# A movement analysis of Negative Doubling: evidence from Occitan

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In this work, we propose a novel account of Negative Doubling, a subtype of Negative Concord (NC) in which a single-negation interpretation arises despite the co-occurrence of a negative marker with one or more negative indefinites (cf. van der Wouden 1994; Zeijlstra 2004). We argue that Negative Doubling is analogous to other well-known instances of syntactic doubling, understood here as the co-occurrence within a single clause of two elements bearing the same semantic function, though not necessarily sharing the same morphosyntax. Romance languages famously display argumental clitic doubling, commonly analysed as the splitting of a 'big DP' (Kayne 1975; Uriagereka 1995; Poletto 2008). We claim that negative doubling arises in a similar fashion from the splitting of a single negative indefinite: its negative feature is extracted and moves to a higher position, yielding a configuration where a negative marker co-occurs with a negative remnant (a Negative Concord Item, NCI).

Two main empirical arguments support this view. The first has to do with the fact that under a doubling analysis the negator and the negative indefinite are base-generated as part of a single consituent, call it big NegP. As a null hypothesis, it should be possible to observe languages in which this constituent is realized as such. Based on data from the ASIt (*Atlante Sintattico d'Italia*) database and (Manzini et al., 2005), we show that Occitan negative indefinites bear out this prediction. In varieties like that of Ramats (Chiomonte, Western Piedmont), the postverbal negator *pa* co-occurs with an indefinite pronoun *gî* in postverbal position(1). Crucially, *pa* and *gî* surface together when the negative indefinite argument sits in a preverbal position (2).

(1)  L' ei  **pâ** vangú **gî**.
     it has not come  anybody

(2)  **Pagî**      a  telefouná.
     not-anybody has called

The second empirical argument is typological. Languages displaying Negative Doubling are traditionally grouped into Strict NC and Non-strict NC systems (Zeijlstra 2004), alongside a third class of mixed systems. Strikingly, there appears to be no attested system showing the mirror image of Non-strict NC, i.e. one in which Negative Doubling is licensed with pre-verbal negative indefinites but not with post-verbal ones (Auwera et al., 2018). We label this unattested pattern *Anti-Non-strict NC*, and show that its absence follows from our proposed analysis, which predicts its underivability.

We argue that languages with Negative Doubling must check negative polarity features in a specific structural position by re-merging a negative item, whereas languages without Negative Doubling need not do so. Crucially, this can be achieved either by moving the whole negative quantifier or by splitting it and moving only its negative sub-part (cf. 4–5). We spell out the details of our account by examining Negative Doubling in Italian (a Non-strict NC system) and Czech (a Strict NC system), where following Laka (1991) we assume Negation to be realized in Pol(arity)P, high in the inflectional field.

The first step of the derivation is the same in both Italian and Czech: *nessuno/nikdo* moves to an internal position of the negative quantifier, creating the remnant containing *non/ne*, which moves to PolP leaving the remnant in a post-verbal position. In strict NC languages, a further remnant movement applies, raising *nikdo* to Spec,SubjP (as in 5b). In the case of Italian *Nessuno viene* (6), the lower portion of the negative QP moves to SpecXP, yielding a doubly-filled Comp effect which makes the lexicalisation of *non* impossible and
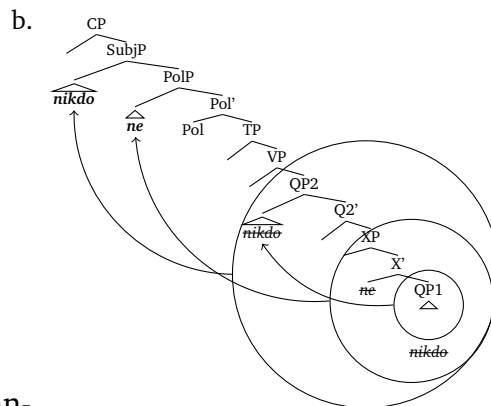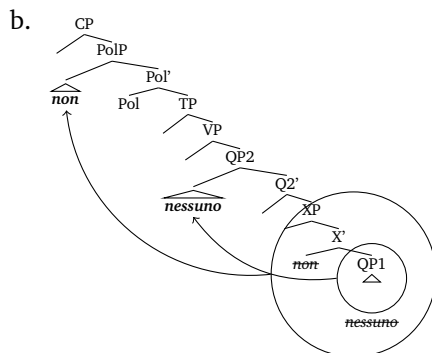
forces the movement of the entire negative QP to Spec,PolP to check its polarity features.

(3) a. **Non** viene **nessuno**. (Italian)
    not comes nobody
    'Nobody comes'

b.



(4) a. **Nikdo ne**volá. (Czech)
    nobody NEG.calls
    'Nobody calls'

b.



On this view, the distinction between NC and non-NC languages results from two independent properties: (i) whether polarity must be checked via re-merge; and (ii) whether negative indefinites may be split. Among NC languages, the difference between Strict and Non-strict systems follows from whether the lower portion of the quantifier (QP1) is allowed to move to the intermediate XP position: Italian-type systems permit this movement (thereby causing the deletion of the negative marker), whereas Czech-type systems do not (forcing the negative marker and negative indefinite to always co-occur). A parallel parameter of variation concerns the specific locus of encoding of negative polarity: PolP in languages like Italian or Czech, a position below TP in languages like Occitan (Zanuttini1997).

(5) a. **Nessuno** viene. (It.)
    nobody comes
    'Nobody comes'

b.
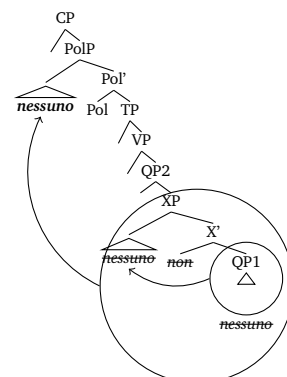


The treatment of Negative Doubling as a *bona fide* instance of syntactic doubling correctly predicts the absence of Anti-Non-strict NC: on our view, pre-verbal NC necessarily passes through a derivational stage yielding post-verbal NC, so a system with pre-verbal NC *but not* post-verbal NC is underivable. From a diachronic and typological perspective, the analysis also explains why NC with post-verbal NCIs is considerably more stable cross-linguistically than NC with pre-verbal NCIs. Post-verbal NC corresponds to the core step in the derivation, whereas pre-verbal NC requires an additional movement operation, giving rise to two possible outcomes (strict vs. non-strict). At a theoretical level, the proposal dispenses with the long-debated idea that NCIs form a distinct lexical class, or should be characterised as NPIs with the special property of being negative in isolation. On our approach, these assumptions are unnecessary: NCIs are best understood as the remnants of split negative indefinites in languages that require negation to be marked in a specific position in the clause.

**References:** Haegeman (1995). The syntax of negation; Kayne (1975). French syntax; Laka (1991). Negation in syntax; Van der Wouden (1994). Negative contexts; Poletto (2008). Doubling as a spare movement strategy; Uriagereka (1995). Aspects in the syntax of clitic placement in Western Romance; Van Der Awera, Alsenoy (2018).On the typology of negative indefinites; Zanuttini (1997). Negation and clausal structure; Zeijlstra (2004). Sentential

negation and negative concord