DOUBLING OF CLITICS AND DOUBLING
BY CLITICS: THE CASE OF NEGATION

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ABSTRACT

Clitics, beside doubling a phrasal constituent, can double other clitics. The two cases to be studied here, based on Italian dialect data, involve copying of the negative clitic on either side of a subject clitic, and copying on either side of an object clitic. In all of the cases we consider, the doubling of the negation clitic is sensitive to the so-called person split, roughly between first/second person and third person. We also consider potentially problematic cases where one of the apparently negative copies surfaces in positive contexts. Our analysis is based on the assumption that clitics are based-generated in the position where they surface — being connected to their copies by the interpretive calculus at the LF interface, as in so-called representational models. More to the point, we abandon the idea that sentential negations instantiate a specialized functional category Neg, where the clitic corresponds roughly to the negation operator. Rather, we propose that negations, including both...
clitics and adverbs are nominal elements, anchored as such at the argumental structure of the verb. Because we treat the so-called sentential negation as a nominal, argumental element, we are led to conclude that from an interpretive point of view, doubling of sentential negations is effectively an instance of so-called negative concord; we deal with the latter by assuming that negations are negative polarity items, rather than negative quantifiers.

1. DOUBLING OF n ON EITHER SIDE OF A SUBJECT CLITIC

In this section, we consider cases of doubling of the clitic negation on either side of a subject clitic, as seen for instance in the Northern Tuscan dialect of Viano in the second person singular in (1ii). In the other persons, reported in (1) under the corresponding roman numbers, the negative clitic simply follows the subject clitic. The examples in (1ii) show that the doubling of the negative clitic is entirely indifferent to the composition of the object clitic string.

(1)  

Viano  
(Tuscany)

i.  a nə dərmə.  
I not sleep  
I don’t sleep.

ii.  a n to nə dərmə.  
SCl not you not sleep  
You don’t sleep.

b.  n to (nə) mə camə.  
not you not me call  
You don’t call me.

c.  n to nə l camə.  
not you not him call  
You don’t call him.

d.  n to n to lavə.  
not you not you wash  
You don’t wash yourself.

e.  n to ə gə l de.  
not you not there it give  
You don’t give it to him.

iii.  i/ la nə dərmə.  
he/she not sleeps  
S/he doesn’t sleep.

iv.  a nə dor’mjaŋ.  
we not sleep  
We don’t sleep.