Negative Concord and Sentential Negation in Gallo

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The goal of this paper is to get a better understanding of Negative Concord (NC) in natural language through the study of Gallo, a Romance language spoken in Brittany. Despite obvious similarities with respect to Standard French, Gallo differs from it by integrating sentential negation *pâ/pouin* 'not' to the NC system. We will first show that previous analyses of the phenomenon based on specific properties of *n*-words (Déprez (2003, to appear), Zeijlstra (2010)) fail to account for properties of NC in Gallo, and then argue for an alternative approach (inspired from Muller (2010), and Homer (2013)), based on specific properties of the sentential negation itself. We will finally propose an account for inter/intra-individual microvariation in the NC system of Gallo.

Keywords: Negative Concord, Romance languages, Semi-negations/*n*-words, Micro-syntactic variation, Non-veridicality, Anti-veridicality, Expletive Negation.

1.   Introduction

The aim of the paper is to focus on Negative Concord in Gallo, i.e. when the association of two negative words (or more) gives rise to one semantic negation (negative reading of the sentence). Gallo, a Romance language spoken in the eastern part of Brittany, is very interesting in that respect: on the one hand, it is very similar to Standard French (very similar lexemes to express negation); but on the other hand, it also exhibits very specific properties as to when negative concord is available. In the first section, we will introduce the main difference between Standard French and Gallo with respect to NC. The following section will be devoted to the evaluation of preceding analyses of NC, and we will show

that it cannot account for the contrast between Gallo and Standard French without adding unwelcome stipulations. In Section 4, we thus propose an alternative account, in the spirit of Muller (1991, 2010) and also Homer (2013), based on the fundamental idea that the basic contrast between Standard French and Gallo follows from the status and specific properties of the sentential negation itself. We will compare several possible formalizations of such generalization. Section 5 gives an overview of the wide range of inter-/intra-individual microvariation with respect to NC in Gallo, and provides possible ways to deal with such variation, building on syntactic constraints on the one hand, and semantic scales associated to non-veridicality (Giannakidou (2006)) in the other hand.

2.   From Standard French (SF) to Gallo

Most studies on negation build on a primary distinction between sentential negation (sentential NEG), and other negative words, often called *n*-words or semi-negations (Laka (1990), Corblin et al (2004), Déprez (2003)), for which Giannakidou (2006) gives the following definition:

(1)   An expression α is an n-word (or semi-negation) iff:

– *α can provide a negative fragment answer; and*

– *α can be combined with sentential NEG or another α-expression yielding a reading equivalent to one logical negation.*

Comparing Standard French and Gallo with respect to how negation is expressed, force is to notice the similarity between the two systems, with a similar distinction between *n*-words and sentential NEG, as Table 1 shows:

Table 1. Expressing negation in Standard French versus Gallo.

	Standard French (SF)	**Gallo**
Sent. Neg	*(ne)… pas* 'not'	*(ne)… pâ/pouin* 'not'
***n*-words**	*aucun, personne, rien, jamais* 'no, nobody, nothing, never'	*aoqhun, person.n ren, jamin* 'no, nobody, nothing, never'

2.1   NC and Double Negation in Standard French (SF)

As it is well known, the association of two *n*-words in SF can yield two different interpretations: a NC reading or a Double Negation (DN) reading.

(2)   *Personne n'a   rien   dit.*

nobody NEG-has nothing said

NC reading: "Nobody said anything"

DN reading: "Everybody said something"

The NC occurs when multiple occurrences of negative constituents express a single negation, yielding the reading "nobody said anything" for (2). As often noticed in the literature, such reading can be correlated with the use of Negative Polarity Items (NPI) such as in the example (3):

(3)   *Personne n'a dit quoi que ce soit/la moindre chose.*

nobody NEG-has said anything/the least thing

Nevertheless, the sentence in (2) also has a Double Negation (DN) reading, yielding the reading "everybody said something". As already discussed in Corblin et al (2004) among others, one crucial property of SF is that, when sentential NEG appears in a sentence, the only possible reading is the DN, as we can see in (4) where the two negations cancel each other out yielding a positive reading. The main observation is thus that sentential NEG *pas* 'not' does not participate in the NC system in SF.

(4)   *Tu (n)'as   pas vu personne.*

       You NEG-have not seen nobody

       DN reading only: "You saw someone"

2.2   NC and Double Negation in Gallo[1]

The main difference between SF and Gallo lies in the fact that sentential NEG in the latter does participate in the NC system. Crucially in examples from (5) to (7) the co-occurrence of sentential NEG (*pâ/pouin*) with an *n*-word/semi-negation does not yield a DN reading, but a NC reading:

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[1] Notice here that there are several orthographic conventions for Gallo. We preserved conventions of each resource, and used Moga convention developed by the association Chubri for our new data.

(5) *Tu   le   vairz   **pas jamaez** roler une cigarette. (GG)*

you OBJ.CL.3SG would-see not never   roll   a   cigarette

'You would never see him roll a cigarette.'

(6) *Y   a   **pas ren**   à   li   dire. (GG)*

there has not nothing to IND.OBJ.CL.3SG say

'There is nothing to tell him.'

(7) *J'ae   **pas** oui   **aùqhun** chat à miaùner. (GG)*

I-have not heard no   cat to mew.

'I didn't hear any cat mewing.'

Another crucial property of Gallo is that presence of sentential NEG is not

systematic, as we can see in (8) to (10).

(8) *Y avaet beaucoup d'erniys aussi, q'on operaet **jamaez**. (GG)*

(lit.) "There were also a lot of hernia that were never cured."

(9) *Du temps qe y avaet **ren** qi presse. (GG)*

(lit.) "From the time when there was nothing that was urgent."

(10) *Jan **ne** vait **personne** (IR)*

(lit.) "Jean sees nothing."

3.   Evaluation of previous analyses of NC/DN readings

Different approaches tried to provide an account of NC in natural language.

Most of them rely on a specific status of *n*-words/semi-negations. From one

side, such items are assumed to be dependent on the presence of another negation, similar to the case of NPIs (Laka (1990), Ladusaw (1992), Giannakidou (1997, 2001), Déprez (2003, to appear), Zeijlstra (2004, 2010)). From the other side, they have been considered as intrinsically negative elements (De Swart & Sag (2002), Déprez (2003)), and NC readings follow from a semantic mechanism, called polyadic or resumptive quantification[2]. Therefore, *n*-words are either compared to NPIs without negative contribution and thus require a negative (potentially null) operator to be licensed, or they are negative quantifiers (or indefinites) bearing a NEG feature, which would give rise to a NC reading by an operation of resumption.

Considering *n*-words as dependent items (close to NPIs), let us focus on two specific approaches, the one from Déprez (2003, to appear) proposed for Creole from Martinique (CM) and Haitian Creole (HC), and the one from Zeijlstra (2004) also developed in Penka (2011).

3.1 *Déprez (2003, to appear): n-words as NPIs*

Déprez (2003) proposes to account for NC in CM by assuming that *n*-words in that language are very close to NPIs. The general idea is quite simple: if an *n*-word can occur in contexts that generally license NPIs (such as questions or conditionals, and more generally contexts that Giannakidou (2006) calls

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[2] Due to space limitations, we don't consider here other accounts of NC, with *n*-words being intrinsically negative, and based on a syntactic mechanism such as NEG Absorption proposed in Haegeman (1995).

non-veridical), then it seems logical to conclude that they are indeed NPIs.

Such correlation seems very strong in CM, as the following examples show:

(11) *Mwen pa we   pèson/anyen.*

Me   not see nobody/nothing

"I didn't see anybody/anything."

(12) *Es   u   we pèson   bon maten an?*

Have you seen nobody good morning

"Did you anybody this morning?"

(13) *Su u   we pèson   an Institut a, di   mwen.*

if you see anybody at Institute,   tell me

"If you see anybody at the Institute, let me know."

The parallel is clear in CM: the use of *n*-words such as *pèson* is not limited to

NC, but also possible in other 'NPI' contexts such as questions and conditionals.

One famous problem with such analysis is to account for one of the defining

properties of *n*-words (see definition in **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introu-**

vable.) which make them different from NPIs, namely the fact that they can

occur in fragment answers with a negative reading, as shown by the example

from Gallo in (14)[3]:

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[3] Every proposal along these lines is forced to argue for a silent negation, either restricted to cases of ellipsis (Déprez (to appear)), or generalized to all cases (Zeijlstra (2004)).

(14) Qhi qe c'ét q'ét   vnu ? Persone (IR)

who that it-is that-is come Nobody

Who came? Nobody.

However, independently of this specific property and the problem that it raises with respect to 'NPIs' approaches, we argue that the close parallel with NPIs cannot be extended to Gallo, as there does not seem to be any comparable correlation between the use of *n*-words in NC readings and their use in other polarity contexts. Consider indeed the following representative examples where *persone* 'nobody', *aoqhun* 'no' and *jamin* 'never' are not licensed in questions:

*(15) *Eyt-i venu persone? (IR)*

Is-it come N-body

*(16) *I   a   aoqhun qui sont venu ? (IR)*

there has no   who are come

"Did anyone come?"

*(17) *Â   tu jamin të   denâchë? (SyMiLa)*

have you N-time been untied

"Have you ever been untied?"

3.2   Zeijlstra (2004, 2010)'s syntactic approach

To begin with, Zeijlstra (2004)'s approach claims that *n*-words are semantically non-negative indefinites that need to be under the scope of a negative

marker (e.g. sentential NEG). He assumes that NC phenomenon can be explained by a syntactic (multiple) agreement between *n*-words, bearing [uNeg] feature, and their licenser bearing [iNeg] feature. In his system, the [iNeg] feature is related to a NegP projection, and is associated either to an overt negative marker such as sentential NEG or to a covert/abstract negative operator (i.e. Op¬). An illustration is given below with an example from French:

(18) *Op¬[iNEG] Personne[uNEG] (n')a rien[uNEG] dit.*

      NC reading: "Nobody said anything."

The NC reading in (18) follows from syntactic agreement between two *n*-words bearing [uNeg] features and a covert negative operator bearing [iNeg]. At first glance, this approach seems to be able to account for all the examples from Gallo introduced in (5) to (7), in which sentential NEG co-occurs with *n*-words to yield a NC reading. We provide in (19) another example from our corpus, together with the syntactic features in the spirit of Zeijlstra (2004): the *n*-word *aoqhun* 'no' syntactically agrees with sentential NEG *pouin* 'not'.

(19) *Com il avë pouin[iNEG] aoqhun[uNEG] amin, i   vivë tout seû. (SyMiLa)*

      as   he had not   no   friend he lived all alone

      "As he had no friends, he lived alone."

The main concern with this analysis is to better understand the difference be-
tween Gallo and SF with respect to the role of sentential NEG. As already
pointed out in the literature (see Penka (2011)), the main question is why co-
occurrence of sentential NEG and an *n*-word in (4) from SF (repeated in (20))
does not allow for a NC reading: the system would clearly predict that reading.

(20) *Tu (n)'as   pas[iNEG] vu   personne[uNEG].*
       DN reading only: "You saw someone"

Penka (2011) provides a formal way to account for the absence of NC reading
in (20). She proposes two extra features [iNeg∅] and [uNeg∅] for SF, and
further proposes that *n*-words in SF are decorated with [uNeg∅], and cru-
cially not [uNeg]. Thus, they cannot be licensed by the presence of sentential
NEG ([iNeg] feature). As the representation in (21) shows, presence of this
extra [uNeg∅] feature is associated to presence of another covert negative
marker with the relevant feature ([iNeg∅]) to license agreement:

(21) *Tu (n)'as   pas[iNEG] Op¬[iNEG∅]   vu   personne[uNEG∅].*
       DN reading only: "You saw someone"

The DN reading thus follows, as two [iNeg(∅)] features occur in the sentence.
Coming back to the general distinction between SF and Gallo, the only option

would then consist in saying that Gallo does not have the [iNeg∅/uNeg∅] features that SF has. We argue that such analysis seems quite stipulative as it basically introduces a feature distinction whose exclusive aim is to account for the distinction in the NC system, i.e. one type of feature ([uNeg]) which induces concord with sentential NEG, and the other ([uNeg∅]) which bans concord with sentential NEG. We will further show in Section 4 that another argument against this view comes from the fact that it relies on specific features of the *n*-words, although we will show that the main difference between Gallo and SF comes from specific properties of the sentential NEG itself.

3.3 *Déprez (1999) and De Swart & Sag (2002): resumptive quantification*

Another type of analysis for *n*-words is proposed by Déprez (1999, 2003) and De Swart & Sag (2002) among others. One common property of these approaches lies in the fact that *n*-words are considered as intrinsically negative. Within this perspective, as *n*-words are inherently negative, the system naturally accounts for DN readings (two negations will lead to a logical cancellation of negations, and therefore, to a positive statement). The case of NC readings is less straightforward. To account for the contrast between the two readings, Déprez (1999) adopts an analysis where quantification can be interpreted in two ways: the sequential interpretation in which each quantifier binds its own variable and is scopally related to the other(s), and the resump-

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tive interpretation, where two similar quantifiers can resume to yield one polyadic quantifier binding several variables, as shown in (22). This type of analysis has been proposed for SF, as it gives a straightforward account of the introductory example in (2), repeated here in (23).

(22) *NC pattern:* ¬∃*x* ... ¬∃*y* ⇨ ¬∃ *(x,y)*

(23) *Personne n'a rien dit.*

"Nobody said nothing."

Sequential (DN): ¬∃x [person (x)] ¬∃y [thing (y)] (said (x,y))

Resumptive (NC): ZERO/NO x,y [person (x),thing (y)] said (x,y)

¬∃x ∃y [person (x),thing (y)] said (x,y)

Both readings are predicted. In the DN reading, each variable is associated with its own quantificational force (¬∃). The negations thus cancel each other to give rise to a positive reading. Concerning the NC reading, however, the two quantifiers can be resumed to form a polyadic quantifier binding both variables simultaneously. Only one negation gets interpreted in the end.

At first glance, this analysis seems to account for why sentential NEG in SF would only yield a DN reading: as *pas* 'not' is not quantificational, it doesn't bind any variable, and cannot be part of resumptive quantification.

The question is then how such type of analysis could be extended to Gallo. The only way to do so would be to consider that resumptive quantification between *pâ/pouin* and *n*-words is available in Gallo. But, at this stage, it might seem quite stipulative, especially if we follow literature on the topic that claims that resumptive quantification should be restricted to similar quantifiers (see Déprez (2003))[4].

4. Our approach to NC: on the status of sentential NEG.

4.1 Building on Muller (1991, 2010)

A third approach can be considered to account for the NC phenomenon in Gallo and across languages. Muller (1991, 2010) proposes that NC is the result of how semi-negations (*n*-words) can be combined. The main property of semi-negations, according to him, lies in their ability to dissociate their NEG feature from an indefinite residual. Additionally, NC readings will occur whenever the NEG feature of each semi-negation can be given the same scope[5]. The general idea is schematized in (24), and illustrated with (25):

(24) *NC pattern: [$_{NEG\ Scope}$ NEG$_{floating}$+Indef … NEG$_{floating}$+Indef]*

(25) *[$_{NEG\ Scope}$ Personne n'a rien dit].*

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[4] But notice here that Section 4 will show that sentential NEG in Gallo can be compared to French lexical items such as *aucunement* 'not at all' which do seem to be quantificational, or at least scalar. On the link between *n*-words and scalarity, see Labelle & Espinal (2014).

[5] Muller (1991, 2010) does not define scope precisely, but his main observation is that presence of the clitic *ne* in SF is the morphological reflex of that scope. We leave it open here as to how such notion of scope could be formalized, for example by introducing Neg Projections in the syntactic representation, or by referring to the notion of focus (*foyer*) of negation.

NC reading: "Nobody said anything."

As shown in (25), the NC reading results from the two NEG features of the *n*-words having the same scope.

The DN reading, however, follows from the two NEG features having two distinct scopes, as shown in (26). The intuition is that such DN reading requires some specific context, and more precisely some form of denial of a previous assertion, and this is what gives rise to distinct scopes of negation, as illustrated in (27):

(26) $[_{\text{NEG Scope1}} \dots [_{\text{NEG Scope2}} NEG_{floating} + Indef \dots NEG_{floating} + Indef]\,]$

(27) A: *Est-ce que quelqu'un n'a rien dit?*

"Did someone say nothing?"

B: *Non, $[_{\text{NEG Scope1}} [_{\text{NEG Scope2}}$ personne n'a rien dit]].*

DN reading: "No, nobody said nothing."

An interesting property of the analysis sketched above is that NC readings can only occur with semi-negations (*n*-words). We argue that such approach makes an interesting prediction with respect to Gallo.

4.2   *pâ/pouin as a semi-negation in Gallo*

Confronting Muller (1991, 2010)'s approach to the NC pattern in Gallo leads naturally to the following prediction: sentential NEG *pâ/pouin* can participate

in the NC system because it is itself a semi-negation. We will give two independent arguments to show that this prediction is borne out, and that it is this specific property that makes Gallo and SF different.

The first argument comes from the interaction between the preposition *sans* 'without' and semi-negations/*n*-words. Crucially, Muller (1991) gives another diagnostics to define semi-negations, given in (28):

(28)   *Muller (1991)'s criterion for **semi-negation**: items that can occur in under the scope of* sans *'without' with a non-negative reading.*

With respect to this criterion, the comparison between Gallo and SF is revealing. Very interestingly, contrary to the case of *pas* in SF, we do find in Gallo occurrences of *pâ* with a non-negative reading under the scope of *sans*, as the following examples from Lecuyer (2014) show:

(29)   *Qhi q'arae   pû   m'fere ene espliqe   sans   pa ecandae ?*
       who that-have could me-do a   brief without NEG spread-the-news
       "Who could have provided an explanation to me without spreading the news?"

(30)   *...sans   pâs   s'detournae   sement...*
       without NEG REFL-shift-away only
       "…without at least shifting away…"

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These two examples show that, contrary to SF, sentential NEG in Gallo still

has the status of a semi-negation. It thus can be compared to French items like

aucunement or *nullement*, which do occur under the scope of *sans*.

(31) Il   est parti sans   √*aucunement*/√*nullement/*pas* se plaindre.

       He is left   without not-at-all/not-at-all/not   REFL-complain

       "He left without complaining (at all)."

This correlation seems to be confirmed by the fact that, as observed by Homer

(2013), Haitian Creole (HC), another Romance language, exhibits exactly the

same property, as shown by the two examples below:

(32) Li *(*pa*) we **anyen**. (Homer, 2013)

       he NEG see n-body

       "He didn't see anyone."

(33) Li pati   san   li   pa   di   orevwa. (Homer, 2013)

       he leave without he NEG say goodbye

       "He left without saying goodbye."

(32) shows that HC makes use of sentential NEG *pa* in its NC system. And very interestingly, as illustrated in (33), this property is correlated with the fact that this sentential NEG can occur under the scope of *sans* 'without'[6].

The second potential argument for this specific status of sentential NEG in Gallo comes from another defining property of *n*-words in general: the fact that they can occur bare in fragment answers (as suggested by Giannakidou (2006), see definition in **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**). And surprisingly, compared to *pas* in SF, the sentential NEG in Gallo can more easily function as a bare fragment answer:

(34) *Ressemb t'i à ses soeurs? (Dame) pouin (dame). (SyMiLa)*

  ''Does he look like his sisters? No, not at all »

Our main conclusion from these two arguments is thus that sentential NEG *pa/pouin* in Gallo participates in NC because it is itself a semi-negation: it can dissociate its negative operator from the (non-negative) residual. An illustration of the process in the spirit of Muller (1991, 2010) is given in (35):

(35) [*NEG Scope* *J'ae* ***pas*** *oui*   ***aùqhun*** *chat à miaùner*]. *(GG)*

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[6] Notice that such occurrences of sentential negation with a non-negative reading are traditionally called cases of Expletive Negation. Due to space considerations, we don't discuss Expletive Negation in detail, but see Déprez (to appear) for a possible account in HC, based on the notion of evaluative negation. And see Muller (1991) and footnote 8 for another view on Expletive Negation, more compatible with our own approach.

I-have not heard no   cat to mew.

"I didn't hear any cat mewing."

Also notice here that, without any further constraint, the way NC is conceived
suggests that presence of sentential NEG should be optional. In that system,
nothing forces the presence of sentential NEG to license other negative elements.
Recall that on the basis of the data introduced from (8) to (10), it seems to be
the case that sentential NEG in Gallo may or may not occur with other negative
elements such as *jamin, person.n, ren*. However, as the picture is more complex,
Section 5 will be devoted to microsyntactic variation in the NC system of Gallo,
and to some hypotheses that can be made to account for such variation.

4.3   *Implementation through Zeijlstra (2004)?*

As observed in the previous section, Homer (2013) found in HC a similar cor-
relation between the use of *pa* in the NC system and its ability to occur under
the scope of *sans*. His formalization, however, is very much comparable to
Zeijlstra (2004)'s approach to NC based on syntactic agreement. One way to
capture in that system our basic generalization that sentential NEG behaves as a
semi-negation consists in arguing for the presence of an abstract negative oper-
ator (silent negation in Homer (2013)'s terms) where negation is interpretable,
and a sentential NEG treated like an *n*-word. The analysis is illustrated in (36):

(36) *Op¬[iNEG]   Li pa[uNEG] we anyen[uNEG]. (Homer, 2013)*

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he NEG   see n-body

"He didn't see anyone."

Clearly, the sentential NEG is treated as a semi-negation/*n*-word in the sense that it bears the same [uNeg] feature. At this stage, it is not easy to see whether such implementation would be welcome or not. On the one hand, notice that Déprez (to appear) clearly argues against such analysis in which *pa* would not be intrinsically negative. But on the other hand, she is forced to consider two radically different uses of *pa*: one as a semantically negative marker, the other as a case of Expletive Negation in the context of *sans*[7]. Our general approach to NC is different in that it does not claim that semi-negations are not semantically negative, but it rather tries to capture the fact that the same item (*pa* in HC, *pa/pouin* in Gallo) could occur in different contexts, yielding a different contribution: these items are negative indeed, but constraints on NC may account for their non-negative reading in contexts such as under the scope of *sans*[8].

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[7] See footnote 6.

[8] One way to do so is to build on Muller (1991)'s approach to Expletive Negation (such as the case of the clitic *ne* in SF), which requires presence of what he calls inverse negative items, i.e. items that bear a NEG feature, which contrary to the case of semi-negations, can only spread 'downards' (ex: *éviter que P ≈ faire en sorte que ¬P* 'avoid that P ≈ ensure that ¬P' In that view, the clitic *ne* would uniformly be used as a kind of negative scope marker, be it used with other negative items, or as a case of expletive negation. We leave the details of such approach on Expletive Negation for future research.

5.   Microvariation in Gallo

This section provides further data from Gallo in order to better understand the specific constraints on NC in that language. We will first show that, on the basis of all the data available, Gallo can be qualified as a non-strict NC language. We will then introduce data that give an overview of the wide range of microvariation that can be found with respect to the use of sentential NEG in NC.

5.1   Gallo as a non-strict NC language

As we can see in (37), presence of an *n*-word in preverbal position doesn't allow the co-occurrence of sentential NEG *pa/pouin*. Notice however that many speakers do not make productive use of *n*-words in subject positions, but tend to resort to periphrastic strategies like in (38).

(37)   *La ptitt filh, rin   lâ decouraijë (*pouin), è   li   caozi. (SyMiLa)*
      the little girl nothing her discouraged not   she him talked-to
      (lit.) "The little girl, nothing discouraged her, she talked to him."

(38)   *S'é q   n'a pouin rin   ni pouin pèrson.n qhi m plé.   (SyMiLa)*
      it-is that has not   nothing nor not   nobody who me pleases
      (lit.) "It's just that nothing and nobody really pleases me."

These examples indicate that, contrary to HC for example, Gallo behaves more like a non-strict NC language as there is no case of preverbal *n*-words in subject position followed by sentential NEG. Notice that such constraint is surprisingly

very stable when confronted to the wide range of variation that can be found in Gallo, and which we will discuss in the following section.

5.2   Intra-/Inter-individual variation

Many cases of variation with respect to NC can be found in Gallo, be they across speakers and even across *n*-words with respect to the same speaker.

One interesting property of Gallo, as shown in (39), concerns the optional *vs* mandatory use of sentential NEG. Some speakers do indeed make optional use of sentential NEG. Notice that such behavior contrasts with other speakers for which sentential NEG seems to be obligatory. More generally, it suggests that Gallo again differs from HC, for which sentential NEG is always obligatory.

(39) a. *Jan   ne   vait (pas) personne   (IR3)*

     John NEG.CL sees not   nobody

    "John doesn't see anyone."

   b. *Persone n'ont   (pouint) ren   veuz   (IR3)*

     Nobody NEG.CL-have not   nothing seen

    "Nobody saw anything."

Another interesting property of Gallo lies in the fact that we also can find variation across *n*-words within one idiom: the same speaker is forced to use sentential NEG with *aoqhun* 'no' in (40) but not with *persone* 'nobody' in (41).

(40) *J'ae *(pas) veuz aoqhun.* (IR6)

(41) *J'ae (pas) veuz persone.* (IR6)

I-have not seen nobody

"I didn't see anybody"

5.3 *How to analyse microvariation: some available options*

The alternative approach to NC proposed in Section 4 does not suffice to account for the wide range of microvaration that can be found across languages (if you compare HC with Gallo for example), across speakers of a language, and even across semi-negations of one idiom. The goal of this section is not to account for all such cases of variation, but at least to offer some general perspectives as to how it could be tackled. We basically propose that at least two independent factors play a role in giving rise to such variation. The first one is syntactic and relates to how and where negation occurs in the syntactic structure and in the linear order (preverbal *vs* postverbal, negative head *vs* syntagmatic negation, as already discussed in Zanuttini (1991) and Déprez (to appear) among others). The second one is semantic and is related to how semi-negations can be interpreted, and more precisely how the residual part of each concording semi-negation is licensed in the context of NC.

As far as semantics is concerned, we argue for a semantic scale of semi-negations comparable to the one generally assumed for NPIs, with superstrong, strong, and weak semi-negations. Crucially, semi-negations are not NPIs, as

they are autonomous, and include a NEG operator, but they do 'become' dependent when NC occurs, when their NEG is dissociated from the residual. Our general take on this semantic factor is summarized by the following claim:

(42) ***Claim#1:*** *n-words are not equal (within a language and across languages) in a similar way that regular NPIs are not equal.*

It is well-known that NPIs are not licensed in the same contexts, and can be classified through a semantic scale (van der Wouden (1994), Zwarts (1998)):

- Some NPIs, called superstrong, require anti-veridical contexts (Giannakidou, 2006), also called anti-morphic contexts; one such context is the scope of sentential NEG or the preposition *without*;

- Strong NPIs require anti-additive contexts, which include preceding contexts, and other contexts such as the scope of semi-negations,…;

- Weak NPIs require non-veridical contexts, i.e. the preceding contexts, and other contexts such as questions, conditionals,…;

Such scale (see Hoeksema (2012) for a similar one) is particularly helpful to classify NPIs, depending on the licensing contexts that they require. To give an example from SF, the expression *du tout* 'at all' can be considered as a strong NPI, as it can be licensed in anti-additive contexts (but not in weaker non-veridical contexts). The relevant examples are given in (43):

(43) a. *Il n'y a pas pensé **du tout**.*

      'He didn't think about it at all.'

    b. *Il est parti sans avoir dormi **du tout**.*

      'He left without sleeping at all.'

    c. *Personne n'est venu **du tout**.*

      'Nobody has come at all.'

    d. **Viendras-tu **du tout** ?*

      'Will you come at all?'

Déprez (to appear) builds on such scale to account for the behavior of *n*-words in HC. Her analysis is based on the evidence that such *n*-words are equal to NPIs, except the fact that they can occur in fragment answers with a negative reading. We basically follow Déprez (to appear) in claiming that such semantic scale plays a role in constraining the use of *n*-words in Gallo, but depart from her in claiming that *n*-words do contribute negation.

Building on Muller (2010)'s approach of semi-negations (*n*-words), we argue that any semi-negation can be part of NC, which leads to dissociation of the NEG feature from the residual. Crucially, it is precisely this residual which will thus be constrained by the semantic scale. Such approach paves the way to a better understanding of some of the differences between SF, Gallo and HC. Focusing on the role of the sentential NEG *pas* 'not' and its cognates, we argue for the following distinction:

- *pas* in SF is no longer an *n*-word/semi-negation; it cannot participate in NC, and the DN reading of (44) follows:

(44) *Tu (n)'as   pas vu   personne.*

DN reading only: "You saw someone"

- *pâ/pouin* in Gallo is still an *n*-word/semi-negation (with potential dissociation of its NEG feature), but the residual (like an NPI) requires an anti-morphic context such as *without*-clauses like in (45) repeated below; it is thus predicted not to appear in the scope of other *n*-words, as shown in (46), and Gallo then surfaces as a non-strict NC language:

(45) *Qhi q'arae pû m'fere ene espliqe […] sans pa ecandae ?*

"Who could have provided an explanation to me without spreading the news?"

(46) *La ptitt filh, rin lâ decouraijë (*pâ/pouin), è li caozi. (SyMiLa)*

(Lit.) "The little girl, nothing discouraged her, she talked to him."

- *pa* in HC is also an *n*-word/semi-negation (with potential dissociation of its NEG feature), but the residual (like an NPI) requires a (weaker) anti-additive context such as the scope of an *n*-word/semi-negation in

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subject position, as (47) shows; HC is thus predicted to surface as a strict NC language[9], as far as semantics is concerned:

(47) *Pèsonn pa vini. (HC)*

nobody not come

"Nobody came."

Notice that such implementation of NC can also account for the fact that the use of each semi-negation may vary across languages (for example, Gallo *vs* HC), but also across speakers of the same language, and even across semi-negations themselves (*aoqhun* 'no' vs *jamin* 'never' in Gallo). The semantic scale applies to each semi-negation separately, and although their use may more or less converge, nothing prevents one semi-negation to be used differently from another one with respect to NC. Notice that this approach can thus be compared to the one developed in Labelle & Espinal (2014), based on the idea that *n*-words can bear a feature for scalarity ($[+\sigma]$), and that this feature may be licensed in various polarity contexts depending on the *n*-word.

Coming back to the other potential source of variation with respect to the use of negation and NC across languages, we basically argue that syntax also plays a crucial role in the following way:

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[9] Notice here that a further distinction between Gallo and HC (which may also play a role in the range of variation with respect to negation) lies in the fact that *pa* in HC has all the properties of a morphosyntactic head, contrary to *pâ/pouin* in Gallo which seems to have an adverbial status comparable to *pas* in Standard French.

(48) ***Claim#2:*** *natural languages are not equal in the way negation is syn-*

  tactically encoded, with two degrees of variation:

  – *morphosyntactic status of sentential NEG (head-like vs syntagmatic)*

  – *surface syntactic scope of sentential NEG (preverbal vs postverbal)*

The syntactic source of variation, contrary to the semantic one, can account for interlinguistic variation. In other words, the general morphosyntax of negation may be different across grammars of different languages. To give a concrete example, although HC and Gallo are similar in the fact that both license sentential NEG in their NC system, they do differ with respect to their syntax of negation. As already shown in Déprez (to appear) among others, sentential NEG in HC is preverbal and has all the properties of a functional head (hence not being autonomous), whereas data from Gallo indicate that sentential NEG in that language is postverbal and exhibit syntagmatic properties. These two morphosyntactic properties naturally have consequences on the use of sentential NEG in NC and in other contexts. For example, Déprez (to appear) notes that, contrary to Gallo, sentential NEG in HC cannot occur bare in fragment answers:

(49) *Esk   ou   vini ? *pa/non.*

  INT.PRT you come   not no

  "Do you come? No."

Such contrast between Gallo and HC may just follow from the morphosyntactic status of sentential NEG: syntagmatic for the former, and head-like (hence, not syntactically autonomous) for the latter.

Another contrast between HC and Gallo lies in the fact that presence of sentential NEG *pa* in HC is compulsory in the NC system, contrary to *pâ/pouin* in Gallo. This again can be accounted for if we argue that *pa* is a negative head comparable to the clitic *ne* in SF, with a similar property, that of marking syntactic scope of negation. The only difference between *ne* in SF and *pa* in HC would thus be that the former became optional as it was reinforced by *pas* to express sentential NEG. In other words, *pa* in HC would occur in similar contexts than *ne* in SF to express the scope of negation[10]. Although such syntactic constraints should be formalized in future work (for example, through the use of Neg Projections and agreement relations), we basically argue that they certainly play a role in giving rise to variation in the NC systems across languages.

6.   Conclusion

Building on the NC pattern in Gallo, we tried to show the limits of previous accounts of NC, and further argue for an alternative approach borrowed from

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[10] And the comparison with the clitic *ne* in SF can be extended to cases of Expletive Negation, for example, under the scope of *sans (que)* 'without'. Both can occur in that context, and the only difference is that *ne* in SF is not obligatory whereas *pa* in HC is compulsory. See footnote 8 for further comments on Expletive Negation.

Muller (1991, 2010) and based on the idea that only semi-negations can participate in NC. Such account suggests that sentential NEG can itself be a semi-negation, which seems to be confirmed by data from Gallo and HC. We finally assume that the wide range of variation with respect to NC across languages, speakers, or *n*-words, is related to two key factors: (i) a semantic constraint on how and when semi-negations can concord (behave like a NPI), and (ii) syntactic constraints concerning the scope of negation (preverbal *vs* postverbal) and the morphosyntactic status of sentential NEG (head-like *vs* syntagmatic).

Another issue which should play a crucial role in this study and which has not been considered much concerns the (un)availability of double negation (DN) readings. Previous studies tend to claim that NC languages do not allow for DN readings, but data from Gallo are far from being clear at this stage. And even if it were the case, it is not sure that absence of DN readings in NC languages means that one of the two concording items is not intrinsically negative. Further studies on the competition between NC and DN readings should thus be developed to get a broader view on how negation works across languages.

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