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Indefinites and negation in Ancient Greek

Introduction. In Early Greek two patterns are available when, in a negative sentence, the negative marker co-occurs with an indefinite pronoun: in the pattern in (1.a), the negative marker *ou* combines with the plain indefinite *tis* 'someone'; in the pattern in (1.b), the negative marker *oudé* combines with the cardinal numeral *heĩs* 'one'.

1. a. **οὔ τις** (*oú tis*) 'nobody'
    b. **οὐδείς** (*oudeís*) 'nobody'

In traditional scholarship, both *oútis* and *oudeís* are considered to be negatively marked pronouns, i.e. lexicalizations resulting from a grammaticalization process. The present study addresses the following questions: why does Ancient Greek have two series of seemingly functionally equivalent pronouns? how do the two different patterns emerge and develop from syntactically formed structures to lexicalized functional items? By means of a corpus study of Homeric Greek, the study shows that, at least in origin, the two series are not functionally equivalent: while the pattern in (1.a) is pragmatically unmarked, the one in (1.b) is emphatic and has the function of pragmatically strengthening negation. The strengthening effect in (1.b) emerges as a function of both the negative marker (the focus-sensitive negative particle *oudé*) and the pronominal stem, which is an end-of-scale element, accordingly to a frequently attested grammaticalization pattern (Haspelmath 1997: 157-164; 222-226). Internal reconstruction leads to the hypothesis that (1.a) is the original common Indo-European pattern, and (1.b) is an innovation. Importantly, the pattern in (1.b) will be shown to be instrumental for the development of Negative Concord in the history of Greek.

The situation in Homeric Greek. Since beginning of attestation, Greek displays a modality-sensitive system of negation (Chatzopoulou 2015), in which the so-called objective *ou(k)* and the subjective *mḗ* negative particles alternate depending on illocutionary force and modality. Both negative particles may morphosyntactically combine with other elements of the functional lexicon, yielding two parallel series, cf. (2):

(2) Elements of the functional lexicon formed with a negative morpheme (selection):

Objective NM *ou(k)*	*oudé* 'and not'	*oú tis* 'nobody'	*oudeís* 'nobody'	*oúpote* 'never'	*oukéti* 'no more'	*oúte* 'neither…nor'
Subjective NM *mḗ*	*mēdé* 'and not'	*mḗ tis* 'nobody'	*mēdeís* 'nobody'	*mḗpote* 'never'	*mēkéti* 'no more'	*mḗte* 'neither…nor'

The pattern (1.a) *oú tis* maintains the status of a non-lexicalized syntactic combination in the Homeric poems: particles can occur between the negation and the indefinite (e.g. Il. 6.487, Od. 8.552). The pattern (1.b) *oudeís* appears to have a word status (as shown also by its acute accent), but the original syntactic combination *oudé heĩs* 'not even one' is also found. Denizot (2014: 70) reports the following distribution for the negatively marked pronouns in Homer:

(3) Distribution of negatively marked indefinites in Homer (Denizot 2014)

	oú tis	*mḗ tis*	*oudeís*	*mēdeis*
Iliad	284	73	8	1
Odyssey	292	97	13	/

Pattern (1.a) is clearly predominant in both the Iliad and the (later) Odyssey. As for pattern (1.b), many authors have described it as an emphatic variant (Wackernagel 1928, Chantraine 1953, Moorhouse 1959, Landsman 1988).

Emphasis with *oudeís*. The emphatic effect observed with *oudeís* in Homeric Greek can be accounted for as the effect of scalar focus (cf. Krifka 1995, Chierchia 2013 on the 'even' operator): *oudé* 'not even', a correlative negation that here is used as a focus particle (Denniston 1954, Moorhouse 1959, Willmott 2011), is combined to an element expressing a scalar minimum, the numeral 'one'. Alternatives ordered along a scale are evoked; the focus denotation is then the extreme

of the scale. Emphasis (strengthening) arises in the interaction with negation: 'even not one' means that it is even the case that the most probable alternative in the widest domain (i.e. the domain that has the highest probability of containing something) does not hold. Later on in the history of Greek, as we will show by means of corpus data, the emphatic effect gets lost (it is not observable in Classical Greek), according to a frequently attested cyclic development involving bleaching of the scalar component (for Greek cf. in particular Kiparsky & Condoravdi 2006, Chatzopoulou 2015).

The connection with Negative Concord. The emergence of an emphatic negatively marked indefinite series has important consequences for the general system of negation in Greek. Classical Greek is a non-strict Negative Concord language (Willmott 2013, Horrocks 2014). The earlier stage documented by Homeric Greek is instead a non-Concord variety. The only context in which 'redundant' marking of negation is observed is represented by cases where a negatively marked element co-occurs with the particle *oudé*, either as correlative negation or as focus particle (Wilmott 2011), as in cases like (4). This particle is, thus, apparently, the first element in the language that becomes reanalysed as a [uNeg] element, i.e., as an item endowed with exclusively formal negation features (under an analysis of Negative Concord as syntactic agreement, cf. Zeijlstra 2004).

(4) **οὐ** γὰρ παυσωλή γε μετέσσεται **οὐδ**' ἠβαιὸν   (Il. 2.386)
     ou gàr pausōlḗ ge metéssetai **oud**' ēbaiòn
     not in.fact pause:NOM PTC be.among:3SG not.even small.bit:NOM/ACC
'for there will be no pause, not even for a short while'

Correlative negations behave differently than other negatively marked elements with respect to Negative Concord in many studied languages, cf. Jespersen (1917: 68-73). I will explore whether the hypothesis, put forward in Gianollo (2017) for the development of Negative Concord from Latin to Romance, that Negative Concord emerges through the interaction with the syntax of Focus can also hold for the diachrony of Greek. Namely, correlative negative particles, which are inherently focused, establish a syntactic relation with a sentential Focus projection in languages with rich movement to Focus, like Ancient Greek (Matić 2003, Kirk 2012). This may yield syntactic dependencies based on [iFoc]-[uFoc] formal features, which in turn can be reanalysed as a [iNeg]-[uNeg] Negative Concord dependency under the appropriate conditions.

Conclusions. The pattern represented by *oudeís* (focus-sensitive negation + 'one') is cross-linguistically frequent, and is paralleled in Romance, cf. Old French *neuns*, Old Italian *niuno*, Romanian *nicĭ un*, etc., all deriving from the combination of focus-sensitive negation *nec* and *unus* 'one'. As in the history of Greek, the Romance pattern emerges as a negation-strengthening device. In this respect, it is best understood as a phenomenon akin to Jespersen's Cycle, which however affects the form of negatively marked pronouns, not the negative marker itself (at a further stage, though, a new NM, *dhen*, will emerge from the neuter form of *oudeís*, pointing to a well-known deep connection between the grammar of indefinites and the grammar of negation, cf. Garzonio & Poletto 2012, Willis et al. 2013). The grammaticalization process leading to the innovative pattern is connected in relevant ways to changes at the clausal level, since it contributes to the development of Negative Concord. It thus helps shed light on the role of focus-sensitive negation in the development of Negative Concord, which has also been observed in the history of Romance (Gianollo 2017).

Selected references: **Chatzopoulou**, K. 2015. The Greek Jespersen's cycle: Renewal, stability and structural microelevation. In C. Gianollo, A. Jäger & D. Penka (eds.), *Language change at the syntax-semantics interface*, 323–354. Berlin: de Gruyter. **Denizot**, C. 2014. 'Personne' et 'rien' dans les poèmes homériques: emplois de οὔ τις et de οὐδείς. In C. Denizot & E. Dupraz (eds.), *Latin quis/qui, grec τις/τίς: parcours et fonctionnements*, 69–88. Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre. **Garzonio**, J. & C. **Poletto**. 2012. On niente: optional negative concord in Old Italian. Linguistische Berichte 230, 131-153. **Gianollo**, C. 2017. Focus-sensitive negation in Latin. Catalan Journal of Linguistics 16, 51-77. **Willmott**, J. C. 2011. Outis and what he can tell us about negation in Homeric Greek. In P. Millett et al. (eds.), *Ratio et res ipsa*, 63–79. Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society.