não choveu*
no yesterday not rained
"No, yesterday it did not rain"
- b. *Não, ontem não, não choveu*
no yesterday no not rained
"No, yesterday it did not rain"
- c. **Nãõ, ontem não, choveu*
no yesterday no/not rained

The sentence in (48Aa) presents a plain affirmative answer, that is to say, an affirmative sentence that makes no use of ΣP . On the contrary (48Ab) and (48Ac) are affirmative sentences using the emphatic particle of positive polarity, *sim* 'yes'. The contrast between these examples shows that this particle must be separated from the verb by a pause (48A.c); since the presence of the verb by itself is interpreted as a positive polarity mark in the sentence (cf. *choveu* 'it rained' in (48A.c)), this positive verb form may not co-occur with the emphatic *sim* 'yes' in Σ° (cf. (48A.b)). Thus, the well-formed example in (48A.c) should be represented as in (49), disregarding the initial *sim* 'yes' of the sentence, as in Laka (1990):

- (49) [ΣP ontem [Σ° sim] [IP [I $^\circ$ choveu]]

In contrast with the configuration proposed in Laka (1990) (cf. (47)), in (49) the positive emphatic particle and the verb do not share Σ° . Instead the verb form occurs in IP, the functional projection that hosts non-emphatic affirmatives.

The negative answers in (48B) seem to corroborate this analysis. While (48B.a) is a plain negative sentence, (48B.b) and (48B.c) are emphatic negatives particles, possibly occurring in Σ° . The contrast between the last two examples suggests that the negative element in Σ° does not constitute the core sentence negation marker. So, it must co-occur with the non-emphatic negation in IP, as illustrated in the following representation:

- (50) [ΣP ontem [Σ° não] [IP [I $^\circ$ não choveu]]

In other words, the current analysis is in accord with Laka (1990), in claiming that ΣP is not able to capture the non emphatic polarity of the positive sentences and extends this proposal to the negative ones. It also suggests that

the non-emphatic positive or negative sentences makes no use of this functional projection. Considering that in Spanish and Portuguese ΣP has been claimed to project above IP, and to host in emphatic constituents (cf. (45)), it is plausible to conjecture that this functional projection is in fact FocusP, a projection that has been proposed to account for emphatic constituents occurring in the left periphery of the sentence. I will not further develop this topic, which would require a more in-depth study.

Summing up, in this section I argued for an analysis which does not posit sentence specific projections for sentence negation and assumes that sentences do not differ from other phrase projections as far as negation is concerned. The generalisation that seems to emerge from the data is the following one: in order for a constituent to be negated, only one requirement must be met — its head must be under the local scope of a negative element, in the examples above, the negative head marker.

I have also reviewed some proposals presented as independent arguments for the existence of NegP/PolP/ ΣP , which assume that these functional projections instantiate imperative and emphatic affirmation.

It has been claimed that it is not possible to ground the existence of NegP/PolP/ ΣP on the distribution imperative sentences, because the complementary distribution of true imperative verb forms with sentence negation does not universally apply. Moreover, in some Romance languages, suppletive forms of the imperative, in the subjunctive or indicative, show up in affirmative sentences, whenever there are no true imperative verb forms for the required grammatical persons. These facts show that there is no necessary correlation between imperatives and this functional projection.

It has been assumed that ΣP may project emphatic affirmation. Taking into account empirical data from European Portuguese, it has been suggested that this functional projection also instantiates emphatic negation, the non-emphatic polarity, either affirmative or negative, being excluded from it.

3.2 The presence of the negative sentence marker with post-verbal N-words

Turning now to Negative Concord configurations, let us consider the first of the two major problems we have to deal with, i.e., the requirement of the presence, in some Romance languages, of a preverbal negative element with postverbal n-words, illustrated by the contrasts in (51), as well as those in (52):

- (51) a. **Ele deu nada a ninguém*
he gave nothing to nobody
- b. *Ele não deu nada a ninguém*
he not gave nothing to nobody
"He did not give anything to anybody"

- (52)a. **A quem tem ninguém ultimamente oferecido livros?*
 to whom has nobody lately given books
 b. *A quem não tem ninguém ultimamente oferecido livros?*
 to whom not has nobody lately given books
 "To whom hasn't anybody given books lately?"

The compulsory presence of the negative marker may be explained if we assume the following two claims:

- (i) N-words in languages like European Portuguese have intrinsic negative polarity, so they must occur in negative domains.
 (ii) A syntactic category constitutes a negative domain if the lexical item which heads it is locally under the scope of an overt negative element.

Notice that the first claim is compatible with the fact that negative words may fix the polarity value of these domains when they occupy an adequate structural position. This is what happens with *nunca* 'never' and *ninguém* 'nobody' in (53).

- (53)a. *Ninguém deu nada a ninguém*
 nobody gave nothing to nobody
 "Nobody gave anything to anybody"
 b. *Ele nunca deu nada a ninguém*
 he never gave nothing to nobody
 "He never gave anything to anybody"

The second claim includes a well-known property of languages with preverbal negative markers, like European Portuguese. As often mentioned, in these languages sentence negation only obtains when a negative item overtly has scope over the tensed verb (see Zanuttini 1991, 1997). Thus, we could rephrase that claim in more specific terms, only taking into account sentence negation.

- (54) In languages presenting preverbal negative markers, sentential negation only obtains when an overt negative item locally takes scope over the verbal element which heads the sentence.

Scope is obtained either by head adjunction of the negative head marker or by local c-command of a negative element. Thus, in (53) the absence of the overt negative marker is allowed because the scope requirement in (54) is fulfilled by the preverbal negative phrase, which locally c-commands the verb in I°(T°). However, in the regular negative sentence in (51b), or in (52b), this demand

may only be satisfied by merging the negative sentence marker with the verbal head which fills I°(T°) or C°.

As mentioned above, the generalisation in (54) has been presented in Zanuttini (1991, 1997). The current study adopts it, but departs from Zanuttini's analyses as far as the explanations provided are concerned.

Zanuttini (1991) correlates the presence of the preverbal negative marker in sentences with post-verbal n-words with the barrierhood of TP at LF. She assumes that in order to satisfy the Neg-Criterion, negative constituents in post-verbal position must move to the Specifier position of the preverbal negative projection at LF. So, in order to remove barrierhood of TP, an overt negative head marker c-commanding TP must occur. In overt syntax, TP does not behave like a barrier and a n-word may occupy [Spec, NegP] without requiring the presence of the preverbal negative head. This proposal is problematic, not only because it involves the Neg-Criterion (cf. section 2.1, above), but also because it relies on the notion of barrier and states, without independent evidence, that TP is a barrier at LF but not in overt syntax.

Zanuttini (1997) assumes that languages presenting a preverbal negative head marker that negates the sentence by itself project a negative phrase above the core IP projections. The need for the co-occurrence of a negative preverbal element with a post-verbal n-word is interpreted as a consequence of the requirement on the checking of Neg°, which may be accomplished by the negative head marker or a raised n-word. She argues that checking by a negative phrase may obtain either by a specifier-head agreement or by c-command. As mentioned in section 2.2, the Checking approach does not convincingly account for the distribution of n-words; besides, the version of this theory presented in Zanuttini (1997) seems controversial in assuming that checking may also occur under c-command. Thus, while keeping the generalisation (54), the proposals of Zanuttini (1991, 1997) will not be adopted in this paper.

In fact, what I am proposing is a much more general and simple account of negation, aiming at applying both to sentence and constituent negation. What I would like to suggest is that (54) is an instance of a general requirement on negation, which states that:

- (55) For a phrase (including IP) to be interpreted as negative, the lexical item that heads it must be in the scope of a negative element.

This scope requirement may be achieved either by merging a negative head maker with this lexical head or in the presence of a negative phrase that locally c-commands it.

3.3 The (un)availability of the negative sentence marker with preverbal N-words

The second problem to account for is the contrast between (56) and (57). These examples show that Romance languages differ in (not-)allowing for the occurrence of an overt sentence negative marker with preverbal negative phrases. While this co-occurrence is impossible in languages like Portuguese and Italian, it is permitted in Catalan and French.

- (56)a. **Ninguém não disse tal coisa*
 nobody not said such thing
 b. **Niente di buono non potrà accadere*
 nothing good not can happen
 (Zanuttini 1991: 112)

- (57)a. *Ningú (no) ha arribat*
 nobody (not) has come
 "Nobody came"
 (Laka 1990: 116)

- b. *Personne n' a rien dit*
 nobody not has nothing said
 "Nobody said anything"

It is usually assumed that in languages with preverbal negative head markers it is this negative element, whenever present, which defines the scope of negation.

Let us additionally consider that, in these languages, the domain of negation is typically restricted to the negative head marker and its scope domain, that is to say, the elements into which it Merges and those it c-commands. Notice that similar claims have been made for English by authors working in different frameworks (cf. Givón 1978, Peres 1997, Newson 1998).¹⁵

This proposal, which in the core cases excludes any preverbal constituent from the scope of the negative sentence marker, is supported by the distribution of the underspecified polarity expressions (see the contrasts in 58) — the negative sentence marker does not license negative interpretations of these expressions whenever they occur in preverbal positions.

¹⁵ Givón (1978) suggests that negative sentences exhibiting a negative marker typically negate the predicate. Peres (1997) and Newson (1998) assume that English presents several possibilities of occurrence of Negative projections within the sentence.

- (58)a. *Uma única pessoa [não telefonou]*
 a single person not telephoned
 "Only one person did not call"
 b. *[Não telefonou uma única pessoa]*
 not telephoned a single person
 "Nobody called"

Still, the negative sentence domain may be extended. This is what happens when a negative marker occupies C°, as in (59)), or when a N-word appears in preverbal position (cf. (60)).

- (59)a. *Eles partiram para férias [sem que se despedissem da Ana]*
 they left on vacation without that themselves.CL
 said good-bye to the Ana
 "They left on vacation without saying goodbye to Ana"
 b. *[CP a quem [não tem ninguém ultimamente oferecido livros]]?*
 to whom not has nobody lately given books
 "To whom hasn't anybody given books lately?"

- (60) *[Nunca nós dissemos isso!]*
 never we said that
 "Never have we said that!"

The distribution of underspecified polarity items attests that in these cases the negative domain has been extended to the whole IP: they may appear in subject position exhibiting a negative reading.

- (61) *Eles partiram para férias [sem que [qualquer deles] se despedisse da Ana]*
 They left on vacation without that anyone
 of them himself.CL said good-bye to the Ana
 "They all left on vacation without saying goodbye to Ana"

- (62) *A quem [não tem [uma só pessoa] ultimamente oferecido livros]?*
 to whom not has a single person lately
 offered books
 "To whom hasn't anybody offered books lately?"

- (63) [Nunca [um só aluno] disse isso!]
 never a single student said that
 "Never has any student said that!"

Thus, we may suppose that the unacceptability of examples like (64), sometimes related with Double Negation cases (cf. Laka 1990), where the overt negative head marker co-occurs with a preverbal n-word, results from a scope conflict: both the negative marker and the n-word delimit the same constituent as a negative, the sentence, by the fact of having scope over the verb that heads it; however, for this single category they establish two different negative domains: the preverbal negative phrase extends the negative domain to the whole projection it occupies, while the negative marker restricts it to the predicate, as illustrated in (65):

- (64) a. *Ninguém não disse tal coisa!
 nobody not said such thing
 "Nobody has not said such a thing!"
 b. *Nunca nós não dissemos isso!
 never [we not said that]
 "Never have we not said that!"

- (65) a. *[XP Ninguém [ZP não disse tal coisa]]
 b. *[XP Nunca [YP nós [ZP não dissemos isso]]]

I assume that a negative domain is defined by the negative constituent and the elements it locally c-commands. Thus, in the representation (65) there are two negative domains, XP and ZP. ZP includes the negative head marker, the verb it merges with and the constituents they locally c-command. XP contains the n-word and the constituents it c-commands, i.e., ZP in (65a) and YP and ZP in (65b).¹⁶

¹⁶ Notice that if we, alternatively, admit that the negative domain overlaps with the c-command domain of the negative element, excluding this one, in (65a), the negative domain defined by *ninguém*, 'nobody', would be ZP, i.e. the negative predicate, and the one delimited by *não*, 'not', would be the verb it merges with and its complements.

However, examples like (i), where the preverbal subject is composed of a negative marker and an underspecified polarity item displaying a negative reading, suggest that a negative preverbal subject extends the negative domain to the specifier of IP.

- (i) [Nem uma só pessoa] disse isso
 not a single person said that
 "No one said that"

The conflict between the scope delimited by a preverbal n-word and the preverbal sentence marker does not arise with *ne* 'not' in French, which has weak features, nor with *no* 'not' in Catalan, which is undergoing a process of feature strength changing.

As often noticed in French the preverbal negative sentence marker is weak in the sense that it cannot negate the sentence by itself (cf. Zanuttini 1997, among others). As for *no* 'not' in Catalan, though it can still negate a sentence, it apparently participates in a diachronic process similar to the one suffered by French *ne*. In fact, according to Espinal (1993), sentence negation in Catalan may be expressed by *no*, or by *no-pas* 'not'. She claims that French and Catalan sentence makers are in different levels of the evolution of the negation's head-particle cycle, whose stages are the following ones: the negative head marker negates the sentence by itself; the negative head becomes reinforced by the co-occurrence of a particle; the negative head may optionally be dropped out in the presence of the particle; the particle, itself, assumes the role of sentence marker and the former negative head is banned. The data suggest that Catalan is moving from the first stage into the second one, while French is already in the third stage.

Thus, in French and Catalan, the negative head marker being weak(er) does not strictly delimit the domain of sentence negation. This proposal is confirmed in French by the exclusion of the strong negative marker *pas* from these contexts.

- (66) *Personne (n') est pas arrivé
 Nobody Neg is not arrived

The example in (67), where the preverbal negative marker co-occurs with the negative complementizer like *sem (que)* 'without', seems to suggest an alternative explanation for the data in (64).

- (67) *Eles partiram [sem que a Ana não
 they left without that the Ana not
 se despedisse deles]
 herself.CL say good-bye to them
 "They left without Ana had not said good-bye to them"

The contrast between (67) and (68) shows that the ill-formedness of (67) is due to the fact that *sem que* 'without' and *não* 'not', having scope over the verb that heads the sentence, redundantly define the same constituent as negative. The non-appearance of the negative marker *não* 'not' in (68a) and the occurrence of the negative markers into two different sentence domains in (68b) produces well-formed results.

- (68)a. *Eles partiram [sem que a Ana se despedisse*
 they left without that the Ana herself.CL said good-bye
deles]
 to them
 "They left left without Ana had said good-bye to them"
- b. *Eles não partiram sem que a Ana se despedisse*
 they not left without that the Ana herself.CL said good-bye
deles
 to them
 "They did not leave without Ana had said good-bye to them"

Yet the redundancy in the delimitation of the categorial domain may not be the whole explanation for the marginality of (64), above, since n-words, differently from negative markers like *sem* 'without' and *não* 'not' may share the same categorial domain in Negative Concord configurations.

Thus the examples in (67) do not constitute an actual alternative to the scope conflict hypothesis. On the contrary, they corroborate it, since as shown in (58) and (61), repeated in (69), the two negative markers do not assign to the sentence the same negative domain — the negative domain in (69a) does not include the preverbal subject, while in (69b) it does, as shown by the (un)availability of the negative interpretation for the underspecified polarity expressions.

- (69)a. *Uma única pessoa [não telefonou]*
 a single person not telephoned
 "Only one person did not call"
- b. *Eles partiram para férias [sem que [qualquer deles]*
 they left on vacation without that anyone of them
se despedisse da Ana]
 himself.CL said good-bye to the Ana
 "They all left on vacation without saying good-bye to Ana"

Thus in (67), there is also a scope conflict, a fact that seems to further confirm the current analysis of the data in (64).

Considering again the ill-formedness of the sentences in (64), repeated in (70), a question remains: why is it that Neg-Absorption does not apply to these configurations as it does in (71)?

- (70)a. **Ninguém não disse tal coisa!*
 nobody not said such thing
 "Nobody did not said such a thing!"

- b. **Nunca nós não dissemos isso!*
 never [we not said that]]
 "Never have not we said that!"
- (71)a. *Nunca ninguém disse isso!*¹⁷
 never nobody told that
 "Nobody has ever told that"
- b. *Ele nunca deu nada a ninguém*
 he never gave nothing to nobody
 "He never gave anything to anybody"
- c. *Ele não deu nada a ninguém*
 he not gave nothing to nobody
 "He did not give anything to anybody"

We can explain this contrast assuming that it results from the conditions on the application of Neg-Absorption: the data analysed so far seem to be adequately accommodated if we accept that Neg-Absorption only applies to a single negative domain being prevented to operate across different negative domains. So, in (70), though the n-word and the preverbal negative head affect the same categorial domain (the sentence), they delimit two different negative sentence domains. In contrast, in (71) all the n-words share the same negative domain. This is so because, in (71a) and (71b), there is no strong negative marker strictly delimiting the verb and its complements as the sentence negative domain, and in (71c) it is this head the only element to fix the negative domain within the sentence.

Notice that the fact that in (71a) two n-words precede the verbal head of the sentence does not undermine this proposal, since n-words in Romance do not exclusively define a negative domain each. When n-words in preverbal position share a negative domain this one is delimited just by one of them.¹⁸ In

¹⁷ Similar examples appear in other Romance languages, as illustrated for Italian in (i), from Zanuttini (1991):

- (i) *Nessuno mai mi aveva parlato così*
 nobody never CL.DAT had spoken like that
 "Nobody has ever spoken to me like that"

¹⁸ N-words in Romance differ from strong negative markers (both sentential and phrasal) in that they may co-occur in the same negative domain producing Negative Concord effects. Strong negative markers yield Double Negation when they co-occur in the domain of the same negative sentence:

- (i) *As crianças não saem sem a autorização dos pais*
 the children not went out without the permission of the parents
 "The children do not go out without their parents' permission"

fact, preverbal n-words do not differ from post-verbal ones in that they occupy independent syntactic positions. Hence, as shown in (72) and (73), they may be separated from each other by the presence of certain temporal and modal adverbs.

- (72) a. *Nunca ainda ninguém me disse isso*
 never yet nobody me told that
 "Nobody has ever told me that yet"
 b. *Ninguém ainda nunca me disse isso*
 nobody yet never me told that
 "Nobody has ever told me that yet"

- (73) *Nunca talvez ninguém me tenha dito isso*¹⁹
 Never perhaps nobody me has told that
 "Perhaps nobody has ever told me that"

In these circumstances, it is plausible to assume that it is the leftmost n-word that fixes the beginning of the negative domain, since it c-commands both the other(s) n-word(s) and the verbal head of the sentence. The distribution of underspecified polarity items confirms this expectation, as it shows that it is the leftmost n-word in the sentence that licenses the negative interpretation of these items when they appear in preverbal position — see the contrasts in the examples in (74) and (75)).²⁰

- (74) a. *Nunca um só passageiro ficou assustado*
 never a single passenger got afraid
 "No passenger has ever got afraid"

In languages like standard English, negative quantifiers apparently share this property with strong negative markers.

¹⁹ *Talvez* 'perhaps' may precede or follow the first n-word in preverbal position, but it produces marginal sentences when it follows both, as shown in (i) and (ii):

- (i) *(Talvez) nunca (talvez) ninguém (talvez) tenha dito isso*
 (perhaps) never (perhaps) nobody (perhaps) told me that
 "Perhaps nobody has ever told me that"
 (ii) *(Talvez) ninguém (talvez) nunca (*talvez) tenha dito isso*
 (perhaps) nobody (perhaps) never (perhaps) told me that
 "Perhaps nobody has ever told me that"

²⁰ Notice that the data in (72) and (73), as well as those in (74) and (75), contradict the idea that multiple n-words in preverbal position are allowed by the fact that in overt syntax one of them occupies the specifier position of a maximal projection and the others occur in adjunction to this specifier position, as illustrated in (i).

(i) [[XP *Nunca* [XP *ninguém*]] [disse isso]]

- b. *Um só passageiro nunca ficou assustado*
 a single passenger never got afraid
 "Just one passenger never got afraid"

- (75) a. *Ninguém uma só vez ficou assustado*
 nobody a single time got afraid
 "Nobody has ever got afraid"
 b. *Uma só vez ninguém ficou assustado*
 a single time nobody got afraid
 "Just once did nobody got afraid"

The data analysed so far corroborate that Neg-Absorption must apply to a single negative domain. Yet, cases of Long Distance Negative Concord, illustrated in (76), seem to challenge this assumption.

- (76) a. *Eu não quero [ouvir nada]*
 I not want to hear nothing
 "I do not want to hear anything"
 b. *Eu não quero [que tu digas isso a ninguém]*
 I not want that you say that to nobody
 "I do not want you to say that to anybody"

Nevertheless, recent analyses of Long Distance Negative Concord present evidence that is compatible with the claim that Neg-Absorption operates only in a single negative domain.

In effect, Negative Concord across sentence boundaries is only available when the syntactic and semantic properties of the clauses involved convert them into a single complex scope domain for sentence negation. According to Giannakidou and Quer (1997), the crucial property for Long Distance Negative Concord licensing is the dependence of the tense of the subordinate sentence upon the tense of the main one, a property that they correlate with the semantics of the main predicate.²¹

The fact that Long Distance Negative Concord involves tense dependence is to be expected, if we assume that T° is the most relevant functional head in the sentence domain, and that sentence negation obtains whenever an overt negative element locally has scope over the verbal head that checked T°.

²¹ Giannakidou and Quer (1997) show that N-words are licensed within a tensed domain. They demonstrate that Long Distance Negative Concord is restricted to specific contexts which partially overlap with the use of the infinitive and the subjunctive. They also show that not all the subjunctive or infinitival embedded domains are transparent, just those where there is tense dependence of the subordinate sentence with respect to the main one.

4. Conclusions

In this paper I have claimed that N-words exhibit intrinsic negative content. So, they must occur in negative domains, though they may fix their polarity value, whenever they appear in the relevant structural position.

I argued that sentence negation is not radically different from phrase negation. In order to be negated, all these constituents must overtly have their heads under the local scope of a negative element. Concerning sentence, this requirement implies the presence of a negative element having local scope over the verbal item that heads the sentence.

Since N-words are intrinsic negative items, Negative Concord involves multiple negative constituents which do not cancel each other, but contribute to form a single negative expression. Negative Concord may not be reduced to a Spec-Head Agreement relation and must be accounted for by Neg-Absorption, an LF operation which applies within a single local negative domain, converting different instances of negation into a sole negative unit.

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