

Answering Negative Polar Questions in Gallo
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This paper probes the answers patterns to negative polar questions (NPQs) in Gallo, an endangered regional language of the Oïl family, in order to determine the locus and interpretation of negation (NEG) in Gallo.

With Holmberg (2015) a.o., we assume 3 syntactic positions for NEG: low, middle, or high NEG. NPQs have a high NEG reading if they double-check a positive proposition *p*, but a middle NEG reading if they double-check *not p* (Ladd 1981, Romero & Han 2004, Holmberg 2013).

We use the interpretation of answer particles to NPQs in a given language *L* (e.g., whether *yes* confirms *p*, or *not p*, whether *no* yields negative concord (NC) or double negation (DN)) to diagnose the locus and interpretation of NEG in *L* (whether NEG is low, middle or high, whether morphological NEG is semantically negative or not). Based on Holmberg, we formulate the **NEG-Diagnostics** in (1). Holmberg gives the typology of answer systems in (2i)-(2iii), to which we add (2iv)-(2v) on the basis of our diagnostics:

1a. LowNegD. *L* has low NEG if YES asserts that *not p* is true, while NO asserts that *not p* is false (thus confirming *p*).

1b. MidNegD. *L* has middle NEG if bare YES cannot be used to assert that *p* is true, while NO asserts that *p* is false. To assert that *p* is true, *L* can resort to reversal particles (reversing the polarity of *not p*), or to extended *yes* answers.

1c. HighNegD. *L* has high NEG if YES asserts that *p* is true, while NO asserts that *p* is false.

2.i) Languages with all 3 positions: high, low, middle (English, Standard French (SF))

ii) Languages with high and middle –but not low– NEG (Swedish, Finnish)

iii) Languages with low –but neither high, nor middle– NEG (Japanese)

iv) Languages with middle –but neither high, nor low– NEG (**Gallo**)

v) Languages with middle and low –but not high– NEG (**SF-Dialect 2**)

The lack of the low negation in Gallo

Applying the LowNegD in (3), we find that Gallo does not have low NEG since *vèrr* ‘yes’ cannot be used to assert that *not p* is true, (3b/b’) and *nouna* ‘no’ cannot assert that *not p* is false (3c/c’), unlike English *yes* and *no* (4b-c). Rather, *nouna* confirms *not p*, and to confirm *p*, the reversal particle *sia* must be used. This pattern is that of middle NEG (1b), not Low NEG (1c).

3a. Ton chat, i maunj ti pouint du pâtè d coutum? 4a. Does your cat usually not eat pâté?

Your cat he eats Q°not the pâté of custom

b. *Vèrr (i maunj **pouint** d’pâtè d’coutum.)

b. Yes (he doesn’t eat pâté.)

c. Dam nouna (i maunj **pouint** d’pâtè d’coutum.)

c. No (he eats pâté.)

c’. Darn no_{uneq} [TP he eat not_{uneq} pâté] ✓NC/*DN

c’. No_{ineq} [TP he doesnt_{ineq} eat pâté] ✓DN

d. ‘Sia’ → asserts *p* is true (= he eats pâté.)

The lack of LowNeg in Gallo follows from a general property of neg-words, be it neg-indefinites (*persone* ‘no one’), neg-answer particles (*nouna*), or morphological NEG (*pouint*): they are **not** intrinsically negative and, as such, carry a UNEQ feature that must be licensed by covert semantic NEG \emptyset_{INEG} (Zeijlstra 2004). Evidence for this claim will be provided –e.g (5) where both *pas* and *person* appear in a *yes/no* question (NPI context) on a non-negative reading. The contrast between the 2 languages follows. In English, the combination of the particle no_{INEG} and overt NEG ($n't_{\text{INEG}}$) inside the (optionally elided) clause in (4c) yields DN as in (4c’). DN is unavailable in Gallo since both $\text{nouna}_{\text{UNEQ}}$ and $\text{point}_{\text{UNEQ}}$ must be licensed by \emptyset_{INEG} (3c-c’). (3b) will be ruled out because affirmative *vèrr* clashes with \emptyset_{INEG} required to license $\text{point}_{\text{UNEQ}}$.

5 Gallo: Y’a pas persone? Gloss: There-has not no-one ‘Is anyone/someone there?’

The lack of high negation in Gallo and SF-Dialect 2

Applying the HighNegD (6-7), we find that Gallo does not have high NEG either. The context in (6a) and the use of the PPI *too* (Ladd 1981) in (6b) ensure that B’s question is double-checking a positive proposition *p* (“that Jane is coming”). We see here that the *vèrr* ‘yes’ cannot be used to assert that *p* is true (7c), unlike in English (6c). Crucially, however, the Gallo reversal particle

sia can be used to assert that *p* is true (7d), although it cannot be used to answer a positive polar question (8a-b). Again, the answer pattern in (7) is that of MidNeg (1b), not HighNeg (1c).

6a A: Ok, now that Stephan has come, we are all here. Let's go!

b B: Isn't Jane coming too? (From Romero & Han 2004)

c Yes (She is coming.) → asserts *p* is true d No. → asserts that *p* is false → **HighNegD** (1c)

7a A: Entendu. Le Stephan ée arivè, mézè. Tout l' mondd son arivè. S'éè parti !

Understood the Stephan is arrived now All the world are arrived Let's go

'Ok, now that Stephan has arrived, we are all here. Let's go!'

b. B : La Jane, è vièn pouint (*itou) ? 'Jane isn't coming too?'

The Jane she comes not also

c. *Vèrr d. ✓Sia (La Jane, è vièn) e. ✓Nouna → **MidNegD** (1b)

8a. Sabrina vient èl caté nouz ? 'Is Sabrina coming with us?'

Sabrina come her with us b ✓Vèrr c *Sia d ✓Nouna

Romero & Han (2004) derive high vs. middle NEG readings as a scopal ambiguity between NEG and a conversational epistemic (focus) operator VERUM roughly expressing "we are sure that *p/not p* should be added to the Common Ground". When VERUM scopes over NEG (9b), the speaker is double-checking *not p*, whereas when NEG scopes over VERUM (10b), the speaker is double-checking *p*.

9a. Isn't Alex coming either? (middle NEG reading)

b. [VERUM [*not p*]] (Question about *not p*)

10a. Isn't Alex coming too? (high NEG reading)

b. [NOT [VERUM *p*]] (Question about *p*)

Adopting this scopal account of high vs. middle NEG, we incorporate VERUM into the syntax of NPQs, as shown for English in (11a/b), irrelevant structure omitted. Semantic NEG can be generated in either of 3 positions: under a polarity head scoping above the focus operator VERUM (HighNeg, (11b)), or below VERUM but above TP (MidNeg (11a)), or inside TP (LowNegNEG).

The difference between English and Gallo then follows automatically from the status of propositional NEG in the 2 languages. In English, semantic and morphological NEG coincide: *not* carries an INEG feature and can be overtly spelled out in either of these 3 positions. In contrast, in Gallo, *pouint*, just like any other neg-word in Gallo, is not intrinsically NEG –that is, carries a UNEG feature that must be checked by a covert negative operator \emptyset_{INEG} . Now, if \emptyset_{INEG} is generated under Pol°_2 below VERUM (MidNeg), then it licenses morphological NEG inside TP (*pouint*_{UNEG}). However, if \emptyset_{INEG} is generated under Pol°_1 above VERUM (HighNeg), then it fails to license *pouint*_{UNEG} since the latter no longer falls in the immediate scope of \emptyset_{INEG} because VERUM intervenes between the higher c-commanding \emptyset_{INEG} and *pouint*_{UNEG}. Evidence for this comes from a correlated contrast between the 2 languages. A PPI is licensed in English with HighNeg (6b) precisely because VERUM shields the PPI by intervening between the PPI and the higher NEG. In contrast, in Gallo (7b), the PPI is not licensed because semantic NEG must appear below VERUM in order to licence *pouint*_{UNEG}, and thus cannot shield the PPI from NEG.

Finally, we shall show that SF splits into 2 dialects: Dialect 1, which patterns like English, vs. Dialect 2, which has lowNeg (unlike Gallo), but not high NEG (just like Gallo). We extend our account of the lack of high NEG in Gallo to SF Dialect 2, thus deriving cross-linguistic variation across 5 languages, from the setting of 2 parameters: whether semantic (sentential) NEG is overt or not and whether polar response particles contribute semantic NEG, as summarized in (14).

(14) Language	Gallo	SF-Dialect 2	SF-Dialect 1 / Spanish / English
Negative Response particles	<i>Nouna</i> _{UNEG}	<i>Non</i> _{INEG/UNEG}	<i>Non</i> _{INEG/UNEG} / <i>No</i> _{INEG/UNEG} / <i>No</i> _{INEG/UNEG}
Sentential Negation	<i>Pas/pouint</i> _{UNEG} / \emptyset_{INEG}	<i>Pas</i> _{UNEG} / \emptyset_{INEG}	<i>Pas</i> _{SINEG} / <i>No</i> _{INEG} / <i>Not</i> _{INEG}

