Turning expletive: From embedded speech-acts to embedded propositions

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Abstract

This article focuses on a non-canonical use of negation in historical and modern French, characterized by an apparent absence of meaning: expletive negation. In search of the lost meaning of expletive negation, via a diachronic investigation from Latin to French, we establish that expletive negation originates from prohibitive negation. We put forward an analysis of prohibitive negation within Krifka (2014)'s model of embedded speech-act and propose that expletive negation is the continuation of prohibitive negation, and that it is what remains of a long-gone embedded negative imperative in French. Along this line of analysis, the article brings historical evidence in favour of the hypothesis that languages can develop from speech-act embedding to proposition embedding. Our analysis of prohibitive negation as a clause-typing negation marker in Latin and as a verbal mood negation marker brings new evidence to the claim that sentential and verbal mood marking are two intimately related phenomena.

Keywords: prohibitive negation, expletive negation, imperatives, priority attitudes

Résumé

Cet article se concentre sur un emploi non-canonique de la négation en français historique et moderne, caractérisé par une apparente absence de sens : la négation explétive. À la recherche du sens perdu de la négation explétive et via une investigation diachronique du latin au français, nous établissons que la négation explétive descend de la négation prohibitive. Nous présentons une analyse de la négation prohibitive dans le modèle de Krifka (2014)

pour les actes de langage enchâssés et proposons que la négation explétive est la continuation de la négation prohibitive. La négation explétive est ce qu'il reste d'un impératif négatif enchâssé, depuis longtemps disparu. Dans cette même ligne d'analyse, cet article apporte des éléments historiques de preuve en faveur de l'hypothèse selon laquelle les langues peuvent évoluer depuis l'enchâssement d'actes de langage vers l'enchâssement de propositions. Notre analyse de la négation prohibitive en tant que marqueur de négation jouant un rôle dans le typage de la clause en latin et en tant que marqueur de négation de mode verbal apporte de nouveaux éléments de preuve à l'affirmation que le mode phrastique et verbal sont des phénomènes intimement liés.

Mots-clés: négation prohibitive, négation explétive, impératifs, attitudes prioritatives

1. INTRODUCTION

Expletive negation is a cross-linguistic phenomenon whereby a negation marker receives a non-negative reading.[1] Across languages, the distribution of expletive negation is limited to a restricted set of contexts. Among these contexts, we find attitude verbs, and especially fear verbs, as shown in (1). We also find expletive negation with adverbial connectives such as exceptive connectives, notably with *unless* ('à moins que'), see (2), or *without* ('sans que'), as well as prospective temporal connectives, and in particular with *before* ('avant que'), see (3), or *until* ('jusqu'à ce que'). Also (for the most part in Romance languages), expletive negation occurs within comparative clauses, see (4).

(1) Depêche-toi!   Je   **crains**   **que**   tu   **ne**   sois   en
     hurry-2SG.IMP-CL.2SG! 1SG   fear-1SG   that   2SG   EXN   be-2SG.SBJV   in
     retard.
     late
     'Hurry up! I'm afraid you'll be late.'

(2) Je   te   jure   que   je   ne   te   toucherai   pas,
     1SG   CL.2SG   swear-1SG   that   1SG   NEG   CL.2SG   touch-1SG.FUT   NEG,
     à moins   **que**   tu   **ne**   me   le   permettes.
     unless   that   2SG   EXN   CL.1SG   CL.3SG   allow-2SG.SBJV
     'I swear that I will not touch you, unless you allow me to.'

(3) Cendrillon   doit   rentrer   chez   elle   **avant que**   son   carrosse   **ne**   se
     Cinderella   must   return   at   3SG   before that   her   carriage   EXN   REFL
     transforme   en   citrouille.
     turn-3SG.SBJV   into   pumpkin
     'Cinderella must go home before her carriage turns into a pumpkin.'

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[1] Abbreviations used: ABL: ablative; ACC: accusative; CL: clitic; COND: conditional; DAT: dative; DECL: declarative; DEM: demonstrative; ExN: expletive negation; FUT: future; GEN: genitive; IMP: imperative; IPFV: imperfective; NEG: negative; NOM: nominative; PASS: passive; PFV: perfective; PL: plural; PNP: perfective non-past; POSS: possessive; PP: past perfect; PRF: perfect; PRO: pronoun; PROH: prohibitive; PRS: present; PST: past; PTCP: participle; REFL: reflexive; REL: relative; SBJV: subjunctive; SG: singular; SUP: supine.

(4) Elle est   encore **plus** charismatique **qu**' on **ne** le   pense.
    3SG is-3SG even   more charismatic   than 3SG ExN CL-3SG think-3SG
    'She is even more charismatic than what people tend to think.'

If expletive negation is an optional element in French, it is not necessarily so in other languages. In Greek, see (5a), or Russian, see (5b), expletive negation cannot be removed.

(5) a. Fovame   na *(**min**) erthi.   [Greek]
      fear-1SG.PRS SBJV ExN   come-3SG
      'I fear that he might come.'   (Giannakidou 1998)

    b. Ja   bojus'   kak by on *(**ne**) zabolel.   [Russian]
      1SG fear-1SG.PRS that SBJV 3SG ExN get.sick-3SG.PRF
      'I fear that he might get sick'.   (Inkova 2006)

In this article, we approach the distribution of expletive negation in French from a diachronic perspective, by tracing its historical trajectory to its Latin roots. In Indo-European linguistics, the idea of a historical relation between expletive negation and prohibitive negation is not new. Among others, it was explored for Greek by Chatzopoulou (2012), for Italian by Parry (2013) and for French by Mari and Tahar (2020). van der Auwera (2005, 2010) and Auwera et al. (2013) argue that prohibitive negation is the morphologically specialized negation that two thirds of the world's languages may possess for imperative sentences; see example (6a).

(6) a. **Chớ** uống rượu! [Vietnamese]
      NEG drink alcohol
      'Do not drink alcohol!'

    b. **Không** uống rượu.
      NEG   drink alcohol
      'I/you/he/etc. am/are/is not drinking alcohol.'   (van der Auwera et al. 2013)

We will show, based on cross-linguistic and historical evidence, that expletive negation arises from Latin prohibitive negation. While this is not a new claim (Ageno 1955, Lakoff 1968, Fruyt 2011, Parry 2013, Lakey 2015), the literature has left unexplained how the transition takes place. Our article fills this gap. We will argue that the historical emergence of an expletive reading of negation is closely related to "harmonic" (akin to the combination between modal verbs and modal adverbs; see Lyons 1977, Huitink 2012, Giannakidou and Mari 2018) uses of prohibitive negation in Latin, which are inherited in French. In our analysis, expletive negation continues the harmonic meaning of prohibitive negation, while reanalysis takes place on the syntactic side, along with a gradual change in the system of clausal complementation, developing from speech-act embedding to proposition embedding.

The article is structured as follows. First, we offer a view across three Indo-European languages – Greek, Albanian and Latin – of the distributions of prohibitive and expletive negations (Section 2). We focus on prohibitive negation in Latin in Section 3. Then we turn to the analysis of the negation *ne* in Latin and French in

Section 4. Section 5 discusses a competing analysis. Section 6 briefly discusses previous approaches of expletive negation. Section 7 concludes.

2. PROHIBITIVE NEGATION ACROSS INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES

Many languages distinguish two or more morphologically specialized negation markers that serve distinct functions. In many languages, negative imperatives cannot be formed with the standard propositional negation. This fact is well documented in the typological literature (e.g., van der Auwera 2005, 2010; van der Auwera et al. 2013).

In this section, we present evidence for the morphological distinction between propositional (or declarative) negation and prohibitive negation in Indo-European languages, based on Turano (2000)'s study for Albanian, Chatzopoulou (2017)'s study for Greek, as well as historical data from Classical Latin. In the glosses, we will refer to the former (declarative) negation as NEG_DECL and to the latter (prohibitive) as NEG_PROH.

	Root clause		Embedded clause
	Declarative clause	Imperative clause	Fear verbs
Latin	*Non*	*ne*	*ne*
Albanian	*nuk/s'*	*mos*	*mos*
Greek	*Dhen*	*mi(n)/me*	*mi(n)/me*

Table 1: Choice of negation marker in Latin, Albanian, Greek

Unlike Joseph and Janda (1999) and Joseph (2002), we will not explore the details of the variety of functions that the prohibitive negation may serve in each of these languages. We will, rather, focus on a similarity between these languages, namely that the prohibitive negation may receive expletive uses, notably under fear verbs (see Table 1). We consider this cross-linguistic similarity as strong evidence of an intimate connection between prohibitive and expletive negation, one that warrants considering in detail the nature of this relation.

2.1 Albanian

Modern Albanian distinguishes between a standard propositional negation *nuk* (which can be replaced by *s'*) and the negation *mos*, which is related to the imperative, optative, or subjunctive mood, in root clauses. In declarative contexts, *nuk* cannot be replaced by *mos*, see (7), and in imperative contexts, *mos* cannot be replaced by *nuk*, see (8), as observed by Turano (2000).

(7) **Nuk**/ ***mos** vajta në bibliotekë.
NEG_DECL/ NEG_PROH go-1SG.PST in library
'I didn't go to the library.'

(8) **Mos**/   ***nuk**   më   ndihmo!
     NEG_{PROH}/ NEG_{DECL} CL.1SG help-2SG.IMP
     'Don't help me!'

Importantly for us, *mos* can receive expletive uses in the embedded clause of fear verbs, among other contexts (where it occurs as an optional element).

(9) Kam   frikë se   **mos**   më   vdes   babai.
     have-1SG fear   that NEG_{PROH} CL.1SG die-2SG father-the
     'I fear that my father will die.'

2.2   Greek

Modern Greek distinguishes between a standard propositional negation *dhen* and the negation *mi(n)*, found in non-declarative contexts like imperative clauses or with the subjunctive (marked by the particle *na*). As observed by Chatzopoulou (2017), these two negations cannot freely alternate; see (10) and (11).

(10) o   Jánis   **dhen**/   ***min**   írthe.
      the-NOM Janis-NOM   NEG_{DECL}/ NEG_{PROH} came-3SG.PP
      'John did not come.'

(11) **Mi**/   ***dhen**   féris   ton   Jáni!
      NEG_{PROH}/ NEG_{DECL} bring-2SG.PNP the-ACC Jani-ACC
      'Don't bring John!'

Min can receive an expletive use in the embedded clause of fear verbs, among other contexts (where it does not occur as an optional element).

(12) Fováme   na   **min**   érthi.
      fear-3SG SBJV NEG_{PROH} come-3SG
      'I fear that he may come.'

2.3   Classical Latin

Classical Latin (roughly from 150 BC to 300 AD) distinguishes a standard propositional negative marker *non*, used with the indicative mood, and the negation *ne*, used with the imperative or subjunctive moods.

Latin prohibitive negation, which we discuss in subsequent sections, receives a (seemingly) expletive use with fear verbs, and with a wider set of verbs (where it does not occur as an optional element).

(13) Haec   timeo   **ne**   impediantur.
      this   fear-1SG NEG_{PROH} prevent-1SG.SBJV.PASS
      'I fear that I may be prevented from (doing) this.'
      (lit., 'I fear may I not be prevented from (doing) this.')   (Lewis 1879)

In view of this set of data, we turn to the investigation of the connections between prohibitive and expletive negation focusing on Latin and French.

3.   PROHIBITIVE NEGATION IN LATIN

The goal of this section is to provide evidence that Latin prohibitive *ne* does not occur randomly in embedded clauses. Rather, the distribution of *ne* in embedded clauses is

restricted to a set of attitude verbs that describe a certain type of imperative illocut-
ionary force (e.g., directives, desideratives, etc.), thus adding a piece of evidence in
favour of the hypothesis of a semantic connection between *ne* in unembedded and
embedded contexts.

Imperative clauses are conventionally associated with a wide range of illocution-
ary forces (see Schmerling 1982, Hamblin 1987, König and Siemund 1999,
Aikhenvald 2010, Condoravdi and Lauer 2012, Kaufmann 2012, Jarry and
Kissine 2014, among others). For instance, depending on contextual conditions,
imperatives may express requests, advice, permission, wishes, etc. The set of attitude
verbs with which *ne* occurs also describe the various types of illocutionary forces that
imperatives may have. For an overview of the distribution of *ne* in embedded clauses,
see Table 2.

Root clause	Matrix clause	
Illocutionary force	Positive priority attitude	Negative priority attitude
Command	*Impero* ('I order')	*Prohibeo* ('I forbid')
	Iubeo ('I order')	*Recuso* ('I refuse')
		Veto ('I forbid')
Request	*Peto* ('I ask')	*Impedio* ('I prevent')
	Mando ('I ask')	*Obsto* ('I prevent')
	Rogo ('I ask')	*Deterreo* ('I prevent')
Warning	*Admoneo* ('I warn')	
	Moneo ('I warn')	
Advice	*Suadeo* ('I advise')	*Dissuadeo* ('I dissuade')
	Cohortor ('I encourage')	*Dehortor* ('I discourage')
Plea	*Obsecro* ('I implore')	
	Quaeso ('I beg')	
Wish	*Velim* ('I want')	*Timeo* ('I fear')
	Opto ('I wish')	*Metuo* ('I fear')
	Cupio ('I desire')	*Uereor* ('I fear')

Table 2: Root clause/Matrix clause matching illocutionary forces

We use the label 'priority attitudes' (after Portner's (2007, 2009) label for
deontic, teleologic and bouletic modals) the category of attitudes in the embedded
clause of which the prohibitive *ne* occurs in Latin. These attitudes come in two
sorts. On the one hand, there are positive priority attitudes (e.g., directives, desi-
deratives). According to the analysis we will advocate for in the next section,
when *ne*-clauses are embedded under positive priority attitudes, they are inter-
preted in conformity with the meaning of the embedding verb. For instance, a
desiderative attitude (e.g., *opto*, 'I wish') expresses a wish and indicates that
the embedded *ne*-clause is to be interpreted as a speech-act of the wish-type,
see (14).

(14) Opto   **ne**   mihi   somnus   gratiam   referat!
      wish-1SG   NEG_PROH   1SG.DAT   sleep-ACC gratitude-ACC report-3SG.SBJV
      'I hope that my death will not be his reward.'
      (lit., 'I hope may my death not be his reward.')   (Fronto, *AurCaes*, 1.4)

On the other hand, there are negative priority attitudes (e.g., prohibitives, appre-
hensives). Embedded under negative priority attitudes, *ne*-clauses are interpreted in a
redundant fashion with respect to the meaning of the embedding verb. For instance, an
apprehensive attitude (e.g., *timeo*, 'I fear') expresses an apprehension and indicates that
the embedded *ne*-clause is to be interpreted as a speech-act of the apprehension-type.
This is redundant, given what the embedded *ne*-clause expresses. This redundancy
explains why such constructions, see for instance (15), are translated as involving no
negation in the embedded clause. The exact nature of the concord mechanism which
is at play in the "harmonic" interpretation of *ne* in clauses embedded under negative
priority attitudes is a question discussed at length in Tahar (2022).

(15) Haec   timeo   **ne**   impediantur.
      this   fear-1SG   NEG_PROH   prevent-1SG.SBJV.PASS
      'I fear that I may be prevented from (doing) this.'
      (lit., 'I fear may I not be prevented from (doing) this.')   (Lewis 1879)

Note that across the three types of uses of Latin *ne*, namely in negative imperatives,
under positive priority attitudes and under negative priority attitudes, we argue that *ne*
carries one and the same semantic contribution: namely, *ne(p)* conveys that the
speaker/the attitude holder prefers not-*p* to *p*. In a negative imperative, not-*p* is the
course of action that the speaker favours. With positive priority attitudes, the attitude
holder prefers not-*p* to *p* (e.g., in (14) the 1st person attitude holder prefers that his
death not be somebody else's reward). Finally, under negative priority attitudes,
the attitude holder also prefers not-*p* to *p* (e.g., in (15) the 1st person attitude
holder prefers not being prevented from doing it to being prevented).

With negative priority attitudes, for the whole construction to convey a prohib-
ition or an apprehension towards a negative event, the propositional (or 'verbal') neg-
ation *non* is required, in addition to *ne*, as in (16a) and (16b) (as mentioned in the
synthetic works on Latin by Orlandini 2001; Bodelot 2003; Fruyt 2011; Pinkster
2015, 2021). Note that a literal translation for such constructions would involve a
double negation.

(16) a. Sed   timeo   **ne**   **non**   impetrem.
         But   fear-1SG.PRS   NEG_PROH   NEG_DECL   achieve-1SG.SBJV
         'But I fear that I may not obtain it.'
         (lit., 'But I fear may I not not-obtain it.')   (Cicero, *Att*, 9.6)

      b. Timuit,   **ne**   **non**   succederet.
         fear-3SG.PRF   NEG_PROH   NEG_DECL   succeed-3SG.SBJV.IPFV
         'He feared that he would not succeed.'
         (lit., 'He feared may he would not not-succeed.')   (Horace, *Ep*, 1.17)

Turning to the empirical characterization of the contexts where prohibitive *ne* occurs in Classical Latin, we describe side by side the occurrence of *ne* in root imperative clauses and in embedded clauses.[2]

In Latin, both morphological imperatives, as in (17a), and morphological subjunctives, as in (17b), could be used interchangeably in the 2nd person, for the construction of root negative imperative clauses (Pinkster 2015).

(17) a. Uigila,   **ne**   somno   stude.
        stay.awake-2SG.IMP, NEG_PROH   sleep-DAT   seek.for-2SG.IMP
        'Open your eyes, don't fall asleep.'   (Plautus, *Mil*, 215)

     b. Da   mihi   hanc   ueniam,
        give-2SG.IMP   POSS.1SG.DAT   DEM.ACC   mercy-ACC
        ignosce,   irata   **ne**   sies.
        forgive-2SG.IMP, angry   NEG_PROH   be-2SG.SBJV
        'Grant me this mercy, forgive me, don't be angry.'   (Plautus, *Am*, 924)

Embedded under attitude verbs, *ne*-clauses do not allow for the morphological imperative. Only morphological subjunctives are attested (Pinkster 2021). Still, embedded clauses of this kind closely correspond to root imperative clauses, which even leads Pinkster to call them "imperative" clauses.[3] Indeed, the distribution of embedded *ne*-clauses argues in favour of a semantic connection between the interpretation of root imperative clauses and the interpretation of the embedded clause. The embedded clause, by spelling out the meaning of the embedding attitude, maintains the illocutionary flavours (or forces) characteristic of imperative clauses, which we now describe.

Commands (and Prohibitions) With Condoravdi and Lauer (2012), we group together directive illocutionary acts as COMMANDS. Furthermore, along with Sadock and Zwicky (1985), Bybee and Pagliuca (1985), and Pakendorf and Schalley (2007), we refer to the negative counterparts of imperatives with a directive force as PROHIBITIONS. Directive and prohibitive speech-acts not only express the speaker's desire towards the (non)realisation of the situation described by the proposition, they also express a request for the addressee's compliance. This request for compliance, as argued by Huddleston (2002), comes in various subflavours.

(18) **Negative Command ('Prohibition'):**
     Meam   domum   **ne**   inbitas
     POSS.1SG.ACC   house-ACC   NEG_PROH   enter-2SG.SBJV
     'Don't enter my house!'   (Plautus, *Epid*, 145)

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[2]We draw on extensive qualitative data from several classical Latin grammars, as well as more recent ones (see Reference Grammars). Furthermore, we rely on data from several works that have extensively studied the Latin negator *ne* (Lakoff 1968, Orlandini 2001, Bodelot 2003, Fruyt 2011, Lakey 2015). We also consulted PHI Corpus of Latin works.

[3]We are very thankful to Igor Yanovich for bringing to our attention the question of mood in root and embedded Latin *ne*-clauses and related issues. These will be discussed in Section 4.2.

(19) **Directive attitude + *ne*-clause:**

Caesar	suis	**imperavit**	**ne**	quod	omnino	telum		in
Caesar	POSS.DAT	order-3SG.PRF	NEG_PROH	some	none	weapon-ACC		to

hostes		reicerent.
enemies-ACC		throw-3PL.SBJV.IPFV

'Caesar ordered them not to throw back any weapon.'　　　　(Caesar, *Gal*, 1.46)

(20) **Prohibitive attitude + *ne*-clause:**

Gracchus	(…)	**prohibuisse**,	**ne**	decerneretur,		ut
Gracchus	(…)	forbid-3SG.PRF	NEG_PROH	decide-3SG.SBJV.IPFV		that

imago	sua	triumphali	ornatu	e	templu
image-NOM	POSS.NOM	triumphally	decoration-ABL	outside	temple

Iouis
Jupiter

'Gracchus forbade people to decorate the temple of Jupiter with his image.'

(Livy, *AUC*, 38.56)

(21) **Negative Request ('Impedition'):**

(Palaestrio does not want a soldier to interfere while his former mistress, who has fainted, is regaining consciousness.)

Ne	interueneris,	quaeso,	dum	resipiscit.
NEG_PROH	interrupt-2SG.SBJV	please	while	regain-consciousness-3SG.PRS

'Don't interfere, please, while she's recovering.'　　　　(Plautus, *Mil*, 1333)

(22) **Rogative attitude + *ne*-clause:**

Id	**ne**	facerem	**rogarent**.
PRO.3SG.ACC	NEG_PROH	do-1SG.SBJV.IPFV	ask-3PL.SBJV.IPFV

'They would have asked me not to do it.'　　　　(Cicero, *Planc*, 91.11)

(23) **Impeditive attitude + *ne*-clause:**

Scilicet	**obstabit**	custos,	**ne**	scribere	possis?
Apparently	prevent-3SG.FUT	guard-NOM	NEG_PROH	write-INF	can-2SG.SBJV

'Apparently, a guard could prevent you from writing?'　　　　(Ovid, *Ars*, 3.619)

(24) **Negative plea:**

Da	mihi	hanc	ueniam,	ignosce,
give-2SG.IMP	POSS.1SG.DAT	DEM.ACC	mercy-ACC	forgive-2SG.IMP

irata	**ne**	sies.
angry	NEG_PROH	be-2SG.SBJV

'Grant me this mercy, forgive me, don't be angry.'　　　　(Plautus, *Am*, 924)

(25) **Precative attitude + *ne*-clause:**

Obsecro,	**ne**	indicium	ero	facias
implore-1SG.PRS	NEG_PROH	denunciation-ACC	master-DAT	do-2SG.SBJV

meo.
CL.1SG.DAT

'I implore you not to betray us to my master.'　　　　(Plautus, *Mos*, 743)

(26) Negative advice ('Dissuasion'):

Isto	bono	utare,	dum	adsit;	cum
DEM.ABL	good-ABL	use-2SG.SBJV	while	be.present-3SG.SBJV;	as.long.as

absit,	**ne**	requiras.

lack-3SG.SBJV   NEG_{PROH}   seek-2SG.SBJV

'Make use of that blessing, while you have it; when it is lacking, do not yearn for it.'

(Cicero, *Sen*, 33.9)

(27) **Hortative attitude +** ***ne*-clause:**

Non   it,   non   it,   quia   tanto opere

NEG_{DECL} go-3SG.FUT   NEG_{DECL} go-3SG.FUT   because   so.much

suades   **ne**   ebitat.

advise-2SG.PRS NEG_{PROH}   go-3SG.SBJV

'He won't go, he won't go, because you advise him so much not to.'

(Plautus, *Stich*, 608)

(28) **Dehortative attitude +** ***ne*-clause:**

Hannibal (…)me   dehortatur   **dissuadet**que,

Hannibal (…)CL.1SG.ACC discourage-3SG.PRS dissuade-3SG.PRS-and

ne   bellum   geram.

NEG_{PROH} war-ACC   make-1SG.SBJV

'Hannibal discourages me and dissuades me from making war.'   (Gellius, *NA*, 6.2)

(29) **Negative Warning:**

Uigila,   **ne**   somno   stude.

stay.awake-2SG.IMP NEG_{PROH} sleep-DAT seek.for-2SG.IMP

'Open your eyes, don't fall asleep.'   (Plautus, *Mil*, 215)

(30) **Admonitive attitude +** ***ne*-clause:**

Illud   autem   te   **admoneo**,   **ne**   [eorum

DEM.ACC yet   CL.2SG.ACC warn-1SG.PRS NEG_{PROH} PRO.PL.GEN

more   qui   non   proficere   sed conspici

customs.ABL PRO.REL NEG_{DECL} progress-INF but show.off-INF.PASS

cupiunt],   facias   aliqua.

want-3PL.PRS do-2SG.SBJV likewise

'Yet, I warn you of this, don't behave like those who want, not to progress, but to be seen.'   (Seneca, *Ep*, 5.1)

Wishes and Apprehensions Imperatives may as well serve no directive function, but merely express the speaker's desire for the (non)realisation of the content of the proposition. WISHES and their negative counterparts, APPREHENSIONS,[4] do not express a request for the addressee's cooperation. In fact, wishes such as well-wishes (*Get better!*) can be addressed, but they need not be.

(31) **Negative wish ('Apprehension'):**

Ne   di   sirint!

NEG_{PROH} gods-NOM allow-3PL.SBJV

'May the Gods not allow it!'   (Pinkster 2015:506)

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[4]Note that in the typological literature, the label *apprehensive* ('volitive of fear', as per Vuillermet 2018) describes, among other things, the modal meaning conveyed by fear verbs or precautioning conjunctions such as the English *lest* (see also Lichtenberk 1995, François 2003, or Kuteva et al. 2019 for a recent discussion). This label is only marginally used to describe negative imperatives of the *wish*-type.

(32) **Desiderative attitude + *ne*-clause:**

At	**ne**	videas	**velim**.
but	NEG_PROH	see-2SG.SBJV	want-1SG.PRS

'But I wish you wouldn't see it.'　　　　　　　　　(Plautus, *Rud*, 1067)

(33) Apprehensive attitude + *ne*-clause:

Timeo,	**ne**	malefacta	mea	sint
fear-1SG	NEG_PROH	misdeeds-ACC	mine	be-3SG.SBJV

inventa	omnia.
discovered-PTCP-PST	all

'I fear that my past misdeeds will be discovered.'　　　　　　(Lewis 1879)

We now substantiate our hypothesis of a semantic relation between *ne* in imperative clauses and embedded contexs by designing a diachronic path from Latin to Modern French.

4. FROM SPEECH-ACT EMBEDDING TO PROPOSITION EMBEDDING

Our analysis spells out two stages of change in the syntax of clausal embedding from Latin to French. Speech-act embedding is the first stage: the embedding attitude selects a negative imperative clause. The second stage is proposition embedding: the embedding attitude selects a propositional complement, with expletive negation.

4.1 Parataxis

Jespersen (1917) was one of the first to suggest that Latin *ne*-clauses are in some way treated as independent sentences when occurring under prohibitive or apprehensive verbs. Under his analysis, such clauses retain both the syntax and the semantics of a root negative imperative. He was followed by different scholars, including Ageno (1955) and Parry (2013), for whom the Latin *ne*-clause is paratactically juxtaposed to the verbal clause (e.g., *Timeo; ne veniat*, 'I fear; may he not come!').

What Jespersen was suggesting is that verbs like *prohibeo* and *timeo* receive a parenthetical use. They serve a presentative function having almost no interpretative effect upon the negative imperative, which has a main point status (see Simons 2007).

Prohibitive verbs name the illocutionary act performed by the negative imperative ("X forbids: PROHIBITION"). The meaning of the main verb is thus redundant with that of the *ne*-clause, with respect to the whole construction. In the same line of thought, one can add that the presentative function that apprehensive verbs serve is meant to provide evidential motivation (see also Krifka 2017; Simons 2007) to the utterance of the negative imperative ("X fears: APPREHENSION").

This line of analysis is based on the old assumption that languages follow a diachronic trajectory of development from parataxis to hypotaxis (see for instance Bennett 1910, Wallin 1910, Meillet and Vendryes 1924). According to this assumption, a language displays, at early stages of its development, paratactic constructions that ultimately develop into subordinated constructions.

The matching of illocutionary flavours between matrix imperatives and embedded subjunctives in Latin makes a paratactic analysis intuitively attractive. However,

the paratactic analysis fails to capture the Latin facts adequately. In fact, even though subjunctive *ne*-clauses are introduced by no embedding device, they can also display characteristic properties of embedded clauses. They display sequence of tense, as in (19), repeated here as (34), as well as coreference between the matrix and embedded subject, see (35) (McCloskey 2006).

(34) Caesar suis **imperavit** **ne** quod omnino telum in
Caesar POSS.DAT order-3SG.PRF NEG_PROH some none weapon-ACC to
hostes reicerent.
enemies-ACC throw-3PL.SBJV.IPFV
'Caesar ordered them not to throw back any weapon.' (Caesar, *Gal*, 1.46)

(35) [Sententiam **ne** diceret$_i$] **recusavit**$_i$.
opinion-ACC NEG_PROH say-3SG.SBJV.IPFV refuse-3SG.PERF
'He refused to give his opinion.' (Cicero, *Off*, 3.100)

In these cases we cannot evoke parataxis. For this reason we propose a middle ground analysis between a paratactic and hypotactic analysis (see Section 5).

4.2 Speech-act embedding in Latin

In a series of recent studies, Krifka has promoted the idea and developed a formal model for speech-act embedding (Krifka 2014, 2017, 2023; see also discussion in Crnič and Trinh 2009; Kaufmann 2012, and Woods 2016). He argues that in English, just as in German, the verb *say* can be used in two different configurations, as in (36). The verb only embeds a proposition in (36a); in (36b), *say* is claimed to embed a speech-act (of assertion).

(36) a. Mary said that she hates John.

b. Mary said she hates John.

For Krifka, speech-act embedding is a device that can be applied to embedded clauses that show root clause property, such as the absence of sequence of tense in English, as in (36b), or verb-second in German, as in (37b).

(37) a. Mary sagte, das sie John hasst.

b. Mary sagte, sie hasst John.

The structure corresponding to proposition embedding is given in (38a) and that corresponding to speech-act embedding in (38b) (Krifka 2014).

(38) a. [[$_{VP}$ Mary [$_{V'}$ *say* [$_{CP}$ *that* [$_{IP}$ *she hates John*]]]]]

b. [[$_{VP}$ Mary [$_{V'}$ *say* [$_{ForceP}$ *she hates John*]]]]

We follow Krifka's proposal and propose that, in Latin, *ne*-clauses are embedded speech-acts.[5] However, embedded *ne*-clauses cannot display root clause property, as they do not allow for morphological imperatives, which remains an open issue for our speech-act embedding analysis.

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[5]Note that, in English, contrary to some assertions, imperatives cannot be embedded.

In our perspective, we assume that *ne* is a specialised negation, with a clause-typing function. More precisely, we propose that *ne* heads the Force projection (Rizzi 1997). The structures corresponding to the fragments (39) are given in (40).

(39) a. **Ne** me territes. ('Don't try to frighten me.')

b. Iubeo, **ne** me territes. (lit., 'I order, don't try to frighten me.')

c. Prohibeo, **ne** me territes. (lit., 'I forbid, don't try to frighten me.')

(40) a. [[$_{ForceP}$ *Ne me territes*]]]

b. [[$_{VP}$ *Iubeo* [$_{ForceP}$ ***ne me territes***]]]

c. [[$_{VP}$ *Prohibeo* [$_{ForceP}$ ***ne me territes***]]]

An important insight in Krifka (2014) is that speech-act embedding verbs are speech-act reports; that is to say, they describe a locutionary act. A question-embedding verb may describe a locutionary act in an explicit manner (e.g., *ask*) or an implicit manner (e.g., *wonder*). To Krifka, *wonder* is a speech-act report insofar as it describes the psychological attitude one has when asking oneself questions.[6] We follow Krifka in assuming that directives explicitly denote a locutionary act, just as desideratives implicitly do. However, we believe that imperative embedding verbs need not be speech-act reports. Indeed, *ne*-clauses may also be embedded under intention reports, like *efficio* ('I try') or *uito* ('I avoid').

(41) **Efficio**   tacitum   **ne**   mihi   funus   eat.
endeavor-1SG.PRS   shut.up-SUP   NEG$_{PROH}$ my   funerals-ACC   be-3SG.SBJV
'I take heed that my funeral rites pass not off in silence.'   (Ovid, *Tr*, 5)

(42) Quem   ego   **uitaui**   **ne**   uiderem.
him-ACC   CL.1SG   avoid-1SG.PFV   NEG$_{PROH}$ see-3SG.SBJV.IPFV
'And this man, I avoided seeing him.'   (Cicero, *Att*, 3)

Our proposal is thus that, in Classical Latin, directives and desideratives have the ability to embed imperative speech-acts. Speech-act embedding may correspond, if the hypothetical earlier stage of parataxis were to be confirmed in ancestors of Latin, to an intermediary stage of development between parataxis and hypotaxis.

4.3 Proposition embedding in French

With the rise of the overt-complementation system in Old French, the Latin prohibitive *ne* undergoes syntactic reanalysis. We believe that expletive *ne* in French is a descendent of Latin *ne*. Note that the French expletive *ne* is homonymous with the standard negation *ne*, but we make the assumption that these two markers were

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[6]The intuition that embedded imperatives are relayed as quotations in Latin is not new, see Wallin (1910:11): 'It is inconceivable, for instance, that a speaker would say: *eum moneo: abeat*, "I advise him: let him go away", without meaning that the thought expressed by *abeat* constitutes his advice.' Speech-act embedding verbs are used to report the performance (by the speaker or another agent) of the embedded speech-act; on the mode of (mixed) quotation, see Kaufmann (2012) and Woods (2016).

morphologically distinct until the standard negation *ne* lost its negative meaning to *pas* due to the Jespersen cycle. Recall that Latin *ne* is semantically redundant with the intrinsic negativity of the negative priority embedding verb. We argue here that expletive negation is semantically in harmony with the intrinsic negativity of the (attitudinal) embedding verb (see *infra*).

During the transition from Latin to French, the use of the complementizer *que* (originating from the Latin indicative complementizer *quod*; see Vincent 1988) develops and becomes more systematic.

Directives and desideratives (and by extension, their negative counterparts) systematically subcategorize for *que*-clauses (or infinitival complements) by the end of the Old French period. They thus cease to embed imperative speech-acts and start behaving, syntactically, as attitude reports.

Our proposal is that with the development of the *que* from Latin to French, prohibitive *ne* loses its clause-typing function in embedded clauses. The key change is that prohibitive *ne* fossilizes into a modal negation, undergoing downward-reanalysis from ForceP to MoodP, under negative priority attitudes; see (45). Crucially, there is a continuity of meaning of harmonic *ne* in Latin and French, despite its syntactic reanalysis. To get from (43) to (44) essentially no semantic change is required.

(43) **Timeo**, **ne** malefacta mea sint inventa
fear-1SG NEG$_{PROH}$ misdeeds-ACC mine be-3PL.SBJV discovered-PTCP-PST
omnia.
all.
'I fear that my past misdeeds will be discovered.' (Lewis 1879)

(44) Je **crains** que mes anciens méfaits **ne** soient découverts.
1SG fear-1SG that my ancient misdeeds ExN be-3PL.SBJV discovered.
'I fear that my past misdeeds will be discovered.'

(45) [[$_{VP}$ *Je crains* [$_{CP}$ *que* [$_{IP}$ *mes anciens méfaits*$_1$ [$_{MoodP}$ ***ne*** + *sont*$_2$-SBJV [$_{VP}$ t$_1$ t$_2$ *découverts*]]]]]]

With *ne* reanalyzed as a negation marker base-generated in the Mood projection, our diachronic investigation resonates with accounts that reach a similar conclusion based on synchronic evidence. In particular, Zovko-Dinković and Ilc (2017)'s synchronic analysis of expletive negation in Croation and Slovenian (building on Abels (2005)'s analysis for Russian) also concludes that the negation which receives an expletive reading is base-generated in MoodP.

From a semantic perspective, we propose that *ne* in MoodP conveys the speaker's preferential attitude towards the negation of the proposition. Just as in imperatives clauses, *ne* conveys a general meaning of dispreference: the speaker wants not-*p* to be realized. We argue that *ne* is reanalyzed in MoodP as it enters 'Modal Harmony' with embedding verbs that express negative preferences.

The notion of 'Modal Harmony' was introduced by Lyons (1977), Huitink (2012), and Giannakidou and Mari (2018), among others, who explored the relation between modal verbs and adverbs.

(46) John must definitely be at home.

Modal Harmony relies on the idea that two modal elements bear the same meaning; in (46), for instance, the modal and the adverb bear the same epistemic flavour.[7] Unlike with Negative Concord approaches, there is no notion of semantic dependency (as in Espinal 1992, 2000; see discussion in section 6.1). The main idea is that, together with the embedding verb, expletive *ne* yields a unitary semantic meaning of dispreference at large. Note that, like adverbs, expletive negation can be omitted in Modern French, without any change in the interpretation of the sentence.

(47) Je   crains   qu'   il   soit   arrivé   quelque   chose   à   mon   chien.
      1SG   fear-1SG that 3SG be-3SG happened some   thing   to my   dog
      'I fear that something happened to my dog.'

To sum up: in our analysis, directive and desiderative attitudes embed imperative clauses in Latin, and in this context prohibitive negation is a contentful element which has a clause-typing function. Imperative embedding is lost and proposition embedding becomes the only option in French for directives and desideratives and their negative counterparts. Prohibitive negation fossilizes into expletive negation with negative priority attitudes.

Second, our analysis provides a new handle on understanding how languages develop from parataxis to hypotaxis, by positing an intermediary stage of speech-act embedding, where there is embedding – as evidenced by *consecutio temporum* and pronominal coreference – without complementizer. Finally, we hope that we have shed new light on the intricacies between sentential and verbal mood as two intimately related phenomena (see Portner 2018, a.o.).

5. AN ALTERNATIVE HYPOTACTIC ANALYSIS FOR LATIN

A competing analysis of the relation between prohibitive and expletive negations could rely on the Performative Hypothesis, notably by Lakoff (1968) (see also Mari and Tahar 2020). The Performative Hypothesis, also developed in the works of Ross (1970), Sadock (1974), and Katz (1977), provides a declarative semantics for imperatives. In this framework, imperative clauses contain an implicit performative verb in their deep structure: an imperative sentence like (48a) and a performative sentence like (48b) are deemed truth-conditionally equivalent (but see Boër and Lycan 1980; Levinson 1980 or more recently Jarry and Kissine 2014; Portner 2016 for criticisms of this approach).

(48) a. Clean your room!

      b. [I order that] you clean your room.

More recently, Mari and Tahar (2020) have revisited the Performative Hypothesis. For them, along with Kaufmann (2012), the variety of forces that imperatives may have are hard-coded in the semantics and not reconstructed in the pragmatics, via inferential

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[7]As Giannakidou and Mari (2018) argue, several cases of modal disharmony are observed, cross-linguistically, with respect to force.

mechanisms (à la Wilson and Sperber 1988, and Condoravdi and Lauer 2012). They posit the presence of an abstract operator I$_{\text{MP}}$ in the semantics of imperative clauses and propose a unified modal semantics for the imperative operator and for priority attitudes.

In Lakoff's analysis and, by extension, in Mari and Tahar (2020)'s, it is argued that *ne* in embedded position is a complementizer (a hypothesis shared by Vincent 1988, Orlandini 2001, Roussou and Robert 2003, Fruyt 2011, Lakey 2015, among others), which is selected by the embedding verb and has the capacity of selecting a subjunctive clause.

(49) a. [[$_{\text{ForceP}}$ I$_{\text{MP}}$ [$_{\text{NegP}}$ **ne** [$_{\text{IP}}$ *me territes*]]]]

b. [[$_{\text{VP}}$ *Iubeo* [$_{\text{CP}}$ **ne** [$_{\text{IP}}$ *me territes*]]]]

c. [[$_{\text{VP}}$ *Prohibeo* [$_{\text{CP}}$ **ne** [$_{\text{IP}}$ *me territes*]]]]

An alternative syntactic analysis, which considers the embedded *ne*-clause to be headed by a null complementizer, could as well be considered within Lakoff's and Mari and Tahar's line of reasoning.[8]

(50) a. [[$_{\text{ForceP}}$ I$_{\text{MP}}$ [$_{\text{NegP}}$ **ne** [$_{\text{IP}}$ *me territes*]]]]

b. [[$_{\text{VP}}$ *Iubeo* [$_{\text{CP}}$ $\varnothing$ [$_{\text{NegP}}$ **ne** [$_{\text{IP}}$ *me territes*]]]]

c. [[$_{\text{VP}}$ *Prohibeo* [$_{\text{CP}}$ $\varnothing$ [$_{\text{NegP}}$ **ne** [$_{\text{IP}}$ *me territes*]]]]

In both cases, however, we have to stipulate hidden mechanisms or operators, which, for methodological reasons, we prefer to abstain from. In (49), we have to stipulate that *ne* does not occupy the same syntactic position in root clauses and in embedded clauses. In other terms, as per Fruyt (2011) and Lakey (2015), we have to posit that Latin prohibitive *ne* grammaticalizes onto a subordinator when occurring in embedded clauses (a claim for which there is no diachronic evidence, to the authors' knowledge).[9]

6. PREVIOUS ANALYSES OF EXPLETIVE NEGATION AND DISCUSSION

This section compares our account to previous ones. We leave aside the discussion of expletive negation in root clauses (such as Portner and Zanuttini 2000's account for exclamatives and Eilam 2009's account for free relatives), under the working assumption that expletive negation in root and embedded clauses is not a unified phenomenon (see also Greco 2019). We also leave aside the discussion of expletive negation in adverbial clauses (such as Tovena 1996's and Margulis 2018's accounts for *until*-clauses). Still, to understand how the present account would generalize to adverbial clauses, the reader is referred to Tahar (2021a), who argues that expletive negation enters Modal Harmony with the negative preference component conveyed at the pragmatic level by *avant que*-clauses ('before') or at the truth-conditional level by *à moins que*-clauses ('unless') in French.

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[8]We thank an anonymous reviewer for calling our attention to this point.

[9]Indeed, there is no evidence that root negative imperatives are found at earlier stages of Latin than embedded *ne*-clauses.

6.1 Expletive negation as a negative concord item

Previously, van der Wurff (1999); van der Wouden (1994) and Espinal (2000) have posited that expletive negation is a Negative Polarity Item. Relatedly, Espinal (1992, 2000) and Zeiljstra (2004) have posited that expletive negation enters Negative Concord with the embedding context. Together with the main verb, expletive negation would yield a 'single-negation' semantic reading. To the previous authors, expletive negation is indeed embedded under 'inherently negative' contexts.

In the works of van der Wurff (1999) and van der Wouden (1994), it is argued that the negativity of the contexts of appearance of expletive negation relies on downward-monotonicity. Subsequent works like that of Espinal (2000) propose that the negativity of contexts where expletive negation occurs relies on nonveridicality (see also Jin and Koenig 2019), defined as the property of operators that do not entail the truth of the proposition they take as argument (see Zwarts 1995, Giannakidou 1998, 1999, 2011), with respect to an epistemic model (see Giannakidou and Mari 2015, 2016, 2021). Simply relying on downward-monotonicity or non-veridicality would lead to an obvious over-generalization. For instance, downward-monotonic predicates such as the emotive-factive attitudes *regret* or *be surprised* (see von Fintel 1999 for a discussion) do not allow for expletive negation. Similarly, belief predicates do not allow for expletive negation in spite of being non-veridical (they do not entail p).

Finally, for Espinal, the main predicate is interpreted as semantically 'negative', while the negation marker in the subordinate clause is interpreted (out of a semantic mechanism of 'logical absorption') as a dependent concord item, which is semantically empty. Our analysis proposes an alternative explanation, grounded in the diachronic trajectory from prohibitive negation, by appealing to the notion of Modal Harmony rather than the notion of Negative Concord. According to our account, both the attitude and the negation bear the same modal meaning of negative preference. Since the negative preference remains once the expletive negation is omitted, it is hard to find contexts in which the negative contribution of the expletive *ne* is visible. However, there are cases – especially with temporal connectives – in which this component can still be seen, as in (51).

(51) Context: A doctor receives a patient who promises to stop smoking once he has recovered from his current pneumonia.

    a. Vous   devriez   arrêter de fumer   **avant que** vous soyez
       2SG   should-COND stop   of smoking before that you be-2SG.SBJV
       guéri.
       healed
       'You should stop smoking before you get better.'
       Intended: the speaker wants to convey a relation of consecution
       between the main event and the subordinate event.

    b. **#Vous** devriez   arrêter de fumer   **avant que** vous **ne**
       2SG   should-COND stop   of smoking before that you ExN
       soyez   guéri.
       be-2SG.SBJV healed

'You should stop smoking before you get better.'
Intended: the same meaning as (51a).

The use of expletive negation in (51b) is infelicitous for the reason that the *avant que*-clause describes a positively valued event. Indeed, the most natural interpretation of (51b) would be what Tahar (2021b) labels an apprehensive use of the *avant que*-connective, conveying that the goal of the doctor is that his patient does not get better, which is conflicting with the intended interpretation.

6.2   Expletive negation as a modal particle

For Yoon (2011) and Mari and Tahar (2020), expletive negation is not a standard negation marker but a modal particle (but see also Makri 2013). For these authors, expletive negation is the grammatical reflex of a component related to the ordering source of the embedding verb. According to Yoon's analysis, expletive negation realizes the ordering source of the predicate, as it imposes an ordering on the (non-veridical) modal base M_B of the verb *fear*, ranking $\neg p$-worlds higher than p-worlds on a desirability scale.

(52)   *Scalar semantics for expletive negation with fear* Yoon, 2011: p.161:

    a.   If *fear (x,p)* is true in a context c, then $M_B(x) \cap p$ is not $\varnothing$ in c.

    b.   The evaluative component of EN *(x,p)* expresses in context c
as the following:
$M_B(x) - p >_{Desirability} M_B(x) \cap p$ in c

While stating that expletive negation is the morphological realization of the ordering source of the embedding verb provides only an *ad hoc* solution which we cannot retain as such, our diachronic analysis supports the view that expletive negation conveys a meaning of negative preference.

7.   CONCLUSION

In this article, we have argued that there is a morphological distinction between a negation marker dedicated to the construction of imperatives and a standard negation marker, in Latin. We have taken as an assumption that expletive negation in French continues the prohibitive negation from Latin. For Latin, we have argued that prohibitive negation (i) heads ForceP, a functional head encoding clause-typing information, and (ii) either introduces root negative imperatives or negative imperatives embedded under directive or desiderative (and by extension, prohibitive and apprehensive) attitudes. We then argued that prohibitive negation, from Latin to French, (i) loses its grammatical function in embedded context, and (ii) undergoes downward syntactic reanalysis to MoodP. Semantically, we argued that there is a continuity between harmonic uses of prohibitive negation in Latin and the expletive negation. Our analysis proposes that expletive negation enters Modal Harmony with negative priority attitudes, as both bear a meaning of negative effective preference (i.e., that not-*p* be realized).

Once the expletive negation becomes stable in attitudinal context, its use starts spreading across other constructions, such as adverbial connectives (Tahar 2021a, 2022) as in later stages of the history of French, starting in the 17th century. The fact that expletive negation becomes productive in a new syntactic environment recalls the grammaticalization path known as *generalization* (Hopper and Traugott 1994, Heine 2003, Boerm 2008). It is not a mere coincidence that the generalization of expletive negation to new syntactic contexts takes place by the 17th century, at the stage of the Jespersen cycle when *ne* loses its negative meaning to *pas* or to another postverbal negator. It is reasonable to assume that preverbal negation *ne* at this stage is no longer a negation marker (as argued, for instance, by Wallage 2005, 2008, Breitbarth 2009). The semantic reanalysis of the preverbal marker of standard negation, into what Breitbarth (2009) names a "polarity" negation, could have resulted in endowing this marker with a semantic content akin to that of expletive negation. Both expletive and standard *ne* could plausibly have merged at this point in the history of French into a single functional item, which could have triggered the observed resurgence of productivity in the usage of expletive negation.

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