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1 Introduction

In many languages there exists variation between a canonical negative form (e.g. *not*) and another, noncanonical, form. One well-known and rather well-studied example is the present-day variation in French between the complex negative *ne ... pas* and the simple postverbal negative marker *pas*. The original, strictly preverbal, negative *ne* was strengthened by the nominal reinforcer *pas* (< 'step'), first variably, then obligatorily, in the history of French (Jespersen 1917; Posner 1985). Later, the preverbal marker became optional. Nowadays, the variant forms in (1a,b) have the same meaning, or, at the least, they can be said to convey the same propositional content:

(1a) Je ne sais pas.

(1b) Je sais pas.

'I don't know.'

As shown in considerable detail in research by Ashby (1981, 2001) and Coveney (1996), among others, the variation between these two negative variants in Modern French is progressing such that the simple postverbal marker in (1b) is (and has been for some time) displacing the complex pre- and postverbal negative marking in (1a) in the spoken language.

Much less well-known, however, is the fact that variation between canonical and noncanonical negative variants is widespread across the Romance languages. From the point of view of semantic/pragmatic meaning, the negation in French might actually be considered less interesting than the variation found in several sister languages, insofar as the French case is one which is rather advanced diachronically. Indeed, the present-day variation between negative variants in French is based primarily on speaker and stylistic considerations (Ashby 2001; Coveney 1996), instead of, for example, pragmatic factors.

The aim of this paper is to examine and analyze several cases of variation between canonical and noncanonical negatives in several other Romance varieties, from a pragmatic perspective. These cases are, I will argue, regulated primarily by *discourse-pragmatic* factors, relating specifically to the information structural status of the negated proposition. In addition, unlike

the French case, it is not clear that any constitute changes-in-progress wherein the noncanonical variant is displacing the canonical variant.

The hypothesis to be defended in this paper is that the noncanonical negatives to be examined conventionally encode the denial of a discourse-old or inferrable proposition (cf. Prince 1992). That is, they encode the denial of a proposition which is already explicit in the discourse (discourse-old), or one which is inferrable on the basis of other discourse-old information. On the other hand, canonical negative variants may merely implicate such denials conversationally, and as a result can be used in a wider range of discourse contexts than their noncanonical counterparts. It will be shown that this discourse-pragmatic constraint on the noncanonical variants holds true regardless of formal differences between the noncanonical negatives, and also of other differences in meaning/function.

2 Negation and Variation in Four Romance Varieties

In several other Romance languages it is possible to find cases of variation between a canonical and a noncanonical negative, mainly in speech. Some of these cases are similar in structure to the French case, while others are structurally distinct. But whatever the case, this variation is usually mentioned only in passing in language-specific grammars and other works (for notable exceptions, see Espinal 1993 and Schwegler 1991, 1996).

These cases of noncanonical negation and others like them are variously termed "emphatic", "reinforcing", "contrary to expectation", or "presuppositional", despite the fact that *no* explanation of any of these terms is normally provided. Another unfortunate problem with such terms is that some of them ("contrary to expectation" and "presuppositional") have been employed to characterize *canonical* negation across languages (see, e.g., Givón 1978). Clearly, then, explanations for the existence of noncanonical negative variants have not gone beyond the level of intuition, in the sense that a noncanonical variant is often perceived as "feeling different" from its canonical counterpart. The reason for this lack of rigor in the analysis of noncanonical negatives is probably quite simple: in terms of their propositional content, the negative variants (canonical and noncanonical) express very similar, if not identical, meanings. What is needed to get beyond this impasse, in my view, is a pragmatic perspective on the variation.

2.1 Neg + Reinforcing Particle (<Noun)

The first two Romance varieties to be examined exhibit a structure which is almost identical to French *ne ... pas*. In addition, each also has a postverbal

reinforcing particle that was originally derived from a noun denoting a minimal quantity (e.g. I didn't take *a step*). However, the function of these noncanonical variants is much more restricted pragmatically than the French form, as the evidence presented below shows.

Let us consider first the case of Catalan. In Catalan, the canonical negative morpheme is a strictly preverbal form (*no*): *La noia no ha llegit el llibre* 'The girl has not read the book'. The noncanonical negative form, except for the vocalic difference in *no* and *ne*, is exactly the same as in French: preverbal negative *no*, accompanied by postverbal "reinforcer" *pas* (<'step'). The reinforcing morpheme in both languages must occur directly after the verb (not, e.g., at the end of the VP), as shown in (2):¹

- (2a) *La noia no ha llegit pas el llibre.*
 (2b) **La noia no ha llegit el llibre pas.*
 'The girl has not read the book.'

Despite the near identity of form, however, the function of the Catalan form differs greatly from its French counterpart. According to Yates (1993:108), "*No ... pas* is used to negate an actual or inferred prior statement". He contrasts the minimal pair in (3), albeit without any additional discourse context. Yates' view on the difference between the two variants is as follows: "The first is a straightforward negative sentence. The second conveys more, because it negates a previous supposition that whoever it is would be arriving" (1993:108).

- (3a) *No vindran demà.*
 (3b) *No vindran pas demà.*
 'They will not come tomorrow.'

Yates' characterization of the noncanonical negative in Catalan is similar to that of Hualde (1992:155), who asserts that the *no ... pas* construction is used "to cancel what the speaker believes are the presuppositions of the listener", as in (4):

- (4) A: *Quan vagi a Barcelona, veuré en Joan.*
 'When I go to Barcelona, I'll see John.'

¹ One difference between the French and Catalan structures is that in the latter language, but not the former, *pas* may be followed by negative polarity items, e.g., *No he vist pas ningú* 'I have not seen anyone' (Wheeler, Yates, and Dols 1999:482).

- B: No viu *pas* a Barcelona, en Joan.
'John doesn't live in Barcelona.'

A states explicitly in (4) that he'll see John in Barcelona, thereby conversationally implicating the assumption that (A thinks that) John lives in Barcelona. B's reply with *no ... pas* negates this assumed proposition.

The use of *no ... pas* is not restricted to dialogue contexts, as examples like (5) illustrate. Here, what is denied in the adversative clause is the speaker's expectation or assumption that there was bread available for eating. This assumption is triggered inferentially on the basis of the first clause, which asserts the speaker's wish to eat bread:

- (5) Jo volia menjar pa, però no n'hi havia *pas*.
'I wanted to eat bread, but there wasn't any.'

Importantly, however, the use of *no ... pas* is not felicitous in a non-discourse-triggered expectation scenario. For example, imagine a situation where a child wants to eat bread, and goes into the kitchen to get some, without any mention of bread (or hunger, for that matter) in the discourse situation. When the child arrives in the kitchen, she sees that there is no bread and lets her mother know this. In this scenario, only the canonical negative form would be felicitous:

- (6) Mare, no hi ha (#*pas*) pa!
'Mom, there's no bread!'

The asymmetry between the two forms in a context like (6) supports Espinal's view that the function of *pas* is "to cancel a proposition that is either part of the most accessible context or is an inference deducible from the utterance's context" (1993:354).

A structurally similar case of noncanonical negation can be found in standard Italian, where the reinforcing postverbal negative is *mica* (<'crumb'), in the *non ... mica* construction.² According to Cinque, *mica* "has a purely presuppositional meaning" (1991:314; translation mine), which can be perceived in examples like the following.

- (7) A: Mi dovrei mettere la giacca.
'I have to put my jacket on.'

² *Mica* may also be used, with the same function, in preverbal position, where it does not co-occur with *non*, e.g. *Mica è freddo* 'It's not cold'.

B: Non è mica freddo.
'It's not cold.'

A's utterance in (7) licenses the inference that (A believes that) it's cold enough to wear a jacket. B's reply with *mica* explicitly indexes that inferred proposition and denies it.

Following Cinque, Zanuttini (1997) notes that the following sentence is pragmatically marked with respect to the version without *mica*:

(8) Gianni non ha mica la macchina.
'Gianni doesn't have the car.'

As Zanuttini notes, "the occurrence of *mica* is pragmatically restricted to those contexts in which the non-negative counterpart of the proposition expressed by the sentence is *assumed in the discourse* ... If such a proposition is not part of the *common ground*, the presence of *mica* renders the sentence infelicitous and its counterpart without *mica* must be used (i.e., *Gianni non ha la macchina*) (1997:61-2; boldface added). According to my Italian informants, this characterization is accurate, with the exception that the notions "assumed in the discourse" and "common ground" must be modified somewhat. A proposition which has either or both of these latter statuses is not necessarily one which is discourse-old or inferrable: the notion of common ground can refer simply to implicit shared assumptions between interlocutors.³ However, the *non ... mica* construction cannot be used in such a context. For instance, this construction is infelicitous in a context where (8) is uttered to contravene the unstated expectations of the interlocutors about Gianni. Thus, just as in the Catalan case, the proposition negated by *non ... mica* must be one which is in some way derivable (either by explicit assertion or inference) from the discourse context.

In both Catalan and Italian, then, the lexical meaning of the postverbal, originally nominal, element (*pas, mica*) has been bleached, and emphasis in the sense of a minimal quantity (the original meaning of the nominal elements) is no longer present at all. Instead, the presence of the postverbal particle is an explicit signal that the proposition being negated is one which is accessible in, or derivable from, the ongoing discourse. A proposition which is merely an "expectation" of the interlocutors, i.e. one which is not accessible in or derivable from the discourse context, cannot be negated us-

³ To their credit, neither Cinque nor Zanuttini were interested in giving a full semantic/pragmatic characterization of the *non ... mica* construction. The descriptions they employ were adequate for their syntactic analyses.

ing the noncanonical negative variant. Only the canonical negative variant can be used in such a situation. This means that the canonical variant is felicitous in all contexts where the noncanonical variant may appear, but not vice-versa, a situation which is likewise true for the other Romance varieties to be examined below.

2.2 Embracing Negation

Another pattern of noncanonical negation found in the Romance languages is known as the "embracing" negative structure, wherein the canonical negative is found both in its normal preverbal position, as well as in postverbal position. This pattern is found in Brazilian Portuguese and Dominican Spanish, among other Romance varieties (see Schwegler 1996).

In standard Brazilian Portuguese (BP), there is extensive variation between the canonical preverbal negator *não*, and the embracing negation *não ... não*, where the latter *não* is situated in sentence-final position.⁴

The contrasting felicity of the (a) and (b) examples in (9) and (10) shows how the noncanonical variant "presuppose[s] a previous affirmative assertion or assumption which they seek to contradict." (Schwegler 1991:194).

- (9a) A: O que você não fiz no Rio que queria fazer?
'What didn't you do in Rio that you wanted to do?'
- B: Eu não fui a praia (#*não*).
'I didn't go to the beach.'
- (9b) A: Você gostou da praia no Rio?
'Did you like the beach in Rio?'
- B: Eu não fui a praia *não*.
'I didn't go to the beach.'
- (10a) A: Como você compararia o Brasil com os EUA?
'How would you compare Brazil and the USA?'
- B: O Brasil não é um país rico (#*não*).
'Brazil isn't a rich country.'
- (10b) A: É verdade que o Brasil tem muitos metais, *não* é?
'It is true that Brazil has many precious metals, right?'
- B: Tem sim, mas não é um país rico *não*.
'It does, but it's not a rich country.'

⁴ In some dialects, especially in parts of northeastern Brazil, the noncanonical variant is often just postverbal *não* (Schwegler 1991). It is pragmatically restricted in the same ways as the embracing *não ... não* structure (Roncarati 1996).

The noncanonical negative in (9a) is unacceptable since there is nothing in the discourse context to implicate that speaker A assumes speaker B went to the beach in Rio. This contrasts with (9b), where the polar question licenses the implicature that B did go to the beach; this implicature is contravened by the noncanonical negative in the reply. Likewise, in (10a), there is no potential implicature to the effect that Brazil is a rich country to license the use of the noncanonical form. In (10b), however, speaker B's initial reply to A's question (*Tem sim* 'It does'), affirming that many precious metals can be found in Brazil, could potentially invite the inference that Brazil is a rich country. B's use of the *não ... não* structure in this case is felicitous because she herself assesses the proposition ("Brazil is rich") to be inferrable from the current discourse context. The difference between the use of the noncanonical and canonical variants in (10b) is a subtle one, but it is pragmatically significant because the noncanonical form makes the speaker's attitude toward the information status of the negated proposition explicit in what is said. This status remains implicit when employing canonical variant.

The felicity of the noncanonical form in the next example shows that the contextually-derived proposition does not have to be *believed*, but only *activated* (cf. Dryer 1996) in the discourse context. This distinction shows that the noncanonical form is not restricted to denying propositions derivable from pragmatic presuppositions (contra Schwegler 1991):

- (11) A: Está ventando hoje?
'Is it windy today?'
B: Hoje não está ventando não, mas ontem ventou muito.
'Today it's not windy, but yesterday it was very windy.'

In addition, the proposition that is being denied does not have to be one which is derived from the strictly linguistic context. However it still must be triggered by some other contextual material in the discourse setting, as in the following example:

- (12) [speaker sees spouse putting on a heavy jacket before going outside]
Não está muito frio não.
'It's not very cold out.'

The speaker in (12) draws the inference from her spouse's action that he must believe that it is sufficiently cold to warrant putting on a heavy jacket before going outside. The speaker then uses the *não ... não* construction to negate this proposition.

Turning our attention now to the case of Dominican Spanish, Toribio (2000) states that the *no... no* construction is used to indicate the "reassertion of a negative context statement". As in BP, there is no intonational break prior to the final *no*, despite the frequent orthographic practice of placing a comma before this negative.

However, Toribio also cites the views of Jiménez Sabater (1975:170), who states that the second *no* "agrega, por lo general, un matiz de convicción sobre aquello que se niega" ('adds, in general, a nuance of conviction about that which is negated'). Thus, Toribio's discourse-based explanation is somewhat in conflict with that of Jiménez Sabater, who appears to consider the construction as a way of marking emphasis.

Other evidence provided by Schwegler (1996) appears to corroborate to some extent Toribio's analysis. Schwegler argues that *no ... no* is not emphatic; rather, the choice of NEG 1 (simple preverbal *no*) or NEG 2 (embracing) is dependent on "pragmatic factors" such as the "presence or absence of (implicit or explicit) presuppositions in the prior discourse" (1996:287; my translation).

To test this claim, Schwegler (1996) carried out a Labov-style rapid and anonymous survey in several low SES neighborhoods of Santo Domingo, and asked the question in (13). Importantly, the street which he was asking about was in all cases a fictitious one:

- (13) ¿Ud. sabe. dónde queda la calle San Marero?
'Do you know where San Marero Street is?'

Schwegler found that there was a strong preference for the double negative structure in replies to the question in (13): NEG 1 = 28%, NEG 2 = 72%. Moreover, the proposition negated was, in nearly all cases, one which referred to the addressee's own knowledge, e.g. *no sé no* 'I don't know'.

When Schwegler modified his question by adding an expression (*por si acaso* 'by chance') which attenuated the speaker's expectation that the addressee could supply an affirmative reply, as in (14), the distribution of the negative variants in subjects' responses changed dramatically, NEG 1 = 62%, NEG 2 = 38%:

- (14) ¿Ud. sabe por si acaso dónde queda la calle San Marero?
'Do you know by chance where San Marero Street is?'

Schwegler attributes the difference in frequency of NEG 2 in responses to (13) and (14) to the attenuation which *por si acaso* lends to the second question, leading to a weaker assumption about the addressee's knowledge. Thus,

while the mere act of asking the question may lead the addressee to infer that the speaker assumes knowledge on the part of the addressee, the attenuating expression in (14) was critical in altering the strength of the assumptions derivable from the question.

To sum up the data in this section, we have seen that, in both languages that have the embracing negative structure, the postverbal negative is not necessarily emphatic or presuppositional. Rather it can be more accurately described as “phoric”, insofar as it signals that the proposition being negated is one which is accessible in the prior discourse.

3 The Case of “Independent” *Tampoco* in Spanish

The noncanonical negatives surveyed so far are all structurally similar: they consist of a preverbal and postverbal negative element. We now turn to a noncanonical negative which differs from the others in that it is strictly preverbal: Spanish *tampoco*. This form is usually translated as ‘(n)either’ in its most typical use. In this use, it requires a parallel negative proposition as a licenser in the prior discourse context, and may appear either postverbally (with a preverbal negative trigger) or preverbally (without a trigger):

- (15a) A: ¿Vas a la fiesta?
 ‘Are you going to the party?’
 B1: No voy.
 ‘I’m not going.’
 B2: #No voy *tampoco*. #
- (15b) A: No voy a ir a la fiesta. ¿Vas a ir tú?
 ‘I’m not going to the party. Are you?’
 B1: Yo no voy *tampoco*.
 ‘I’m not going either.’
 B2: Yo *tampoco* voy.
 ‘I’m not going either.’

Response B2 in (15a) is infelicitous because there is no prior negative proposition accessible in the discourse context to license *tampoco*. The responses in (15b), on the other hand, are perfectly acceptable because of the negative in speaker A’s preceding utterance.

Beyond the “typical” use of *tampoco* as in (15b), however, another common use of the same form that has gone virtually unnoticed until now is as a marker of *attenuated* denials. I term this use the “independent” use of *tampoco* since it does not require a prior negative proposition to license it (see Schwenter 2000). This use is seen in the attested example (16):

(16) [Context: In a bar in Spain; discussing Pablo's (in)ability to drive home]

A: Pablo está borracho.

'Pablo is drunk.'

B: **Tampoco** ha bebido tanto.

'He hasn't drunk **that much**.'

B's reply in (16) can only be interpreted as disagreeing with A's assessment of Pablo's state of inebriation. In fact, in the context in which this exchange occurred, what A was trying to convey was that Pablo should not be allowed to drive; B's *tampoco*-marked response was meant to challenge A's position.⁵

Crucial for the analysis of "independent" *tampoco* as a marker of attenuated denials is that B could not have said the following in his reply:

(16') B: #**Tampoco** ha bebido nada.

'He hasn't drunk **anything**.'

Such a reply would constitute a full denial of the truth of "Pablo has drunk (alcohol)", and this use of *tampoco* is incompatible with full denials. The canonical negative *no* would however be a perfectly felicitous option in this context (as it would be also in [16]).

While this non-emphatic, attenuating meaning is not part of the meaning of the other noncanonical negatives seen above, the thread that unifies "independent" *tampoco* with the other noncanonical variants is its similar information-structural requirements. The following pair of question-answer sequences illustrate clearly the difference between canonical negator *no* and noncanonical *tampoco* with respect to contextually-accessible assumptions:

(17a) A: ¿Cómo va lo de tu casa?

'How's your house coming along?'

B: Pues **no/#tampoco** avanzan mucho las obras.

'Well, construction's not progressing much.'

⁵ An "independent" use of *either* is possible in English, but the interpretation is not the same. In this example, B is not taking issue with A, but rather pointing out the incongruence between John's level of drunkenness and the amount of alcohol that he has consumed. (i) A: John is wasted.

B: (And) he hasn't drunk that much either.

The Wh-question in (17a) is not rhetorically biased toward any degree of progress, or lack of progress, in the building of the house. Thus, it does not activate (without additional non-linguistic assumptions) any proposition regarding progress. (17a) contrasts with (17b):

- (17b) A: ¿Avanzan las obras de tu casa?
 'Is the construction of your house progressing?'
 B: Pues **no/tampoco** avanzan mucho.
 'Well, it's not progressing much.'

The polar question A asks is biased toward "progress", in the sense that an affirmative reply to it will be interpreted as asserting such progress. Thus, the question alone is enough to activate the proposition "Las obras avanzan" ("the construction is progressing") in the discourse context. This makes it accessible to a denial marked by *tampoco* in B's reply.

As in the cases from the other Romance varieties surveyed above, an "expectation" which is not triggered by some element of the discourse context cannot be denied using *tampoco*. Notice the contrast between (18a), where only *no* is acceptable, and (18b), where either form is acceptable:

- (18a) [Julia is staying at her friend Marta's house. She goes to take a shower]
 Oye Marta, **no/#tampoco** hay mucho jabón...
 'Hey Marta, there isn't much soap.'
 (18b) [Julia is staying at her friend Marta's house. She goes to take a shower, after Marta has told her the bathroom is fully stocked]
 Oye Marta, **no/tampoco** hay mucho jabón...
 'Hey Marta, there isn't much soap.'

A normal expectation that a person has when staying at a friend's house is that there will be soap in the shower. However, the use of "independent" *tampoco* is not possible on the basis of this expectation alone, as seen in (18a). In (18b), however, where this expectation is one which is warranted by discourse-old information, *tampoco* is perfectly felicitous.⁶

Naturally occurring examples of this use of *tampoco* can be seen in (19) and (20). What is most interesting about both these examples is that the

⁶ As pointed out to me by Terrell Morgan (p.c.), another important difference here is that only in (14b) is it possible to replace *mucho* with *tanto* 'that much'. The latter adjective is a comparative with anaphoric properties, as implied by its English gloss.

choice of *tampoco* (instead of *no*) allows the speakers to distance themselves from any responsibility for the proposition that is being negated:

- (19) B: además parece que te enfades conmigo todo el rato y/ °(no sé)°// yo pienso que **tampoco** me he portado tan mal
 ‘besides it seems like you’re mad at me all the time and, I don’t know, I think that I haven’t behaved all that badly.’
- A: no si / TÚ NO TE HAS PORTADO MAL// pero→ no lo sé/
 hay veces que- que me da la impresión de que/ cuando estoy con mis amigos me-/ me miras como si me dijeras ¿por qué estás ahí?! ¿sabes?
 ‘No, you haven’t behaved badly, but I don’t know, there are times that I get the impression that, when I’m with my friends, you look at me like you were saying, “why are you over there?”, you know?’ (Valencia Corpus: Briz (ed.) 1995)
- (20) [From a Spanish television show; H3 is a woman whose husband has been cheating on her with his lover. H1 and H2 are asking H3 questions about the situation and H3 states that she would like to meet the lover]
- <H1> ¿Qué quiere decir conocerla? A ver, que nos cuente. Tú quieres conocer a la amante de tu <simultáneo> marido
 ‘What do you mean meet her? Let’s see, let’s have her tell us. You want to meet your husband’s lover.’
- <H3> Yo la citarí
 ‘I’d set up an appointment with her.’
- <H2> Va a hacer </simultáneo> una telenovela.
 ‘She’s going to make a soap opera.’
 [...]
- <H1> ¿Qué vas a hacer? a ver, <simultáneo> cuéntanos qué es lo que vas a hacer.
 ‘What are you going to do? let’s see, tell us what it is that you’re going to do.’
- <H3> Yo, que <palabra cortada> </simultáneo> quedaría con ella en una cafetería <simultáneo> porque **tampoco** es un monstruo
 ‘I would meet with her in a cafeteria, because she’s not a monster.’ (CREC)

In (19), speaker A is fighting with her boyfriend B. She states that B is always getting mad at her, licensing the implicature that A’s behavior is such that B is justified in doing so. Speaker A uses *tampoco* to deny that her behavior is bad enough for B to always be mad at her. Example (20) is more

complex, in that the inference that H3's husband's lover is "a monster" is not necessarily licensed by any of the explicit content of the discussion, but it is inferrable based on H1 and H2's incredulous reaction to H1's desire to meet the lover. In both examples, canonical *no* would of course be a fully felicitous alternative, albeit one which would not indicate the discourse-accessible status of the proposition being negated.

It is important to note that, because it is the speaker who assesses a given proposition as accessible or not in the discourse context, sometimes *tampoco* can be found negating propositions which are not necessarily accessible, or at least of lesser accessibility, to other interlocutors. This is clear in both (21) and (22):

(21) [e-mail exchange between two departmental colleagues]

R: >Por cierto, me han aceptado el abstract para ese congreso. Ahora me toca inventar algo.

'By the way, they've accepted my abstract for that conference. Now I've got to invent something...'

H: **Tampoco** creo que vaya a haber muchos expertos en el tema allí.

'I don't think many experts on the topic will be there.'

(22) [Conversation overheard between two graduate students]

P: Pero el examen es duro, ¿no?

'But the exam is tough, right?'

M: Sí, pero **tampoco** tienes que estudiar tanto.

'Yeah, but you don't have to study that much.'

Further discussion with e-mail interlocutors R and H in (21) made it clear that R did not mean to implicate that many experts on the topic of his talk would be present at the conference. However, this is what H interpreted when R wrote that he would need to "invent something" for the conference. Likewise, in (22), speaker M's initial affirmative reply to P's question, on its own, could implicate that a heavy amount of studying is necessary for the exam in question. M uses *tampoco* to index that this proposition is now "in play" in the discourse, and at the same time deny its veracity.

In sum, the evidence provided in this section shows that, despite its very different form when compared to the other four cases surveyed, as well as its conventionally attenuating meaning, Spanish *tampoco* is similar to the other noncanonical negatives in that it is employed only to negate propositions which the speaker judges to be accessible in or derivable from the ongoing discourse context.

4. Conclusion

The evidence and analysis provided in this paper demonstrate that the non-canonical negatives surveyed are employed to negate propositions that the speaker believes are accessible in or can be plausibly inferred from the current discourse context. Put a bit differently, the noncanonical forms all require a "trigger" element in the prior discourse in order to be used felicitously. Without this trigger, they are infelicitous. The variation between canonical and noncanonical negatives depends on the information-structural value (discourse-old, inferrable) of the proposition being negated.

The most important difference between the canonical and the noncanonical negatives is that only the former can be used to deny propositions derivable from strictly encyclopedic knowledge, i.e. those which cannot be plausibly derived from the ongoing discourse, but which still constitute "shared knowledge" or "common ground". The distribution of the canonical and noncanonical forms makes it clear that the *manner* in which information becomes "common ground", i.e. as part of the current discourse or via some other means, is of utmost importance.

Though not emphasized in this paper, the present analysis has potential implications for the view of how noncanonical negatives become canonical over time (cf. French). Instead of considering this process, or considering it strictly, as a gradual loss of "emphasis"—an intuitive and ultimately untestable notion—it is necessary to take into account the possible de-linking of the noncanonical negative from its requirement of discourse-boundness. Clearly, if any of the other noncanonical Romance variants surveyed here eventually become canonical negators, like *pas* in French, it will be the loss of discourse requirements which will have ultimately stimulated the change.

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