

## *Pas jamei* - A Case Study of Occitan Negation

Romance languages have provided a valuable testing ground for grammaticalization phenomena. They continue to do so, as seemingly idiosyncratic features of smaller members of this family, for instance, the different types of negation in Occitan, have yet to be analyzed within the scope of grammaticalization. However, even for French negation, as Hansen (2012) points out, there remains a need for further studies of negative markers (*n*-words) of adverbial origin, like *jamais* or *plus*. This study seeks to contribute to discussions surrounding specific cases of negation in light of grammaticalization. Not discounting older philological treatments of Occitan, more recent studies on Occitan negation have assumed a comparative Romance perspective (Schwegler 1990; Boerm 2008; Hansen & Visconti 2012; Willis et al. 2013), although some exist that have focused on Occitan negation and specific negative structures in particular (Medina Granda 2000, 2007; Jagueneau 2007).

In this paper, I trace the emergence of the negative construction *pas jamai/jamei/jamais* ‘never’ in Occitan and argue that it has undergone a distinct development, which cannot be fully accounted in terms of the Jespersen’s cycle (Jespersen 1917). Initially, Old Occitan had a unique preverbal negator *non*, which could be strengthened through the addition of *ges* ‘kind’, *mica* ‘crumb’, *ren* ‘a thing’, or *dorn* ‘a small measure, a bit’; the use of these emphasizees became increasingly common during the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (Schwegler 1990). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *pas* ‘step’ could function as the sole negator, which suggests that the emphasizee was in the process of developing into the primary negative marker. While the bipartite negation (i.e., *non ... pas*) was still frequent at this point, it had largely disappeared by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, having become limited to the written language. It can thus be assumed that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century postverbal negation was more widespread in spoken Occitan. Some varieties of Modern Occitan have proceeded beyond the stage of a unique postverbal negator and have introduced a new nominal element functioning as an emphasizee of *pas*, which has been reduced to a simple negative marker. The old negator *pas* and the new negators are placed postverbally, as seen in (1).

(1) *Lo paure tròba pas cap d’amics* ‘The poor guy doesn’t find any friends’ (Cichon 1999: 42)  
According to Schwegler (1990: 164), “these additional emphasizees have now themselves become negators proper, thereby concluding yet another negation cycle.” The postverbal double negatives include *pas cap/pas ges* ‘not’, *pas jamai* ‘never’, *pas enlòc* ‘nowhere’, *pas pus* ‘no longer’, *pas gaire* ‘hardly’, *pas res* ‘nothing’. What appears to be an idiosyncrasy of Occitan, sheds light on the mechanisms of grammaticalization: A lexical item is introduced to serve as an emphasizee to a negator. With time, this lexical item evolves into a grammatical element, which becomes even more grammatical, as the introduction of a new emphasizee suggests. Within the Occitan varieties, however, Gascon stands out as a particular case in that it allows for the tripartite construction negative structure *ne ... pas jamei* ‘never’, illustrated in (2), which does not seem to follow the stages proposed by Jespersen (Jespersen 1917).

(2) *Lo rei non plora pas jamei* ‘The king never cries’ (Escòla Gaston Fabus)

The objective of this paper is to trace the emergence of this tripartite negative construction and evaluate it from the perspective of grammaticalization. The study is based on the analysis of data gathered from the *Còrpus Textuau Occitan*, with precisely 761 instances of *jamei/jamai* of which 268 co-occur with *pas*. This corpus consists of articles from 2000-2012 and of literary texts from 1899-2012 published by the *Escòla Gaston Fabus*, which is located in the Aquitaine region. I propose that Gascon constitutes an exceptional case of negation within the Romance

family, with its tripartite construction. While the earlier texts of the corpus illustrate instances of *non...jamei* and *non...pas jamei*, the later non-literary texts contain the latter tripartite construction almost exclusively. The grammaticalized negators are therefore similar to French, but it appears that *pas* was introduced with the weakening of *non/ne* in order to underline the negative interpretation of *jamei/jamai*.

## References

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