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# Lexical variation and Negative Concord in Traditional Dialects of British English

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## Abstract

In the present paper I investigate, from a Minimalist perspective and using data from the Freiburg English Dialect corpus, the patterns of Negative Concord (NC) attested in different Traditional Dialects of British English. By arguing that lexical variation exists in the negative operator used to express sentential negation, which is truly semantic in Standard English but carries an interpretable negative feature in Traditional Dialects of British English, I explain why NC, understood as syntactic Agree between [iNeg] and [uNeg] features, is attested in the latter but not in the former. In the same vein, by arguing that in Traditional Dialects of British English two lexical entries are possible for n-words which contrast in the interpretability of the negative feature they carry ([iNeg] vs. [uNeg]), the optionality of NC in the studied Non-Standard dialects of English as well as the different patterns observed in the data can be accounted for.

**Keywords:** Negative Concord, lexical variation, negative quantifiers, n-words, Standard English, Traditional Dialects of British English

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Standard English vs. Traditional Dialects of British English*

In Standard English (1a) expresses single negation, but (1b-d) do not. As indicated by the symbol ‘≠’, (1b-d) are not equivalent to the sentences in brackets.

- (1) a. I saw *nobody*  
b. I did *not* see *nobody* (≠ I did not see anybody)  
c. I didn’t see *nobody* (≠ I didn’t see anybody)

d. *Nobody saw nothing* ( $\neq$  Nobody saw anything)

The examples in (1b, c), which involve an object negative quantifier (*nothing, nobody*, etc.) co-occurring with the sentential negative marker (*not / -n't*), and (1d), which contains a subject negative quantifier co-occurring with an object negative quantifier, are only grammatical in Standard English if interpreted as conveying Double Negation (DN) (i.e., as the affirmative propositions *I saw someone* in the case of (1b, c), and (*At least*) *someone saw something* in the case of (1d)). However, certain conditions are necessary for DN to emerge in (1b-d) which will not be discussed in this paper.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, the so-called negative quantifiers can co-occur with the sentential negative marker expressing single negation in Traditional Dialects of British English, for which Trudgill (1990: 5) gives the following definition:

“Traditional Dialects are what most people think of when they hear the term dialect. They are spoken by a probably shrinking minority of the English-speaking population of the world, almost all of them in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. They are most easily found, as far as England is concerned, in the more remote and peripheral rural areas of the country, although some urban areas of northern and western England still have many Traditional Dialect speakers.”

(Trudgill 1990: 5)

Sequences where the sentential negative marker co-occurs with a negative quantifier are attested in virtually all of the nine major dialect areas (cf. Trudgill 1999) covered by the Freiburg English Dialect (FRED) corpus.<sup>2</sup> This is shown in (2), where

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<sup>1</sup> See Puskás (2012) for an account of the necessary pragmatic and syntactic conditions that lead to the emergence of Double Negation in English.

<sup>2</sup> The nine areas are the Outer Hebrides, the Isle of Man, the Highlands and the Lowlands of Scotland, the North, the Midlands, Wales, the Southeast and the Southwest. Some of these areas are further subdivided into counties, which are indicated in the examples after the transcript identification number (e.g. HEB\_018) and the dialectal area (e.g. Outer Hebrides) (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

italics have been used to highlight the lexical items that constitute the object of study of this paper.

- (2) a. I didn't say *nothing* (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)
- b. So it didn't cost *nothing* (IOM\_002. Isle of Man)
- c. Well, you couldnae do *nothing* at the market day  
(PER\_003. Perthshire, Scotland. Lowlands)
- d. But I didn't get *no* dole, because I couldn't get *none*  
(LAN\_005. Lancashire, North)
- e. You couldn't do *no papers nor nothing*  
(NTT\_014. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)
- f. And beyond that *nobody* couldn't go (GLA\_003. Glamorgan, Wales)
- g. I mean, you shoot a net on the Dogger Bank now and you wun't get  
*nothing* –only a bit of wreck!  
(SFK\_038. Suffolk, Southeast)
- h. You didn't have *nobody* to learn you in they days  
(SOM\_036. Somerset, Southwest)

In approximately 90% of the counties where data like (2) are attested, examples where two (or even three) negative quantifiers co-occur are also found, as illustrated in (3) and (4).<sup>3,4</sup>

- (3) a. *Nobody*'d got *nothing* that's the way it was

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<sup>3</sup> For reasons of space, only one example per dialectal area has been included in (4). See Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix for a complete list of counties / transcripts where data such as (3) and (4) occur.

<sup>4</sup> There are only 6 examples in the whole corpus where *never* is not one of the two co-occurring negative quantifiers, as in (3), and these have only been attested in the output of 5 speakers in the counties of Nottinghamshire, Shropshire (Midlands), Kent, Suffolk (Southeast) and Cornwall (Southwest). That *never* is much more frequent in multiple n-word combinations than other negative quantifiers was already observed in Anderwald (2002: 106), who reports that in the BNC-SpS corpus, *-n't* and *never* occur as the first element of NC constructions almost 97% of the time. Accounting for such a difference in frequency is left as further research.

(NTT\_005. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)

- b. *Nobody's* got time for *nothing* these days

(SAL\_027. Shropshire, Midlands)

- c. *Nobody* said *nothing* about it (KEN\_002. Kent, Southeast)

- d. *Nobody* paid *n'* regard to them! (SFK\_038. Suffolk, Southeast)

- e. *Nobody* said *nothing* to him (CON\_004. Cornwall, Southwest)

- (4) a. We *never* heard about it *nor nothing* (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)

- b. We *never* had *no* sword dance (IOM\_002. Isle of Man)

- c. Oh, the farmer *never* said *nothing* to you about that

(ANS\_001. Angus, Scotland. Lowlands)

- d. No, *never* had *no* doctors (LAN\_002. Lancashire, North)

- e. No they *never* had *no* babies (NTT\_012. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)

- f. He *never* paid *no* dole (DEN\_004. Denbighshire, Wales)

- g. *Never* said *nothing* to *nobody* (KEN\_010. Kent, Southeast)

- h. But *nobody never* saw it (DEV\_001. Devon, Southwest)

The phenomenon illustrated in (2)-(4) above is known as Negative Concord (NC), which is a label used in the literature to describe the fact that multiple manifestations of negation are semantically interpreted as single negation. While several scholars (Labov 1972; Ladusaw 1992; Anderwald 2002, 2005; among others) have reported that NC is a common feature of Non-Standard varieties of English, the particular NC patterns attested in these varieties have not often been carefully examined from a syntactic perspective. For this reason, the purpose of the present paper is to provide a Minimalist analysis of NC in Traditional Dialects of British English.

The lexical elements involved in NC, which is a common phenomenon in Romance languages (see Giannakidou 2000 and references therein), have been referred to in the literature as *n-words* since Laka (1990). Therefore, given that *nobody*, *nothing*, etc. occur in NC constructions in Traditional Dialects of British English, it seems reasonable to entertain the idea that these lexical items are n-words rather than negative quantifiers. Actually, in these Non-Standard varieties, the data in (2)-(4) (which cannot be assigned a single-negation reading in Standard English) show that these lexical items have the first property that Giannakidou (2006: 328) includes in her definition of n-word given in (5). In addition, *nothing*, *nobody*, etc. have the property in (5b), as they can be used as negative fragment answers –as illustrated in (6)– in all varieties of English.

(5) An expression  $\alpha$  is an *n-word* iff:

- a.  $\alpha$  can be used in structures containing sentential negation or another  $\alpha$ -expression yielding a reading equivalent to one logical negation;
- b.  $\alpha$  can provide a negative fragment answer.

(Giannakidou 2006: 328)

(6) Q: Who called you yesterday?

A: *Nobody*.

As *nothing*, *nobody*, *no*, etc. fit into the definition of n-word in (5) in Traditional Dialects of British English, I will refer to them as n-words in the remainder of the paper when considering FRED data but as negative quantifiers in Standard English (as they do not comply with (5a)). In addition, following Giannakidou's (2000: 459) observation that n-words form a heterogeneous class across languages and, hence, "the proper semantic characterization of n-words is an essential ingredient of any analysis of NC", I

will explore what is in an n-word in Traditional Dialects of British English with the aim of accounting for the different NC patterns that are attested in the FRED data.

### *1.2. On the Traditional Dialects of British English corpus data*

FRED is a spoken-language dialect corpus of approximately 2.5 million words that represents the Traditional Dialects of British English from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. FRED, which can be automatically searched with concordance tools, contains transcripts of 30- to 90-minute-long interviews recorded between 1968 and 2000 for oral history projects. It is based on materials collected mainly from Non-Mobile Old Rural Males (NORMs) (Chambers and Trudgill 1998: 30), of whom 75% were over 60 years old when the data were recorded.<sup>5</sup> While this makes this corpus especially suitable for the study of Non-Standard grammatical features such as NC, one has to bear in mind that it circumscribes to Traditional Dialects of British English and that it does not include data that represent more contemporary Non-Standard varieties of English.<sup>6</sup>

That said, let us concentrate on describing the NC patterns that occur in the FRED data. In the literature, NC is often classified into two main types: Strict and Non-Strict (Giannakidou 1997, 2000). In Strict NC languages such as Romanian and Czech, n-words must co-occur with the sentential negative marker in all contexts. Conversely, in Non-Strict NC languages such as Spanish and Italian, only postverbal n-words must co-occur with the sentential negative marker (or with a preverbal n-word); preverbal n-words cannot. Unlike in Romance languages, however, postverbal n-words do not

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www2.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/institut/lskortmann/FRED/> for more information on FRED.

<sup>6</sup> It seems, however, that the patterns of NC attested in FRED largely coincide with those reported in Anderwald (2002) for contemporary Non-Standard British English as reflected in a 5-million-word spoken subcorpus taken from the British National Corpus (the BNC-SpS) (Anderwald 2005: 127). That is, as will be discussed in Section 4 for the NC data in FRED, in the BNC-SpS, negative quantifiers optionally co-occur with the sentential negative marker both when they are postverbal and when they are preverbal, hence qualifying as n-words. Likewise, as in FRED, strings of a preverbal n-word followed by the sentential negative marker are less common than preverbal n-words expressing negation in the absence of the sentential negative marker (Anderwald 2005: 120). *Never* often seems to function as a negator.

necessarily depend on some preverbal negation in Traditional Dialects of British English. This is shown in (7).<sup>7</sup>

- (7) a. But he had *no music* (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)
- b. We had *no horse* or nothing  
(INV\_001. Inverness-shire, Scotland. Highlands)
- c. Mi father had *no work* at all, and couldn't get a job nowhere  
(LAN\_012. Lancashire, North)
- d. Well you got *nothing* (NTT\_013. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)
- e. Had *no canteen* or nothing  
(DEN\_003. Denbighshire, Wales)
- f. Like everywhere else, an easterly wind was *no good* to no one  
(SFK\_030. Suffolk, Southeast)

Likewise, sentences such as (8) are clearly outnumbered by sentences in which a preverbal n-word occurs in the absence of the sentential negative marker.<sup>8</sup> Preverbal n-words can appear with the sentential negative marker only in a subset of Traditional Dialects of British English (see Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix). Besides, as is the case with postverbal n-words, they only do so optionally.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The possibility of having data such as (7) makes Traditional Dialects of British English crucially different from Romance languages with NC. Hence, an analysis other than the one offered here may be needed to account for the nature of n-words and NC in Romance. See, among others, Bosque (1980), Rizzi (1982), Laka (1990), Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman and Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman (1995), Giannakidou (1997, 1998, 1999), Déprez (1997, 2000), Espinal (2000, 2007), Herburger (2001), Swart and Sag (2002), Zeijlstra (2004, 2012) and Penka (2007, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> FRED contains only 32 examples of the kind illustrated in (8), which have been produced by 24 different speakers (see Table 3 in the Appendix). The marginality of NC constructions involving a preverbal n-word and the sentential negative marker is also observed for the BNC-SpS in Anderwald (2005: 120).

<sup>9</sup> The non-categorical nature of NC in Non-Standard English is discussed in Anderwald (2002, 2005), who reports percentages of use of NC across varieties of English that range from 0% to approximately 33% in the BNC-SpS and from 8.8% to 29.2% in an almost completed version of FRED. Furthermore, NC is more widespread in the South and the Midlands than in the North (Anderwald 2005). Actually, for the counties of Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty (Scotland-Highlands), Banffshire, Fife, Midlothian, Peebleshire and West Lothian (Scotland-Lowlands) there are no NC data of any kind, and for the rest of counties in Scotland, the available data reduce to a few sentences, only. There are no NC data for the county of Warwickshire (Midlands), either.



- (8) a. *None* of them couldn't do anything (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)
- b. We *never* didn't know what that meant (LAN\_012. Lancashire, North)
- c. I know this sounds funny, but *nobody* didn't notice it  
(SAL\_023. Shropshire, Midlands)
- d. And beyond that *nobody* couldn't go (GLA\_003. Glamorgan, Wales)
- e. He was seasick all trip and *no-one* didn't see after him  
(SFK\_012. Suffolk, Southeast)
- f. But they, *nobody* didn't know your life after you're dead  
(CON\_004. Cornwall, Southwest)

Furthermore, in some counties of the Midlands (Nottinghamshire and Shropshire), the Southeast (Kent and Suffolk) and the Southwest (Devon and Wiltshire), 7 speakers produced strings with a preverbal n-word followed by *never* instead of the sentential negative marker. Some of these examples are listed in (9).

- (9) a. *Nobody never* went away in them days  
(NTT\_009. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)
- b. But *no one never* interfered with us (KEN\_003. Kent, Southeast)
- c. But *nobody never* saw it (DEV\_001. Devon, Southwest)

In short, an account of NC in Traditional Dialects of British English must be able to explain the facts in (10) and, more generally, address the two main questions in (11).

- (10) a. In all Traditional Dialects of British English that allow NC, postverbal n-words can (but do not have to) co-occur with the sentential negative marker.
- b. In a subset of the Traditional Dialects of British English that allow NC, preverbal n-words may (but do not have to) co-occur with the sentential

negative marker.

- c. In almost all Traditional Dialects of British English that allow NC, *never* can co-occur with another n-word; in a subset of Traditional Dialects of British English that allow NC, *never* can co-occur with the sentential negative marker.

- (11) a. Why are sentences with multiple negative expressions interpreted as having a single-negation reading in Traditional Dialects of British English but not in Standard English?
- b. Why is NC optional in Traditional Dialects of British English?

In the remainder of the paper I show that (11a) can be straightforwardly answered by assuming that the negative operator that is able to express sentential negation is of a different semantic nature in Standard English and in Traditional Dialects of British English in such a way that it can participate in syntactic agreement with negation-dependent elements in the latter, but not in the former. With respect to (11b), I argue that the existence of two lexical variants for n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English (specified either as [iNeg] or as [uNeg]) explains why NC is not obligatory in these Non-Standard varieties. By resorting to lexical variation, I account not only for the difference between Standard English and Traditional Dialects of British English with respect to the (im)possibility of having NC as part of their grammar, but also for an intriguing similarity between the two, namely the possibility that n-words, like negative quantifiers, can express single negation by themselves not just when occurring as fragment answers (as in (6)), but also in simple transitive clauses (as in (7)).

In short, in this paper the syntactic variation observed between non-NC and NC dialects is claimed to reduce to a difference in the featural content of the negative head Neg(ation) (which, as discussed in Section 3, can be merged independently, or as part of

an n-word), as well as to the existence of two kinds of n-words (only one of which is inherently negative). Attributing syntactic variation to differences in the features of functional heads in the Lexicon follows the spirit of Borer (1984) and, more recently, Adger and Smith (2010), and is in line with a microparametric approach to NC (Déprez 2011; Espinal and Tubau to appear). Furthermore, the existence of lexical variation in n-words has already been postulated in diachronic approaches to English negation to account for the change of this language from an NC to a non-NC one (Ingham 2007, Tubau and Ingham 2015).<sup>10</sup>

The paper is organised as follows. In section 2, I outline Zeijlstra's (2004) account of NC as syntactic agreement. In section 3, I discuss the morphology and syntax of negative quantifiers in Standard English and of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English. In section 4, I explain how NC constructions are derived in those Traditional Dialects of British English that allow them. Finally, section 5 concludes the paper.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Ingham (2007) and Tubau and Ingham (2015), English n-words change from NC elements to negative quantifiers in the transition from Middle English to Modern English by developing a competing lexical entry. While in Early Middle English n-words are assumed to be specified as [uNeg], an alternative lexical entry specified as [iNeg] emerges in the Late Middle English period for n-words.

The ambiguous behaviour of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English is similar to the behaviour of n-words in French, a Romance NC-language. As can be seen in (ia), French n-words can express negation by themselves in simple transitive clauses (*ne* being a scope marker of negation rather than the sentential negative marker, which is *pas* 'not'). As shown in (ib), they can also participate in NC, but do not have to, as shown by the fact that (ib) is ambiguous between an NC and a Double Negation (DN) reading (Déprez 1997, 2000).

(i) a. Marie n'a rien mangé  
 Marie NEG.has nothing eaten  
 'Marie ate nothing'  
 b. Personne n'a rien mangé  
 Nobody NEG.has nothing eaten  
 'Nobody ate anything' (NC) / 'Everybody ate something' (DN)

Our analysis of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English predicts that, similarly to what happens in French, two n-words specified with [iNeg] should give rise to DN. Though scarce, data such as (iia, b) exist in the FRED corpus that are clearly not interpreted as NC and, thus, seem to confirm the prediction.

(ii) a. Oh you get nothing for nothing these days (LAN\_020. Lancashire, North)  
 b. No, you got nothing for nothing (DUR\_002. Durham, North)

See Labelle and Espinal (2014) for an account of the development of different kinds of French negative expressions in terms of lexical variants with different feature specifications that are in competition.

## **2. Theoretical approach: n-word licensing as syntactic agreement**

In previous analyses of NC, n-words have been assumed to be negative polarity items (Laka 1990; Giannakidou 1998, 2000), negative quantifiers (Zanuttini 1991, Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, Haegeman 1995, de Swart and Sag 2002), or ambiguous between the two (Herburger 2001). The data that are discussed in this paper, however, are problematic for these three approaches.

While assuming that n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English are negative polarity items that need to be licensed by negation (Laka 1990) or by a non-veridical operator (Giannakidou 1998, 2000) easily accommodates the negation-dependent character of n-words illustrated in (2)-(4), such an account needs to stipulate the existence of an abstract licensing operator to explain that n-words seem to contribute negation by themselves in the examples in (7).

The opposite happens when assuming that n-words are negative quantifiers: while the data in (7) can be straightforwardly accounted for, the data in (2)-(4), where the n-words occur in the scope of another negative element, can only be given an explanation by adding some mechanism that reduces the multiple negative meanings to one (cf. Haegeman and Zanuttini's (1991) Neg-factorisation, or de Swart and Sag's (2002) resumptive quantification).

Finally, while Herburger's (2001) analysis of n-words as ambiguous between negative polarity items and negative quantifiers might seem adequate to account for the data that are discussed in the present paper, it does not explain why n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English are restricted to negative clauses and cannot occur in contexts where polarity items can be licensed (e.g. questions and conditionals). Thus, the ambiguous behaviour of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English needs to be recast in different terms. The possibility that is explored in this paper is

lexical variation in two functional heads, namely Neg(ation) and D(eterminer). Such lexical variation results in (i) the ban on NC in Standard English but not in (Non-Standard) Traditional Dialects of British English, and (ii) two kinds of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English that differ in their negative import.

A fourth approach to NC is that of Zeijlstra (2004), for whom n-words are non-negative indefinites, but not negative polarity items. N-words are assumed to be endowed with an uninterpretable negative feature, [uNeg], which requires them to establish a syntactic dependency with a lexical item bearing an interpretable negative feature, [iNeg]. Such a dependency is mediated by the operation Agree, which deletes uninterpretable features before the derivation is sent to the interfaces (Chomsky 2000, 2001).

Agree is formalised as in (12) in Zeijlstra (2012: 17) to capture NC phenomena. The crucial difference with Chomsky's (2000, 2001) original formulation of Agree is the directionality of the operation: while in (12) –also known as Reverse Agree–  $\alpha$  (the Probe) is c-commanded by  $\beta$  (the Goal), it is the other way around in Chomsky (2000, 2001).<sup>11</sup>

(12) [Reverse] *Agree*:  $\alpha$  can agree with  $\beta$  iff:

- a.  $\alpha$  carries at least one uninterpretable feature and  $\beta$  carries a matching interpretable feature.
- b.  $\beta$  c-commands  $\alpha$ .
- c.  $\beta$  is the closest goal to  $\alpha$ .

(Zeijlstra 2012: 514)

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<sup>11</sup>Additionally, interpretability and valuation are biconditionally related in Chomsky (2000, 2001), in the sense that uninterpretable features are unvalued, whereas interpretable features must be valued. Pesetsky and Torrego (2007), however, argue that if this condition is not assumed, interpretable but unvalued and uninterpretable but valued features should also exist. In this paper, I do not comment on the correlation between interpretability and valuation. Rather, I assume as standard that uninterpretable features need to Agree with a matching interpretable feature to be deleted.

As NC is common among Romance languages, let us illustrate how (Reverse) Agree, (12), results in NC between the sentential negative marker and a postverbal n-word in Italian, for example, where the strikethrough on the [uNeg] feature of *nessuno* ‘nobody / anybody’ in (13b) indicates that the feature has been checked by agreeing with the [iNeg] feature of the sentential negative marker.

(13) a. *Non* ha telefonato a *nessuno*

not has called to n-body

‘He hasn’t called anybody’

b. [NegP [Neg° *non*<sub>[iNeg]</sub>] [<sub>VP</sub> ha telefonato a *nessuno*<sub>[~~uNeg~~]</sub>]

(Zeijlstra 2004: 258)

NC is also possible between a preverbal and a postverbal n-word, as illustrated in (14). In this case, as Zeijlstra (2004) assumes n-words to carry a [uNeg] feature, his analysis involves the triggering of an abstract negative operator, Op<sub>[iNeg]</sub>, which is inserted as a Last Resort to prevent any [uNeg] features from reaching the interfaces unchecked.

(14) a. *Nessuno* ha telefonato a *nessuno*

not has called to n-body

‘Nobody called anybody’

b. [NegP [Op<sub>[iNeg]</sub>]-*Nessuno*<sub>[uNeg]</sub>] [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> ha telefonato a *nessuno*<sub>[uNeg]</sub>]

(Zeijlstra 2004: 259, examples (63) and (64))

The distribution of n-words with respect to the sentential negative marker gives rise to two different kinds of NC, labelled as Strict NC and Non-Strict NC (Giannakidou 1997, 2000). While in Strict NC both preverbal and postverbal n-words must co-occur with the sentential negative marker, in Non-Strict NC only postverbal n-words can co-occur with it. Italian, as illustrated in (13) and (14), displays Non-Strict

NC, whereas Czech, as shown in (15), is a Strict NC language. As shown in (16), the sentential negative marker cannot co-occur with a preverbal n-word in Italian, whereas it cannot be omitted in Czech.

(15) a. Milan *nevidi* *nikoho*

Milan neg.sees n-body

‘Milan doesn’t see anybody’

b. *Nikdo* *nevolá*

n-body neg-calls

‘Nobody is calling’

(Zeijlstra 2004: 250, example (17) and 252, example (23))

(16) a. *Nessuno* (\**non*) ha telefonato a *nessuno*

n-body not has called to n-body

‘Nobody called anybody’

b. *Nikdo* \*(*ne*)volá

n-body neg-calls

‘Nobody is calling’

Zeijlstra (2004) reduces the Strict vs. Non-Strict NC distinction to the feature characterisation of the sentential negative marker: while it is specified as [iNeg] in Non-Strict NC languages such as Italian, it is specified as [uNeg] in Strict NC languages such as Czech. Hence, the Last Resort negative abstract operator that appears in the analysis of (14a) extends to all contexts where n-words occur in Czech, (17), and even to sentences that only contain the sentential negative marker, (18).

(17) a. [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>Op</sub>¬<sub>[iNeg]</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> *nikoho*<sub>[uNeg]</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> Milan [<sub>v°</sub> *nevidi*<sub>[uNeg]</sub>]]]]]

b. [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>Op</sub>¬<sub>[iNeg]</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> *nikdo*<sub>[uNeg]</sub> [<sub>v°</sub> *nevolá*<sub>[uNeg]</sub>]]]]]

(Zeijlstra 2004: 250, example (18) and 252, example (24))

(18) a. Milan *nevidi*

Milan neg.sees

‘Milan doesn’t see’

b. [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>Op</sub>¬<sub>[iNeg]</sub> <sub>Neg<sup>o</sup></sub><sub>[uNeg]</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> Milan *nevidi* <sub>[uNeg]</sub>]]

(Zeijlstra 2004: 249-250, examples (14) and (15))

While the account of NC in Traditional Dialects of British English that is developed in this paper follows Zeijlstra’s (2004) core assumption that NC is syntactic agreement between an element bearing [<sub>iNeg</sub>] and one or more carrying [<sub>uNeg</sub>], extending Zeijlstra’s analysis to Traditional Dialects of British English is problematic in different ways. First, as acknowledged and exemplified (but not further discussed) by Zeijlstra (2004: 145), NC in Non-Standard English can either be Non-Strict, as in (19), or Strict, as in (20) (cf. Ladusaw 1992).

(19) a. John didn’t see *nothing*

Non-Strict NC

‘John saw nothing’

b. *Nobody* has\*(n’t) come

‘Nobody came’

(20) a. John didn’t see *nothing*

Strict NC

‘John saw nothing’

b. *Nobody* hasn’t come

‘Nobody came’

(Zeijlstra 2004: 145, examples (119) and (120))

According to Zeijlstra’s assumptions for Strict and Non-Strict NC languages (cf. (14)-(18) above) the sentential negative marker should be negative in some varieties of Non-Standard English (cf. (19)), but non-negative in some others (cf. (20)). This seems counterintuitive. Furthermore, if n-words are only specified as [<sub>uNeg</sub>] in Non-Standard



English, the abstract negative operator that is allegedly inserted as a Last Resort when no overt negation occurs in the clause would become pervasive in our data since, as has been mentioned in Section 1.2, n-words often occur in the absence of a licensing negation in Traditional Dialects of British English.

In what follows, therefore, I put forward a proposal that can account for the distribution of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English by assuming that two different lexical entries for n-words exist which differ not only in their feature composition ([iNeg] vs. [uNeg]), but also in their internal structure (an existential DP vs. a complex syntactic object involving a Neg head and an existential DP). This determines whether n-words are negation-dependent elements or not and eliminates the need for a Last Resort abstract operator in (the Traditional Dialects of) British English.

In addition, I attribute the difference between Strict and Non-Strict NC (which is only evident in the distribution of preverbal n-words) to a requirement on the checking conditions of n-words (cf. Penka 2007) rather than to the negative vs. non-negative nature of the negative marker, thus avoiding the claim that English has a non-negative negative marker *-n't / not*. The negative marker is assumed to be always negative in English; however, it is also claimed to be subject to lexical variation, which results in the (im)possibility of having NC as part of the grammar of Standard English and Traditional Dialects of British English.

### **3. The morpho-syntax of English *nobody*, *nothing* and the like**

As shown in (1a) above, repeated here as (21a), negative quantifiers such as *nobody*, *nothing*, *no*, etc. express negation in the absence of the sentential negative marker in Standard English. As shown in (21b-d), they cannot yield a single-negation reading if they co-occur with the sentential negative marker or with another negative quantifier.

- (21) a. I saw *nobody*  
 b. I did *not* see *nobody* ( $\neq$  I did not see anybody)  
 c. I didn't see *nobody* ( $\neq$  I didn't see anybody)  
 d. *Nobody* saw *nothing* ( $\neq$  Nobody saw anything)

As illustrated in (22), negative quantifiers can license one or more polarity items that occur in their scope. In addition, they can be used in isolation as fragment answers to questions, as in (23). Such a distribution is taken as evidence for the fact that negative quantifiers introduce an instance of logical negation in Standard English.

- (22) a. *Nobody* said anything.  
 b. *Nobody* said anything to anyone.

- (23) a. Q: Who attended the party?  
 A: *Nobody*.  
 b. Q: What did you see?  
 A: *Nothing*.

With respect to the morphology of negative quantifiers, in this paper I follow the view that they are decomposable into two independent parts that contribute the two crucial aspects of their semantics: one of these two components expresses negation, whereas the other has an existential meaning (Klima 1964; Jacobs 1980; Ladusaw 1992; Rullmann 1995; den Dikken et al. 1997; Sauerland 2000; Penka and Zeijlstra 2010; Iatridou and Sichel 2011; Penka 2011; Zeijlstra 2011; Temmerman 2012; among others). The two parts of the negative quantifier are assumed to enter the derivation separately and to occupy different syntactic positions. It is only at PF that they are assumed to become a single word (Klima 1964; Jacobs 1980; Rullmann 1995; Iatridou and Sichel 2011; Zeijlstra 2011; Temmerman 2012).

More precisely, in line with Penka (2007), Zeijlstra (2011) and Temmerman (2012), I assume that negative quantifiers in Standard English contain a negative operator and an existential quantifier DP. This idea is supported by the Split Scope readings (Potts 2000; Penka 2007, 2011; Zeijlstra 2011) that can possibly emerge in sentences involving negative quantifiers and other scope-taking operators such as modals or intensional verbs, as in (24), as well as in *there*-constructions with post-copular negative quantifier subjects and a modal, as in (25) (Penka 2007, 2011).

In (24), the negative component of the negative quantifier takes scope over the epistemic modal (*can* / *could*), whereas the existential part (*a doubt*, *a mistake*) scopes below the modal. Italics have been used to highlight the relevant lexical items involved in the Split Scope reading.

(24) a. There *can* be *no* doubt.

‘It is not possible that there is a doubt.’  $\neg > \text{can} > \exists$

b. Yet here it was, a letter, addressed so plainly there *could* be *no* mistake.

‘It was not possible that there was a mistake.’  $\neg > \text{can} > \exists$

(From Rowling, J. K. (1997) *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*.

Bloomsbury, London: 42)

Penka (2007: 172)

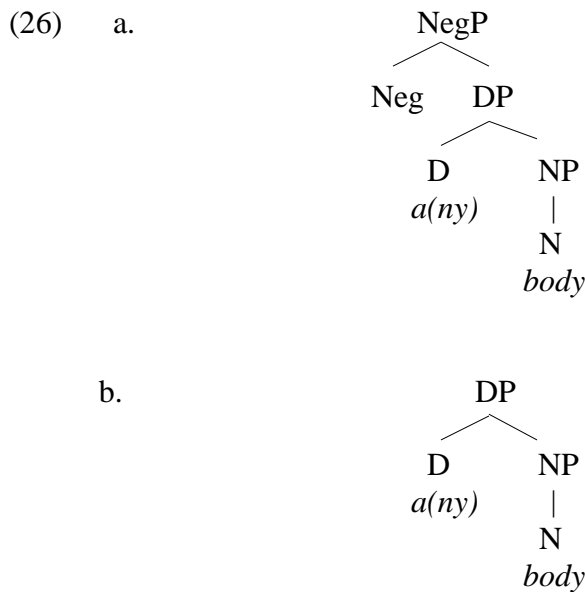
In a *there*-construction with a modal such as (25), the post-copular negative quantifier subject should have narrow scope with respect to the modal (i.e., need  $> \neg\exists$ ), as this is how post-copular subjects usually behave in *there*-constructions in English (Milsark 1977; Heim 1987). However, in (25), the most accessible reading is one where negation takes scope over the modal, stranding the existential behind (i.e.,  $\neg > \text{need} > \exists$ , \* need  $> \neg\exists$ ). Again, this is evidence in favour of decomposing negative quantifiers into two independent parts.

(25) [This country is very rich indeed and has enormous resources. If this House and this Government wanted to, resources could be found to provide a house for everybody in this country.]

There *need* be *nobody* sleeping on the streets; there *need* be *no* homelessness and *no* evictions because people cannot meet the kind of rents being demanded.

Penka (2007: 172)

In this paper, Standard English negative quantifiers are assumed to be complex syntactic objects (Zeijlstra 2011) with the internal structure in (26a) (cf. Temmerman 2012).<sup>12</sup> Any-polarity items, by contrast, are the non-negated version of (26a) (i.e., (26b)).



<sup>12</sup> Zeijlstra (2011) claims English *nobody*, *nothing* and the like to be the Spell-Out of an abstract negative operator and a sister indefinite.

In Temmerman (2012), it is assumed that NegP dominates an existential DP (which is selected by the VP) but that it is itself not dominated by the VP. That is, the existential DP has two mother nodes (NegP and VP) as the result of Parallel Merge (Citko 2005, 2011; de Vries 2005, 2009; van Riemsdijk 2006), which is assumed to be available in natural languages alongside External and Internal Merge (Chomsky 2001). This allows NegP to have different Spell-Outs at PF (as the sentential negative marker *not*, or as part of the negative quantifier). According to Temmerman (2012: 137, fn. 107), however, the sentential negative marker ‘-n’t’, which is the most common in non-standard English (Zeijlstra 2004: 144), is the Spell-Out of a polarity head that is part of a structure that does not involve multidominance. Hence, in this paper I do not incorporate Parallel Merge or multidominance and confine myself to a more conservative view of phrase structure.

Let us start by considering the semantics of the negative head, Neg. As discussed in Temmerman (2012: 134 and ff.), Neg can either be adjacent to an existential DP, as in (27a, b)), or merge independently and be Spelled-Out as the sentential negative marker *-n't*, as in (28).

(27) a. I saw *nobody*.

b. I did *not* see anybody.

(28) I *didn't* see anybody.

That is, the two sentences in (27a, b) are claimed to be structurally identical and differ only in their Spell-Out at PF: while Neg and the existential DP (which are adjacent after transfer and linearization at PF) may undergo a postsyntactic operation known as Fusion Under Adjacency and become a single lexical item (e.g. *nobody*, in (27a)), they do not have to (e.g. *not...anybody*, in (27b)). For (28), Temmerman assumes that *-n't* is the Spell-Out of a polarity head above TP.

In short, negative quantifiers in Standard English are assumed to enter the derivation as existential quantifiers (i.e., as DPs), alongside an independent negative operator, Neg. This can merge with the existential DP, or independently from it higher up in the structure. While the merge of Neg and the existential DP and subsequent Fusion Under Adjacency results in a negative quantifier, (27a), merge of Neg in the TP domain results in a discontinuous strategy involving the sentential negative marker *-n't* and an *any*-polarity item, (28).

As our data show that Neg in Standard English negates a clause but cannot participate in NC constructions (i.e., the sentential negative marker and negative quantifiers such as *nobody*, *nothing* and the like cannot co-occur without yielding a DN reading), it is plausible to extend Zeijlstra's (2009) analysis for the French negator *pas* 'not' to English. *Pas* and Standard English Neg show a similar behaviour: they cannot

co-occur with n-words / negative quantifiers under a single negation reading. Zeijlstra accounts for this fact by arguing that *pas* is negative semantically, but not morpho-syntactically. That is, *pas* introduces an instance of logical negation, but it does not carry any syntactic feature that allows it to participate in the Agree relation that NC requires. In Standard English, therefore, Neg can be assumed to contribute negation to the clause without being specified as [iNeg]. In Traditional Dialects of British English that allow NC, however, Neg is taken to carry an [iNeg] feature, so that an Agree relation between Neg and one or more lexical items carrying a [uNeg] feature can be established.

As has been shown in earlier sections, n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English can be dependent on a licensing negation, but also occur in the absence of another negative element that licenses them, with the sentence still being interpreted as negative. Thus, n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English can carry a [uNeg] feature (cf. Zeijlstra 2004) when they are negation-dependent elements, but they can also be specified as [iNeg] when they contribute negation on their own.<sup>13</sup> The absence of an [iNeg] feature in Neg in Standard English and its presence in Traditional Dialects of British English accounts for the impossibility of having NC in the former but not in the latter, hence providing an answer to the question in (11a).

As further developed in the next section, the existence of two lexical variants for n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English (namely an inherently negative variant, specified as [iNeg] vs. a non-negative –but negation-dependent– variant

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<sup>13</sup> Following Zeijlstra (2011: 112), it is assumed that both Standard English negative quantifiers and n-words specified as [iNeg] in Traditional Dialects of British English can undergo QR to an IP-adjoined position when required for scope reasons (e.g. when negative quantifiers / negative n-words interact with modals). The Split Scope readings of negative quantifiers occurring with modal verbs illustrated in (24) and (25) emerge when the negative operator that is part of the structure of the negative quantifier / negative n-word scopes above the modal verb, but the existential DP reconstructs to its base-generated position below the modal (Zeijlstra 2011).

specified as [uNeg]) allows us not only to give an answer to the question of why NC is optional in these varieties, ((11b) above), but also to account for the distribution of n-words attested in the FRED data (the observations in (10a-c) above).

#### 4. Explaining NC in Traditional Dialects of British English

In the following sections, I put forward a syntactic analysis of the NC patterns that are attested in different Traditional Dialects of British English. While Section 4.1 is devoted to the distribution of postverbal n-words, in Section 4.2 I account for the distribution of preverbal n-words. Section 4.3 briefly discusses the particular case of *never*.

##### 4.1. The distribution of postverbal n-words

Like negative quantifiers in Standard English, postverbal n-words can express sentential negation by themselves in Traditional Dialects of British English. This is shown in the examples in (7a-f), repeated here as (29a-f) for convenience.

- (29) a. But he had *no music* (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)
- b. We had *no horse* or nothing  
(INV\_001. Inverness-shire, Scotland. Highlands)
- c. Mi father had *no work* at all, and couldn't get a job nowhere  
(LAN\_012. Lancashire, North)
- d. Well you got *nothing* (NTT\_013. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)
- e. Had *no canteen* or nothing  
(DEN\_003. Denbighshire, Wales)
- f. Like everywhere else, an easterly wind was *no good* to no one  
(SFK\_030. Suffolk, Southeast)

However, unlike what is the case in Standard English, postverbal n-words can also co-occur with other n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English, as shown in (7f),

repeated here as (29f). As shown in most of the examples in (2) above, repeated below as (30), n-words can also co-occur with the sentential negative marker *-n't* (and also, less commonly, with *not*).

The italicised n-words in (30) can convey sentential negation by themselves because they are the combination of the Neg head that is used to express sentential negation and an existential DP (cf. Temmerman 2012). Like in Standard English, Neg has flexible merging possibilities in Traditional Dialects of British English: it can merge with an existential DP, resulting in an n-word that is not dependent on any other instance of negation (cf. Zeijlstra 2011, Temmerman 2012), or it can merge in the TP domain and be Spelled-Out as *-n't* or *not* (cf. Matushansky 2006; Temmerman 2012). Unlike in Standard English, however, Neg carries a formal feature [iNeg] in Traditional Dialects of British English, which allows it to participate in a syntactic agreement dependency such as NC.

Examples such as (30) indicate that n-words are often dependent lexical items in Traditional Dialects of British English, nonetheless, as n-words occur under the scope of the sentential negative marker.

- (30) a. I didn't say *nothing* (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)
- b. So it didn't cost *nothing* (IOM\_002. Isle of Man)
- c. Well, you couldnae do *nothing* at the market day  
(PER\_003. Perthshire, Scotland. Lowlands)
- d. But I didn't get *no* dole, because I couldn't get *none*  
(LAN\_005. Lancashire, North)
- e. You couldn't do *no papers nor nothing*  
(NTT\_014. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)
- f. And beyond that *nobody* couldn't go (GLA\_003. Glamorgan, Wales)



- g. I mean, you shoot a net on the Dogger Bank now and you *wun't* get *nothing* –only a bit of wreck!

(SFK\_038. Suffolk, Southeast)

- h. You *didn't* have *nobody* to learn you in they days

(SOM\_036. Somerset, Southwest)

To explain such a dependency, it is necessary to entertain the idea that n-words in these Non-Standard varieties carry a [uNeg] feature (Tubau to appear) –as has been argued to be the case for n-words in Romance (Zeijlstra 2004)– and serve as Probes searching for a Goal with a matching interpretable feature, [iNeg], with which they Agree.

It seems, therefore, that two lexical entries exist for n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English: these are either (i) the combination of Neg (specified with an [iNeg] feature) and an existential DP –which results in an n-word that expresses negation by itself, or (ii) an existential DP endowed with a [uNeg] feature that needs to Agree with an element with an [iNeg] feature. As summarised in Table 1, inherently negative n-words are referred to as *Type I n-words*, whereas non-negative dependent n-words are referred to as *Type II n-words*.

		Examples
<b>N-word</b>	<i>Type I:</i> Neg <sub>[iNeg]</sub> + $\exists$ = n-word <sub>[iNeg]</sub>	<i>no</i> music in (29a), <i>nothing</i> in (29d)
	<i>Type II:</i> $\exists$ <sub>[uNeg]</sub> = n-word <sub>[uNeg]</sub>	<i>nothing</i> in (2a-c), <i>nobody</i> in (2f), (2h)

Table 1. Lexical variation in n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English

Given that a Neg head is necessary for a sentence to be interpreted as negative in English (both in the Standard and Non-Standard varieties), the Numeration for a clause that will ultimately be assigned a single-negation reading will contain only one Neg head. Such head is assumed to be specified as [iNeg] in Traditional Dialects of British English that allow NC. Depending on where the Neg head merges, it will be Spelled-

Out either as part of an inherently negative n-word (Type I), or as an independent negative marker (cf. Temmerman 2012). In both cases, however, the Neg head specified as [iNeg] will be able to negate the clause. Negation-dependent n-words (Type II) are assumed to be specified as [uNeg].

Table 2 summarises the differences between Standard English and Traditional Dialects of British English with respect to the (im)possibility of having NC as part of their grammar, the nature of the Neg head and the nature of lexical items such as *nobody*, *nothing*, etc.

	Standard English	Traditional Dialects of British English
<b>Negative Concord?</b>	No	Yes
<b>Neg head</b>	Semantic operator (no [iNeg] feature)	Operator with a syntactic feature [iNeg]
<b><i>Nobody</i>, <i>nothing</i>, etc.</b>	Negative quantifiers	Negative n-words ( <i>Type I</i> : Neg head specified [iNeg] + $\exists$ ) <sup>14</sup>
		Non-negative n-words ( <i>Type II</i> : specified as [uNeg])

Table 2. Summary of differences between Standard English and Traditional Dialects of British English related to the expression of negation

Typical cases of NC involving a sentential negative marker and a postverbal n-word (e.g. (2) / (30)) can be analysed as containing a negative marker specified as [iNeg] which Agrees with one or more n-words of Type II, specified as [uNeg] (see

<sup>14</sup> Notice that Type I n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English and Standard English negative quantifiers only diverge with respect to the presence vs. absence of a syntactic feature [iNeg], which makes it possible for n-words to participate in NC but impossible for negative quantifiers.

Table 1). For those cases where two postverbal n-words occur (e.g., (30e)), a preverbal [iNeg] feature is assumed to engage in Multiple Agree with the lower [uNeg] features (cf. Zeijlstra 2004: 249, Tubau to appear).

Notice that if the Numeration for a given negative clause contains a Neg head and an existential DP not specified as [uNeg], two different Spell-Outs are possible: either Neg merges with the existential DP yielding an inherently negative n-word of Type I, as in (31a), or Neg merges independently in the TP domain, with the existential DP being Spelled-Out as an *any*-form, as in (31b). In (31a), the Type I n-word is assumed to move to the edge of the vP so that its [iNeg] feature can take scope over the verb and negation is interpreted as sentential (cf. Acquaviva 1997, Penka 2007).

(31) a. It cost *nothing*.

b. I didn't cost *anything*.


In short, in this section I have argued that because postverbal n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English can express sentential negation by themselves, but also co-occur with the sentential negative marker and other postverbal n-words, two lexical entries for n-words need to be postulated in these Non-Standard varieties of English. Type I n-words are complex syntactic objects combining a negative head, Neg, specified with an [iNeg] feature (Neg<sub>[iNeg]</sub>) and an existential quantifier DP (cf. Zeijlstra 2011), whereas Type II n-words are existential quantifiers specified as [uNeg]. The syntactic dependency between the sentential negative marker and one or more Type II n-words is established by means of Agree (à la Zeijlstra 2004, 2012) between an [iNeg] and one or more [uNeg] features. The existence of two competing lexical variants which diverge in the (un)interpretability of their [Neg] feature explains why, as seen in the FRED data, n-words are not always negation-dependent lexical items in Traditional Dialects of British English.

#### 4.2. The distribution of preverbal n-words

Preverbal n-words most often occur in the absence of the sentential negative marker in Traditional Dialects of British English where NC is attested, and it is possible for them to co-occur with other postverbal n-words. Leaving aside the case of *never*, which is briefly addressed in Section 4.3, notice that the syntax of those (few) cases where a subject and an object n-word co-occur –here illustrated with the example in (32)– can also be analysed as involving (Reverse) Agree between an [iNeg] and a [uNeg] feature, as shown in (33).

(32) *Nobody* said *nothing* to him (CON\_004. Cornwall, Southwest)

(33) [<sub>VP</sub> [<sub>NegP</sub> [<sub>Neg</sub> <sup>¬</sup>[iNeg]] [<sub>DP</sub> [<sub>D</sub> a] [<sub>NP</sub> [<sub>N</sub> body]]]] [<sub>v'</sub> [<sub>v</sub> said] [<sub>DP</sub> nothing<sub>[uNeg]</sub> ...]


  
 Agree

A question arises, at this point, in relation to the possible combinations of the negative operator (Neg<sub>[iNeg]</sub>) and one or more existential quantifiers ( $\exists$  or  $\exists_{[uNeg]}$ ) that may result in the attested data. In what follows, I will show that (32) can be assumed to contain a Neg operator specified as [iNeg], an existential quantifier DP ( $\exists$ ), and an existential quantifier DP carrying a [uNeg] feature ( $\exists_{[uNeg]}$ ) rather than any of the three other options in (34) below.

(34) a. No Neg head specified as [iNeg] and two existential DPs specified as [uNeg]:

$\exists_{[uNeg]} + \exists_{[uNeg]}$

b. A Neg head specified as [iNeg] and two existential DPs: Neg<sub>[iNeg]</sub> +  $\exists$  +  $\exists$

c. A Neg head specified as [iNeg] and two existential DPs specified as [uNeg]:

Neg<sub>[iNeg]</sub> +  $\exists_{[uNeg]}$  +  $\exists_{[uNeg]}$

There are two reasons for assuming that (32) involves a Neg operator specified as [iNeg], an existential quantifier DP and an existential quantifier DP specified as [uNeg].

The first one is conceptual: for a sentence to be negative in Traditional Dialects of British English, an [iNeg] feature must be in the Numeration and Spelled-Out either as the sentential negative marker, or as part of an n-word of Type I. Hence, if there is no sentential negative marker in (32), then one of the two n-words must carry the [iNeg] feature that renders the sentence negative. A Last Resort operator,  $Op_{[iNeg]}$ , (cf. Zeijlstra 2004) that checks the [uNeg] features of the two n-words in (34a) would be less economical than having a Type I n-word specified as [iNeg].

Second, the combinations in (34b, c) do not yield the correct Spell-Out (i.e., they do not result in (32)). According to the account put forward so far, (34b) would yield the Spell-Out in (35), as the negative head  $Neg_{[iNeg]}$  would merge with the subject existential DP, thus forming an n-word of Type I that can semantically license the object existential DP, Spelled-Out as an *any*-indefinite.<sup>15</sup>

(35) *Nobody* said *anything* to him.

Conversely, (34c) would result in (36), as the negative head  $Neg_{[iNeg]}$  would merge in the TP domain, hence being Spelled-Out as *-n't*. Both the subject and the object n-words are of Type II and carry a [uNeg] feature (for there is only one [iNeg] feature in a sentence that expresses sentential negation). As the subject, whose final Spell-Out position is {Spec, TP}, outscopes the Neg head, the Agree relation between the two would have to take place in the  $\nu P$  domain, prior to the movement of the subject from {Spec,  $\nu P$ } to {Spec, TP}.

(36) *Nobody* didn't say *nothing*.

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<sup>15</sup> The reader may ask why  $Neg_{[iNeg]}$  cannot merge with the object  $\exists$ , thus yielding the Spell-Out in (i):

(i) Anybody said nothing to him

Since *any*-indefinites are assumed to be existential quantifiers with no negative formal features, their licensing is not syntactic, but semantic. Hence, they need to be in the scope of a negative operator at the moment of Spell-Out (Giannakidou 1998; den Dikken et al. 2000, among others). Alternatively, the principle of Neg-First (Jespersen 1924; Horn 1989) would also favour merge of  $Neg_{[iNeg]}$  with the structurally highest first-merged  $\exists$ .

Notice that in some Traditional Dialects of British English (see Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix), preverbal n-words can (optionally) co-occur with the sentential negative marker (as for example in (37)), and, therefore, data such as (36) are actually attested in the FRED corpus.

(37) Oh aye, *nobody* didn't want it (SOM\_031. Somerset, Southwest)

It seems, therefore, that a difference exists across Traditional Dialects of British English with respect to whether a Type II n-word (specified as [uNeg]) can be licensed by negation when it sits in {Spec,  $\nu$ P}, its base-generated position, or not. While in some dialects this is possible and, hence, preverbal n-words can co-occur with the sentential negative marker, as in (37)), in other dialects the requirement exists that Type II n-words be c-commanded by negation in their final Spell-Out position (cf. Penka's 2007 LF condition on negative indefinites). Unlike in Zeijlstra's (2004) account, the negative marker in (37) is not assumed to be non-negative, and no Last Resort Op<sub>[iNeg]</sub> needs to be inserted to rescue the derivation in those dialects that can have (37) (but also (32)) as part of their grammar.

To conclude this section, let us highlight that if Type I (specified as [iNeg]) and Type II (specified as [uNeg]) n-words are in real competition, one would expect (32) to be able to contain a Type I n-word in object position and a Type II in subject position. In order to express sentential negation, the Type I n-word (specified as [iNeg]) would raise to a  $\nu$ P-adjoined position at the edge of the  $\nu$ P. From there, it could license the [uNeg] feature of the subject Type II n-word sitting in {Spec,  $\nu$ P} before it moved to {Spec, TP}. This would result in a convergent derivation in those dialects that allow Type II n-words to be licensed in a non-final Spell-Out position (but it would crash in those that do not).

#### 4.3. A very brief note on never

As reported in Tottie (1991), Beal (1993), Cheshire, Edwards and Whittle (1993), Cheshire (1998), Anderwald (2002, 2005), Beal and Corrigan (2005) and Lucas and Willis (2012), *never* seems to be closer to a negator than to a negative quantifier. It is not surprising, therefore, that, as illustrated in the examples in (38), it occurs as a preverbal element in NC constructions in more than half of the transcripts where NC has been attested (see Table 3 in the Appendix).

- (38) a. We *never* heard about it *nor nothing* (HEB\_018. Outer Hebrides)  
b. We *never* had *no* sword dance (IOM\_002. Isle of Man)  
c. Oh, the farmer *never* said *nothing* to you about that  
(ANS\_001. Angus, Scotland. Lowlands)  
d. No, *never* had *no* doctors (LAN\_002. Lancashire, North)  
e. No they *never* had *no* babies (NTT\_012. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)  
f. He *never* paid *no* dole (DEN\_004. Denbighshire, Wales)  
g. I said, I *never* been in *no* trouble (LND\_001. London, Southeast)  
h. Until the phone went, I *never* knew *nothing* at all about it  
(DEV\_004. Devon, Southwest)

Likewise, data such as (39) show that *never* can also co-occur with a subject n-word, as was also the case for the sentential negative marker in (37) above.

- (39) a. *Nobody never* went away in them days  
(NTT\_009. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)  
b. *No one never* interfered with down on the store  
(SFK\_031. Suffolk, Southeast)  
c. And *nobody'd never* ask her any questions  
(WIL\_010. Wiltshire, Southwest)

However, data such as (40) show that *never* also occurs in the scope of the sentential negative marker, thus indicating that it can be a dependent element that needs to be licensed by negation.

- (40) a. ...if he didn't *never* sell (LAN\_003. Lancashire, North)  
 b. But I couldn't *never* see it (SFK\_014. Suffolk, Southeast)  
 c. ...because that won't *never* cure a horse  
 (WIL\_024. Wiltshire, Southwest)

In short, the data in (38)-(40) seem to support the existence of two lexical entries for *never*, as well. While the fact that the sentences in (40) are interpreted as expressing single negation rather than DN makes it clear that *never* is of Type II (specified as [uNeg]) in these sentences, in (38) *never* is of Type I (i.e., specified as [iNeg]). In (39), by contrast, *never* can be of Type I (i.e., negative) in those dialects that allow Type II n-words to occur in subject position and have their [uNeg] feature checked before reaching their final Spell-Out position in {Spec, TP}; in those dialects that do not, *never* is necessarily of Type II, whereas the subject n-word is of Type I. But, of course, a Type II *never* in (39) is also an option in dialects that allow [uNeg] to be c-commanded in a non-final Spell-Out position. Thus, *never* occurs much more frequently than *-n't* after preverbal n-words across dialects.

Two circumstances related to the morpho-syntax of *never* can possibly be responsible for the negator-like flavour that it has been reported to have in different varieties of English. First, *never* is an adverb and, as such, it can be assumed to be a vP-adjunct (cf. Pollock 1989; Iatridou 1990; Johnson 1991; Bowers 1993; among others). This is a position with scope over the verb and, hence, suitable for the interpretation of negation as sentential. Second, *never* is an n-word (cf. (40)) and, therefore, it is subject to the lexical variation described in this paper. That is, *never* can be a Type I n-word



specified as [iNeg] and base-generated in a position from where it can negate the event expressed by the verb. These two properties make it close to a negator while still being an n-word.

## 5. Conclusions

In this paper, I have discussed the syntax of the different kinds of NC (and non-NC) patterns attested in Traditional Dialects of British English from a Minimalist perspective. In line with both classical and more recent studies on negative indefinites, I have assumed Standard English negative quantifiers to be decomposable into a negative operator and an existential quantifier DP. A lexical difference associated with the nature of the negative head Neg has been held responsible for the distinction between negative quantifiers in Standard English (which cannot co-occur with the sentential negative marker or with another negative quantifier without yielding a DN reading) and n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English (which can occur in NC constructions but, crucially, do not have to).

It has been claimed that the negative operator that sits in the Neg head is a semantic operator that cannot check a [uNeg] feature by means of Agree in Standard English, whereas it carries an interpretable negative feature, [iNeg], in Traditional Dialects of British English, where NC is generally possible. In both cases, I have argued that the negative operator has to scope above  $\nu$  for negation to be interpreted as sentential.

By analysing the different patterns of NC attested in the Non-Standard English data that have been taken from the FRED corpus, I have claimed that two different lexical entries for n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English must exist. This view has also been defended in diachronic studies of English negation to account for the

fact that NC became impossible in the transition from Middle English to Modern English in the varieties that later conformed the Standard. The dialectal data that we have considered in this paper show us what the language looks like when n-words are turning into non-negation-dependent elements.

While the existence of Type I n-words (specified with an [iNeg] feature) allows us to account for the fact that NC is optional in Traditional Dialects of British English (as both preverbal and postverbal n-words can express negation on their own by virtue of containing an interpretable negative feature), the fact that n-words can co-occur with other n-words as well as with the sentential negative marker in Traditional Dialects of British English indicates that they are sometimes negation-dependent elements. Hence, I have argued in favour of Type I n-words (specified as [iNeg]) being in competition with Type II n-words (which are the Spell-Out of an existential quantifier specified with a [uNeg] feature). For the derivation not to crash, Type II n-words need to have their [uNeg] feature checked by a matching interpretable negative feature [iNeg] –either carried by the sentential negative marker, or carried by a Type I n-word– by means of Agree. Agree between [iNeg] and [uNeg] ensures a single-negation reading of NC constructions in Traditional Dialects of British English.

Crucially, I have discussed the fact that if the two lexical entries are in real competition, they should be able to occur in the same contexts. While the data show that this is indeed the case in postverbal position, where n-words can be found expressing negation by themselves but also agreeing with a negative head higher up in the structure, in preverbal position a restriction seems to exist in most dialects that prevents negation-dependent Type II n-words to co-occur with the sentential negative marker (or with Type I *never*). I have argued that this is because for such a configuration to converge, checking of the [uNeg] feature of the preverbal Type II n-word must take

place prior to its movement to {Spec, TP}, and this is not allowed in every dialect. Such a constraint on feature-checking results in some Traditional Dialects of British English featuring Strict NC (those that allow feature-checking to operate on a copy that will not be Spelled-Out) and others featuring Non-Strict NC (those that require feature-checking to take place between a licensor and the copy that will be Spelled-Out). Hence, it is not necessary to base the Strict vs. Non-Strict NC distinction on the negative marker being non-negative in certain Traditional Dialects of British English but not in others (which clearly goes against the speakers' intuitions) and triggering the insertion of an abstract negative operator that conveys sentential negation but is not phonologically realised.

Last but not least, I have also briefly discussed the distribution of *never*, which, despite being often described as a negator in the literature, also behaves as an n-word according to our data from FRED. I have argued that the lexical variation that allows n-words (and, hence, *never*) to be inherently negative in Traditional Dialects of British English together with the fact that *never* occupies an adjunct position with scope over the verb crucially contribute to motivating the observation that it is close to a sentential negator.

To finish off, let us return to the two central questions that I intended to answer in this paper, namely (i) why sentences with multiple negative expressions are given a single-negation reading in Traditional Dialects of British English but not in Standard English, and (ii) why NC is optional in Traditional Dialects of British English. I have argued that the answer to both is to be found in the existence of lexical variation in some functional heads, namely Neg and D. While NC is possible in Traditional Dialects of British English because the Neg head that is used to express sentential negation carries an interpretable negative feature that can Agree with an uninterpretable matching feature, NC is not possible in Standard English because Neg is a truly semantic operator

that cannot check syntactic features. Likewise, the existence of lexical competing variants of n-words in Traditional Dialects of British English (a complex syntactic object with an [iNeg] feature vs. an existential DP with a [uNeg] feature) allows us to account for the otherwise puzzling optionality of NC in these Non-Standard varieties of English. All in all, the present analysis attributes remarkable differences in the syntax of negation in Standard and Non-Standard dialects of English to minimal feature differences in a few selected functional heads.

## Appendix

Table 1. *List of dialect areas and counties with NC data in the FRED corpus*

<b>Hebrides (HEB)</b>	
<b>Isle of Man (MAN)</b>	
<b>Scotland-Lowlands</b>	Angus (ANS)
	Dumfriesshire (DFS)
	Kincardineshire (KCD)
	Kinrosshire (KRS)
	Perthshire (PER)
	Selkirkshire (SEL)
<b>North</b>	Durham (DUR)
	Lancashire (LAN)
	Northumberland (NBL)
	Westmorland (WES)
	Yorkshire (YKS)
<b>Midlands</b>	Leicestershire (LEI)
	Nottinghamshire (NTT)
	Shropshire (SAL)
<b>Wales</b>	Denbighshire (DEN)
	Glamorgan (GLA)
<b>Southeast</b>	Kent (KEN)
	London (LND)
	Middlesex (MDX)
	Suffolk (SFK)
<b>Southwest</b>	Cornwall (CON)
	Devon (DEV)
	Oxfordshire (OXF)
	Somerset (SOM)
	Wiltshire (WIL)

Table 2. *NC patterns across Traditional Dialects of British English in FRED*

	1. -n' t + V + n-w	2. never + V + n-w	3. n-w + -n' t + V	4. n-w + V + n-w	5. n-w + never + V	
HEB	X	X	X			<b>Hebrides</b>
MAN	X	X				<b>Isle of Man</b>
ANS	X	X				<b>Scotland-Lowlands</b>
DFS		X				
ELN	X	X				
KCD	X	X				
PER	X	X				
SEL	X					
DUR	X	X				<b>North</b>
LAN	X	X	X			
NBL	X	X				
WES	X	X				
YKS	X	X				
LEI	X					<b>Midlands</b>
NTT	X	X		X	X	
SAL	X	X	X	X	X	

**n-w**: n-word  
**V**: verb  
 ≤ 5 examples (dark grey)  
 ≤ 10 examples (light grey)

DEN	X	X	X			Wales
GLA	X	X	X			
KEN	X	X	X	X	X	Southeast
LND	X	X				
MDX	X	X				
SFK	X	X	X	X	X	Southwest
CON	X	X	X	X		
DEV	X	X			X	
OXF	X	X	X			
SOM	X	X	X			
WIL	X	X	X		X	

Table 3. *NC patterns across Traditional Dialects of British English (per transcript)*

	1. -n' t. + V + n-w	2. never + V + n-w	3. n-w + -n' t + V	4. n-w + V + n-w	5. n-w + never + V	
HEB_006	X					Hebrides
HEB_018	X	X	X (1)			
HEB_030	X					
HEB_033	X					Isle of Man
IOM_001	X	X				
IOM_002	X	X				Scotland-Lowlands
ANS_001		X				
ANS_003		X				
ANS_004	X					
DFS_001		X				
ELN_012	X	X				
KCD_001	X	X				
PER_003	X	X				
SEL_002	X					
DUR_001	X					North
DUR_003	X	X				
LAN_002	X	X				
LAN_003	X (w. never)					
LAN_004	X					
LAN_005	X	X				
LAN_006	X					
LAN_008	X					
LAN_012	X		X (w. never)			
LAN_020	X	X				
NBL_006	X	X				
NBL_007	X					
NBL_008	X	X				
WES_004	X					
WES_014		X				
WES_015		X				
WES_017		X				
YKS_002	X					
YKS_003		X				
YKS_004		X				
YKS_005	X	X				
YKS_007	X					
YKS_009	X					
YKS_010	X	X				
YKS_011	X					
LEI_001	X					Midlands
LEI_002	X					
NTT_001	X	X				
NTT_002	X					

NTT_003		X				
NTT_005	X	X		X (2)		
NTT_006	X	X				
NTT_007	X					
NTT_008	X					
NTT_009	X	X			X (2)	
NTT_010	X					
NTT_012	X	X				
NTT_013	X	X				
NTT_014	X	X				
NTT_015	X					
NTT_016	X	X				
SAL_008		X				
SAL_011	X					
SAL_017	X					
SAL_018	X	X				
SAL_019		X				
SAL_020	X					
SAL_023	X		X (1)			
SAL_024	X	X				
SAL_025	X					
SAL_027				X (1)		
SAL_036	X	X				
SAL_038	X	X				
SAL_039		X			X (1)	
DEN_003	X					
DEN_004	X	X	X (1)			
GLA_001	X	X				
GLA_002	X					
GLA_003	X		X (1)			
GLA_005	X					
KEN_001	X					
KEN_002	X	X		X (1)		
KEN_003	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X			X (1)	
KEN_004, KEN_010, KEN_011 (same speaker)	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X	X (4)		X (1)	
KEN_005	X	X	X (1)			
KEN_006	X	X				
KEN_007	X	X				
KEN_008	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
KEN_009	X	X				
LND_001	X	X				
LND_002	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					
LND_003	X	X				
LND_004	X	X				
LND_005	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
LND_011	X	X				
LND_033	X					
MDX_002	X	X				
SFK_001	X	X				
SFK_002	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					
SFK_003	X	X				
SFK_004	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					
SFK_005	X	X	X (1)			
SFK_006	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
SFK_007	X	X				
SFK_008	X					
SFK_009	X	X				
SFK_010	X	X				
SFK_011	X	X				
SFK_012	X	X	X (1)			
SFK_013	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				

**Wales**

**Southeast**

SFK_014	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
SFK_015	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X	X (1)			
SFK_016	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
SFK_017		X				
SFK_018	X	X	X (1)			
SFK_020	X	X				
SFK_021	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					
SFK_022	X	X				
SFK_023	X					
SFK_024	X	X				
SFK_025	X	X				
SFK_026	X	X				
SFK_027	X	X				
SFK_028	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
SFK_029	X	X				
SFK_030	X	X				
SFK_031	X	X	X (1)		X (1)	
SFK_032	X	X				
SFK_033	X	X				
SFK_034	X	X				
SFK_035	X	X				
SFK_036	X	X				
SFK_037	X	X				
SFK_038	X	X				
SFK_039	X	X				
CON_001	X	X				
CON_002	X	X				
CON_003	X	X		X (1)		
CON_004	X		X (2)	X (1)		
CON_005	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X	X (2)			
CON_006	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
CON_009	X	X				
CON_010	X					
CON_011	X					
DEV_001	X	X			X (1)	
DEV_002	X	X				
DEV_003					X (1)	
DEV_004		X				
DEV_005	X					
DEV_006	X					
DEV_007	X	X				
DEV_008	X	X				
DEV_009	X					
DEV_010	X					
DEV_011	X	X				
OXF_001	X		X (1)			
OXF_002	X	X				
SOM_001		X				
SOM_002	X	X				
SOM_003	X					
SOM_004	X	X				
SOM_005	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X	X (1)			
SOM_006	X					
SOM_007	X		X (w. <i>never</i> )			
SOM_009	X		X (1)			
SOM_010	X	X				
SOM_012	X	X				
SOM_013	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
SOM_014	X	X				
SOM_016	X	X				
SOM_017	X					
SOM_018	X	X				

## Southwest



SOM_020	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					
SOM_022	X					
SOM_023		X				
SOM_024	X					
SOM_025	X	X				
SOM_027	X					
SOM_028	X	X	X (1)			
SOM_029	X	X				
SOM_030	X	X				
SOM_031	X	X	X (1)			
SOM_032	X	X	X (2)			
SOM_034	X					
SOM_035	X	X				
SOM_036	X	X	X (1)			
WIL_001	X	X				
WIL_002	X					
WIL_003	X	X	X (1)			
WIL_004	X					
WIL_005	X	X				
WIL_006	X	X				
WIL_007	X					
WIL_008	X		X (1)			
WIL_009	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )		X (1)			
WIL_010	X		X (1)		X (1)	
WIL_011	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )		X (1)			
WIL_012	X					
WIL_017	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )	X				
WIL_018	X	X	X (1)			
WIL_019	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					
WIL_022	X	X				
WIL_023	X					
WIL_024	X (a. w. <i>never</i> )					

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