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The Significance of Formal Features in Language Change Theory and the Evolution of Minimizers

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Abstract On the one hand, this paper puts forward that the historical evolution of an n-word is conditioned by the presence or absence of a syntactic formal feature [uNeg]. Particularly, it shows that historically minimizers can either become Polarity Items or Emphatic Polarity Particles (with metalinguistic content) depending on their having an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] or not. On the other hand, it points out three different ways of fixing the syntactic expression of negation within natural languages—i.e. three different ways of licensing the [uNeg] formal feature: (1) under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature and either a Focus Operator that encodes the meaning [same]/[reverse], or a Force Operator that encodes [objection]; (2) under an anti-veridical operator Op¬ [iNeg]; and (3) under a non-veridical operator. Furthermore, the paper argues in favour of the significant role of syntax in the expression of metalinguistic negation. Hypotheses are tested through a syntactic and discursive characterization of three different types of Catalan negative expressions (*pla*/*poc* 'no', *pas* 'not at all', *gens*/*gota*/*mica* 'any, none, nothing') to show that their diachronic evolution, their distributional behaviour from a Romance comparative standpoint, and their licensing requirements fit perfectly. The contrast between two Old Catalan items with a similar origin, distribution and evolution (*pas* and *gens*), displays that *pas* had a formal [uNeg] feature licensed under a non-veridical or an anti-veridical operator in Old Catalan and, hence, it has evolved into a Negative Emphatic Polarity Particle (NEPP) with metalinguistic content in Modern Catalan, while *gens* did not and it has become a simple Polarity Item (PI). It is a well-known fact that Catalan *pas* conveys metalinguistic negation (that is, it intervenes in presupposition-denying contexts, descriptive semantic contradictions or other types of objections to a previous assertion), whereas *gens* does not. As for the loci of [uNeg] licensing,

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they are confirmed when tested through the Catalan and Italian data. First, it is shown that *pas* has undergone a change in its licensing conditions, so that Modern Catalan *pas* is licensed under anti-veridical operators (i.e., the negative marker *no*, which is underspecified as Op¬ [iNeg]). Second, Modern Catalan *poc* has an [uNeg] formal feature which is licensed under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature and a Focus Operator that acts as a probe for its movement to the Specifier of FocusP. And third, *pla* is licensed under an [iNeg] Pol feature and the relative polarity feature [objection] encoded in a ForceP Operator. Comparative data prove that Italian *mica* has an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] that can be licensed under two operators: First of all, under an [iNeg] Pol feature and a Focus Operator, in the same way as Modern Catalan *poc*. And, secondly, under an anti-veridical operator (Op¬ [iNeg]), like Modern Catalan *pas*.

Keywords Formal features · Diachronic evolution · Negative expressions · Metalinguistic negation · Licensing conditions · Locus of licensing · Grammaticalisation pathways · Microvariation

1 Introduction

The historical development of negative expressions has been studied since at least Jespersen. They fall in two general classes: "indefinites of either positive or negative morphological character within the scope of negation"[1] and "minimizers denoting small entities or negligible quantities from various domains" (Horn 2010a: 2, 2001: 452–456). It is the latter that are dealt with in this paper. The detailed study of expressions that are restricted to non-veridical contexts contributes to the typology of negative polarity items (Hoeksema 2010: 854–855).

Concerning the diachrony of reinforced negation, Van der Auwera (2010: 75–85) identifies three stages with transition periods in which the old pattern is in competition with the new one. The older pattern may remain either as a general option or as a restricted one. Thus, the availability of two or more variants in the same phase can result into (i) register (ii) region or (iii) discourse-pragmatics specialization—see also Hansen and Visconti (2009) on the role of reinforced negation in the diachronic evolution of French and Italian negators. Some scholars have pursued the idea that polarity items are primarily rhetorical devices, others wonder whether the doubling strategy is a matter of emphasis, strengthening or clarity (Van der Auwera 2010: 79–80). In fact, stress is posited to have

[1] I leave aside (N)PIs that come from indefinites, such as *ningú* 'nobody' or *res* 'nothing'. Many authors use the term PI (Vázquez-Rojas and Martín 2007; Labelle and Espinal 2013, 2014), where others use weak NPI (Batllori et al. 1998; Martins 2000) for negative expressions licensed under non-veridical operators. In this paper I am using PI as equivalent to weak NPI, and NPI as strong NPI. As for the licensing conditions of NPIs, see Horn (this volume).

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played a role in the process of change of Dutch *enig* "from a non-referential indefinite found primarily in non-veridical contexts into a regular negative polarity item restricted to downward-entailment contexts." (Hoeksema 2010: 854–855). Similarly, Larrivée (2010: 2253) shows that *ne* insertion by middle-class speakers of Swiss French studied by Fonseca-Greber (2007) can have two functions: register and emphasis, the pragmatic value of which is signalling speaker evaluation or involvement.

Apart from contributing to the understanding of the preceding aspects, research on the diachronic development of Polarity Items (PIs) can shed light on their licensing conditions (Penka and Zeijlstra 2010: 772–775). Since they can be regarded as "the product of a process of grammaticalisation" (Hoeksema 2010: 190), the study of their diachronic pathway can help determine the features intervening in licensing, and can provide us with a model of the features involved in acquisition and parameterisation—see Lightfoot (1991), Jäger (2008), Biberauer (2013), Biberauer et al. (Forthcoming), and the research works of the University of Cambridge *Rethinking Comparative Syntax* (*ReCOS*) group, among others.

According to the *Borer-Chomsky Conjecture* (see Baker 2008: 156), variation is attributable to differences in the features of particular items in the lexicon. Thus, I follow recent work within the Minimalist framework about uninterpretable (uF) and interpretable (iF) formal features (Chomsky 1995, 2000). Formal features are either interpretable or uninterpretable. The former are relevant at LF, while the latter, the uninterpretable ones, are valued and only survive to PF—see Pfau (this volume, Sect. 2.3) for a comprehensive explanation of the role that uninterpretable and interpretable features play in negation across languages.

As put forward by the *ReCOS* members, UG only provides the child with the uF/iF template. Thus, there are two types of features: purely formal features not connected to semantics and formal features connected to semantics. The child has to learn which features [F] are grammaticalised in its language, and these are the ones that account for linguistic variation. Notice that here the sense of 'grammaticalised' is different from that of historical upward reanalysis, and is related to the child's fixing the feature in grammar.

Accordingly, this paper aims at proving that an n-word historical evolution is conditioned by the presence or absence of a syntactic formal feature [uNeg], on the one hand, and at elucidating the significance of syntactic formal features in language change theory, on the other. Catalan data confirm that historically minimizers can either become Polarity Items or Emphatic Polarity Particles with metalinguistic content depending on their having an [uNeg] feature or not. Modern Catalan *gota, gens* and *mica* 'any, nothing, none' lack this [uNeg] formal feature,

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whereas Modern Catalan *poc* 'no', *pla* 'no' and *pas* 'not at all'[2] evolved into negative empathic polarity particles NEPP[3] because of their [uNeg] formal feature.

Moreover, this piece of research points out the existence of three different ways of fixing the syntactic expression of negation within natural languages: (1) under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature and either a Focus Operator that encodes the meaning [same]/[reverse], or a Force Operator that encodes [objection]; (2) under an anti-veridical operator Op¬ [iNeg]; and (3) under a non-veridical operator. Besides, it provides evidence in favour of considering that metalinguistic negation can be captured in syntactic terms—see Martins (2014) for an account of metalinguistic negation along the same lines. The metalinguistic value that will be shown to characterise Catalan *poc*, *pla* and *pas* marked negators is understood as follows:

> While two distinct uses of sentential negation must indeed be admitted, the marked, nondescriptive variety is not a truth-functional or semantic operator on propositions, but rather an instance of the phenomenon of METALINGUISTIC NEGATION—a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatever, including the conventional or conversational implicata it potentially induces… (Horn 1989/2000: 363)

And will be taken to encompass presupposition-cancellation following Horn (1985, 1989/2001).[4] The way in which the features representing these interpretative effects are valued is by an agreement relation in dedicated syntactic positions. The syntactic framework adopted for the analysis is Rizzi (1997) *Theory of left periphery* and the split CP hypothesis, which results in a number of hierarchically organized specialized positions, such as: ForceP, TopicP, FocusP, and FinP.

The paper is organized in 6 sections. This introduction offers a very general overview of some of the major subjects concerning diachronic approaches to reinforced negation and the semantic import of metalinguistic negation, as well as an outline of the main aims of the paper. The working hypotheses are stated in the second section and the following sections are devoted to seeing they relate to the empirical data. Thus, Sect. 3 offers a general description of Modern Catalan minimizers and negative emphatic polarity particles, along with an account of their historical pathways from Old Catalan to Modern Catalan. Then, a comparative

[2]Catalan *poc* and *pla* are dialectal: *poc* ('no') is used in the Northern Region of Catalonia (in the dioceses of Girona and Elne), and *pla* ('yes' and 'no'), which is receding, is employed by adults and mostly within the generations of elder speakers of the North Oriental part. As for *pas*, it is common in Northern and Central varieties of Catalan, but its distributional position with reference to the verb restricts it to more limited areas: the configuration 'Aux *pas* Participle' (*no l'he pas vist* "I haven't seen him at all") is most frequently used in the Catalan spoken in Girona, l'Empordà and la Plana de Vic.

[3]See Batllori and Hernanz (2008, 2009, and above all 2013) for a detailed account of emphatic polarity particles and a specific explanation of the distinction between high and low particles in Catalan and Spanish. High negative emphatic polarity particles—HNEPP—are licensed in the left periphery, either in FocusP or in ForceP, whereas low negative emphatic polarity particles—LNEPP—are licensed within *v*P. Concerning high and low NEPP, see also Breitbarth et al. (2013).

[4]Notice that the term Metalinguistic Negation MN is used in a variable way in the literature—see Larrivée (2010) and Wallage (this volume) for the notion of pragmatic activation.

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synchronic approach is undertaken in Sect. 4, where the hypothesis concerning the loci of licensing is empirically tested within Romance languages, mostly Catalan and Italian. Section 5 presents the reader with further evidence in favour of a syntactic characterization of metalinguistic negation along the lines of Martins (2014). And, finally, Sect. 6 concludes the paper.

2 Significance of Formal Features in the Evolution of Minimizers and Loci of Licensing

This section offers a description of the hypotheses concerning the behaviour and evolution of n-words which in the following sections will be tested against the empirical evidence (i.e., Catalan and other Romance data).

A general overview of the data suggests that some minimizers, some quantitative adverbs and some manner adverbs become negative emphatic polarity particles with metalinguistic content because they have an [uNeg] formal feature. In particular, Modern Catalan data show that there is a small group of polarity items, which originated from minimizers (*gens*, *gota*, and *mica*), that should be differentiated from a second group that goes back either to minimizers (like *pas*), quantitative adverbs (like *poc* [< PAUCU 'little']) or manner adverbs (like *pla* [< PLANE 'clearly, plainly']).

The examples in (1) and (2) display the differences between these two types of items. The contrast conveyed by *gens* [< GĔNUS 'genus, kind'], in (1a), *gota* [< GŬTTA 'drop'], in (1b), and *mica* [< *MĪCCA < MĪCA 'particle, speck'], in (1c), on the one hand, and *pas* [< PASSU 'step'], in (2), on the other, is due to the fact that the latter is regarded as a metalinguistic negator with counter-presuppositional meaning that "implies an enrichment of the negative concept" with "an overtone of rejection or confirmation of an expectation" (Espinal 1993: 361),[5] whereas the former (*gens*, *gota*, and *mica*) are plain PIs and can be used out of the blue.

(1) a. Aquest nen no menja gens.
this child not eats nothing
"This child doesn't eat

b. No hi veig *gota*. M' hauré de posar ulleres.
not there see none to-me will-have ofwearglasses
"I don't see anything at all. I'll have to wearglasses."

c. No ho sé *mica*
not it know nothing
"I don't know it at all"
[*DCVB*, sv. *mica*]

[5]That is, a metalinguistic negative meaning that contributes to implicatures, but not to truth-conditions. As for pragmatic activation in relation to Catalan *pas*, see Wallage (this volume, Sect. 2.1).

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(2) A: – Trobaràs en Joan a la festa.
will-meet the John at the party
"–You will meet John at the party."

a. B – Ell no hi ha anat *pas*.
he not there has gone at-all
"– No, he did not go there"

b. B – Ell no hi ha *pas* anat.
he not there has at-all gone
"– No, did not go there"

The sentences in (1) do not convey any objection, while in (2) speaker A assumes that speaker B is going to meet John at the party and speaker B, in (2a) and (2b), denies the presupposition.

Compared to *pas*, a previous expectation or presupposition is also needed to use *poc* [< PAUCU 'little'], in (3a), and *pla* [< PLANE 'clearly, plainly'], in (4a). They display some significant differences, though. Besides, it is worth reminding that *poc* and *pla* come from a quantitative and a manner adverb, respectively, and that in Modern Catalan they coexist with these adverbs, as illustrated in (3b) and (4b), correspondingly.

(3) a. NEPP
Poc he vist en Joan aquesta tarda.
no have seen the John this afternoon
"I haven't seen John this afternoon."

b. QUANTITATIVE ADVERB
He vist *poc* en Joan aquesta setmana.
have seen little the John this week
"I haven't seen John much this week"

(4) a. NEPP
– Jo *pla* he estat el que t'ha fet això. –Sí, Josafat, fores tu
I no have been the that CL_{DAT} have done this / yes Josafat were you
"– I wasn't the one who did you this. – Yes, Josafat, it was you who did it"
[*CTILC*: 1906. Prudenci Bertrana, *Josefat*: 59]

b. MANNER ADVERB
Senyor, podeu donar-vos *pla* les gràcies a vós mateix, d'aquesta pèrdua gran.
Sir, you-can give-you clearly the thanks to you self of-this loss big
"Sir, you can clearly thank yourself for this complete loss"
[*CTILC*: 1945. Josep M. de Sagarra, *La tempestat*: 29]

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Together with *pas*, for most speakers *poc* and *pla* are "negative logical operators which require access to somebody's expectations about the likelihood of either the truth or falseness of the proposition expressed or desired, and lead to some cognitive effects" (Espinal 1993: 367)—see Rigau (2004, 2012) for more information on *pla*. Yet, their most distinctive feature is the fact that the latter can be autonomous negation markers[6] and can even license (N)PIs, whereas the former requires the presence of another negator and does not license (N)PIs.[7] For more information on these NEPPs, see Batllori and Hernanz (2013).

(5) a. En Joan *poc* ha vist *ningú*.
the John no has seen nobody
"John HASN'T seen anybody"

b. En Joan *pla (que)* ha vist *ningú*.
the John no (that) has seen nobody
"John HASN'T seen anybody"

c. *En Joan ha *pas* vist *ningú*.[8]
the John has not-at-all seen nobody

In accordance with these data, I posit that they must have had an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] in order to evolve into NEPPs and that the changes in their locus of licensing condition the nature of these items.

Hence, the hypotheses I put forward are the following:

(I) Any minimizer, quantitative adverb or manner adverb must have grammaticalised an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] in order to evolve into a NEPP.

(II)The loci of licensing of the [uNeg] formal feature will either be:

[6]Notice that there is inter-speaker variation in the use of *poc* as an autonomous negative marker. Crucially, speakers from Girona and Figueres who are currently competent in its use seem to reanalyse *poc* as a negative marker that can be used out of the blue, without any cognitive effect. For more information on this, see Batllori and Rost (2013).

[7]Horn (2002: 77) quotes Yoshimura in relation to the meaning of metalinguistic or echoic negation, and mentions that it displays procedural rather than conceptual meaning, which explains its failure to license NPIs. If we take into account Escandell-Vidal and Leonetti (2000: 376) observation that there can be a systematic association between formal syntactic functional categories and the semantic notion of procedural meaning, the syntactic and cognitive traits of *pas* can be easily captured—see Sect. 5. Thus, *pas* can be regarded as a MN and, accordingly, its target "is what is not asserted", what "is not part of explicit content and/or not communicated" (Horn 2002: 78–79). As for *pla* and *poc*, as suggested by Zeijlstra, NPIs would be licensed by Focus, rather than by these metalinguistic negators. This would explain why only HNEPPs license NPIs—see footnote 3.

[8]This utterance would be grammatical in the Catalan spoken in the South of France (Conflent, Vallespir and Roussillon), in which *pas* is the negative marker.

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(a) under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol(arity) feature and either a Focus Operator that encodes the meaning [same] /[reverse], or a Force Operator that encodes [objection];
(b) under an anti-veridical operator Op¬ [iNeg]; or
(c) under a non-veridical operator.

(III) Depending on the locus of licensing the historical evolution will bring about:

(a) a high negative emphatic polarity particle (HNEPP) with metalinguistic content;
(b) a low negative emphatic polarity particle (LNEPP) with metalinguistic content; or
(c) a negative marker.

These hypotheses are tested in the following sections.

3 Catalan Data

3.1 Modern Catalan

The contrasts illustrated by examples (1) to (5) of the preceding section may seem to point to a similarity between *pas*, in (2), and *gens*, *gota* and *mica*, in (1). Notice, however, that their distribution and meaning is remarkably different in Modern Catalan, as the data in (6) shows.

In (6a) and (6c) *pas* conveys an implicature and, accordingly, it bears a counter-presuppositional value. For instance, these sentences can be used in a context in which a girl expected a boy to buy cheese, but he does not. Then, he says he has not bought cheese implying that he has not fulfilled her expectations. In this case, (6a) and (6c) would be equally appropriate utterances (for they have exactly the same meaning).[9] In regard to (6d), it does not carry any comparable pragmatic value to that of (6a) and (6c), and it only expresses the lowest degree of a scale. As we will see in detail in Sect. 3.2, the reason why (6b) is ungrammatical is directly related to the syntactic and semantic differences between *pas* (a LNEPP in Modern Catalan), on the one hand, and *gens*, *gota* and *mica* (PIs in Modern Catalan), on the other, which I attribute to the presence or absence of an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] (as stated in hypothesis I, in Sect. 2).

[9] *Pas* has been regarded as a *v*P-adjunct (see Rowlett 1998; Zeijlstra 2004), which might explain the distribution displayed by these examples. See footnote 33, though.

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(6) a. No n'he *pas* comprat (de formatge).
not of-it-have not-at-all bought (of cheese)
"I haven't bought any cheese at all"

b. *No n'he *gens/gota/mica* comprat (de formatge).
not of-it-have any bought (of cheese)

c. No n'he comprat *pas* (de formatge).
not of-it-have bought not-at-all (of cheese)
"I haven't bought any cheese at all"

d. No n'he comprat *gens/gota/mica*[10] (de formatge).
not of-it-have bought an (of cheese)
"I haven't bought any cheese"

In (6a) and (6c), the [uNeg] feature of the NEPP *pas* is licensed under the anti-veridical operator Op¬ [iNeg].[11]

The examples in (7) show that some of these items can co-occur in the same sentence. Native speaker of the Northern Catalan variety under study agree in that these utterances are very colloquial and highly emphatic, though—see Rossich (1996).

(7) a. En Joan *poc* ho ha fet *pas* *gens/gota/ni mica* (de menjar).
the John no it has done not-at-all any (of eat)
"John HASN'T eaten anything at all"

b. En Joan *poc* ho ha *pas* fet *gens/gota/ni mica* (de menjar).
the John no it has not-at-all done any (of eat)
"John HASN'T eaten anything at all"

c. En Joan *pla* ho ha *pas* fet *gens/gota/ni mica* (d'estudiar).
the John no it has not-at-all done any (of study)
"John HASN'T studied even a little bit at all"

d. En Joan *pla* ho ha fet *pas* *gens/gota/ni mica* (d'estudiar).
the John no it has done not-at-all any (of study)
"John HASN'T studied even a little bit at all"

[10]Some Catalan varieties use *ni mica* instead of *mica*.

[11]Tubau (2008: 249–251) considers *pas* "a polarity item with underspecified polarity features". I would rather say, however, that it is a NEPP with an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] that in some varieties (such as the one of Sant Ramon—Lleida) can still be licensed under a non-veridical operator, as it was in Old Catalan—see (15d).

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These items exemplify three different kinds of negative expressions: HNEPPs (*pla* and *poc*), LNEPPs (*pas*) and PIs (*gens*, *gota* and *mica*). As illustrated in (7), *pla* and *poc* can co-occur with *pas* and also with either *gens*, *gota* or *mica*.

3.2 From Old Catalan to Modern Catalan: Historical Pathways

In this section, I would like to draw attention to two questions related to the hypotheses I to III stated in Sect. 2.

(i) How is the negative value of these negative expressions triggered? (Remember that hypothesis I states the need to have grammaticalised a formal feature [uNeg] so as to become a negative emphatic polarity particle NEPP).
(ii) Is there a different historical pathway to become either PI or NEPP? And, if so, why? (Remember that hypothesis III states that an item evolves into a High NEPP, a Low NEPP or a negative marker depending on the locus of licensing, and that hypothesis II establishes that the [uNeg] feature can be licensed: i. under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature and either a Focus Operator [same]/[reverse] or a Force Operator [Objection]; or ii. under an anti-veridical Op¬ [iNeg]; or iii. under a non-veridical operator).

In order to shed light on these issues, I examine the evolution of *gens*, *gota*, and *mica* towards PIs, on the one hand, and *pas*, *poc* and *pla* towards NEPPs, on the other, so as to test my main hypotheses.

Batllori et al. (1998)—for Old Spanish—and Martins (2000)—for several Old Romance languages—provide evidence to determine that minimizers and indefinites change from [affirmative] to [α negative] in Old Spanish and Old Catalan, which means that a negative value can obtain whenever they are licensed by a negative marker. As illustrated in (8), minimizers[12] were already used in Latin, which was a *Duplex negatio affirmat* (DNA) language, in principle.

[12] See Horn (2001: 452–456) for an inventory of NPI minimizers, and an account of the systematic use of indefinites to reinforce negation. Regarding the use of minimizers in Latin and their evolution to Romance PIs, see Batllori et al. (1998), Martins (2000). Horn (2010b: 111–148) gives a detailed account of multiple negation, a taxonomy of motives for double negation, and the factors intervening in this type of negation.

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(8) a. Quoi neque paratast *gutta* certi consili
that not have drop firm resolution
[Plauto, *Pseud*. 397, Väänänen, § 353]

b. Quinque dies aquam in os suum non coniecit, non *micam* panis
for-five days water in mouth his not entered non crumb of-bread
[Gaius Petronius, c. 27-66 AD, *Satyricon*. XLII]

c. non licet *transversum digitum* discedere
not allowed crossed finger move-away
[Cicerón, *Ac*. 2, 58, Väänänen, § 353]

In Early Romance, in the varieties of which *Duplex negatio negat* DNN (see Horn 2010b: 111–148), minimizers became PIs.[13] As a result, they had to co-occur with a negative element, such as the negative marker *no*, in order to license their negative meaning,[14] otherwise they got a positive value (Martins 2000).

Correspondingly, Old Catalan licensed these PIs under non-veridical operators and they were negative or positive depending on the presence of the negative marker, as can be seen in (9a) and (9b), respectively.

(9) a. en terres e regnes que *gens no* us pertanyen
in lands and kingdoms that none not to-you belong
"In lands and kingdoms that don't belong to you at all"
[*CICA*: *Tirant lo Blanch*. 14th century, p. 1314]

b. si *gens* de gentillesa en l' ànimo has… tota l'aurias ensutzada … amant aquesta
if some of kindness in the spirit have$_{-2SG}$ all it would-have sullied loving this
"If you had any kindness in your soul, it would have been ruined by loving this woman"
[*CICA*: *Corbatxo*. 14th century, p. 87]

Old Catalan data in relation to *mica*, given in (10), and *gota*, in (11), confirm the reanalysis put forward by Roberts (2007: 148) illustrated in (12).

[13]According to Labelle and Espinal (2013, 2014) bare nouns and positive quantifiers become PIs when they acquire a semantic feature that makes them dependent on the presence of a non-veridical operator.

[14]This is so, because they are scalar items with an abstract semantic feature that needs to be checked at LF to lock in their pragmatically strongest meaning in the context and prevent further recalibration of meaning (Labelle and Espinal 2013, 2014: 198–199).

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(10) a. E guarda·t que a n'aquest temps no li dóns *mica* d' oli
and keep-you that in that time not to-him give little of-oil
"And be careful not to give him any oil in that time"
[*CICA*: *Cànon d'Avicenna.* 14th century, 70v]

b. no y ha tremolament *mica*.
not it have shivering little
"there is no shivering at all"
[*CICA*: *Cànon d'Avicenna.* 14th century, 78r]

(11) a. no se·n perdé *gota* de oli, que tot caygué damunt los mantells
not it of-it lost drop of oil, for all fell over the clothes
"No oil was lost, because it fell in upon the clothes"
[*CICA*: *Dietari* [Porcar]. 17th century, 334r]

b. pasaren més de set mesos que no plogué *gota*
elapsed more than seven months that not rained drop
"There had been more than seven months without any rain"
[*CICA*: *El 'Libre de Antiquitats'de la Seu de València 3.* 16th century, p. 229]

Thus, it is obvious that these quantitative items underwent the same reanalysis from non-specific DP objects to clausal negators[15] as Old French *point*—see Roberts (2007: 146-149):

(12) no V [$_{DP}$ [$_{D}$ Ø $_{non\text{-}specific}$] [$_{NUMP}$ [$_{NUM}$ *mica/gota/gens* [$_{NP}$ d'oli]]] >
> no V [$_{NEG}$ *mica/gota/gens*] [$_{VP}$ [$_{DP}$ Ø $_{negative}$ d'oli]] >
> no V [$_{NEG}$ *mica/gota/gens*] [$_{VP}$]

In Modern Catalan the PIs *mica*, see (13a), and *gota* still coexist with the DPs *una mica* 'a little', as in (13b), and *una gota* 'a drop'.

[15]As suggested by one of the anonymous reviewers, it is worth noticing here that, once *mica* and *gota* appear with intransitive verbs, we can say that they are no longer part of a nominal phrase.

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(13) a. Jo, de vostè, no me'n refio *mica*.
I of you not to.me-of.you trust nothing
"I don't trust you at all"
[*CTILC*: Blai Bonet. 1969. *Mister Evasió*.]

b. dóna-li'n *una mica d'*aigua.
give to-her-of-it a little of water
"Give her some water, please"

In relation to Old Catalan *pas*, it is generally accepted that its genesis goes back to a minimizer associated with verbs of movement (a DP complement to the main verb in expressions like 'walk a step', as explained by Larrivée 2010; Meillet 1912, among others), that underwent the entire loss of its D properties to become a negative clausal element, as shown in (14). For a DP to be entitled to such reanalysis, however, it must have been either an indefinite DP or a bare noun.

(14) V [$_{DP}$ *pas*] > V [$_{Neg}$ *pas*] VP
(Roberts and Roussou 2003: 155-157)

The aforementioned facts entail that, as Old Catalan PIs did, *pas* should appear either within the scope of a negative operator (*no…pas*) or immediately followed by the negative operator (*pas no*)[16] to get a negative reading, which can be seen in (15b) and (15c).

In (15a) it expresses its literal nominal sense (i.e., *un pas* 'a step'), but the semantic compositional value of the whole sentence is somehow similar to the cases in which *pas* conveys a negative meaning because of the presence of the negative marker *no*, like in (15b) and (15c), for instance.

Notice that the latter contexts, (15b) and (15c), are exactly the same ones in which Old Catalan PIs *gens*, *mica* and *gota* obtain their negative reading. If we compare (9b) with (15d), though, it is obvious that *gens* and *pas* have a relevant

[16]Old French *pas* displays several similarities with Old Catalan *pas*, as can be seen in Ingham (2014). The sequence *pas ne* is hardly ever attested in 13th century Old French prose works, but it is found in verse texts, especially in relative clauses. I would like to thank Professor Richard Ingham for this information, and also for the following example:

(i) Ne portez pas la nuvele en Geth ne as rues d'Escalúne que les filles des Philistiens ne se haitent ne *les de ces ki pas ne sunt circumcis s'esléecent*
" […] the daughters of those who are not circumcised are rejoicing"
[c. 1175. Anonymous. *Quatre Livres des Rois*: 62]

In my opinion, the comparative study of these items deserves further research. Unfortunately, a detailed account of this issue goes beyond the scope of this work.

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difference. In non-veridical contexts *gens* displays a positive meaning, as in (9b), whereas *pas* conveys a negative value, as in (15d).[17]

(15) a. que Curial no vage *un pas* sens tu
that Curial not go a step without you
"…that Curial doesn't take a step alone"
[*CICA*: *Curial e Güelfa*. 15th century, p. 12]

b. *no* perdonaria Déus *pas* lo pecad
not would-forgive God not-at-all the sin
"God wouldn't forgive any sin at all"
[CICA: *Homilies d'Organyà* (13th century, p. 122]

c. vós *pas* *no* sabíets aquest cavaler qui era.
you not-at-all not knew this knight who was
"you did not know who this knight was at all"
[CICA: *Crònica* [Desclot]. 13th century, p. II.58]

d. si la intenció del concili passa contra lo papa, vos
if the intention of-the council goes against the Pope you
deuriu captenir en una manera, e en altra si vèyeu que
should act in a way and in other if you-see that
la intenció del papa passàs e fos *pas*
the intention of-the Pope was-accepted and was not-at-all
apoderada.
controlled
"if the council goes against the Pope's intentions, you should act in a particular way, but if you see that the council accepts what the Pope is planning to do and the Pope's intention is not subjugated, then you should act in another one"
[CICA : Documents de la Cancelleria d'Alfons el Magnànim. 15th century, Doc. 11. 1434]

[17]As illustrated below, this type of sentences would be ungrammatical in Modern Catalan without the negative marker *no*:

(i) a.*Si has anat a totes les llibreries i l'has *pas* trobat, és que està exhaurit.
If you-have gone to all the bookshops and it-have PAS found is that is sold-out
b. Si has anat a totes les llibreries i no l'has *pas* trobat, és que el llibre està exhaurit.
"If you have been to all the bookshops and you haven't found it anywhere at all, it means that the book is sold out".

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This is evidence in favour of hypothesis I, according to which a minimizer must have an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] to become a NEPP, and also clarifies the reason why *pas* became a LNEPP (i.e., hypothesis IIIb),[18] while *gens*, *gota* or *mica* did not. Old Catalan *pas* already had an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg], that could even be licensed under a non-veridical operator (i.e., hypothesis IIc), whereas *gens*, *gota* and *mica* had a positive reading in non-veridical contexts.

Pas, *gens*, *gota* and *mica* originated from minimizers and, accordingly, they displayed many similarities throughout Old Catalan. This is evidenced by the fact that both Old Catalan *pas* and *gens* can actually be found together with other PIs in preverbal position followed by *no*, as exemplified in (16) with *may* 'never' and *gens* 'any, nothing, none'.

(16) a. los uns cavant …erbas que *may pas no* foren oydes anomenar sinó d' ella
the ones digging weeds that never not-at-all not were heart mentioned but for her
"some were digging out weeds that had never been known at all by anyone but her"
[*CICA*: *Corbatxo.* 14th century, p. 57]

b. *gens pas no* és rahó que negun puscha ni deja haver poder en l' altruy
none at-all not is reason that nobody might nor had-to have power on the-other
"There is no reason to allow any of them to overpower the others."
[*CICA*: *Llibre del Consolat de Mar.* 14th century, p. 50]

This fact contrasts clearly with the ungrammaticality of Modern Catalan *pas* in the preceding contexts, which confirms that they have followed a different evolution.

In sum, Old Catalan *pas*, despite having a comparable distribution to that of PIs and in spite of having undergone a parallel process of reanalysis or grammaticalisation [compare (12) and (14)], displayed a different behaviour under non-veridical operators. Then, the question arises why it became a NEPP if, as has been shown above, it exhibited many similarities with PIs. It can be argued that the reason of such evolution lies in its having an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] (i.e., hypothesis I, in Sect. 2). Labelle and Espinal (2013) acknowledge that if a lexical item "has a negative reading in the absence of a negative marker", it is evidence enough to assume that it has a syntactic formal [uNeg] feature.

[18]Or even a negative marker (i.e., hypothesis IIIc): in fact, *pas* became the negative marker in the Catalan spoken near the French border (Alta Garrotxa and Alt Empordà) and the South of France (Conflent, Vallespir and Roussillon).

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Hence, the main difference between Old Catalan *pas*, on the one hand, and *gens*, *gota* and *mica*, on the other, is that the former had a formal [uNeg] feature, which was syntactically licensed under a non-veridical operator [as in (15d)] or an anti-veridical operator [as in (15b) and (15c), or (16)],[19] while the latter were PIs with a semantic strong feature that could either be interpreted as positive or negative at LF, depending on the context.

Moreover, taking into account that Modern Catalan *pas* cannot be licensed under the non-veridical context illustrated in (15d), and given that it must co-occur with the negative marker *no* in order to be licensed (see footnotes 17 and 19), it is clear that there has been a change in the licensing conditions of this element: Old Catalan *pas* was licensed under non-veridical and anti-veridical operators, while Modern Catalan *pas* must be licensed under anti-veridical operators (i.e., the negative marker *no*, which is underspecified as Op¬ [iNeg]). In fact, *pas* has been submitted to a stronger licensing requirement through its evolution, because anti-veridicality is a subcase of non-veridicality, and the n-words licensed by anti-veridicality are strict NPIs. According to Giannakidou (2011: 1684):

> Antiveridicality … is the notion we need as a criterion for the **stricter NPI classes** that are licensed narrowly by more 'negative' licensers. For this class, which is **often emphatic**, a growing body of literature suggests that **we must view licensing also as a syntactic**, and not merely a semantic relation.

In my opinion, this is an argument in favour of hypothesis III (that relates the evolution of these items to the loci of licensing) and sheds light on the reason why *pas* became a LNEPP (or a strict NPI, in terms of Giannakidou 2011) in Modern Catalan.[20]

From now on, I am going to assess the three hypotheses given in Sect. 2 with reference to the grammaticalisation path followed by another kind of negative expressions (i.e., *poc* and *pla*), which also results in emphatic or marked negation.[21] At first sight, the two pathways can be clearly separated out by considering the semantic value of the grammaticalised item: PIs (such as Catalan *gens*, *gota* and *mica*) express a quantificational or quantitative meaning, while NEPPs (like *poc* and *pla*, for instance) convey informational or informative meaning—see Israel (1996) on polarity sensitive items.

[19] As for the syntactic formal [uNeg] feature of *pas* in Old Catalan, it had to be syntactically licensed, at least, under non-veridicality, but it could also be licensed under anti-veridicality. In my view, this shows that Old Catalan *pas* was closer to a true or strict NPI than *gens*, *mica* and *gota* (which were PIs without a syntactic formal feature). However, eventually it did not evolve into an NPI, but into a NEPP with metalinguistic content.

[20] Notice that the terms Low Negative Emphatic Polarity Particle and High Negative Emphatic Polarity Particle refer to the syntactic representation of these items and the term Metalinguistic Negative Marker, which will be also used in Sect. 5, refers to the pragmatic meaning they convey.

[21] That is: "a metalinguistic use of the negative operator rather than […] a semantic operator which is part of logical form."—see Horn 1985: 151.

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Batllori and Hernanz (2008, 2009) show that, from Old Catalan examples like (17), *poc* 'little' underwent a process of grammaticalisation and became a NEPP, as illustrated in (19). The syntactic derivation of the emphatic use of the quantitative adverb *poc* 'little' (17) is outlined in (18), whereas the one of the NEPP *poc* 'no' (19) is given in (20).

(17) pensà-se que *poc* li profitaria la sua probretat volenterossa.
thought-$_{PRON}$ that little him would-benefit the his poverty voluntary
"he thought that his voluntary poverty would serve him little (if the richest of the world were rewarded by Saint Gregory)."
[*CICA*: *Vides de Sants Rosselloneses*. 13th century, p. 301]

(18) a. [$_{ForceP}$ .... [$_{FocusP}$ .... [$_{PolP}$ … [$_{TP}$ … [$_{VP}$ profitaria *poc*]]]]]
b. [$_{ForceP}$.... [$_{FocusP}$ ... [$_{PolP}$ … [$_{TP}$ *poc*$_i$ [$_{VP}$ profitaria t$_i$]]]]]
c. [$_{ForceP}$.... [$_{FocusP}$ *poc*$_i$ ... [$_{PolP}$ t$_i$ [$_{TP}$ t$_i$ [$_{VP}$ profitaria t$_i$]]]]]

The movement in (18) is driven by a focalization process, which is directly related to the grammaticalisation path of positive polarity markers such as *sí* in Catalan and Spanish [< SĪC] and *oc* in Old Catalan [< HOC EST], that triggers the movement of a VP internal modifier to the left periphery of the sentence (precisely to PolP, and later on to FocusP)—see Batllori and Hernanz (2008, 2009). In (17) and (18) *poc* still has the prototypical verbal modifier quantitative meaning, but it also modifies the polarity of the whole sentence. In (19) as represented by (20), though, *poc* hasn't got any quantitative meaning anymore and it only concerns the polarity of the whole sentence.[22]

(19) Los manestrals *poch* tenian feyna, molts dias se morian gent de miseria.
The artisans no had work, many days PRON died people of scarcity
"The artisans didn't have work, and people often died of want"
[*DVCB* sv. *Poc*: *Cròn. Guerra Indep.* Penedès]

[22]As for the syntactic structure and the hierarchical order of FocusP and PolP, see Haegeman (2000: 49). She argues that the landing site of neg-fronting in expressions like *under no circumstances* is not identical to that of the wh-preposing in *under what circumstances*, and also that FocusP should be reinterpreted in terms of an articulated structure containing two hierarchically organized positions: Focus Phrase and Polarity Phrase.

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It is a structural change that can be described as "Pol* Move > Pol* Merge", in line with Roberts and Roussou (2003). That is, instead of base generating *poc* within the VP and moving it into Pol, as in (18), it is reanalysed as negative polarity, and is directly merged into Pol, see (20), so that there is a loss of movement related to the loss of quantitative meaning.

(20) [ForceP...[TopicP los manestrals [FocusP poc_i ... [PolP t_i [TP teni-an feyna]]]]]

The same kind of grammaticalisation may be assumed for *pla*, although it is slightly different from *poc*, as will be seen in Sect. 5.

In view of the above mentioned facts, I regard *poc* as having an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg], which is licensed by an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature (via Move in Old Catalan and Merge in Modern Catalan), and that must be further licensed by a Focus Operator[23] that acts as a probe for its movement to the Specifier of FocusP (i.e., hypothesis IIa, in Sect. 2), as illustrated in (21):

(21) [ForceP...[TopicP [FocusP poc_i Op [PolP $t_{i[uNeg]}$[Pol°[iNeg]] [TP …]]]]]

A comprehensive comparison between *poc* and *pla* is offered in Sect. 5 below, which is devoted to examining the metalinguistic characteristics of these negative expressions.

4 Synchronic Comparative Romance Data

The preceding sections have lent support to the main hypotheses through a syntactic and discursive characterization of the three different types of Catalan negative expressions (*pla/poc* 'no', *pas* 'not at all', *gens/gota/mica* 'any, none, nothing). This section furthers the hypotheses by putting the expressions in a Romance comparative perspective.

[23]This Focus Operator might encode the relative polarity features [same] and [reverse] (see Farkas and Bruce 2010).

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I leave aside the contrastive study between some varieties of Modern Catalan and Modern French *pas*[24] and also Aragonese *pas*,[25] as well as the analysis of the similarities and differences between Catalan *poc* and Spanish *poco*.[26]

Thus, this section focuses on the comparison between Catalan *poc* and *pas*, on the one hand, and Italian *mica*, on the other, which provides evidence of microvariation with regard to underspecification (that is, hypothesis I:

[24]Catalan dialects display two instances of *pas*. In the Northern and Central areas of Catalonia *pas* is a NEPP:

(i) Avui *no* menjaré *pas* patates.
Today no will-eat not-at-all potatoes
"Today I won't eat potatoes at all"

On the other hand, in the varieties spoken in Roussillon, Vallespir, and Conflent, as well as in some small villages of Alt Empordà and la Garrotxa, *pas* is the negative marker and, thus, it is used without *no* (like French *pas*):

(ii) a. T'ho donaré *pas* [*DCVB*, sv. *pas*]
To-you.it will-give no
"I won't give it to you"
b. mira que la tossuderia es *pas mica* sanitosa
look that the stubbornness is no not-at-all healthy
"Take into account that stubbornness is not healthy at all"
[*CTILC*: Esteve Caseponce. 1907. *Contes vallespirenchs*. Narrativa]

Van Gelderen (2004, 2011) *Negative Cycle* accounts for this change: first, *Late merged* into the Spec of the NegP, and then Spec to Head reanalysis according to the *Head Preference Principle.*

[25]Aragonese *pas* displays a very similar behaviour to that of Catalan *pas*. Contrast the following examples with those given in (2) and (6).

(i) Hoy no s'en ha feito *pas* de pastura.
today not it CL has done of pasture
"Today there was no pasture"
[http://franchochardiz.blogspot.com.es/2011_10_01_archive.html]

(ii) Ý a muchas otras tierras [...] que yo no he *pas* visto
there have many other lands … that I not have at-all seen
"There are many other lands that I haven't seen at all"
[trad. Juan de Mandevilla, *Libro de las maravillas del mundo*, ms. Esc. MIII7 (end of the 15th century) , fol. 37r, 163]

I would like to thank Álvaro Octavio de Toledo for these examples and his accurate observations on Aragonese *pas*, which I leave aside for further research.

[26]As explained in Batllori and Hernanz (2008, 2009), Spanish quantitative *poco* is base generated in VP internal position, so that when it moves to PolP and to FocusP, its quantitive value is emphasized (and not the negative polarity of the sentence, as would be the case of Catalan *poc*). In this type of sentences there is obligatory adjacency between *poco* and the verb, and the subject occurs in postverbal position.

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Table 1 Emphatic polarity particles—Batllori and Hernanz (2013: 19)

Language	High EPPA		Low EPPA	
	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative
Spanish	*sí, bien, ya*			
Catalan	*sí, bé, ja, prou, pla*	**poc, pla**	*ben*	**pas**

Table 2 Low emphatic polarity particles—Batllori and Hernanz (2013:20)

Language	Affirmative	Negative
Catalan	*ben*	**pas**
Italian	*bene*	**mica**
French	*bien*	–

having an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg]) and the licensing requirements of negative expressions (that is, hypothesis II: licensing the [uNeg] a) under Pol [iNeg] + either the Focus Op [same]/[reverse] or the Force Op [objection], b) under an anti-veridical Op¬ [iNeg], or c) under a non-veridical Op).

As mentioned above, Batllori and Hernanz (2013) provide the reader with a full description of Modern Catalan emphatic polarity particles, including the negative ones, such as *poc*, *pla* and *pas* (see Table 1), and a fairly accurate account of LNEPP in some Romance languages (see Table 2). I repeat the tables that display the syntactic distribution of these items here for ease of exposition, the items under study in this section corresponding to the bolded ones.

As is well-known, in some Modern Italian varieties, the syntactic behaviour of *mica* is different from the one displayed by Catalan *mica* (see Sect. 3 above). Italian *mica* has been argued to convey a presuppositional value—see Cinque (1976/1991), Cinque (1999: 4 and 121–126), Falcinelli (2008), Hansen and Visconti (2009), Hernanz (2010: 33). With reference to its syntactic distribution, Cinque (1999: 4–11) comments on the fact that Italian *mica* precedes habitual adverbs, as well as *già* 'already', *più* 'any longer', *sempre* 'always' and *completamente* 'completely',[27] which means that it is base generated under TP. At this point,

Footnote 26 (continued)

(i) A los huessos de la racheta *poco* acaesce quebrantamiento.
To the bones of the carpus little happens breaking-off
"One rarely breaks the wrist bones (because they are very hard)."
[*CORDE*: 1493. Anonymous. *Traducción del Tratado de cirugía de Guido de Cauliaco*.]

(ii) $[_{CP} \ldots [_{FocusP}\ poco_i \ldots [_{PolP}\ t_i\ [_{TP} \ldots\ t_i \ldots]]]]$

[27]The examples given by Cinque (1999: 4–11) are the following: Alle due, Gianni non ha *solitamente mica* mangiato, ancora "At two, G. has usually not eaten yet". Non hanno *mica già* chiamato, che io sappia "They have not already telephoned, that I know". Non hanno chiamato *mica più*, da llora "They haven't telephoned not any longer, since then". Da allora, non acetta *mica più sempre* i nostri inviti "Since then, he doesn't any longer always accept our invitation".

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it is easy to establish a parallelism between Italian *mica* and Catalan *pas*, but the examples in (22)[28] illustrate that Italian *mica* can also behave as a peripheral focused negative expression and, what is more, that Italian *mica* has a parallelism with Modern Catalan *poc* as well.

(22) a. *Mica* ho detto questo!
a'. *Poc* he dit això.
no have said this
"I haven't said this!"

b. Credo che *mica* abbia detto questo.
b'. Crec que *poc* havia dit això.
Think that no had said this
"I think that she/he hadn't said this"

c. Maria dice che Gianni *mica* ha detto questo
c'. La Maria diu que en Joan *poc* ha dit això.
the Mary says that the John no has said this
"Mary says that John hasn't said this"

d. Chiudi la porta, che *mica* fa caldo
d'. Tanca la porta, que *poca* fa calor.
close the door, that no is hot
"Close the door, because it isn't hot"

e. *Maria, che *mica* ha detto questo, ...
e'. ?La Maria, que *poc* ha dit això, …
the Mary, that no has said this, ...
"Mary, who hasn't said this, ..."

f. *Se *mica* hai detto questo, allora va tutto bene.
f'. *Si *poc* has dit això, aleshores va tot bé.
if no have said this, then goes all ok

(23) *Mica* l'ho insultato
mica him-have insulted
"I've not insulted him".
[Cinque (1976: ex. (4))]

In my opinion, in (22a)–(22e), as well as in (23), *mica* moves first to PolP and then to FocusP, like Catalan *poc*. Along these lines, the ungrammaticality of (22f) follows from the fact that this sentence is a central or non-peripheral adverbial clause, which, according to Haegeman (2010a, b, 2013, and references therein), is derived

[28]Thanks to Professor Giuseppe Longobardi for the Italian examples. He speaks a Central Italian variety (Lazio) were the use of *mica* is perfectly productive.

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as a free relative, with wh-movement of an operator to the left periphery (to ForceP). Hence, movement of *mica* to FocusP creates intervention effects, because this adverbial clause is derived by operator extraction. The use of *mica* is possible, though, in main clauses (22a) and (23), complement clauses selected by epistemic verbs (22b), peripheral adverbial clauses (22c), and non-restrictive relative clauses (22d), which are not derived by the movement of an operator and, consequently, are the ones that admit Main or Root Clause Phenomena (MCP or RP), such as movement to FocusP.

Furthermore, the examples in (24) and (25) illustrate that *mica* also shares the same distribution as Catalan *pas*, and that in this case neither of them is ungrammatical in central or non-peripheral adverbial clauses—see (24f). Batllori and Hernanz (2013) show that *pas* is a LNEPP, which is base generated below Cinque (1999) MoodPIrrealis (i.e., the locus of the non-peripheral adverbial clause operator, according to Haegeman). Thus, there are no intervention effects in the derivation of this kind of adverbial clauses and, in this case, *pas* and *mica*, generated below MoodPIrrealis, are grammatical in all the utterances given from (24) to (25).

(24) a. Non ho *mica* detto questo.
a'. No he *pas* dit això.
no have no said this
"I haven't said this at all"

b. Credo che non abbia *mica* detto questo.
b'. Crec que no havia *pas* dit això.
think that no had no said this
"I think that she/he hadn't said this at all"

c. Maria dice che Gianni non ha *mica* detto questo.
c'. La Maria diu que en Joan no ha *pas* dit això.
the Mary says that the John no has no said this
"Mary says that John hasn't said this at all"

d. Chiudi la porta che non fa *mica* caldo
d'. Tanca la porta, que no fa *pas* calor.
close the door, that no is no hot
"Close the door, because it isn't hot at all"

e. Maria, che non ha *mica* detto questo, ...
e'. La Maria, que no ha *pas* dit això,…
the Mary, that no has no said this, ...
"Mary, who hasn't said this at all, ..."

f. Se non hai *mica* detto questo, allora va tutto bene.
f'. Si no has *pas* dit això, aleshores va tot bé.
if no have no said this, then goes all ok
"if you haven't said this at all, then everything is ok"

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(25) Non è *mica* freddo, qua dentro
not is mica cold here inside
"It's not cold (at all) here"
[Cinque (1976: ex. (11a))]

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the fact that in some varieties of Italian, *mica* behaves as a negative marker, which confirms hypothesis IIIc stated in Sect. 2 (that is, the evolution into a negative marker).

(26) È *mica* alta la Loren
is mica tall the Loren
"S. Loren is not tall"
[Espinal (1993: footnote 2, ex. (iic))]

Given all that, it is clear that Italian data fit the hypotheses stated in Sect. 2. Accordingly, Italian *mica* has a [uNeg] formal feature that can be licensed under different operators. First of all, as the examples in (22) and (23) show, it can be licensed under an unvalued [iNeg] formal feature in Pol and a Focus Operator [same]/[reverse], like Modern Catalan *poc*. Secondly, as exemplified in (24) and (25) Italian *mica*, like Modern Catalan *pas*, can license its [uNeg] formal feature under an anti-veridical operator: Op¬ [iNeg].

To conclude this section, it is worth adding that Italian *mica* cannot be exclusively regarded as a LNEPP (cf. Batllori and Hernanz 2013). Moreover, its parallelism with Catalan *poc* and *pas* embodies different ways of 'grammaticalising' or fixing the expression of negation within natural languages (see Biberauer 2013).

Table 3 summarises the syntactic formal features and the loci of licensing of the main negative items under study, which corroborate the initial hypotheses posed in Sect. 2. I leave aside PIs because, as said before, they have a strong semantic feature, but they do not have formal features.

Table 3 Negative expressions with syntactic formal features

Catalan *pas* Italian *mica*	Catalan *poc* Italian *mica*	Catala *pla*
[uNeg]	[uNeg]	[uNeg]
Op¬ [iNeg]	unvalued [iNeg] Pol°	unvalued [iNeg] Pol°
anti-veridical Op	FocusP Op [same] /[reverse]	ForceP Op [objection]

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The following section is going to focus on the metalinguistic content of these items and on their syntactic representation, along the lines of Martins (2014).

5 Metalinguistic Negation in Syntactic Terms

In this section I examine the metalinguistic uses[29] of Modern Catalan *poc*, *pla*, and *pas* so as to prove that the semantic content of these negative expressions is related to their syntactic characterization as either HNEPP or LNEPP—that is, hypotheses IIIa and IIIb.

Notice that Martins (2014) classifies Metalinguistic Negative Markers (MNM) into two categories: Peripheral MNM and Internal MNM. Roughly, for ease of exposition, we could take HNEPP and PMNM, on the one hand, and LNEPP and IMNM, on the other, to be the same kind of elements.

Before checking whether hypothesis III is confirmed by Catalan data in relation to *poc*, *pla*, and *pas*, however, I refer to Farkas and Bruce (2010) and Martins (2014), because I rely on some of their findings. Farkas and Bruce (2010: 106–107) put forward two types of polarity features that can capture several metalinguistic uses of negation: (i) absolute polarity features ([+], [−]), and (ii) relative polarity features ([same], and [reverse]; i.e., agreement and disagreement). Martins (2014) suggests that a third relative polarity feature [objection][30] encoded in the CP domain[31] should be regarded, and, as said above, she argues in favour of two kinds of metalinguistic negative markers (MNM) to license assertive and/or evaluative features. In line with this, she poses that Internal MNM that license [+ assertive] features and are rooted in the TP domain, can move to Spec,CP after having undergone morphological merge with V, whereas Peripheral MNM that license [+ assertive] and [+ evaluative] features are merged in Spec,CP.

Furthermore, Martins (2014) points out that Internal Metalinguistic Negative Markers (IMNM) and Peripheral Metalinguistic Negative Markers (PMNM) can be discriminated by their response to following tests: (i) availability in isolation and nominal fragments, (ii) ability to deny a negative proposition, (iii) compatibility with idiomatic sentences, (iv) with coordinate structures featuring a sequence of events, and (v) also with VP ellipsis. While IMNM trigger ungrammaticality in these syntactic environments, PMNM are perfect in all these contexts.

[29] As defined by Horn (1989/2001: 363), "metalinguistic negation focuses, not on the truth or falsity of a proposition, but on the assertability of an utterance." It does not necessarily bring about the untruth of the equivalent affirmative proposition, and "can either be anchored in the previous utterance or deny a common ground presupposition" (Martins 2014). See Lee (this volume) for additional information with regard to the way metalinguistic negation is processed.

[30] According to her, this feature [objection] "helps identify responding assertions, among declaratives".

[31] Martins distinction between relative features encoded in the CP domain (i.e., [same], [reverse] and [objection]) and polarity features encoded in SigmaP (i.e., [+] and [−]) can be captured in my analysis under the assumption that the former are encoded either in ForceP or FocusP, and the latter in PolP.

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Consistent with this, I put *pla*, *poc* and *pas*[32] through these tests in order to see whether their metalinguistic content is directly related to their syntactic nature and to prove that hypotheses IIIa and IIIb (that is, becoming either a HNEPP or a LNEPP depending on the locus of licensing) are right. The results show that *pla* (a HNEPP) can be regarded as an PMNM, and *pas* (a LHNEPP) as an IMNM, because *pla* can occur in isolation and also in nominal fragments, as illustrated by (27a) and (27b), whereas *pas* cannot, as (28a) and (28b) show.

(27) a. – En Joan ha pagat el menjar, no? – Ell *pla* / – Això *pla*
the John has paid the meal, not he not this not
"– John has paid the meal, hasn't he? – No, he hasn't."

b. – Diu que comprarem el cotxe vermell. – El vermell *pla*.
he-says that we-will-buy the car red the red not
"–He says that we are buying the red car. –Not the red one."

(28) a. – En Joan ha pagat el menjar, no? – *Ell *pas* / – *Això *pas*
the John has paid the meal, not he not this not

b. – Diu que comprarem el cotxe vermell. – *El vermell *pas*.
he-says that we-will-buy the car red the red not

And *pla* can deny a negative proposition, as in (29), but *pas* cannot, see (30).

(29) – Ell no pot estar begut, perquè ell no beu. – *Pla* que no.
he no can be drunk because he no drink no that not
"-He can't be drunk, because he doesn't drink. –Yes, he does."

(30) – Ell no pot estar begut, perquè ell no beu.
he no can be drunk because he no drink
– **Pas* que no. / – *No *pas*.
no that not no not-at-all

[32]In regard to *pas*, in Modern Catalan it requires the presence of the negative marker *no* to be licensed, and cannot convey a negative meaning on its own. Espinal (1993: 355) already stated that in Modern Catalan it is *no-pas* that cancels a conceptual assumption, confirms someone's expectations (i.e., a negative proposition or a conversational implicature), and reinforces negation. According to her, *no-pas* doesn't contribute to the "explicit content of the proposition or to truth-conditions" and enriches "linguistically undetermined language expressions, by implying a non-descriptive use of negation" (Espinal 1993:368). Thus, Modern Catalan *no-pas* is a Metalinguistic Negation Marker (MNM).

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Moreover, *pla* can be used with idiomatic expressions (31), but *pas* cannot (32).

(31) En Joan *pla* (que) somia truites
the John not (that) dreams omelettes
"John doesn't daydream"

(32) *En Joan somia *pas* truites
the John dreams not omelettes

And *pla* can be employed in coordinate structures that constitute a sequence of events, as in (33). On the contrary, *pas* triggers ungrammaticality in these cases, see (34).

(33) – Es van quedar sense cèntims i van deixar la feina.
PRON AUX_{PAST} run without money and AUX_{PAST} leave the job
"They run out of money and gave up working."
– Ells *pla* que es van quedar sense cèntims i van
they not that PRON AUX_{PAST} run without money and AUX_{PAST}
deixar la feina. Es van quedar sense cèntims perquè
leave the job PRON AUX_{PAST} run without money because
van perdre la feina.
AUX_{PAST} lose the job
"They didn't run out of money and gave up working. They run out of money, because they lost their job."

(34) – Es van quedar sense cèntims i van deixar la feina.
PRON AUX_{PAST} run without money and AUX_{PAST} leave the job
"They run out of money and gave up working."
– *Ells es van quedar *pas* sense cèntims i van
they PRON AUX_{PAST} run not without money and AUX_{PAST}
deixar la feina. Es van quedar sense cèntims perquè
leave the job PRON AUX_{PAST} run without money because
van perdre la feina.
AUX_{PAST} lose the job

Furthermore, *pla* is compatible with VP/TP ellipsis, while *pas* is not, as the examples in (35) and (36) show.

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(35) –En Joan li va regalar un ram de roses a la
the John to-her AUX_{PAST} present a bunch of roses to the
seva filla.– Ell *pla*.
her daughter he not
"–John presented her daughter with a bunch of roses.–He didn't."

(36) –En Joan li va regalar un ram de roses a
the John to-her AUX_{PAST} present a bunch of roses to
la seva filla. –*Ell *pas*.
the her daughter he not

Last but not least, Martins (2014) takes the incompatibility of PMNM with evidential adverbs as a proof for their merge into Spec,CP, because they compete for the same structural position in Cinque (1999) hierarchic structure. Notice, though, that under my analysis PMNMs merge in ForceP (see footnote 31). Along the lines of Hernanz (2006: 144), I consider that these adverbs are merged in ForceP, which is "the syntactic domain that expresses assertion and which provides the structure to host modality operators". The predictable incompatibility of *pla* with this kind of adverbs is shown in (37) below.

(37) a. *Evidentment (que) *pla* (que) vindrà.
Evidently that not that will-come

b. **Pla* (que) vindrà evidentment.
Not that will-come evidently

So far we have seen that *pla* is a high emphatic polarity particle with a peripheral metalinguistic negative marker meaning and that *pas* is a low emphatic polarity particle with an internal metalinguistic negative marker reading. In the variety of Modern Catalan under study *pas* can merge morphologically[33] into the auxil-

[33]Further evidence in favour of considering that the merge undergone by *pas* is morphological comes from the fact that neither an adverb nor a complement can interfere between *pas* and the auxiliary or the past participle, as illustrated in the following examples:

(i) *La Maria *no* ha mai/més/sempre *pas* vingut
Mary not has never/more/always at-all come

(ii) *La Maria *no* ha vingut mai/més/sempre *pas*
Mary not has come never/more/alway at-all

(iii) *La Maria *no* ha menjat patates *pas*
Mary not has eaten potatoes at-all

It is worth pointing out that the auxiliary and the participle constitute a morphological cluster in Modern Catalan.

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iary head or the participle in TP, giving as a result the sequence 'AUX *PAS* PARTICIPLE' or 'AUX PARTICIPLE *PAS*'. Hence, the impossibility of licensing (N)PIs follows[34] (see also footnote 7), and its [uNeg] feature is only licensed under the anti-veridical operator *no*.

From now on, I compare *pla* and *pas*, on the one hand, with *poc*, on the other, to find out whether *poc* is also an PMNM or not. At first glance, it is clear that *poc* parallels with *pla* from a syntactic standpoint: both of them can license (N)PIs, for instance (see Rigau 2004; Batllori and Hernanz 2013, for more information on this). However, *poc* also triggers ungrammaticality when put through the tests illustrated from (27) to (36), but it can co-occur with evidential adverbs, see (38). So it cannot be analysed in the same terms as *pla*. It also differs from *pas* in that it cannot merge morphologically with V (**has poc vist* "have not seen").

(38) a. Evidentment (que) *poc* ho farà.
Evidently that no it will-do
"Evidently he won't do it"

b. *Poc* ho farà evidentment.
No it will-do evidently
"He evidently won't do it"

I take all this as evidence in favour of hypothesis IIa concerning the locus of licensing: *Poc* is licensed under a FocusP operator (the locus of the relative polarity features [same] and [reverse]), whereas *pla* is licensed under a ForceP operator (the locus of the relative polarity feature [objection]).

Furthermore, I conclude that the division between PMNM and IMNM is not enough to capture the behaviour of all metalinguistic negators, because Catalan *poc* is a HNEPP (like *pla*), but it is not a PMNM in the terms given by Martins (2014). I leave this aspect for further research together with the need to explore in more detail the parallelism between Catalan *poc* and Italian *mica*, and to determine the highest adverb in Cinque (1999) hierarchy that can co-occur with *poc* and *mica*.[35]

Finally, it is also worth saying that some metalinguistic negators (specifically, HNEPP) can also license (N)PIs.

[34]As a functional projection, TP conveys procedural meaning, and thus the impossibility of licensing (N)PIs follows.

[35]I would like to thank Professor Ian Roberts for this observation that I leave aside for subsequent research, because it is beyond the scope of this paper.

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6 Conclusion

This paper shows that the historical evolution of an n-word is conditioned by the presence or absence of a syntactic formal feature [uNeg] and that depending on their having an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] or not, minimizers can either become Polarity Items or Emphatic Polarity Particles (with metalinguistic content). It establishes three different ways of fixing the syntactic expression of negation within natural languages: (1) under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature and either a Focus Operator that encodes the meaning [same]/[reverse], or a Force Operator that encodes [objection]; (2) under an anti-veridical operator Op¬ [iNeg]; and (3) under a non-veridical operator. Moreover, the paper also argues in favour of the significant role of syntax in the expression of metalinguistic negation. Accordingly, it examines Catalan marked versus unmarked negation to show that the cognitive mechanisms involved in their meaning are instances of Metalinguistic Negation. It also checks their licensing requirements and examines their diachronic evolution, and their distributional behaviour from a comparative standpoint. It draws attention to the trigger of the negative value of these negative expressions (i.e., the [uNeg] formal feature), and illustrates the separate historical pathway followed by PIs and NEPPs. It is shown that Old Catalan *pas* contrasted with PIs such as *gens*, even though they displayed a similar syntactic distribution, in having a formal [uNeg] feature which could be licensed under non-veridical operators. The comparison between Catalan *poc* and *pas*, on the one hand, and Italian *mica*, on the other, provides evidence of microvariation with regard to underspecification and licensing requirements of negative expressions given in the initial hypotheses: Italian *mica* has an uninterpretable formal feature [uNeg] that can be licensed under two operators (first, under an unvalued [iNeg] Pol feature and a Focus Operator, like Modern Catalan *poc*; and, second, under an anti-veridical operator: Op¬ [iNeg]). Additionally, both Catalan *pas* and Italian *mica* brought about a negative marker in some particular dialects. In Sect. 5, the syntactic representation of metalinguistic content is evaluated and I conclude that the division between PMNM and IMNM is not enough to capture the behaviour of all metalinguistic negators, on the one hand, and that some metalinguistic negators (specifically HNEPP) can also license (N)PIs, on the other.

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