SYNTACTIC ASPECTS OF METALINGUISTIC NEGATION

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Abstract. This paper investigates expressions that convey 'objection' in the sense of Horn (1989), dealing with data from Portuguese, Spanish, French, English and Hungarian. It shows that such expressions, which include idioms/swear words, locative/temporal deictics, *wh*- words and lexical instantiations of 'nothing', behave as metalinguistic negation (MN) markers. It then provides information on their availability across languages (according to the extant literature) and describes the different word order patterns associated with them. It is proposed that what unifies the apparent crosslinguistic diversity of MN markers is their syntax at the 'left periphery' (under the cartographic approach of Rizzi 1997 and further subsequent developments). Farkas and Bruce's (2010) concepts of 'responding' assertions and 'relative polarity' features are considered crucial to understand the distinctive polarity characteristics of MN sentences.

Keywords: metalinguistic negation, left periphery, swear words, locative/temporal deictics, wh-words, comparative syntax, polarity features, word order.

1. INTRODUCTION

Different types of unambiguous metalinguistic negation (MN) markers can be found across languages (cf. Martins 2020a). My goal in this paper is to investigate what they may have in common despite their apparent diversity. As illustrated in (1), MN markers include (not exclusively) idioms/swear words, temporal/locative deictics and *wh*- words. Examples are from European Portuguese, which throughout this paper I will abbreviate to Portuguese.

(1) A: A União Europeia (não) vai acabar.
the Union European (not) goes end-INF
'The European Union will (not) come to an end.'
B: a. A União Europeia (não) vai acabar *uma ova*.
the Union European (not) goes end-INF MN-marker (literally, 'a fish roe')
b. *Uma ova* é que a União Europeia (não) vai acabar.
MN-marker is that the Union European (not) goes end-INFIN
c. A União Europeia (não) vai acabar *agora*.
the Union European (not) goes end-INFIN MN-marker (literally, 'now')
d. *Agora* (não) vai.
MN-marker (not) goes

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e. *Qual* a União Europeia (não) vai acabar.
which the Union European (not) goes end-INFIN
f. A União Europeia (não) vai acabar *o quê*.
the Union European (not) goes end-INFIN the what
g. *Qual* a União Europeia (não) vai acabar qual quê.
which the Union European (not) goes end-INFIN which what
h. *Uma ova* / *Agora* / *Qual*.
[isolated MN markers]
'Like hell the European Union will (not) come to an end.'

Addressing the question of what may link together these different types of MN markers, I propose they are speaker-oriented (attitudinal/challenging) evaluative expressions with a basically common syntax. Adopting a cartographic approach to the sentential left periphery (Rizzi 1997, and further subsequent developments), I will put forward an analysis aimed at unifying the syntax of MN markers and at the same time deriving language-internal and crosslinguistic variation.

I use the term 'metalinguistic negation' in the sense of Horn (1989), who defines it as "a device for objecting to a previous utterance on any grounds whatever" (Horn 1989: 363), and distinguishes it from descriptive/ordinary negation:

> Apparent sentence negation represents either a descriptive truth-functional operator, taking a proposition **p** into a proposition **not-p** (or a predicate **P** into a predicate **not-P**), or a metalinguistic operator which can be glossed 'I object to **U**', where **U** is crucially a linguistic utterance or utterance type rather than an abstract proposition. (Horn 1989: 377)

In section 2, I will clarify why I refer to idioms/swear words, temporal/locative deictics and *wh*- words expressing denial (like in (1) above) as 'MN markers'. I will show that they differ from descriptive/ordinary negation and pattern with metalinguistic negation expressed by 'not' in being excluded from 'initiating assertions' (Farkas and Bruce 2010), not displaying negative concord, not licensing negative polarity items, being compatible with (strong) positive polarity items, being necessarily interpreted as external negation and being a main clause phenomenon. Section 3 will offer an overview of the different types of unambiguous MN markers that have been reported in the literature on Romance and other languages. Section 4 will be dedicated to the syntax of unambiguous MN markers. It will start with some descriptive observations concerning word order and the presence/absence of the complementizer *que/é que* and will then show how the proposed syntax derives them.

In a nutshell, it will be proposed that the MN markers that can appear either sentence-initially or sentence-finally occupy the same position within the sentential left periphery in both orders, the latter being derived by IP-topicalization to a Speech Act layer above ForceP. Sentence-initial MN markers that are articulated with the *in situ* IP through the complementizers *que*/*é que* are first merged in Focus, then move to Force. Instead of merging of the complementizer, the verb may move to Fin(ite), deriving subject-verb inversion. Romance sentence-initial MN markers that do not cooccur with the complementizer *que*/*é que* are directly merged in Force (not first-merged in Focus). Corr's (2016) split Force (i.e. Evaluative>Evidential>Declarative) will prove crucial to derive

some aspects of microvariation. Concerning the relation between metalinguistic negation and polarity, it will be proposed that a left-peripheral [*objection*] feature is a constitutive part of MN sentences. This feature adds to the [*same*] and [*reverse*] relative polarity features devised by Farkas and Bruce (2010) and gives MN sentences their distinctive polarity characteristics. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. PROPERTIES OF MN MARKERS

Metalinguistic negation is a type of denial that differs from proposition denial conveyed by descriptive/ordinary negation (Horn 1985, 1989; Geurts 1998). Whereas descriptive/ordinary negation is not limited to denial contexts, hence can occur in 'initiating' and 'responding' assertions (Farkas and Bruce 2010), metalinguistic negation is always a reaction to a previous assertion (audibly uttered or 'in the air'; cf. Geurts (1989: 362), Martins (2020: 357)), thus excluded from initiating assertions. That the MN markers investigated in this paper unambiguously express metalinguistic negation is demonstrated by the fact that they are not admitted in out-of-the-blue sentences (i.e. initiating assertions), as exemplified in (2) and (3), which only allow the descriptive negation (DN) interpretation. In (2b) and (3b) *agora* can only have the temporal adverbial interpretation ('now'), which results in a contradiction between the two terms of the proposition in (2b), under the widely accepted view that rainy weather is bad weather, and in incompatibility between *hoje* 'today' and *agora* 'now' in (3b), possibly due to their distinct temporal ranges. Sentence (3c) is uninterpretable.

(2) a. *Não* está bom tempo mas também *não* está o dia de chuva que anunciaram.
not is good weather but also not is the day of rain that announced.3PL
'The weather isn't good but it is not the announced rainy day either.'

b. # Está *agora* bom tempo mas também está *agora* o dia de chuva que anunciaram.
is now good weather but also is now the day of rain that announced.3PL
'Now the weather is good but also a rainy day as announced.'

(3) a. Oh! Hoje *não* há esquilos no jardim.
oh! today not is squirrels in.the garden
'Oh no! Today there aren't squirrels in the park.'

b. # Oh! Hoje há *agora* esquilos no jardim.
oh! today is now squirrels in.the garden
'Oh no! today there is now squirrels in the park.'

c. *Oh! Hoje há esquilos no jardim *uma ova*.
oh! today is squirrels in.the garden a fish.roe

Another specificity of MN markers that distinguishes them from descriptive/ordinary negation is their invisibility concerning negative concord. This property allows MN markers to convey denial of negative sentences, as no negative concord is established between the predicative negation marker and the MN marker, as illustrated in (1) above, or between n-words and the MN marker, as shown in (4) and (5) with deictic, idiomatic and

wh- MN markers. In (5), there is negative concord between *ninguém* 'nobody' and *nada* 'nothing/
anything', but no negative concord with *uma ova*.

(4) A: *Ninguém* o viu.
nobody him saw
'Nobody saw him.'
B: a. *Ninguém* o viu *agora*.
nobody him saw MN-marker
b. *Ninguém* o viu *uma ova*.
nobody him saw MN-marker
c. *Qual* *ninguém* o viu.
MN-marker nobody him saw
d. *Ninguém* o viu *o quê*.
nobody him saw MN-marker
'Nobody saw him my eye.' / 'Like hell nobody did.'

(5) A: *Ninguém* viu *nada*.
nobody saw anything
'Nobody saw anything.'
B: *Ninguém* viu *nada* *uma ova*.
nobody saw anything MN-marker
'Nobody saw anything my eye.' / 'Like hell (nobody did)!'

MN markers are unable to license negative polarity items (NPIs)/n-words and, conversely, are compatible with positive polarity items (PPIs) of the type excluded from ordinary negative sentences. The special relation between metalinguistic negation and polarity items constitutes one of the classic tests devised by Horn (1985, 1989) to separate MN from DN in 'not' sentences. The examples in (6) and (7) are taken from Horn (1989). In (6Bb) MN is expressed by *not*, just like DN in (6Ba). Contextual factors disambiguate between the DN and MN readings. In (7a-b) MN is expressed by what Horn (1989: 566) refers to as 'formulaic external negations' and I call (unambiguous) MN markers. In such cases only the MN reading is available. Hence the denied assertions in (7) can be easily reconstructed by the reader. The examples show that whereas DN excludes the PPIs *already/still* and requires the NPIs *yet/anymore*, MN displays the opposite pattern.

(6) A: Bill has *already* forgotten that today is Friday. (Horn 1989: 368)
B: a. Maybe he has*n't* {*yet*/**already*}, but will soon. (DN)
b. Bill has*n't already* forgotten that today is Friday, because today is Thursday. (MN)

(7) a. *Like hell* I {*still* love you / *love you *anymore*}. (Horn 1989: 402)
b. *Like fudge*, he's {*already* washed up / *washed up *yet*}.

Testing with the Portuguese MN markers under discussion reveals exactly the same facts. The MN marker *agora* is compatible with the PPI *algo* 'something' but excludes the NPI/n-word *nada* 'anything, nothing' in (8). The minimizer *a ponta de um corno* 'the tip of a horn' is licensed under negation and excluded from affirmative sentences (compare (9a)

with (9b)). As expected, MN markers do not license the minimizer (see (9c-d)); but they can cooccur with it if independently licensed by ordinary negation (see (9e)). Therefore, the problem with (9c-d) is lack of licensing of the minimizer, not incompatibility between the minimizer and the MN marker. The paradigm in (10) features the polarity-sensitive idiomatic expression *pintar a manta* (literally, 'paint the blanket'; idiomatically, 'misbehave', especially speaking of a child), which requires an affirmative sentence, behaving as a strong PPI (compare (10Ba) with (10Bb)). Unsurprisingly, the PPI *pintar a manta* is compatible with the MN markers, as exemplified with *agora* in (10A').

(8) A: Tu estás a esconder-me *algo*.
you are to hide-me something
'You are hiding something from me.'
B: Estou *agora* a esconder-te {*algo*/**nada*}.
am MN-marker to hide-you {something/*anything}
'*Nonsense* I am hiding {something/*anything} from you.'

(9) a. Ele não faz a ponta de um corno.
he not does the tip of a horn
'He doesn't do a damn thing.'
b. # Ele faz *a ponta de um corno* sim. (only literal interpretation)
he does the tip of a horn yes
'He does make the tip of a horn.'
c. # Ele faz *agora a ponta de um corno*. (only literal interpretation)
he makes now the tip of a horn
'Now he makes the tip of a horn.'
d. *Ele faz *a ponta de um corno uma ova*. (uninterpretable)
he makes the tip of a horn a fish.roe
e. Ele *não* faz *a ponta de um corno* {*agora*/*uma ova*}.
he not makes the tip of a horn MN-marker
'Like hell he doesn't.'

(10) A: Como é que ele se portou?
how is that he SE behaved
'How did he behave?'
B: a. *Pintou a manta*.
painted.3SG the blanket
'He behaved badly.' / 'He acted up!'
b. # *Não pintou a manta*. (only literal interpretation)
not painted.3SG the blanket
'He didn't paint the blanket.'
A': *Pintou a manta agora*. (as a reaction to (10Ba))
painted the blanket MN-marker
'Nonsense he did.'

MN is an instance of external negation (Horn 1989; Drozd 2001; Kroeger 2014; among others), as attested, for example, by the interaction between negation and complex sentences including a reason *because* clause. Whereas DN displays scope ambiguity relative to matrix *not* and the adverbial reason clause, MN sentences only allow the wide

scope, external negation reading against the narrow scope, internal negation one. This is illustrated by the contrast between (11) and (12) and becomes particularly clear in (13a–c), where the MN markers totally exclude the narrow scope reading. Note that this is independent of the linear position of the MN marker, which is clause-final in (13Ba), clause-initial in (13Bb) and clause-medial in (13Bc).[2]

(11) a. He is not in jail because he lied. (DN)
b. [Reason>Neg] 'It is because he lied that he is not in jail'.
c. [Neg>Reason] 'It is not because he lied that he is in jail'.

(12) A: He is in (some fucking) jail because he lied.
B: [Neg>Reason] He isn't in (some fucking) jail because he lied. (MN)

(13) A: Está na prisão porque mentiu.
is in-the jail because lied
'He is in jail because he lied.'
B: a. Está na prisão porque mentiu *uma ova*.
is in.the prison because lied MN-marker
b. *Qual* está na prisão porque mentiu
MN-marker is in.the prison because lied
c. Está *agora* na prisão porque mentiu.
is MN-marker in-the prison because lied
'Like hell.' / 'He is in prison because he lied my eye.'

Metalinguistic negation is a Main Clause phenomenon, thus typically excluded from subordinate clauses (cf. Kroeger 2014). The Portuguese examples in (14) evidence the contrast between main and embedded clauses concerning MN markers. In a complex sentence like (14B), two interpretations are available for root *agora* (the MN interpretation and the temporal interpretation) but only the temporal adverbial interpretation is available for embedded *agora* (compare (14Ba–c) with (14Bd–e)). Note that MN *agora* can associate with the lower verb only if the embedded clause is promoted to main clause in the objecting reply, as in (15).

(14) A: O governo anunciou que vai baixar os impostos.
the government announced that goes lower the taxes

[2] A reviewer comments on (11): "There are two readings corresponding to the scope Neg>Reason, 11c indicates just one of them, where the causal relation is the focus of negation (we know he is in jail; we reject the claim about the cause of this situation). We can also have a reading without focus: "it is not the case that he is in jail because he lied" – this reading is maybe hard to get in 11, but is easier to get with the MN marker, according to my intuition – in other words, 13c is compatible with both him being in jail and him not being in jail". My intuition as a Portuguese speaker, however, is that (13c) cannot be interpreted as an objection to him being in jail. Such an objection would require excluding the reason *because* clause, as illustrated in (i), which could be an alternative reply to (13A):

(i) *Está agora na prisão*.
is MN-marker in-the prison
'He is in prison my eye'.

The syntactic analysis that will be proposed in section 4, excludes of the "reading without focus" suggested by the reviewer because in (13c) *na prisão porque mentiu* ('in prison because he lied') is in Spec,FocusP (as a result of VP focus movement after the verb has raised to T).

'The government announced that it will lower the taxes.'

B: a. O governo anunciou *agora* que vai baixar os impostos.
the government announced AGORA that goes lower the taxes

b. O governo anunciou que vai baixar os impostos *agora*.
the government announced that goes lower the taxes AGORA

c. *Agora*.
Int. 1: 'The government announced that it is going to lower the taxes my eye.'
Int.2: 'The government announced now that it is going to lower the taxes.'
Int. 3: 'The government announced that it is now going to lower the taxes.'

d. O governo anunciou que vai *agora* baixar os impostos.
the government announced that goes AGORA lower the taxes

e. O governo anunciou que vai baixar *agora* os impostos.
the government announced that goes lower AGORA the taxes.
'The government announced that it is now going to lower the taxes.'
(MN interpretation is unavailable)

(15) A: O governo anunciou que vai baixar os impostos.
the government announced that goes lower the taxes
'The government announced that it will lower the taxes.'

B: a. *Agora* vai.[3]
MN-marker goes

b. Vai *agora*.
goes MN-marker
'Like hell.'

3. TYPES OF MN MARKERS ACROSS LANGUAGES AND WORD ORDER PATTERNS

The largest and more widespread group of unambiguous MN markers across languages is constituted by idioms and swear words, such as English *like hell*, *my eye*, *my ass*, *my foot*, *bollocks/ballocks*, *no way*, *nonsense*, *yeah right*, *bullshit*, *poppycock*, *fiddlesticks*, *your old man*, *like fun*, *like shit*, *like fuck*, *like fudge*, *yo' mama*. Possibly all languages have this kind of MN markers, but lexical choices vary across languages, dialects and even individuals (see Richard Hudson summary on "naughty negation" in https://linguistlist.org/issues/4/4-277/). In Spanish, Olza-Moreno (2017) lists *una leche* ('a blow/hit'), *(unas/las) narices* ('a/the noses'), *una mierda* ('a shit'), *los cojones* ('the balls'). Pierre Larrivée (2011) offers *mon oeil* ('my eye') and *tu parles!* ('you speak') for French. In Portuguese, *uma ova* 'a fish roe', *o tanas* (obscure meaning), *uma merda* ('a shit'), *o caraças* (euphemistic slang for penis) are used as MN markers. Usually, idioms/swear words used as MN markers can appear in sentence-initial or sentence-final position, although some of them resist one of the positions, e.g. English *like hell* is always sentence-initial. In (16) and (17), examples with French *mon oeil* and Spanish *una mierda* are provided. The examples (16a) and (17a-b) show that in sentence-initial position the MN

[3] The sentence-initial position of *agora* is a dialectal feature of Northwestern varieties of European Portuguese. See on this matter, Pereira (2013).

markers are linked to the rest of the sentence by the complementizer *que* (or, in Portuguese, the cleft-marking complementizer *é que*, see (1Bb) above). In this respect there is a contrast with English, where idioms/swear words are always juxtaposed at the beginning or end of the sentence (see the English translations of the French and Spanish examples). Example (17) shows that Spanish may have subject-verb inversion with initial *una mierda* instead of the presence of *que* (compare (17c) with (17a-b)). Besides being sentence-peripheral, idioms and swear words may occur isolated when conveying metalinguistic negation (see (1h) above and (16c)).

(16) a. *Mon oeil que* le roi de France est chauve. Il n'y a pas de roi
my eye that the king of France is bald there NEG is NEG a king
de France.
of France
'My eye the king of France is bald. There is no king of France.'

b. Le roi de France est chauve *mon oeil*.
the king of France is bald my eye

c. Mon oeil!
my eye
'Nonsense the king of France is bald.' / 'The king of France is bald my eye.'
(Larrivée 2011: 3, and p.c.)

(17) a. – Déjame solo – grito.
leave.me alone shout.1SG
'Leave me alone – I shout.'
– *Y una mierda que* voy a hacerlo – responde, en el mismo tono mordaz.
and a shit that go.1SG to do.it answers in the same tone scathing
'Like hell – he answers, in the same scathing tone.'
Google search 27.08.2020[4]

b. – Baja la voz – dice alguien.
lower the voice says someone
'Lower your voice, someone says.'
– ¡*Y con una mierda que* voy a bajar la voz, Knight!
and with a shit that go.1SG to lower the voice Knight
'Like hell I will lower my voice, Knight!'
Google search 27.08.2020[5]

c. A: Deberías desculparte por tu comportamiento.
should.1SG apologize.REFL.1SG for your behaviour
'You should apologize for your behavior.'
B: ¡*Una mierda* voy (yo) a disculparme!
a shit go I to apologize.REFL
'Like hell I will apologize!'
(Olza Moreno 2017: 47)

[4] https://www.wattpad.com/720905473-the-only-reason%C2%A9-pausada-temporalmente-cap-08
[5] https://www.fanfiction.net/s/12579535/2/Tres-minutos-para-el-infierno

Besides idioms and swear words other types of MN markers have been identified in the literature, namely: 'nothing' (English, Portuguese, Rioplatense Spanish); *wh-* words (Portuguese, Spanish, maybe Hungarian); temporal/locative deictics (Portuguese); '*X que*' expressions (i.e. Spanish *ma que*, *otra que*, *minga que*, *cómo que*; cf. Garcia-Negroni 2017). This last group, which will not be addressed in the present paper, appears to be of a mixed type since it includes elements of the other classes, such as *minga* 'nothing' and the *wh-* word *cómo* 'how'.

The sentences in (18) and (19) feature the Rioplatense Spanish *minga* 'nothing', which either appears in initial position (with or without the complementizer *que*) or occurs isolated. English *nothing*, on the other hand, is always sentence-final, as exemplified in (20). Cf. Pinto (2010) on Portuguese *nada* 'nothing'.

(18) A: Juan si dio por vencido.
Juan himself gave for defeated
'Juan has given up.'
B: ¡*Minga que* se dio por vencido!
nothing that himself gave for defeated
'Not bloody likely has he given up!'
(García Negroni 2017: 24)

(19) ¡*Minga* nos van a poner de rodillas! ¡Minga!
nothing us go.3SG to put on bended.knees! nothing
'Like hell they will make us get down on bended knees! Like hell!'
(Alfredo De Angeli, Argentinian politician)[6]

(20) A: He found proofs that clinched the argument.
B: He found proofs that clinched the argument *nothing (of the sorts*).
(Bolinger 1977: 45; Horn 1989: 566)

The grammaticalization of locative/temporal deictics as MN markers has only been reported in Portuguese (Martins 2012, 2014).[7] These MN markers differ from the other types in that they can (*agora*, literally 'now') or must (*lá*, literally 'there') occur in medial position. Besides, they do not cooccur with an overt complementizer even when allowed in sentence initial position. The paradigm in (21) shows that *agora* is allowed in initial, medial or final position whereas (22) exemplifies the typically medial, immediately postverbal position of *lá*, and its exclusion from peripheral positions. *Agora* can occur isolated; *lá* cannot, except if it clusters together with *agora*, as shown in (23).[8]

[6] Cf.: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2j3Q-Hug4zo

[7] Although I am not aware of the existence of this type of MN markers in other languages besides Portuguese, some Bantu languages have ordinary NEG-markers originated from deictic locatives (cf. Devos, Kasombo and van der Auwera 2010; Devos and van der Auwera 2013).

[8] A reviewer comments: "For the MN markers that are, or appear to be, sentence-internal, the author assumes a very high position […], where everything that follows the MN marker is in SpecFoc and everything which precedes it is topicalized to SpecSAP by remnant movement. What is striking however is that we see the orders which these adverbs would have in their normal temporal/deictic use (*agora* = 'now', *là* = 'there'). So why not assume that they keep their formal features from their 'literal' use and they undergo LF-raising for interpretation in the special MN marker use?". In fact, it is not the case that *agora* and *lá* have a similar syntactic distribution as temporal/locative deictics and

(21) A: O cão quer ser amigo do gato.
the dog wants be friend of-the cat
'The dog wants to be friends with the cat.'
B: a. *Agora* quer.
MN-marker wants
b. Quer *agora* ser amigo do gato.
wants MN-marker be friend of-the cat
c. Quer (ser amigo do gato) *agora*.
wants be friend of-the cat MN-marker
'Nonsense the dog wants to be friends with the cat.'

(22) A: O cão quer ser amigo do gato.
the dog wants be friend of-the cat
'The dog wants to be friends with the cat.'
B: a. O cão quer *lá* ser amigo do gato.
the dog wants MN-marker be friend of-the cat
'Nonsense the dog wants to be friends with the cat.'
b. *O cão quer ser amigo do gato *lá*.
the dog wants be friend of-the cat MN-marker

(23) A: O cão quer ser amigo do gato.
the dog wants be friend of-the cat
'The dog wants to be friends with the cat.'
B: a. *Agora*.
b. **Lá*.
c. *Agora lá*.
'Nonsense.'

Turning now to *wh*- MN markers, they occur in initial and final position but different *wh*- phrases appear in each position. A specificity of *wh*- MN markers is that they may cooccur in the same sentence distributed between its left and right edges. In Portuguese, *wh*- MN markers also occur isolated, individually or in a cluster that reunites the typically sentence-initial *wh*- word with the typically sentence final one. Examples from Spanish and Portuguese are provided in (24) and (25) respectively.

(24) A: Hombre, es que como humillación no me refiero solo a los silbidos…
man is that with humiliation not REFL refer only to the whistles
'Man, with 'humiliation' I don't refer just to whistles…'
B: Pero *qué* humillación *ni qué narices*. Le han silbado porque no paraba una.
but what humiliation nor what noses. him have whistled because not stopped one
'But what humiliation?! They whistled to him because he wasn't stopping goals.'
(Olza Moreno 2017: 51)

as MN markers. The locative *lá* can be preverbal or postverbal and does not need to be adjacent to the verb; the MN marker *lá*, however, must appear postverbally and in strict adjacency to the verb. The MN marker *agora* is obligatorily sentence-initial in the Northwestern Portuguese dialects (see footnote 2) and must be postverbal outside that dialectal area. None of these restrictions apply to temporal *agora* in the relevant dialects. Cf. Martins (2014).

(25) A: Eles humilharam-no.
They humiliated him.
B: a. *Qual* humilharam-no.
which humiliated-him
b. Humilharam-no *o quê*.
humiliated-him the what
c. *Qual* humilharam-no *qual quê*.
which humiliated-him which what
d. Qual (quê).
which what
'Like hell they did.'

In an article dedicated to Hungarian polarity particles in responding assertions, Farkas (2009) discusses the contrasts between the 'reversal' particles *de* (literally, 'but') and *dehogy*, the latter composed, according to Farkas (2009), by the particle *de* plus the *wh*- word *hogy* 'how' (although *hogy* can also be the complementizer 'that'). Farkas (2009: 16) notes that: "An important difference between *de* and *dehogy* is that the sister of *dehogy* is not the asserted sentence but rather the sentence at the top of the input Table". This suggests that the Hungarian particle *dehogy* might be a *wh*- MN marker. The examples below show that *de* cooccurs with *nem* 'no, not' in reversing responses to positive assertions and with *igen* 'yes' in reversing responses to negative assertions. To the contrary, denying *dehogy* cooccurs with *nem* ('not') in responses to negative assertions and does not cooccur with *igen*. The exclamation mark in the sentences with *dehogy* is also suggestive. Expressing a speaker's attitude (or psychological state) is a feature that metalinguistic negation shares with exclamatives (cf. Castroviejo Miró 2008). The examples in (26) to (28) and their translations are as provided by Farkas (2009).

(26) A: Mari elment. (Farkas 2009: 113)
Mari PART.left
'Mari left.'
B: *Nem*, *nem* igaz. Nem ment el.
no, not true not left PART
'No, that's not true. She didn't leave.'
A: *De igen*, elment.
DE yes PART.left
'Yes, she left.'
B: *De nem*, *nem* ment el.
DE no not left PART
'But no, she didn't.'

(27) A: Mari elment már. (Farkas 2009: 115)
Mari PART.left already
'Mari has left already.'
B: *Dehogy* (ment el)! Itthon van.
dehogy left PART home is
'She didn't leave. She is home.'

(28) A: Mari nem ment még el. (Farkas 2009: 116)
Mari not left yet PART
'Mari hasn't yet left.'
B: *Dehogy nem* (ment el)! Már rég az iskolában van.
dehogy not left PART already long the school is
'She left. She's been at school for a long time.'

Another relevant piece of evidence comes from the fact that the positive polarity item *már* 'already' (see (27A) above) can cooccur with *dehogy*, which shows its compatibility with PPIs. The data in (29), for which I thank Veronika Hegedűs, exemplify the opposite behaviors of the ordinary negator *nem* and the denial particle *dehogy* relative to polarity items. Whereas in the '*nem*' sentence (29Ba) the PPI *már* of the initiating assertion is necessarily replaced by the NPI *még*, the '*dehogy*' sentence (29Bb) maintains *már* and excludes *még*. Also note that *dehogy* can occur isolated, like most MN markers, as shown in (29Bc).

(29) A: Mari elment *már*.
Mari PART.left already
B: a. *Nem*, *nem* ment {*még*/**már*} el!
no not left yet/*already PART
'Mari didn't leave yet.' (DN)
b. *Dehogy* ment {*már*/**még*} el!
dehogy left already/*yet PART
c. *Dehogy*!
'Mary didn't leave already,' (MN)

In Hungarian, *nem* 'not' conveys ordinary negation and metalinguistic negation, but whereas ordinary negation triggers verb movement resulting in inversion of the neutral particle-verb order, metalinguistic negation does not (Kiss 2015). This could appear as problematic for the hypothesis that *dehogy* expresses metalinguistic negation because sentences with *dehogy* display the inverted order verb-particle (cf. (27) and (28) above). However, the verb-particle order is triggered not only by (ordinary) negation but also by constituents in focus and *dehogy* seems to correspond to the latter (Farkas 2009). In the next section we will see evidence that different MN markers across languages appear to associate with the Focus projection in the sentential left periphery.

4. THE SYNTAX OF MN MARKERS AT THE CLAUSAL LEFT PERIPHERY

As demonstrated in the previous section, MN markers may appear in different positions in the sentence, some more usual than others. Table 1 summarizes the data.

Table 1

Word order patterns with MN markers

	position	word order	types of MN markers
I	initial	MN-marker [SVO]	idioms, temporal deictics, *wh*- words, 'nothing'
II	final	[SVO] MN-marker	idioms, temporal deictics, *wh*- words, 'nothing'
III	medial	SV MN-marker O	locative/temporal deictics
IV	initial–final	MN-marker [SVO] MN-marker	*wh*- words
V	isolated	MN-marker (MN-marker)	most MN-markers

Patterns I (sentence-initial), II (sentence-final) and V (isolated) are common to most MN markers, the main exception being the Portuguese locative *lá*, which must be strictly postverbal (surfacing in final position only if nothing else follows the verb) and cannot occur isolated. The Portuguese temporal deictics (*agora*, *alguma vez* 'sometime'), on the other hand, share pattern III (sentence-medial) with *lá* but also occur in patterns I, II and V. Pattern IV is exclusive of *wh*- words, which also occur in patterns I, II and V. But different *wh*- words occur in initial and final position and pattern V (isolated MN-marker) requires the presence of the *wh*- word whose typical position is sentence-initial. Another important descriptive observation concerns the presence/absence of an overt complementizer (*que*; *é que*) in the sentences with initial MN markers. The overt realization of the complementizer is associated with pattern I, but the MN markers that also occur in pattern III or pattern IV do not allow the complementizer.

In section 4.1 I will seek to explain this set of descriptive observations under the hypothesis that they follow from the syntax of MN markers at the left periphery.[9] In fact, different aspects of MN markers point to the sentential left periphery: (i) MN markers are non-argumental, descriptively meaningless, discourse-oriented material conveying a speaker's evaluative attitude (cf. Martins 2020 and references therein); (ii) the complementizer *que/é que* follows MN markers (iii) *wh*- phrases are among MN markers; (iv) metalinguistic negation is 'external negation' and a main clause phenomenon.

Section 4.2 will specifically address the relation between metalinguistic negation and polarity, articulating the analysis put forward in 4.1 with Farkas and Bruce's (2010) pragmatic model of conversational update. The distinction between initiating and responding assertions, on the one hand, and between absolute and relative polarity features, on the other, will be especially relevant.

4.1. Metalinguistic Negation and the Left Periphery

In the last decades, Rizzi's (1997, 2004) cartography of the left periphery, initially proposed as shown in Figure 1, has been enriched by further splitting some of the categories of the CP space and adding pragmatically motivated structure above CP. Many different proposals appeared in the literature. Corr's (2016) expanded left periphery

[9] Topic, Focus, Emphatic/Expressive/Evaluative, as a kind of illocutionary force, have been referred in the literature as activated layers of the left periphery in MN sentences (cf. Larrivée 2018; 2014; Giannakidou and Yoon 2011; Giannakidou and Stravou 2009).

incorporates a UtteranceP (UP) space above CP, hosting two Speech Act projections (cf. Speas and Tenny (2003), Haegeman (2006, 2014), Haegeman and Hill (2013)), and splits Rizzi's Force, which encodes illocutionary force, into three different categories, namely Evaluative, Evidential and Declarative, as represented in Figure 2. I will adopt here these two aspects of Corr's (2016) left periphery. I hypothesize that MN markers necessarily activate ForceP and, depending on the chosen MN marker, may activate FocusP as well.[10] In MN sentences, the UP space is also activated even when it does not display overt content. In Rizzi's (1997, 2004, 2016) system, Topic (and Mod) projections can be iterated, but FocP can only be activated once in a single CP field. I follow these assumptions but take topic-movement to be able to reach the SAP position above Force.

Rizzi's LEFT PERIPHERY (C-system/CP space)

Force Top* Int Top* Foc Mod* Top* Fin IP …

Discourse-oriented layer *Propositional layer*

Figure 1.
Rizzi's (1997, 2004) Left Periphery
(*Top – Topic, Int – Interrogative, Foc -Focus, Mod – (Adverbial) Modifier, Fin – Finiteness*)

Corr's LEFT PERIPHERY (UP space above CP space)

[SAHighP [SALowP [**EvalP** [EvidP [DeclP [TopP [Pol-IntP [ExclP [Wh-IntP [**FocusP** [FinP [IP …

Split **ForceP**

Syntactic encoding of 'conversational dynamics'

Figure 2.
Corr's (2016) Left Periphery
(*SA – Speech Act; Eval – Evaluative, Evid – Evidential, Decl – Declarative, Pol-Int – Polar-Interrogative, Excl – Exclamative, Wh-Int – Wh-Interrogative*)

[10] A reviewer comments: "An alternative analysis would take sentence-peripheral MN markers that lack an overt C to be adjuncts to CP/ForceP, assuming a higher functional layer only for those that take *que/é que*. I suspect that the author assumes a framework which bans adjunction (Kayne 1994, maybe in Cinque's 1999 version in which all adjuncts are specifiers of dedicated projections), but this is not clearly stated". It will be advisable to acknowledge this, so that the reader might understand why analyses involving adjunction are never considered". Theoretical options – the goal of offering an integrated analysis of the syntax of MN markers under a cartographic approach – but also empirical reasons explain why adjunction is not considered to account for the data discussed in this paper. Adjunction would not account for: (i) why the availability of the sentence-initial position for *agora* is subject to dialectal variation (see footnote 7), since there seems to be no restrictions on sentential left-adjunction across EP dialects; (ii) the *wh*- pattern, with specific *wh*- words appearing at the left- and right-edges of the sentence, as well as the unavailability of this pattern (i.e. pattern IV in table 1) with other types of MN markers; (iii) the fact that with fragments the MN marker *agora* must precede the fragment whereas idioms/swear words must follow it (cf. (38) below), independently of the presence/absence of a complementizer when those idioms/swear words are sentence-initial (Romance *vs.* English); (iv) why only the MN marker *qual* can be used to object to a previous objection expressed by another MN marker (cf. (46)–(47) below).

Let us now consider the word order patterns identified in table 1, starting with the crosslinguistically widely attested patterns I and II, with the MN marker occurring respectively at the leftmost and rightmost edges of the sentence. The presence of the complementizer *é que* in Portuguese, which typically occurs in cleft structures, signals that the constituent to its left is focus. In French, (mirative) focus constructions with *que* are also attested in colloquial speech (Authier and Haegeman 2019). I take idioms and other MN markers that must/can cooccur with the overt complementizer to be first-merged in FocusP, then move to ForceP, possibly going through Corr's three categories, Eval>Evid>Decl.[11] Merged in Fin, the complementizer links the discourse-oriented layer with the propositional layer of the sentence. In languages like English, MN markers are never followed by an overt complementizer. This kind of crosslinguistic variation might be the effect of the different types of focus structures each language allows. In Spanish, verb movement to Fin optionally arises as an alternative to merging of the complementizer, resulting in subject-verb inversion. The simplified structural representations in (30) to (32), featuring respectively French, Portuguese and Spanish data, illustrate pattern I. In (30) and (31) Fin is filled with the complementizer, in (32) with the raised verb. A third option is IP ellipsis, in which case only the MN marker is pronounced.

(30) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *mon oeil* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ ~~*mon oeil*~~ [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ *que* [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ *le roi de France est chauve* …
my eye that the king of France is bald

(31) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *uma ova* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ ~~*uma ova*~~ [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ *é que* [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ *está na prisão porque mentiu*…
a fish.roe is that is in-the prison because lied.3SG

(32) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *una mierda* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ ~~*una mierda*~~ [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ *voy* [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ *yo a disculparme*…
a shit go I to apologize

Pattern II slightly differs from pattern I. The MN markers are again merged in FocusP, then moved to ForceP. But there is IP topicalization to SAP, which derives the sentence final position of the MN marker and dispenses with the presence of the complementizer. This is exemplified in (33) and (34), to be compared with (30) and (31) respectively.

(33) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ *le roi de France est chauve* [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *mon oeil* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ ~~*mon oeil*~~ [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ ~~*le roi de France est chauve*~~ …
the king of France is bald my eye

(34) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ *está na prisão porque mentiu* [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *uma ova* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ ~~*uma ova*~~ [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ ~~*está na prisão porque mentiu*~~…
is in-the prison because lied.3SG a fish.roe

The Portuguese MN markers that can (or must) appear in medial position cannot cooccur with the complementizer *é que*. I take this to signal that they cannot be focus. Take, for example, Portuguese *agora*. It can appear in sentence initial and sentence final position, in which case it will only differ from idioms, structurally, in being directly merged in

[11] A reviewer raises the objection that: "A further problem for generation in SpecFocP is that it contravenes Rizzi's criterial freezing (see Rizzi 2006, 2010)". I do not have a clear answer to this question. Maybe the fact that the MN marker is externally, not internally, merged in Spec,FocP (i.e. not moved there) allows it to escape Criterial Freezing: "when a criterial configuration is created, the element carrying the criterial feature in the *moved phrase*, the criterial goal, is not accessible to *further movement*" (Rizzi 2017: 9; emphasis mine). Or maybe Criterial Freezing could be 'relativized'.

ForceP. What makes the medial positioning possible (i.e. pattern III) is precisely the fact that FocusP is free. This allows moving a constituent intended as the focus of the objection to FocusP, then topicalizing the remnant IP, as illustrated in (35) and (36).[12] If no constituent is moved to Focus, pattern II is derived with IP topicalization (see (37)) and pattern I is derived without it. Objections expressed by the non focal deictics are milder than those expressed by focal idioms/swear words. Metalinguistic negation always expresses a speaker's attitude, specifically an attitude of disapproval, which can go from mild, playful (or subtle) criticism to strong assertive (or scornful) criticism (cf. Chapman 1996). MN deictics tend to be at the bottom of the strength scale and MN idioms/swear words at the top, possibly with subtle (lexical) variations between members of the same class.

(35) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ *vai baixar* [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *agora* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ *os impostos* [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ ~~*vai baixar os impostos*~~ …
goes lower AGORA the taxes

(36) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ *vai* [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *agora* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ *baixar os impostos* [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ ~~*vai baixar os impostos*~~ …
goes AGORA lower the taxes

(37) [$_{\mathbf{SAP}}$ *vai baixar os impostos* [$_{\mathbf{ForceP}}$ *agora* [$_{\mathbf{FocusP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{FinP}}$ [$_{\mathbf{IP}}$ ~~*vai baixar os impostos*~~ …
goes lower the taxes AGORA

[12] The MN marker *agora* usually prompts VP Ellipsis (or TP Ellipsis), giving rise to patterns that parallel those found in answers to *yes/no* questions in Portuguese (compare (iB) with (iiBa)). Constituents that escape deletion under VP/TP Ellipsis (and are not topicalized/left dislocated) display contrastive discourse prominence, which is signaled by the corresponding continuation/rectification, as exemplified in (iiBb).The inadequacy of the continuation in (iiBc) – in contrast to (iiBd) – arises because it disregards the focus of the objection. It would be fine as a continuation for (iiBa).

(i) A: O Vladimir morreu no sábado?
the Vladimir died in-the Saturday
'Vladimir died last Saturday.'
B: Morreu.
died
'Yes, he did.'

(ii) A: O Vladimir morreu no sábado.
the Vladimir died in-the Saturday
'Vladimir died last Saturday.'
B: a. Morreu *agora*.
died MN-marker
'No way.'
b. Morreu *agora* no sábado. Morreu no domingo.
died MN-marker in-the Saturday died in-the Sunday
'No way he died last Saturday. He died last Sunday.'
c. Morreu *agora* no sábado. #O Vladimir tem uma saúde de ferro.
died MN-marker in-the Saturday the Vladimir has a health of iron
'No way he died last Saturday. Vladimir is the healthiest person I know.'
d. Morreu *agora* no sábado. Ninguém morre ao sábado.
died MN-marker in-the Saturday nobody dies in-the Saturday
'No way he died last Saturday. Nobody dies on Saturday.'

Both *agora* and the idiom *uma ova* (like idioms in general) can be associated with fragments. As exemplified in (38), *agora* precedes the fragment whereas *uma ova* (like, for example, English *my ass*) follows it. This is further evidence in favor of the different relation of idioms/swear words and deictics with FocusP. Whereas with *agora* FocusP is free to receive the fragment *vermelho* 'red', with *uma ova* (or *my ass*) it is not, which implies that only a topic position will be available to host the fragment (cf. Rizzi 2016 on the 'uniqueness of left peripheral focus').

(38) A: Compramos um carro vermelho.
buy.1PL a car red
'Let us buy a red car.'
B: a. *Agora* vermelho.
AGORA red
b. Vermelho *uma ova*.
red UMA OVA
Red my ass.
c. *Uma ova (é que) vermelho.
UMA OVA (is that) red
* My ass red.

The deictic locative *lá* differs from *agora* in only allowing pattern III (not patterns I and II). The fact that the MN marker *lá* must be strictly postverbal can be explained if *lá* cannot stay alone in ForceP (due to some morphological or other deficiency), requiring the presence of the verb. Under Corr's (2016) split ForceP, this can be explained if *lá* does not move beyond Evid and it is the verb that moves to Eval, like in other types of evaluative sentences in European Portuguese (cf. Ambar 1999; Martins 2020). This is represented in a simplified manner in (39). Alternatively to verb movement to Eval, the deictic *agora* can be merged in Eval, resulting in the deictic cluster *agora lá*, which can occur isolated (if there is ellipsis of the *in situ* IP) or in structures such as (40) and (41), featuring respectively pattern III, with *agora lá* in medial position, and pattern II, with *agora lá* in final position. For further details on the syntax of the Portuguese MN markers *lá* and *agora*, including evidence that *lá* moves from inside the IP in contrast to the other MN markers, see Martins (2014).

(39) [$_{SAP}$ *O governo* [$_{EvalP}$ *vai* [$_{EvidP}$ *lá* [$_{DeclP}$ [$_{FocusP}$ *baixar os impostos* [$_{FinP}$
the government goes LÁ lower the taxes [$_{IP}$ ~~*O*~~

(40) [$_{SAP}$ *O governo* *vai* [$_{EvalP}$ *agora* [$_{EvidP}$ *lá* [$_{DeclP}$ [$_{FocusP}$ *baixar os impostos*
the government goes AGORA LÁ lower the taxes
[$_{FinP}$ [$_{IP}$ ~~*O*~~

(41) [$_{SAP}$ *O governo* *vai* *baixar os impostos* [$_{EvalP}$ *agora* [$_{EvidP}$ *lá* [$_{DeclP}$ [$_{FocusP}$ [$_{FinP}$
the government goes lower the taxes AGORA LÁ [$_{IP}$ ~~*O*~~

Pattern IV is exclusive of *wh*- MN markers. In Portuguese, two *wh*- words are involved, *qual* and *quê*, but the latter can only occur in final position whereas the former can appear in two different higher positions. I take *quê* ('what') to be a focus item that needs to cooccur with an item in Force to form an MN marker. This item can be the *wh*-word *qual* ('which') or the determiner *o* ('the'). On the other hand, *qual* can as well occupy

a higher position at the outer edge of the UP space (possibly giving content to a [*objection*] feature or OBJECTION Speech Act Operator – see section 4.2). Because *qual* can be (externally or internally) merged in SAHighP, pattern IV with the topicalized IP sandwiched in between *wh-* words is possible. Like in the previously discussed structures (with other types of MN markers), the topicalized IP moves to SALowP. The simplified representation in (42) illustrates pattern IV. The availability of patterns I and II with *wh-*words is exemplified in (43) and (44) respectively. The *wh-* word *qual* and the cluster *qual quê* may occur isolated (see (43)) where the round brackets around the content of the IP indicate possible ellipsis)). The unavailability of *qual* in final position signals that it obligatorily merges in SAHighP. The sequence *o quê* cannot occur isolated or in initial position possibly because *quê* does not move to Force and cannot undergo postsyntactic morphological merger with the non *wh-* determiner *o* 'the'.

(42) [**SAHighP** *qual* [**SALowP** *vai baixar os impostos* [**ForceP** {*qual/o*} [**FocusP** *quê* [**FinP** [**IP** ~~*vai baixar os impostos*~~ …
QUAL goes lower the taxes QUAL/O QUÊ

(43) [**SAHighP** *qual* [**ForceP** ~~*qual*~~ [**FocusP** [**FinP** [**IP** (*vai baixar os impostos*) …
QUAL goes lower the taxes

(44) [**SALowP** *vai baixar os impostos* [**ForceP** {*qual/o*} [**FocusP** *quê* [**FinP** [**IP** ~~*impostos*~~ …
goes lower the taxes QUAL/O QUÊ

The SAHighP position of *qual* also explains that it precedes fragments, which can be optionally followed by *qual quê*. The fragment *vermelho* 'red' in (45B) underwent topic-movement and sits in SALowP, like in (38Bb) above, but *qual* is structurally higher than the idiom *uma ova*, hence it precedes whereas *uma ova* follows the fragment. On the other hand, the similar linear orders of (38Ba) and (45Ba) do not correspond to the same structure. In (38Ba) the fragment is in focus.

(45) A: Compramos um carro vermelho.
buy.1PL a car red
'Let us buy a red car.'
B: a. *Qual* vermelho.
QUAL red
b. *Qual* vermelho *qual quê*.
QUAL red QUAL QUÊ
'Red my eye'.

Further evidence that *qual* is structurally higher than the other MN markers is shown in (46) and (47). *Qual* seems to be the only MN marker than can convey an objection to a previous objection expressed by another MN marker, as illustrated in (46) and (47). These sentences require an adequate intonation.

(46) A: Compramos um carro vermelho.
buy.1PL a car red
'Let us buy a red car.'

B: *Agora* vermelho.
AGORA red
A: *Qual agora* vermelho.
QUAL AGORA vermelho.
'Come on, don't disagree'.

(47) A: Compramos um carro vermelho.
buy.1PL a car red
'Let us buy a red car.'
B: Vermelho uma ova.
red UMA OVA
A: Qual vermelho uma ova. Vá lá.
QUAL red UMA OVA go EMPHATIC MARKER
'Don't object to it. Please agree'.

4.2. Metalinguistic Negation and the Syntax of Polarity

MN declaratives can be characterized as 'responding assertions' in the sense of Farkas & Bruce (2010), who distinguish them from 'initiating assertions' and formalize the distinction in terms of polarity features.

> We call here *responding assertions* those assertions that perform a responding move, and *initiating assertions* those subtypes of assertions that are not responding. […] In order to capture the common denominator of responding moves, we propose to introduce two relative polarity features, [*same*] and [*reverse*], the former marking confirming moves and the latter marking reversing ones. (Farkas and Bruce 2010: 106–107)

In Farkas & Bruce (2010) model of conversational update, the relative polarity features [*same*] and [*reverse*] automatically determine the value of the absolute polarity features [+] and [–], roughly corresponding to aff(irmation) and neg(ation) in current syntactic literature, as exemplified in (48) and (49).

(48) Anne: Sam is home.
Ben: Yes he is. [*same*, +]
Connie: No, he isn't. [*reverse*, –]

(49) Anne: Sam is not home.
Ben: Yes, he is. [*reverse*, +]
Connie: No, he isn't. [*same*, –] (Farkas and Bruce 2010:109)

I propose to add to the set of relative polarity features introduced by Farkas and Bruce (2010) the relative polarity feature [*objection*], as exemplified in (50) and (51). The data in (50) and (51) show how reversing moves and objecting moves determine the value of the absolute polarity features in opposite ways. I hypothesize this is the reason why ordinary negation and metalinguistic negation behave in opposite ways concerning the licensing of negative/positive polarity items, as illustrated by the distribution of the PPI

already and the NPI *yet* in (50) and (51). Note that in (51Bc) the NPI *anymore* is licensed by ordinary negation, not by the MN marker *the hell*, as the contrast with (50Bc) proves.

(50)	A:	Sam is already home.	[+]	
	B:	a. Yes he already is.	[*same*, +]	*confirming assertion*
		b. No, he isn't yet.	[*reverse*, –]	*reversing assertion*
		c. The hell he already is.	[*objection*, +]	*objecting assertion*
(51)	A:	Sam is not home anymore.	[–]	
	B:	a. No, he isn't anymore.	[*same*, –]	*confirming assertion*
		b. Yes, he still is.	[*reverse*, +]	*reversing assertion*
		c. The hell he isn't anymore.	[*objection*, –]	*objecting assertion*

I take the exclusive relative features of responding assertions to be grammatically encoded in the Speech Act area, whereas absolute polarity features are encoded in the IP-internal Σ-head (Laka 1990). Hence, the two sets of features are independently expressed by different functional heads, as shown in (52) and (53).[13]

(52)	A:	$[_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [+]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	initiating assertion
	B: a.	$[_{SAP}\ [\textit{same}]\ [_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [+]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	*confirming assertion*
	b.	$[_{SAP}\ [\textit{reverse}]\ [_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [-]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	reversing *assertion*
	c.	$[_{SAP}\ [\textit{objection}]\ [_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [+]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	objecting *assertion*
(53)	A:	$[_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [-]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	initiating assertion
	B: a.	$[_{SAP}\ [\textit{same}]\ [_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [-]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	c*onfirming*
	b.	$[_{SAP}\ [\textit{reverse}]\ [_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [+]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	reversing
	c.	$[_{SAP}\ [\textit{objection}][_{ForceP}\ [_{FocusP}\ [_{FinP}\ [_{\Sigma P}\ [-]\ [_{TP}\ \dots$	objecting

In a nutshell, the feature [*objection*] does not interact with the absolute polarity features [+] and [−] in the way [*reverse*] does. While [*reverse*] entails the inversion of the absolute polarity feature value of the antecedent sentence, [*objection*] copies that value. In this respect it shares a property with [*same*]. Although [*objection*] and [*reverse*] both express rejection of a previous assertion, only [*reverse*] makes a specific move to update the discourse *common ground*, by reversing the previously asserted proposition. Objection puts conversational update on stand by[14], the speaker's intention being in first place to express an attitude of disapproval and dissociation from an utterance.[15]

[13] I diverge in this respect from Farkas and Bruce (2010), who take both the absolute and the relative polarity features to be hosted by PolP, their leftmost functional projection, which dominates CP.

[14] MN sentences are incompatible with evidential adverbs and tag questions. See Martins (2014).

[15] A few days ago, I was walking on the street and saw two friends come across each other. They say hello and he asks her about (summer) vacations. She answers: *Férias? Qual férias!* (vacations? what vacations!; no interrogative intonation in the *qual*-sentence and no number agreement between the *wh*- word and vacations; the interrogative sentence would be *Quais férias?*, with both the *wh*- word and the noun in plural form). I do not know if she simply did not have summer vacations or else what kind of trouble she may have had during her vacations. The MN sentence *Qual férias!* was not intended to provide information (that would presumably come afterwards), but to express a 'psychological state' (Castroviejo Miró 2008) and an attitude of dissociation from the hearer's utterance (Carston 1996).

I suggest that the feature [*objection*] and possibly a Speech Act operator OBJECTION interacting with the polarity features distributed between the left periphery and the IP space belong to the higher Speech Act projection of the clausal architecture (cf. Authier 2013).

5. CONCLUSION

This paper investigates the syntax of metalinguistic negation. It focuses on the different types of unambiguous metalinguistic negation markers that can be found across languages and tries to understand what they have in common despite their apparent diversity (e.g. swear words, temporal/locative deictics, *wh*- words). It is proposed that the sentential left periphery (in the spirit of the cartographic approach) provides the unifying link behind the crosslinguistic variety of MN markers and can also explain aspects of microvariation related to word order, presence/absence of overt complementizers and cooccurrence of MN markers in a single responding move (discontinuous or in clusters). Intended next steps in the current investigations will be to broaden the crosslinguistic typological coverage of unambiguous MN markers and extend the proposed analysis to integrate the syntax of MN sentences with 'not'.

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