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On the typology of Negative Concord. A view from Old Venetan

1. Old Venetan varieties (Old Paduan and Old Veronese), documented in texts of the 13th and 14th centuries, display a non-strict Negative Concord system. However, differently from other Romance languages with non-strict Negative Concord like Modern Italian or Modern Spanish, where negative items in preverbal position are never followed by the preverbal negation marker, in Old Venetan it is possible to find alternations like those in (1).

(1) a. che ***neguna*** consa se pò saver se no quanto   Deo ne   vol   altrui   revelar
that no   thing one=can know if not how.much God of.it=wants to.other reveal
'since nothing can be known if not what God desires to reveal to others'
(*Lucidario*, Old Veronese)

  b. sì che ***mai   no*** pote faro terra de loro e   ***mai   no*** la farà
so that never not can make land of them and never not it=will.make
'so that they are not able to have their land, and they will never be'
(*Lucidario*)

  c. ***né*** ira   ***né*** grancor ***né*** maltalento   logo ***no*** po trovar en la soa mento
nor anger nor rancor nor bad disposition place not can find   in the his mind
'Nor anger, nor rancor, nor evilness can have place in his mind'
(*Dell'Amore di Gesù*, Old Veronese)

While the DP containing the negative quantifier *neguna* in (1a) is not followed by the preverbal negative marker, the adverb *mai* 'never' in (1b) and the negative coordination particle *né* in (1c) are doubled by *no*.

2. I will show that this type of non-strict Negative Concord is structural and does not depend uniquely on the category of the negative item in the preverbal space. The main evidence in favor of a structural analysis is provided by alternations (even in the same text) like the one in (2): a negative quantifier in a non–argumental preverbal XP is doubled by *no*. Furthermore, there are cases of preverbal objects containing negative quantifiers followed by the preverbal negation (3).

(2) a. lo to   amor unca per ***nesun*** tempo ***no*** deventa   reo né   puçolento
the your love ever for no   time   not becomes bad nor rank
'Your love never becomes wicked or rank.'
(*Dell'Amore di Gesù*)

  b. et ancor   rosa né viola ***nesuna*** è sovra terra ke   tant'   ola
and furthermore rose nor violet no   is on   earth that so.much perfumes
'There is no rose or violet so fragrant on earth.'
(*Dell'Amore di Gesù*)

(3)   ***nexuna*** altra richeza ***no*** à   questo bon homo
no   other richness not has this   good man
'This good man has not other richness'
(*Leggenda di S. Caterina*, Old Veronese)

Finally, a subject with a negative quantifier can be doubled by the preverbal negator if it is moved outside its standard position, like in (4) where it is separated from the inflected verb by the adverb *plu* 'more':

(4)   Dunca ve' che çescaun   serave   pleno che **nexuno** plu   **no** 'n vorave
               thus see that each.one would.be full   that no.one more   not=of.it=wanted
               'So you can see that each one would be satisfied so that no one would want
               more of it'
               (*Lucidario*)

3. The Negative Concord displayed by these varieties will be analyzed according to the following lines: following Zeijlstra (2004) I assume that sentential negation is encoded by the operator OP¬, which agrees with multiple items in the structure. However, my analysis diverges from the one proposed by Zeijlstra as I assume that OP¬ is not located in the specifier of a NegP projection, but can be lexicalized by items with an interpretable or an uninterpretable negative feature [i/uNeg] at different levels of the structure. This means that it is sufficient one [uNeg] item to encode sentential negation if it is in an appropriate configuration (Haegeman and Lohndal 2010). Under this analysis Negative Concord arises if the [uNeg] item does not agree with OP¬. I will argue that an appropriate configuration for Negative Concord is subject to micro-variation. While in languages like Modern Italian OP¬ can be realized by all preverbal negative items (likely because they c-command T or Polarity), in Old Venetan varieties taken into consideration here, only a negative item in subject position can lexicalize OP¬. I propose that this difference can be explained assuming featural hierarchies: in modern Italian [uNeg] prevails on features of the same type, like [Focus] or other features on items higher than TP, and even if the negative item bears these other features, OP¬ can agree with [uNeg] and preverbal negation is not realized; in Old Venetan the presence of [Focus] blocks this agreement, and Negative Concord arises. These means that Negative Concord is a type of repair strategy to avoid Relativized Minimality effects (Rizzi 1990 and subsequent work).

(5)   a.   [FocusP [XP(uNeg)+(Foc)][FinP [TP *no*(iNeg) V ...]]]   Negative Concord
       b.   [TP [DP(uNeg) ~~*no*(iNeg)~~ V ...]]   no Negative Concord

4. I will also discuss both synchronic and diachronic micro-variation of this system. Differently from Old Veronese and Old Paduan, Old Venetian always displays Negative Concord, like in strict-Negative Concord languages. I will consider this configuration as the extreme step on a scale, where [uNeg] can never openly realize OP¬.

(6)   E **nesun** de li altri frari   **no** sia   tegnudi de andar
             and no.one of the other brothers not were obliged to go
             'and no other brother should go there' (Old Venetian*,* guild document)

Furthermore, some modern Venetan varieties are similar to Old Venetian, with the difference that Negative Concord is obligatory with negative adverbs or preverbal negative objects, and optional with negative subjects.

(7)   **Nissun** (**no**) l-à   parlà male de ti.   (Pellestrina)
             no.one   not SCL=has spoken bad of you

I will consider this type the intermediate stage between the strict-Negative Concord type of Old Venetian and the asymmetric type of Old Paduan and Old Veronese.

References: Haegeman, Liliane and Terje Lohndal. 2010. Negative concord and multiple agree: a case study of West Flemish. *Linguistic Inquiry* 41.2, 181-211.; Zeijlstra, Hedde. 2004. *Sentential Negation and Negative Concord*. Doctoral dissertation, U. Amsterdam.