

Gallo and its non-semantically negative (scalar) negation

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As well-known, research on *n*-words (negative words) across Romance languages has been discussed and analyzed (cf. Corblin & al. 2004). However, whether *n*-words are inherently negative expressions (Zanuttini 1991, Déprez 2003, Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, de Swart 2002) or Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) – that is, indefinites that must appear under the scope of negation in order to be licensed (Laka 1990, Giannakidou 1997) still remains to be a question.

This study provides evidence that will contribute to the literature of *n*-words in Romance languages. To do so, we started investigating and analyzing fieldwork from Gallo on negation, mainly, the distribution of sentential negation *pas/pouint* + *n*-word (in Gallo). Specifically, *aoqhun* (no one).

Gallo is an endangered regional language of the Oïl family (like French), spoken in Upper Brittany, extending over Côtes-d'Armor, Ile-et-Vilaine, Morbihan and Northern Loire-Atlantique. The discussion here is based on the SYMILA project (*Syntactic Micro-variation in Romance languages of France*), Deriano (2005), Robin (2010) and personal fieldwork.

We start with the hypothesis that Gallo's counterpart of the *n*-word '*aucun*' (no one) in French is not its cognate '*aoqhun*' but rather '*pas aoqhun*' (Robin 2010). We argue the existence of two patterns: In Pattern I ((1)), '*pas*' co-occurs with the DP '*aoqhun*' as it marks morphological negation and provides the scalarity feature that minimizers/(N)PIs are built of. In Pattern II ((2)), '*pas*' is no longer necessary as *aoqhun* has already become an *n*-word. Namely, it has both scalarity and negative features as French *aucun* (no one).

Pattern I

- (1) Y a pas aoqhun bonome de fort come li. (Robin 2010)
There have not (n)one man of strong as he
'No one is a strong as he is.'

Pattern II

- (2) Aoqhun garçaille ne joue dans la pièce. (Robin 2010)
(n)one children NE play in the room
'No children play in the room.'

As stated in Labelle & Espinal (2014), negative expressions undergo diachronic changes where they gain or lose features. On the basis of this idea, and following approaches where Polarity Items (PIs) have a strong scalar feature [+σ] (Chierchia 2013, Labelle & Espinal (2014)) we put forward the idea that Pattern I in Gallo shows a stage of development. In particular, the shift from being indefinite to be a negative element.

Recall that diachronically French *pas* ('not') combined with motion verbs, indicated minimal or no motion (Rooryck 2017). It started as a minimizer that moved from the noun meaning 'step' to a functional operator 'not'. Moreover, additionally to a negative uninterpretable feature, *pas* also carries a scalarity feature (see Garzonio & Poletto 2008). This, we put forward the hypothesis that *pas*, behaving similarly to the French minimizer, carries both the uninterpretable scalar and negative feature, like any other Polar Item.

Compelling evidence to support that *pas* is non-intrinsically negative comes from its presence under an antimorphic operator (e.g. *without*) who checks out its [uNeg] feature giving, as a result, a Negative Concord (NC) reading (i.e., when multiple negative expressions semantically express a single negation), as seen in (3). Evidence supporting *pas* as scalar comes

from its presence in non-veridical context such as yes/no questions, as shown in (4), where both *pas* *person/aoqhun* are interpreted as non-semantically negative. In other words, having as having a ‘Is there at least one person?’ meaning.

- (3) Marie coupe des grains sans pas aoqhun à l’ëide. (Becerra-Zita 2017)
 Mary cut some grains without not (no)one to her.help
 ‘Mary harvests without anyone’s help.’
- (4) Y’a pas person/aoqhun ? (Becerra-Zita 2017)
 There-has not (no)person
 ‘Is anyone/someone there?’

Thus, our assumption is that *pas* is the element carrying the uninterpretable scalar and the uninterpretable negative feature, each one licensed by a proper operator. On Pattern I, *pas* co-occurring obligatorily with *aoqhun* (or any other n-word in Pattern1) have a Domain Widening (DW) interpretation as each element carries a specific type of alternative. In other words, scalar alternatives are signal by *pas* while domain alternatives are signal by *aoqhun*. Both elements (in Pattern I) co-occurring together triggered the DW effect. Pattern II, on the contrary, has already absorbed the scalar and negative feature as any other n-word. The empirical findings in this study extend our knowledge of negation as not only provides additional evidence with respect to the composition and licensing of NPIs but also shows us different stages of diachronic changes in the same language.

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