

Three syntactic derivations for Constituent Negation

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Negation (NEG) can have sentential scope or negate a subclausal term, typically a Quantifier Phrase (QP), in Constituent Negation (CN) (Klima, 64; Horn, 89; Collins and Postal, 2014). In those cases, NEG immediately precedes the QP, as in Spanish (1):

- (1) [[No pocos] han venido a la fiesta]
not few have come to the party

NEG can combine with a large set of QPs, as in (2), and the common view is that in all those sequences NEG directly merges with the QP (Sanchez Lopez, 1999 for Spanish; Kim and Sag, 2002) or possibly, the Q (Collins, 2016, 2017, 2020).

- (2) [No todos/cualquiera/cada uno de ellos] ha venido tarde
Not all/(just) anyone/each one of them has arrived late

Etxepare and Uribe-Etxebarria (2018, in press), recasting an old idea of Lasnik (1972), argue that many of the sequences of *NEG QP* do not correspond to the direct merge of the NEG head and the QP, but are derived instances of adjacency between a very high NEG and a focus-fronted QP. One source of evidence has to do with cases like (3), in which the sequence of NEG QP is broken by a clausal adverb:

- (3) No tal vez a todos les guste eso “Not perhaps everyone likes that”
Neg perhaps prep all cl like that

Note that the modal adverb licenses subjunctive mood, and NEG does not negate the adverb, but the QP. We know independently that sentential negation cannot precede modal adverbs of the sort above (4a), it must necessarily follow them (4b):

- (4) a. *No tal vez les guste eso b. Tal vez no les guste eso
Neg perhaps cl like.subj that Perhaps neg has.subj come

Examples such as (3) must be related to the existence of double NEG in Spanish, possible in the context of denials targeting a negative sentence. (5) (from corpus) is a reply to a newspaper heading saying that *People do not wish to work in the land*:

- (5) No todos no quieren trabajar en el campo
Neg all neg wish work.inf in the land
“Not everyone does not wish to work in the land”

We show that direct merge of NEG with the QP is only available to weak QPs. For strong QPs, the structure underlying the sequence NEG QP is one where the QP is fronted into a position that precedes sentential negation, and is dominated by an even higher NEG. Note that in Spanish, only weak QPs can be preceded by negation within a PP:

- (6) a. *A no todo el mundo le gusta eso b. A no mucha gente le gusta eso
Prep neg all the world cl likes that Prep neg many people cl likes that
“Not everyone likes that” “Not many people likes that”

Our main proposal is that CN follows one of the following two syntactic strategies:

- (7) a. [_{PolP} NEG ... [_{FocP} QP Foc [_{IP}... (QP)...]] Association with focus (general)
b. [_{QP} NEG ... [_{QP}... Q...]] Direct Merge (only WQs)

(7a) accounts for why sequences of NEG QP involving strong quantifiers present clear right-left asymmetries, absent in the case of weak quantifiers. Compare (8-9):

- (8) a. No todos podrán venir hoy (9) a. No muchos podrán venir hoy
neg all can.fut to.come today neg many can.fut to.come today
“Not all will be able to come today” “Not many will be able to come today”
b. *Hoy podrán venir no todos b. Hoy podrán venir no muchos
today can.fut to.come neg all today can.fut to.come neg many
“Today not all will be able to come” “Today not many will be able to come”

This is expected if the derivation of NEG QP sequences with strong Qs always involves fronting the QP to a preverbal position that is below a high NEG. Association with focus

is universal, and generally available to all quantifiers (Payne, 1985): in Spanish, right-left asymmetries arise with weak Qs if negation is placed outside the preposition (10).

- (10) a. Les gusta a no pocos b. *Les gusta no a pocos c. No a pocos les gusta
cl.them pleases prep not few Meaning: “Not few of them like it”

We take this to show that the external position of negation in (10c) corresponds to the focus fronting strategy characterized in (7a). (10a) corresponds to the direct merge of negation and the QP (7b). The asymmetry between strong and weak Qs is apparent in other languages through the form of negation. European Portuguese has two forms that can be employed for subclausal negation: *nem* and *não*. The first one is obligatory with strong Qs (Peres 2013): (11) *Nem todos os estudantes tinham lido o livro*

Neg all.pl the.pl student.pl have read the book
« Not all the students have read the book »

Não occurs as both the sentential negation and the negation that directly merges to WQs:

- (12) a. *Não está aqui* b. *Estavam na festa não muitos estudantes*
Neg is here there.were at.the party not many students

Weak quantifiers can also be preceded by *nem*, in which case they occur in the left periphery of the sentence (13): *Nem muitas pessoas sabem que ela existe*

Not many people know that she exists

We take this asymmetry to illustrate the basic distinction between association with focus (7a) and Direct Merge (7b). *Nem* in Portuguese also expresses scalar negation (*not even*):

- (14) *Nem os melhores alunos responderam a la pergunta*
not.even the best students answered to the question

The scalar interpretation makes no semantic sense in either (11) or (13). But we take the form of the negation marker to indicate that negation is associated in this case to a focal feature (De Clerq, 2013), that forces the QP to move to a left peripheral focal position. In other words, Portuguese constructs phrase-internally the same syntactic configuration that Spanish constructs at the sentence level, coupled with obligatory fronting, as in Spanish:

- (15) [_{NegP} *Nem* [_{FocP} [_{QP} Q] Foc (Q)]] Foc.. [_{IP}... (NegP)...]

The sequence NEG QP can't be split in Portuguese by clausal adverbs, unlike in Spanish:

- (16) **Nem provavelmente todos os estudantes tinham lido o livro*
Not probably all the students have read the book

This third strategy, closely related to (7b), is observable also in other Romance languages whose negative form involves a scalar element. Consider Italian in contrast with Spanish, where the equivalents of Italian NEG must be supplemented with an overt scalar element:

- (17) a. *Ha giocato non bene* b. *Ha giocato no *(muy) bien*
Has played not well has played not very well

- (18) a. *Maria non ha voluto parlare que con lei*
Maria neg has wanted to.talk Comp with them
b. *María no ha querido hablar *(más) que con ellos*
María neg has wanted to.talk more Comp with them
“Mary did not want to talk but with them”

- (19) a. *Non una parola a María!* b. *Ni/*no una palabra a María*
Not one Word to Mary Not.even/not one word to Mary
“Don't say even one word to Mary”

In line with Portuguese, CN in Italian cannot be split by clausal adverbs:

- (20) **Non probabilmente tutti hanno comperato questo libro*
Neg probably all have bought this book

We extend this analysis to those Romance varieties whose negation involves a minimizer, obligatory in CN, as Padovan (Parry, 1997; Poletto, 2017), and cannot be split:

- (21) *Non (*probabilmente) miga tutti* “not everyone”