The syntax of focus negation

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The Syntax of Focus Negation

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1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to provide a unified analysis of all uses of the negative item NO (corresponding to pro-sentence negation as well as to a Focus marker similar to 'really+neg') in Italian varieties. The behavior of this item is rather interesting because it displays a window on the left periphery and the various projections contained in this domain and on its interaction with the IP. I propose that, despite its surface distribution, NO is always located in the same position in all the constructions in which it occurs; namely a (either contrastive or informational) Focus position in the CP layer. That negation is sensitive to Focus is well known, (see Etxepare & Etxeberria (2007) for a recent treatment of the relation between Focus and Negation). All cases of NO are instances of one and the same structure in which NO is in the low CP Focus position; the seemingly different position of NO depends either on an elliptical structure similar to sluicing as analyzed in van Craenenbroeck and Liptak (2006), (2008) or on optional remnant movement of the whole IP in front of NO. We will see that all the differences among the various constructions can be traced back to independent properties of the whole structure.

In section 2 I describe the distribution of NO in some northern Italian varieties and Veneto regional Italian. In section 3 I analyze contrastive Focus negation providing a unified analysis for sentence initial and sentence final NO, which occur in structures with evidential modality of direct evidence by the speaker. In section 4 I analyze the pro-sentence usage of NO, and show that it can be analyzed with the same structure as the sentence final and sentence initial NO, if a structure similar sluicing in wh-constructions is adopted. Pro-sentence NO does not have an evidential character, but this is due to an independent constraint on sluicing regarding the impossibility of moving an empty verb to projections higher than its usual landing site in declarative clauses.

2. The distribution of the negative marker NO

In this section I provide a general view on the possible structures in which NO can occur. The first usage the negative marker NO displays, in standard and non standard Italian varieties as well as in English, is the so-called pro-IP (or CP) negation:

(1)   A: Ci sei andato?
                There are gone?
                'Have you gone there?'
        B: No/Sì
                No/Yes
                'No, I did not'

To the best of my knowledge, there is no Italian dialect which uses short tags as English does, Italian varieties do not need any repetition of the verb or of the auxiliary in any context.[1] In Italian dialects the values of English short tags are taken by sentential particles of different sorts, which I will not investigate here (see on this Munaro and Poletto (2004), (2006)), and which in any case are not verbs. All Italian varieties have developed a morpheme like NO to answer a question negatively.

Notice however that in the colloquial variety of Italian used in Veneto (and more generally in the Northern regions like Friul, Lombardy, Piedmont and Liguria) NO can serve as a sentence final Focus marker emphasizing negation (the corresponding positive element is also used to reinforce a positive statement) in answers to questions:

(2)   Non ci vado NO!   Regional Italian
        Not there go NO

(3)   No ghe vado NO!   Veneto
        Not there go NO
        'I won't go there'

---

[1] Some dialects do have a form of reinforcement of the negative or positive marker to which an adverbial formative is added *sine/none*. This is probably similar to the forms *yep/nope* found in some varieties of English.

The meaning of the negative marker NO in these contexts is similar to the one of an evidential which includes the speaker and the addressee, who both have evidence of the fact that the event is negated. The informal pragmatics of an utterance like the ones above is something like "why are you asking me whether I'm going, it is self evident to me and it should be to you as well". I will show later on that NO has an evidential value. NO does not only have an evidential and a negative value, the intonational contour of the utterance clearly indicates that NO is focused (and this is why I write it all in capitals).[2] However, if NO is located in Focus, it should rather be sentence initial and not sentence final.

As a matter of fact, in Veneto and in the regional variant of standard Italian spoken in the region, this item can also be found at the very beginning of the clause followed by a complementizer, which clearly shows that the element is in the CP domain. This type of construction is much more widespread that the one in which NO is sentence final.

(4)   NO che non ci vado!   Regional Italian
        NO that not there go

(5)   NO che non ghe vado   Veneto
        NO that not there go
        'I won't go there'

The meaning and the pragmatics of the two constructions are the same, in both cases NO that the (negative) answer should be self-evident to the interlocutor as it is to the speaker.

Both structures have a positive counterpart, namely SI 'yes': this is also an evidential meaning, in this case a positive one:

(6)   Ci vado SI   Regional Italian
        There go YES
        'I will go there indeed'

(7)   Sì che ci vado
        Yes that there go

---

[2] See below for arguments showing that NO is sentence final and not simply in a low position inside the IP.

The distribution is exactly the same, as SI can be found at the end of the whole clause or at the beginning.

This type of Focus negative marker is shown by Zanuttini (1997) to have been turned into standard negation in some Northern Italian dialects: she reports that NO is related to Focus in Pavese and Milanese and is indeed the standard negative marker (but notably with the same interesting properties I analyze below in section 3).

In other dialects, like the Rhaetoromance variety of S. Leonardo di Badia, NO is the only possible negative marker in imperative clauses where it substitutes for the usual negative marker *ne..nia*, which is similar to standard French negation. A declarative sentence is thus negated with *ne...nia* as in (8a), or with *mine* (corresponding to the special negative marker *mica* of standard Italian which is analyzed by Cinque (1976) as triggering an implicature):

(8) a. Maria ne va nia a ciasa

          M. not goes not to home

     b. Maria ne va mine a ciasa

          M, not goes not to home

Neither *nia* nor *mine* can occur in imperative clauses:

(9) *Ne le fa nia/mine

     Not it do not/not

     'Don't do it'

The only possible negative marker is NO, which occurs either in first position (and in this case there is no other negative marker) or at the end of the clause (and in this case the preverbal negative marker *ne* is obligatory):

(10) a. Ne le fà NO

          Not it do NO

      b. NO le fà

          NO it do

Interestingly, one might wonder what makes the negative marker NO compatible with imperatives while *nia* is incompatible. Moreover, notice that the two possible positions (sentence

final or sentence initial) are exactly the same as those where we see Focus negation in Veneto. Veneto also has a similar phenomenon, although it is morphologically less evident, as the distinction between the standard negative marker and NO is simply in the opposition between an open and a closed /o/.

A more general fact about Focus negation is that, as other types of negative markers (see Roorick (2008) on French *ne*) it does not always convey a negative meaning. A case of this type is illustrated by the following conversation:

(11)   Waiter: Cercava qualcosa?
         Looked-for something?
         'Are you looking for something?'

         Customer: NO, NO, volevo solo i savoiardi
         No, no wanted only the cookies
         'Actually, I just wanted cookies'

In this case, the customer is indeed looking for something, the use of negation is meant to indicate that the type of request has already been satisfied or is not relevant.

Another type of context in which NO has no negative marker at all are exclamative clauses:

(12)   Arrivo al parcheggio, e NO che mi hanno fatto la multa!
         Arrive at the parking lot, and NO that me have done the fine!
         'I arrived at the parking lot, and surprisingly I had got a ticket!'

Here the usage of NO rather indicates the surprise of the speaker, it is not negative at all. This type of negation is often called 'expletive negation', I refer to Zanuttini and Portner (2003) who offer both a semantic and a syntactic treatment. Apparently these cases are similar to the sentence initial case illustrated above, as they are followed by a whole clause.

3. An analysis of Focus negation

I think that a unified analysis of this item in all the constructions where it occurs is not only possible but desirable. Therefore, I propose that NO is always located in the same position and has the same properties in all the constructions (and dialects) where it occurs.

Given that in standard Italian and in Veneto NO is a negative Focus marker, and that it can precede the complementizer, I adopt the null assumption that sentence initial NO is indeed located in the Focus position which is standardly assumed to be in the lower portion of the CP layer. [3]

However, the very presence of a complementizer represents a problem: usually a DP/PP with contrastive Focus is not followed by a complementizer in either Italian or Veneto:

(13) a.   UN GATO NERO el me ga portà casa

A cat black, he me has taken home

b. *UN GATO NERO che el me ga portà casa

A cat black that he me has taken home

However, other elements located in the Focus layer display either verb movement (with enclisis of the subject clitic) or a complementizer in Veneto: exclamative, interrogative and free relative[4] wh-items, the wh-item introducing a temporal clause and the one corresponding to 'as', *sicome*, all require a complementizer:

(14)   No so che gato che el te ga portà casa

Not know what cat that he you has taken home

(15)   Cossa che el me ga portà casa!

What that he me has taken home!

---

[3] I will adopt here the following layering of the CP proposed in Benincà and Poletto (2004). For arguments in favour or this structure see Benincà and Poletto (2004):

(i) [Hang. Topic [Scene Sett. [Left disl. [List interpr [[contr. cp1 adv/obj, [contr.cp2 circ.adv. [Inform. cp]]]

|_____frame_____| | _theme_____| |_____focus _____ |

[4] Veneto does not have any wh-form in non free relatives, only the complementizer is used with a resumptive pronoun, a strategy which is well attested in several languages.

(16)   Chi che el me porta casa, ze sempre un foresto
         Who that he me takes home, is always a stranger

(17)   Sicome che el me ga portà casa un gato nero…
         As that he me has taken home a cat black

(18)   Quando che el me ga portà casa un gato nero…
         When that he me has taken home a cat black

Given that since Benincà's (2001) and Rizzi (2001) clearly show that relative wh-items and interrogative wh-items are not located in the same position in Italian varieties, we cannot assume that it is a single position in the CP layer which requires the presence of the complementizer, rather it seems to be the class of wh-elements which requires the complementizer even though they are located in different projections according to the construction in which they occur. Apparently, in Veneto the class of elements requiring a complementizer is even wider, as it includes:

a) Wh-items of any type (exclamative, interrogative, free relative)

b) All items introducing a temporal clause ('when', 'before', 'after') or a purpose clause ('given', 'as', 'seen')

c) The item introducing a causal or a consecutive introduced by 'as'.

I would like to propose that NO belongs to the same class of elements, which all are intrinsecally operators, differently from focussed DPs. Notice that all the cases noted above introduce embedded clauses except for the exclamative case, which (as I will show later) has a property in common with NO. The regional variant of standard Italian does not have such a widespread class of elements, however, it still uses the complementizer in exclamative clauses, (and in some causal and consecutive clauses). Whatever the mechanism forcing the presence of a complementizer in some clause types but not in others, the observation remains that the presence of the complementizer does not seem to be related to the Focus projection per se (or any other position in the CP), but rather to the class of items located in various specifiers, which varies a lot even within the same Veneto region, the diachronic tendency being that the complementizer is realized more and more. I will leave this problem aside and just assume that Focus Negation belongs to the class of intrinsic operators which require a complementizer after them.

Therefore, the analysis of a sentence like the following is the one in (20):

(19)   NO che no ghe so ndà!
        NO that not there am gone

(20)   [CPFocus NO [FinP [Fin° che …[IP no ghe so ndà]]]

Since Rizzi (1997) a finite complementizer is generally assumed to be merged in Force°, a position higher than Focus. However, Poletto (2000) noticed that several Northern Italian dialects realize a complementizer after all or some wh-items in embedded questions. The examples above also show that the finite complementizer cannot always be merged in Force. Poletto (2001), Cocchi and Poletto (2007), Belletti (2008), Ledgeway (2005) all show on independent evidence that there exist also low complementizer merged in Fin° which can avoid moving to Force. I will assume that this is an additional case of this sort.

An argument in favour of the idea that NO is in Focus and that consequently the complementizer following NO is not a high but a low one comes from the following observation: while it is perfectly possible to have a Topic element in front of NO, it is not possible to have it after the complementizer: if the complementizer were in the Force layer of a clause embedded under NO, we would predict that the whole CP layer (including all Topic projections) is available (I thank G. Cinque for pointing this out to me).

(21)   A Gianni NO che non glielo do
        To Gianni NO that not to him-it give
        I do not really want to give it to G.

(22)   *No che a Gianni non glielo do
        NO that to Gianni not to him-it give

One could object that cases like these might be treated as some sort of constituent negation [A Gianni NO] with the constituent [DP+NO] placed in the Focus field at the beginning of the clause. This cannot be the case, as the following Veneto example shows:

(23)   A Gianni po NO che non ghe lo daria
        To John prt. NO that not him it would-give

In (23) the sentential particle *po* (analyzed at length in Munaro and Poletto (2004)) intervenes between the XP at the beginning of the clause and the negative emphasizer. This shows that the XP and NO do not form a constituent.

As for sentence final NO, I propose that this construction is related to the one with sentence initial NO in the following way: NO is always located in the Focus layer in the CP, its sentence final position is the result of IP fronting. A sentence like (24) can thus be analyzed as (25):

(24)   No ghe so ndà NO!

       Not there am gone NO

(25)   [SpecGroundP [IP no ghe so ndà] [Ground° [CPFocus NO] [FinP [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]]

       [Fin° [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]]

According to this analysis, NO is always moved from within the NegP where it originates[5] to a Focus position, which, following standard assumptions on the structure of the clause in Italian is located low in the CP area. When NO is in first position, there is no IP fronting. When NO is in sentence final position, this is the result of a movement of the whole IP to a position, GroundP, which is located in the Topic field higher than Focus (again following standard assumptions on the CP layer).[6]

Notice however that the two sentences with sentence initial and sentence final position of NO do not constitute a minimal pair, because the complementizer only surfaces when NO is in sentence initial position, as the ungrammaticality of the following examples shows, where the complementizer can neither be moved along with the IP (26a), nor be left in situ (26b):

(26)   a.   *Che non ci vado NO

          That not there go NO

     b.   *Non ci vado NO che

          Not there go NO that

In order to explain the asymmetry concerning the presence vs. absence of a complementizer, I will simply propose that CP projections are subject to the Doubly filled comp filter, according to

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[5] I will not pursue the matter of the original position of NO any longer in this work. For a detailed discussion see Poletto (2008).

[6] For independent evidence in favour of the position of GroundP in the CP see Poletto and Pollock (2004).

Cecilia Poletto

which the head and the specifier of the same projection cannot be both occupied at the same time. In the case of sentence final NO, the IP has moved first to the SpecFin position before moving to SpecGround, hence the ban against the occurrence of the complementizer.[7] If the sentence does not move, FinP has to be realized, and this is done by means of merging a complementizer.

(27)   [SpecGroundP [IP no ghe so ndà] [Ground° [CPFocus NO] [FinP [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]] [Fin° [IP ~~no ghe so ndà~~]]]

(28)   [GroundP [CPFocus NO [FinP [Fin° che …[IP no ghe so ndà]]]

Notice that the IP in the structure above is the direct complement of FinP, but it is a standard assumption in the recent literature that a complement cannot move to the specifier of the head selecting it. Therefore, the type of IP projection moved cannot be the highest one. Given that these sentences have an evidential value, it seems plausible to assume that it is the inflected verb itself which moves to this position and that it is this EvidModP, and not the whole IP which moves to SpecFin and then to Ground.[8]

There are several arguments in favour of the idea that NO occupies a left peripheral position even when it is sentence final: the first is that NO is indeed sentence final and not sentence internal, as one might expect if NO were located in the low IP area.

No real argument can occur after NO, only right dislocated items are possible:

(29)   No ghe so ndà NO, al cinema

        not there am gone NOT, to the cinema

        'I really did not go to the cinema'

(30)   *No ghe so ndà NO, da nisuna parte

        Not there am gone NOT, to no place

        'I really did not go anywhere'

(31)   *Non mi ha detto NO su

---

[7] Notice that the IP projection which moves cannot be the highest one, namely the complement of Fin, as movement of a complement to the specifier of its selecting head in generally banned. I will specify which projection moves in what follows.

[8] From now on I will refer to both sentence final/sentence initial NO as evidential NO.

48

Not me has told NO off

'He did not tell me off'

Elements which cannot be right dislocated, as object quantifiers or verbal particles are ungrammatical in structures like these if they follow NO. Suppose that in structures like (30) NO were sentence internal, it should be located in some low Spec position in IP (if we adopt Cinque's theory on adverbs) or adjoined to the VP (if we do not accept Cinque's view). In any case, internal arguments in their base position should follow NO, but they do not. If we adopt the hypothesis formulated above, this fact receives a natural explanation: NO is not followed by objects because the whole IP has to be moved to its left. Hence, structure (27) is designed to account for the fact that all IP-internal material has to occur before NO, and only elements which can be right dislocated (like definite PPs, but unlike Quantified PPs or verbal particles) can be found to the right of the negative marker. This is not expected if an alternative analysis is adopted allowing NO to occur in a low IP position.

The second argument in favour of the idea that NO is always in the CP even when it appears in sentence final position is that NO is incompatible with elements whose position is typically associated to the lower portion of the CP layer, like wh-items:

(32)   *Dove non sei andato NO?

         Where not are gone NO?

          'Where didn't you go?'

(33)   *Il ragazzo che non ha telefonato NO, è Gianni

         The boy that not has phoned NO, is John

          'The boy who did not phone is John'

NO is both incompatible with interrogative wh-items and with relative pronouns, which is expected if the two types of elements are banned by a minimality effect, but is not, if NO is assumed to be located in the low IP area.

The third argument in favour of the idea that NO is located in the CP layer is the fact that sentences like the following also receive a straightforward explanation:

(34)   a.   Gianni SI che *(l)'ho visto

                  Gianni YES that (him)have seen

                  'I saw Gianni indeed'

b.   A Gianni NO che non lo darei

        To Gianni NO that it not would-give

        'I would never give it to Gianni'

Here we see that the whole clause has not moved, what has moved is a DP, a PP or an Adverb hence movement to Ground is optional, in which case NO is sentence initial, and GroundP can host different types of elements, the IP, yielding sentence final NO, a DP or a PP, yelding NO in second position. Notice that the optionality of movement to GroundP and the fact that it can host various types of elements is typical of Topic-like positions. Notice that GroundP is similar to other Topics because there can be more than one projection of this type, thus yielding third position NO or sentence final NO in case one of the two moved XPs is the IP itself:

(35)   a.   A Gianni, ieri, NO che non gli ho parlato

                To G., yesterday NO that not to-him have talked

        b.   A Gianni, non gli ho parlato NO

                To G. not to him have spoken NO

                'I did not talk to John'

Therefore, I will assume that the analysis proposed above for sentence initial, sentence final and second-position NO is correct and try to apply it to the other occurrences of NO.

4. The evidential character of NO

From the semantic point of view, NO belongs to those types of negative markers, which are often referred to in the literature as "emphatic" negation. There are at least three types of emphatic negative markers in Italian varieties: the first one is 'mica', analyzed by Cinque (1976) as inducing a presupposition, the second is 'niente' meaning at all (see Garzonio and Poletto (2008)) which has scalar properties. The third one is NO, which I described in section 2 in informal terms as having the following semantic import: the speaker is uttering his/her surprise at the fact that his/her interlocutor asks for a piece of information which is self evident to the speaker and should be to the interlocutor as well. I intend to propose that in the case of NO the effect of "reinforcing" negation is provided by the evidential character of this structure, though, as we will see, NO is not itself an

evidential marker (see below section 5). Evidentiality is defined in Roorick (2001:125) in the following way: "Evidentials indicate both source and reliability of information. They put in perspective or evaluate the truth value of a sentence both with respect to the source of the information contained in the sentence, and with respect to the degree in which this truth can be verified or justified".

Arguments in favour of the idea that NO enters an evidential structure are the following: firstly, according to Roorick's overview article, only evidentials whose source of information involves the speaker can be surprisals. The very same link between evaluation by the speaker and surprise is also found with NO, as the speaker utters his surprise at a question about something he evaluates as self-evident. Other types of constructions which display the same link have been analyzed in a similar fashion: Obenauer (2004) analyzes the type of special question known as surprise-disapproval (in his terminology SDQs) as containing a modal projection.

Secondly, evidentials are typical of the spoken language, and tend to disappear when a language is written: constructions with NO are typical of the spoken and colloquial language. Moreover, they are only related to regional or non standard varieties of Italian, not to the standard.

Thirdly, Cinque (1999) assumes that the default value of an evidential is the one of the speaker: this is the value that we find in Italian, where there is no overt verbal morpheme expressing the marked evidentiality value (hearsay).

A further (and stronger) argument of the evidential character of this construction is the following: if NO triggers an evidential structure where the speaker has direct evidence for an event, the structure should be incompatible with adverbs which express a different evidential value, like 'allegedly'. This is exactly what we observe in the following example:

(36)   *Apparentemente Gianni non è arrivato NO

        Allegedly G. not is arrived NO

        'Allegedly, G. has not arrived'

It is a fact that evidentials display restrictions in embedded domains, this is also the case with NO.

Sentence final/sentence initial NO is very limited in embedded domains, and this varies with the type of main verb selecting the embedded clause:

(37)   a.   *Sai che non viene NO?

                Know that not comes NO?

> 'Do you know that he is not coming at all?'

b.   *Se non viene NO...

If not comes NO...

If he is not coming,…

c.   *Mi dispiace che non viene/venga NO

Me displeases that not comes/come+subjunctive NO

'I am sorry that he is not coming at all'

Evidential NO is not possible under verbs like 'know', factive verbs like 'be sorry' or in if-clauses.

The reason for this restriction is probably different for the various types of embedded clauses: in the case of a conditional clause, Haegeman (2008) postulates that there is no Focus projection inside this structure. As we have seen above, NO is hosted in a focus projection, so a whole set of embedded clauses cannot host NO because the relevant projection is simply not there. As for the reason why NO is excluded from embedded clauses which are marked as factive by the selecting verb, I think this is not simply a syntactic restriction, but rather a semantic one. A speaker cannot evaluate an event which is already presented as a known fact.

The restriction observed above is not found in complements of verbs like 'say' and 'think'.

(38)   a.   Credo che non venga NO

Believe that not comes NO

'I think that he is not coming at all'

b.   Mi ha detto che non viene NO

Me has told that not comes NO

'He told me that he is not coming at all'

Moreover, in the case of verbs like 'think' there is an interesting restriction on the person of the main verb, which must be a first person (either singular or plural):

(39)   a.   *Crede che non venga NO

(He) thinks that not comes NO

b.   *Credi che non venga NO

(You) think that not comes NO

c.   Crediamo che non venga NO

We think that not comes NO

This constraint is enlightening, as it shows that the speaker must be involved in the evaluation of the truth value of the event. This is exactly what we expect if this construction has an evidentiality character. The type of evidentiality we observe here is precisely the one in which the speaker presents the sentence as first hand evidence. Languages which have evidential morphemes clearly distinguish 'first hand' evidence from hear-say or reported. Therefore, the person restriction found with NO is an argument in favour of the evidential character of the construction.

I would like to push the analysis even further and adopt Sigurdsson (2004)'s hypothesis that the agent of the speech act is actually present in the syntax by means of a Speaker projection in the CP layer.

Evidential modality is syntactically analyzed by Cinque (1999) as being located at the border of the IP structure higher than other modal projections including epistemic modality and higher than all tense projections but lower than evaluative and speech act modality, as illustrated in (40).

(40)   [frankly $_{Moodspeech\ act}$ [fortunately $_{Moodevaluative}$ [allegedly $_{Moodevidential}$ [probably $_{Modepistemic}$ [once $_{T(past)}$ [then $_{T(fut)}$]]]]]]

I assume here Roorick's proposal that EvidModP is anaphoric in nature, which directly accounts for the first-person restriction observed with verbs like 'think': the anaphoric head located in EvidModP must be bound by the speaker feature located in the main CP. If the main subject is a first person, it can pass on the [+speaker] feature and binding of the anaphor will be correct. If the subject is not a first person, it interferes in the binding relation between the speaker in the main CP and the anaphor, and there is a feature conflict between the default value of the EvidModP (first person) and the non first person subject of the main clause. Roorick discusses similar facts for parentheticals in English (which he analyzes as evidentials) containing a subject. Here there is no subject of a parenthetical, but the features of the anaphor (which is something like a null version of 'myself') must anyhow agree with those of the binder. Therefore, the effect is the same although the way EvidModP is checked is not identical (in English the cases examined by Roorick EvidModP is checked by a parenthetical, here it is the inflected verb itself which moves to EvidModP).

The case of verbs like 'say' is different: the complement of such verbs is well known for being similar to a main clause in the sense that it has a fully fledged CP structure like main clauses. It is probably the case that such complement can have its own independent Speaker projection in its CP layer and does not depend on the CP of the main verb.

If EvidModP is a projection located at the IP border, and NO is located in Focus, this means that NO is not an evidential marker per se, but that it is the whole structure which has an evidential value: it is the inflected verb that moves to EvidModP. If NO is by itself not an evidential element, there should be structures in which it has indeed no evidential value. This is the case of pro-sentence NO, as I will show in the next section.

5. Pro sentence NO

It is a well known fact that some languages have developed pro forms for assertion and negation while others answer a yes/no question with the repetition of the predicate (and of the subject depending on pro drop). One might ask what pro forms like NO are in the syntax in terms of projections, i.e. whether the pro form has to be conceived as an "imploded structure" or whether the whole clause is in some way structurally present, though phonetically empty. Probably both possibilities are realized in different languages, as the fact that the distribution of NO in Italian (and more generally in Romance) is not identical to the distribution of 'no' in English seems to suggest. Assuming that pro-sentence NO is still in the CP layer, and more precisely in the same Focus position used for Focus negation in the evidential constructions seen above, we can hypothesize that there is a whole null IP following NO:

(41)   [GroundP [CPFocus NO [FinP [Fin° …[IP]]]

One argument in favour of the idea that the whole structure is still present though empty is the fact that arguments can be extracted out of the null IP and placed in GroundP in the same way illustrated above for second position NO:[9]

(42)   Io NO

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[9] Notice that constructions of this type are impossible in English, where negation of a single XP is provided by 'not', cases equivalent to the ones discussed here require the verb and the subject to be expressed:

A. Who finished his job?

B. I did not

B' *I no

This suggests that the type of construction examined here for Italian does not really have a parallel in English.

I NO "I did not"

(43)　Io NO che non vengo

　　　I NO that not come "I am not coming"

(44)　A me NO (che non l'ha detto)

　　　To me NO (that not it has told) "I was not told

(45)　Gianni NO (che non l'ha visto)

　　　G. NO (that not him has seen) "G. did not see him"

(46)　Ancora NO (che non l'ho letto)

　　　Yet NO (that not it have read) "I did not read it yet"

One argument showing that the XP preceding NO is in a Ground position (the same position where we see the whole IP in the cases of sentence final NO seen in the preceding section) is the fact that quantifiers cannot be found to the left of NO, unless they are interpreted as specific (as indicated by the translation and by the symbol %):[10]

(47)　%Nessuno NO

　　　Nobody NO

(48)　%Qualcuno NO

　　　Somebody NO

(49)　%Tutti NO

　　　Everybody NO

There seems to be some variation in the judgments here, probably due to the fact that the negative quantifier 'nobody' is not as easily interpreted as specific as the existential or the universal one.

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[10] Cinque (1990) shows that quantifiers can indeed be left dislocated in a Topic position, but only it they are interpreted as specific.

It is also possible to have more than one grounded element and the combination can be either of two arguments or one argument and one adverb:

(50)   A: Sai che Piero ha regalato un brillante a Carla?

             Know- that P. has given a diamond to C.?

             'Do you know that P. gave a diamond to C?'

       B: Gianni a Maria NO

             G. to M. NO

             'G. did not to Mary'

       C: Gianni di sicuro NO

             G. definitely NO

             'G. certainly did not'

This shows that the whole series of Topic projections is available in this construction and that any element belonging to the empty IP following NO can be moved to a Topic position (more specifically GroundP).[11]

Note that in this constructions there cannot be a scene setting adverb. This is due to the fact that these sentences are answers to questions, and the scenario is already provided by the question or input sentence of the interlocutor. Again, these sentences are possible if the adverb is not interpreted as a scene setting one but as the first item of a pair-list reading. One might assume that the following sentences are impossible because GroundP is located higher than the scene setting position for adverbs. However, I think that this test is not relevant: scene setting is not excluded because it cannot occur higher than Ground, but because it is not available, given that the context is already set.

(51)   a.   %Ieri a Gianni NO

             Yesterday to G. NO

       b.   %Nel 1492 Amerigo NO

             In 1492 A. NO

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[11] One might even wonder whether the elliptical sentence can be null because there is a corresponding null topic in GroundP, which allows to interpret the null IP as the one of the question. I will not pursue this matter any further here, as I do not have empirical evidence showing the presence of the null Topic.

Notice however, that all these cases are different from the ones analyzed in section 3 in terms of evidentiality. While the cases in which NO is combined with an overt clause (either on the left or on the right of NO) are cases of evidentiality, the evidential value is lost when the sentence is null. The following contrast shows the point in question:

(52)   A: Gianni è già arrivato?

                G. is already arrived?

                'Has G. already arrived?

        B: Apparentemente NO

                Apparently NO

                'Apparently he did not'

(53)   *Apparentemente Gianni non è arrivato NO

        Apparently G. not is arrived NO

        'Apparently G. has really not arrived'

In the case of pro-sentence NO, the structure with a verb like 'allegedly' is felicitous. When the clause is phonetically realized, the combination of the adverb and NO is not felicitous because of the contradicting evidential value between the construction and the adverb. Recall that according to the analysis put forth above, constructions in which the sentence is realized are evidential because the inflected verb moves to a modal projection checking the relevant feature (see Cinque (1999) for empirical arguments that evidential modality is present in the IP structure and that it is a very high projection in the IP layer). Therefore, it is not focus negation which has per se evidential value, this is provided by verb movement to the relevant IP projection.

If the restricted distribution of evidential NO is the result of its evidential character, we expect that pro-sentence NO, which is not evidential, is not restricted in any sense in embedded domain. This prediction is only partially met:

(54)   a.   *Mi dispiace di/che NO

                Me displeases of/that NO

        b.   *Sai che NO?

                Know that NO?

        c.   %Se NO, gli telefono

                If NO, I call him

   d.   %Gli telefono, se NO[12]

        I call him, if NO

The restriction on the type of main verb is still active, if-clauses, factive verbs and verbs like 'say' do not tolerate NO. I think these restrictions are related to the lack of a left peripheral position in some embedded clauses, much in the spirit of Haegeman recent work on the defective left periphery of some types of embedded clauses. She assumes that some embedded clauses lack the Focus projection: if evidential NO and pro-sentence NO are located in the same position, we expect that none of the two is possible when Focus is lacking.

The second restriction seen above is not found with pro-sentence NO:

(55)   a.   Crede di NO

                Believes that NO

                'He doesn't think so'

          b.   Credi di NO

                believe of NO

                'You don't think so

          c.   Credete di NO

                believe of NO

                'You guys do not think so'

There is no ban against a subject different from the speaker with pro-sentence NO. This type of restriction does not have to do with the position, but with evidentiality: given that pro-sentence NO has not evidential value, because the null verb of the null IP cannot raise up to the relevant modal projection, this is expected.

As for the reason why pro sentence NO is not evidential, I propose that sentences like (52b) or (55) cannot be interpreted as evidential structures because the verb checking the relevant projection is null. The explanation runs as follows: suppose cases like pro-sentence NO are similar to sluicing constructions, in which (according to van Craenebroeck (2004)) the IP is still syntactically present, though empty. This means that pro sentence NO has a structure like the following:

(56)   [GroundP [CPFocus NO [~~FinP [Fin° che …[IP no ghe so ndà~~]]]

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[12] *Sennò* has become an adverb with the meaning of 'otherwise' and it is a fixed form which does not interest us here.

Van Craenenbroeck and Liptak (2008) show that Hungarian and Turkish are different from English because sluicing targets a Focus phrase, and not the whole CP (in our terms ForceP). Notice that this is the exact parallel of NO, which is also located in a Focus position. More precisely, they show that some morphemes which are generally attached to the inflected verb in non elliptical constructions are attached to the sluiced constituent in ellipsis cases. I report here from their article one case of Turkish which is immediately relevant to the analysis of NO:

(57)   A: Hasan hergün biri-ne para ver-iyor-mu".   B: Kimey-**mi!**?[13]

           HasanNOM everyday someoneDAT money give-PROG-EVID-3S whoDAT-EVID

           'A: Reportedly, Hasan gives money to someone everyday.   B: Who to?''

(58)   Hasan hergün kimey-(***mi!**) para ver-iyor-**mu!**?

       HassanNOM everyday whoDAT-EVID money give-PROG-EVID-3S

       'Who does Hasan reportedly give money to every day?'

The contrast between the two examples above illustrates the point: in the sluicing case in (57) the evidential morpheme is attached to the wh-item. Non sluiced constructions like (58) obligatorily display the evidential morpheme on the inflected verb.

This pattern is observed by van Craenenbroeck and Liptak (2008) for the Focus suffix *–e* in Hungarian and for various morphemes in Turkish. From the pattern they conclude that the phonetically empty verb cannot move outside its usual position.

Given the striking similarity between the Turkish/Hungarian case and focus negation, I propose that the same is true for the evidential position in IP in pro sentence NO, which is higher than the usual landing position of the inflected verb in Italian. The empty inflected verb cannot raise to the head of the EvidentialModP, which (as shown by Cinque (1999)) is higher than the usual landing position of the verb. Differently from Turkish, Italian does not have any independent evidential morpheme which can attach to NO. As there is nothing checking the evidential position, pro-sentence NO does not have any evidential value.

Therefore, constructions like pro-sentence NO in Italian and cases in which NO follows a single constituent are to be treated on a par with cases of sluicing, where the whole IP is syntactically present, but not phonetically realized. The only distinction between pro-sentence NO

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[13] The examples correspond to (24) and (26) in van Craenenbroeck and Liptak (2008).

and evidential NO is due to the independent requirement forcing movement of the overt inflected verb to the modal projection encoding evidential modality.

6. Conclusive remarks

In this work I have tried to show that all instances of the sentential negative marker NO are ameanable to the same analysis and that the differences found between the various cases can be traced back to independent constraints: in all cases NO is located in a Focus position in the low left periphery. When its IP is phonetically realized, it can be realized in its base position, (which yields sentence initial order of NO) or moved to the specifier of GroundP, yielding sentence final NO. In both cases it is possible to have more than one grounded element (either the IP and an XP or two XPs). In both cases the structure has an evidential value, obtained by moving the verb into the relevant modal projection.

The position of Focus is also the locus where pro-sentence NO is realized in a structure similar to sluicing, where the whole IP is phonetically silent. In this case the verb cannot move outside its usual domain to the modal projection providing the evidential reading and the structure has no evidential value. This is shown by the different distribution of evidential and pro-sentence NO in embedded clauses.

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