Synchrony and diachrony of a multifunctional particle: Latin *nec*

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Introduction: Overview of the study

- In this work I consider the Latin particle *nec* 'and not'; 'neither'; 'not even' in its diachronic development.

- Latin *nec* (and its full form *neque*) was a highly multifunctional item, which became extremely successful diachronically.

- Observing its development sheds light on the relations between the various meaning components conveyed, as well as on their syntactic implementation, and addresses the challenge posed by multifunctionality to syntax-semantics compositional isomorphism.

Structure of the presentation

1 Introduction

2 The functions of *nec*

3 An analysis of the syntactic-semantic structure

4 The diachronic development of focus-sensitive uses

5 Conclusions

Introduction: *nec*

- transparent etymology: *neque*, with apocope of last syllable *nĕc* (functionally equivalent):
  < IE negative morpheme **ne* + enclitic conjunction *-que*

- for *-que*: cf. the pair *atque* / *ac* 'and (also)'.
  Postpositive:

  (1) terra   mari**que**
       land:ABL see:ABL.and
       'on land and sea'

- Romance outcomes: **correlative negation**: French *ni*, Spanish *ni*, Italian *né*, etc.; Romanian continues the form *neque* >*nicĭ*

- Romance outcomes: **building block of Concord indefinites = n-words**:
  Old French *neuns, nesun* etc.
  Spanish *ninguno*
  Italian *nessuno* (Old: *niuno*)
  → if a Romance indefinite is negatively marked, it is marked with *nec*!

4

Functions of *nec*

- Orlandini (2001), Orlandini & Poccetti (2007, 2008), Pinkster (2015, §8.9, 8.12): variety of uses of *něc*:

    (i) **discourse-structuring particle**: 'and not'; 'furthermore, it is not the case that'; at the beginning of new textual units
    (ii) **correlative negation**: 'neither...nor'
    (iii) **focus particle**: 'not either'; 'not even'

    + archaic *nec*:
    si adgnatus **nec** *escit* 'If there is no agnate male kinsman' Lex XII. 5

- all uses in (i-iii) derive from a basic meaning AND >NOT

- In all this uses *nec* is a semantically negative item, conveying a negation with sentential scope = semantic feature [Neg] (Zeijlstra 2004 and following), cf. double negation *nec non* 'and indeed'

- In functions (ii) and (iii) *nec* is a focus-sensitive negation; in (iii) it overlaps with *ne...quidem*, another focus particle with parallel syntactic structure.

5

Functions of *nec*: (i) discourse connector

(i) **Discourse structuring particle**: as a discourse-structuring connector, *nec* introduces a full clause belonging to a new discourse unit, which may be connected in the discourse to a previous clause independent of the polarity of the latter.

(2) Ex his omnibus longe sunt humanissimi qui Cantium incolunt, quae regio est maritima omnis, **neque** multum a Gallica differunt consuetudine
'Of all the Britons the inhabitants of Kent, an entirely maritime district, are by far the most civilised, differing but little from the Gallic manner of life.' (Caes. BG 5.14)

(3) Accessum est ad Britanniam omnibus navibus meridiano fere tempore, **neque** in eo loco hostis est visus.
'All ships got into Britain at around noon, and no enemy was spotted there' (Caes. BG 5.8)

6

Functions of *nec*: (i) discourse connector

(4) a. Ex his omnibus longe sunt humanissimi qui Cantium
of they:ABL all:ABL far are:3SG most.civilized:NOM who:NOM Kent:ACC
incolunt, quae regio est maritima omnis, **neque** multum
inhabit:3PL which:NOM region:NOM is maritime:NOM all:NOM and.not much
a Gallica differunt consuetudine
from Gallic:ABL differ:3PL habit:ABL
'Of all the Britons the inhabitants of Kent, an entirely maritime district, are
by far the most civilised, differing but little from the Gallic manner of life.'
(Caes. BG 5.14)

b. Accessum est ad Britanniam omnibus navibus meridiano fere tempore,
approached is to Britanna all:ABL ships:ABL midday:ABL around time:ABL,
neque in eo loco hostis est visus.
and.not in that place enemy:NOM is seen
'All ships got into Britain at around noon, and no enemy was spotted there'
(Caes. BG 5.8)

7

Functions of *nec*: (ii) correlative negation

(ii) **Correlative negation**: we find *nĕc* coordinating clauses or smaller constituents.

(5) Caput   dolet   **neque** audio   **nec**   oculis   prospicio satis
head:NOM hurt:3SG and.not hear:1SG and.not eyes:ABL see:1SG   well
'I have a headache, I can't hear, and I can't see well with my eyes' (Plaut. Amph. 1059)

(6) Salve, **nec** minimo puella naso
nec bello pede **nec** nigris ocellis
nec longis digitis **nec** ore sicco
nec sane nimis elegante lingua.
decoctoris amica Formiani.
ten Provincia narrat esse bellam?
tecum Lesbia nostra comparatur?
o saeclum insapiens et infacetum!
'I greet you, lady, you who neither have a tiny nose, nor a pretty foot, nor black eyes, nor long fingers, nor dry mouth, nor indeed a very refined tongue, you mistress of the bankrupt of Formiae. Is it you who are pretty, as the Province tells us? is it with you that our Lesbia is compared? Oh, this age! how tasteless and ill-bred it is!' (Catullus 43, LOEB translation)

Contrastive function of correlative *nec*

(7) Contrast and polarity switch:

a. Hic   nunc domi   servit   suo   patri   **nec** scit
   this:NOM now house:LOC serve:3SG his:DAT father:DAT and.not know:3SG
   pater
   father:NOM
   'Now this one is slave to his father in his home, and his father doesn't know
   it' (Plaut. Capt. 21)

b. Omnia   habeo,   **neque** quicquam   habeo
   everything:ACC have:1SG and.not anything:ACC have:1SG
   'I have everything, and nonetheless I have nothing' (Ter. Eun. 243)

c. It. * *Ho tutto* **né** *ho niente*

d. It. *Ho tutto* **e non** *ho niente*

9

Functions of *nec*: (iii) focus particle

(iii) **Additive (*'not either'*) or scalar (*'not even'*) focus particle**: in the stand-alone focus-particle use, the task of ensuring syntactic and semantic-pragmatic cohesion with the previous discourse is accomplished by other elements in the clause (e.g. *ita* 'thus' below); *nec* indicates that the interpretation requires the consideration of alternatives to the denotation of the constituent in its scope.

> (8) ita primis repulsis   Maharbal   cum maiore   robore
>   thus first:ABL repulsed:ABL Maharbal:NOM with greater:ABL strength:ABL
>
>   virorum missus **nec** ipse   eruptionem cohortium sustinuit
>   man:GEN sent:NOM and.not himself:NOM sally:ACC   cohort:GEN sustain:3SG
>   'Thus after the first forces had been repulsed also Maharbal himself who
>   had been sent with greater manpower did not sustain the cohorts' sortie'
>   (Liv. 23.18.4)

Functions of *nec*: (iii) focus particle

Examples of scalar uses:

(9) **nec** Salus   nobis   saluti   iam esse,   si cupiat,   potest
and.not salvation:NOM we:DAT salvation:DAT now be:INF if desire:3SG can:3SG
'even Salvation cannot be of salvation to us, even if she should desire to be so' (Pl. Most. 351, 3rd-2nd cent. BCE)

(10) dico   autem vobis   quoniam **nec**   Salomon   in omni gloria   sua
say:1SG yet   you:DAT that   and.not Salomon:NOM in all:ABL splendor:ABL his:ABL
coopertus est   sicut unum   ex   istis
dressed:PT be:3SG as   one:NOM from this:ABL
'Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these [lilies of the field]' (Matth. 6.29, 4th cent. CE)

(11) **nemo**   mundus,   **nec**   infans
nobody:NOM pure:NOM and.not infant:NOM
'No one is pure, not even an infant (Leo M. *Serm.* 21, 5th cent. CE)

Many of the negative scalar focus particles seen in Indo-European languages also have an employ as correlative negation (cf. König 1991: Ch. 4, Haspelmath 2007). Spanish *ni* still retains both functions (Herburger 2003), unlike Italian and French, which only have the correlative negation use.

11

Interim summary and proposal

Interim summary:

- In all its uses *nec* can combine with constituents of various sizes, showing no categorial restriction
- In all its uses it introduces a semantic negative operator that can take sentential scope
- In all its uses it contributes an additive component, whereby alternatives are provided by the broader surrounding discourse or by more local antecedents
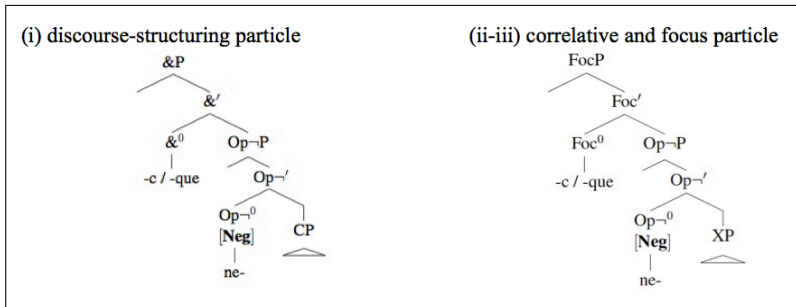
Proposal:

- Across functions, *nec* shares a homogeneous internal syntactic structure, corresponding to its two basic semantic components: additivity and negation.
- the various uses can be derived from the interaction between these two operators and the surrounding structure in which the particle is merged.
- In turn, the structural position of the particle influences its pragmatic properties, in terms of the form of the evoked alternatives and the way they are retrieved.
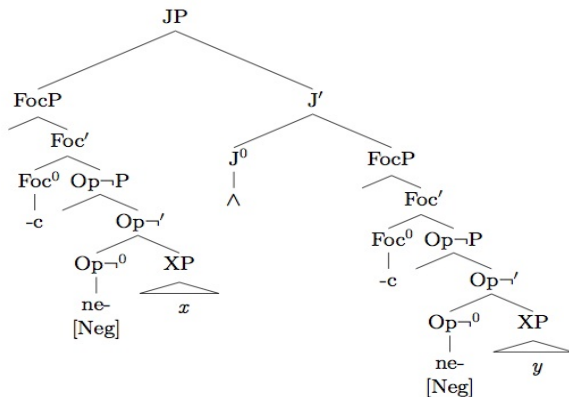
Internal syntactic structure

- One underlying meaning: AND > NOT= cf. bimorphemic structure:
  negative morpheme *ne-* + enclitic conjunction *-que*
- **Linear order** of morphemes due to prosodically triggered inversion
- For **correlative particles as focus-sensitive particles**: cf. Hendriks 2004 for English
  either, *neither*, *both*, followed by den Dikken 2006, Wurmbrand 2008, Ahn 2015.

Analysis for the internal syntax of (i) and (ii-iii):

13

Internal syntactic structure

- Correlation: **asyndetic coordination**, where conjuncts are introduced by focus particles; cf. 'edge coordination' ('not only...but also')) in Bianchi & Zamparelli 2004.
- JP: Junction Phrase, cf. den Dikken 2006, Szabolcsi 2013, Mitrović & Sauerland 2014.

Internal syntactic structure

- FocP and Op¬P: **syncategorematic functional shells**, attaching to various types of focus associates, which remain transparent for c-selection (structure of correlates is possibly elliptical) (cf. Cinque 1999, Biberauer et al. 2014).

- In fact all these constituents are arguably propositional units reduced by **ellipsis**; a proper treatment of the association of the semantic operators involved must eventually lead to such an analysis.

  (12) Cic. fam. 3.5.2:
  neque enim obscuris personis   [*TP* res
  and.not indeed obscure:ABL character:ABL   situation:NOM
  agetur]   **nec** parvis   in causis   res
  develop:3SG.PASS and.not small:ABL in issue:ABL situation:NOM
  agetur
  develop:3SG.PASS
  'for the persons involved are not obscure, nor are the issues trivial'

- Syntactic flexibility is a factor in multifunctionality: the structural position of attachment influences the semantic-pragmatic interpretation, in terms of the form that the alternatives take (influencing, in turn, the way they are retrieved from the context)

15

Unifying discourse function and the rest?

Open issue:

- Problem of lexical ambiguity: Has discourse-structuring *nec* a different lexical entry, with a conjunction *&* instead of a focus particle *Foc*? or can it be considered a focus operator at the discourse level (cf. Garzonio & Gianollo 2017)?

- Sentences introduced by *nec* in its use as discourse particle are never discourse-initial (cf. one-place *and* according to Zeevat & Jasinskaja). They introduce **coordinating discourse relations** (List, Narration, Result): like *and*, *nec* is used when 'the sentence topic of the pivot is abandoned to start dealing with a new topic' (Zeevat & Jasinskaja 2007: 325).

- Likewise, discourse-structuring *nec* introduces a **distinctness requirement**: discourse-structuring *nec* could be considered a focus particle at the discourse level, thus requiring just one lexical entry.

Diachrony of focus-sensitive readings

The stand-alone focus particle function is a later use (from Livy on, cf. Orlandini & Poccetti 2007, 2008, Pinkster 2015: 693), with the **scalar** reading diachronically following the **additive** one

- **Additivity** (*neither*): presupposition that what is predicated about an element also holds for one of its alternatives
- **Scalarity** (*not even*): presupposition that the alternative being predicated is striking with respect to some contextually established scale (a scale of likelihood, a measure scale, etc.)
- scalar reading → interaction with negation: 'even [not *x*]': 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 = **emphatic** reading

17

nec + unus

(13) a. Quis   enim mundus   a   sordibus? **nec   unus** etiamsi unius
who:NOM indeed clean:NOM from sins   and.not one:NOM even.if one:GEN

diei   sit   vita   eius   in terra
day:GEN be:3SG life:NOM he:GEN on earth

'Who is indeed clean from sins? not even one, even if his life on earth is
one day long' (Cypr. testim 3.54, 3rd cent. CE)

b. Ramessen   civitas   nunc campus   est,   ita ut   **nec   unam**
Ramessen:NOM city:NOM now   field:NOM be:3SG so that and.not one:ACC

habitationem   habeat
dwelling:ACC have:3SG

'the city of Rameses is a desert now, such that there isn't even a dwelling'
(Itin. Eg. 8.1, in Bertocchi et al 2010: 82)

c. **non** est   relictus   ex eis   **neque** unus
not   be:3SG remain:PTC of they:ABL NEQUE one:NOM

'and of them not even one is left' (Agnell. lib. pont. 121, 9th cent. CE)

Additive and scalar interpretation

- systematic ambiguity:

    (14) **Anche** *i giganti hanno iniziato in piccolo*   Italian
          'Even giants started from small beginnings' (*anche* = *perfino*)

- The use as additive focus particle is possible only when suitable alternatives for the focus
  are explicitly provided in the context, no accommodation is possible (Zeevat 1992 and
  following), cf. the unfelicitous use of additive particles out of the blue:

    (15) # *John had dinner in New York* **too**

- In the absence of these preconditions, only a scalar interpretation is possible: in that case
  alternatives have to be accommodated by evoking a scale, whose dimension is usually
  suggested by the element in focus.

- A process of presupposition accommodation by means of scale retrieval may have been
  responsible for the conventionalization of a scalar meaning for *nec*: accommodation
  processes on the part of the hearer are costly and, if systematic enough, may lead to a
  reanalysis of the conditions imposed by the lexical entry (cf. Traugott & Dasher 2002,
  Schwenter & Waltereit 2010).

- In turn, in Late Latin *ne...quidem*, which was a competitor of *nec* in the focus-particle use,
  loses productivity, thus opening an additional functional space for *nec* = loss of lexical
  blocking.

Diachronic significance of focus-sensitive readings

- The use at the origin of Romance *nec*-words is the **scalar focus particle** use 'even not *x*'.

- Focus particles are well attested cross-linguistically as formatives of **polarity-sensitive indefinites** (Haspelmath 1997: 222 ff.) and have been connected to the kind of scalar focus found in emphatic negation (Lahiri 1998, Chierchia 2013). Focus-sensitive uses may account for the frequent non-negative NPI-uses in Early Romance.

- The only difference between correlative and focus particle concerns the **syntactic context** in which they are used: the stand-alone focus particle does not have an immediate syntactic correlate. Rather, it has alternatives in the context, which are retrieved in different ways yielding an additive or a scalar reading

- From additive to scalar meaning: process of presupposition accommodation in the absence of suitable anaphoric alternatives.

Conclusions

- I analyzed the functions of *nec* synchronically and diachronically, and I proposed that, across functions, it shares a homogeneous internal syntactic structure, corresponding to its two basic semantic components: additivity and negation.
- The various uses (multifunctionality) can be derived from the interaction between these two operators and the surrounding structure in which the particle is merged.
- In turn, the structural position of the particle influences its pragmatic properties, in terms of the form of the evoked alternatives and the way they are retrieved.

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GRAZIE!

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