

## Syntax, Semantics and Affect in Picard Secondary Negation

**1. Introduction.** This paper presents the results of a new empirical study of the syntax, semantics and pragmatics of secondary negation markers in Picard, an endangered Gallo-Romance dialect spoken in the North of France. Although there has been a fair amount of research into the properties of non-canonical negation in the Italo and Ibero-Romance languages (Cinque 1976, Zanuttini 1997, Schwenter 2005, Frana & Rawlins 2013, a.o.), there has been very little investigation into similar constructions in the Gallo-Romance family. This study aims to help fill this empirical gap through a new investigation of the differences between negative constructions involving *point* and *mie* (1), based on fieldwork data from 7 native speakers from the Vimeu region. In particular, we argue that, while we find straightforward parallels between the syntax of *mie* and *point* and the syntax of different kinds of negation markers in Italian dialects (such as those described by Zanuttini 1997), the semantic/pragmatic values available to the pragmatically 'marked' negation *mie* are different from other marked forms of negation in other previously studied Romance varieties. We therefore conclude that the range of possible mappings between syntactic position and semantic/pragmatic meaning is wider than generally assumed in the literature.

(1) N'te casse **point** t'tête ! A n'va **mie** dureu.  
'Don't break your head (i.e. don't worry)! It won't last.'

**2. Syntax of *point* and *mie*.** Although both *mie* and *point* follow the finite verb, we argue that they do not occupy the same syntactic position; rather, *point* occupies a lower structural position than *mie*. For example, Zanuttini (1997) shows that the low neutral negation *nen* in Piedmontese must follow the temporal adverb *gia* 'already' (ok *gia nen*; \**nen gia*); whereas the high non-canonical negation *pa* in this dialect must precede it (ok *pa gia*; \**gia pa*). Correspondingly, all our speakers accept *point* following *déjo* 'already', and none accept the inverse order (2).

(2) a. J'n'étoais *déjo point* comme ézz'eutes. 'I was already not like them.' (\**point déjo*)  
Although most of our speakers prohibit *mie* with *déjo* in any position, two of the three that allow co-occurrence between *mie* and this adverb prefer to have *mie* precede *déjo* (*J'n'étoais mie déjo comme ézz'eutes*. > *J'n'étoais déjo mie comme ézz'eutes*). Furthermore, for speakers that accept co-occurrence of the two markers, *mie* must precede *point*, not vice versa. This is parallel to Zanuttini (1997)'s observation for the co-occurrence of *pa* and *nen* in Piedmontese: (ok: *pa nen*; \**nen pa*).

(3) J'n'in veux **mie point**! 'I don't want any!' (\**point mie*)  
We therefore conclude that *point* occupies Zanuttini's low negation (NegP<sub>3</sub>) position (like *nen*), while *mie* occupies the higher (NegP<sub>2</sub>) position (like *pa*).

**3. Cross-Romance Variation in Non-Canonical Negation.** We further observe that there exists a difference in pragmatic meaning between the two markers, with *point* being the 'neutral' unmarked negation (which can be used in every discourse context), and *mie* being the 'marked' form (i.e. the one with a narrower distribution). This is not surprising since elements occupying the higher NegP<sub>2</sub> position in Italian dialects (such as Piedmontese *pa* and Italian *mica*, cf. Cinque 1976, Zanuttini 1997, Frana & Rawlins 2013, a.o.) often have a pragmatically marked interpretation. While *point* can be used in all contexts, like *pa*, *mica* and Brazilian Portuguese's secondary negation construction *não...não* (Schwenter 2005), the use of *mie* is infelicitous 'out of the blue'. For example, if someone is walking down the street and suddenly remembers that they didn't turn off the stove, *point* is the preferred form (4).

(4) Du brin! J'n'ai **point/#mie** éteint ch'four! 'Dammit! I didn't turn off the stove!'

Furthermore, also like *pa*, *mica* and *não..não*, *mie* can be used to directly contradict an assumption made by one's interlocutor in the discourse. For example, in the dialogue in (5), if A is listing the food that A and B ate at last night's party, then B can correct A on the contents of the list using *mie*.

(5) A: O s'a mérgoussè avec chés burlots, chés seutréles, chés huites tchuites au fromage...  
'We pigged out on whelks, shrimp, oysters cooked with cheese...'

B: I n'êtoai't **mie** tchuites au fromage.

'They weren't cooked with cheese.'

However, unlike *pa* and *mica* (but like *nao...nao*), *mie* can be used in response to both yes-no (5) and Wh questions (6).

(6) A: Would you like some beef? B: J'n'in veux **mie**. 'I don't want any (obviously)'

(7) A: What time do you think you'll come home?

B: Mais j'ên sais **mie**! 'I don't know (and stop bothering me)!'

Furthermore, unlike *nao...nao* (but like *mica*), *mie* can be used to deny a presupposition (8).

(8) A: John stopped smoking. B: I n'a **mie** arrêté d' feumer: i n'a janmoais feumè d'és vie!

'He hasn't « stopped » smoking : he never smoked in his life!'

In other words, we argue that the pragmatic distribution of *mie* crosscuts previous distributions that have been identified in literature on Romance secondary negation.

**4. Contradiction and affect.** Rather than possessing the same distribution as other previously studied markers in Italo- and Ibero-Romance varieties, we argue that the distribution of *mie* should be characterized through three cases: **1)** *mie* can be used with neutral affect to contradict an interlocutor or as the answer to a question (as in (5)); **2)** (by far the most common use) *mie* can be used to correct/answer an interlocutor **and**, while doing so, express annoyance or anger at the interlocutor. For example, one speaker volunteered that if you ask an elderly person if they would like to buy a computer, they would most likely respond *J'ên veux mie d'tout eu!* 'I don't want any of that, obviously!', rather than just *J'ên veux point d'tout eu!* 'I don't want any of that.' (see also (6)); and **3)** *mie* can be used to provide information (regardless of the opinions or beliefs of the interlocutor) **and** express feelings of annoyance, anger or urgency. For example, while *point* is acceptable for all speakers in the context in (4), three speakers say that the corresponding sentence with *mie* can be used, particularly if the speaker is upset and they then immediately return home to turn off the stove. Likewise, if someone is pestering you with questions, one can say *J'ên sais mie pu* to mean 'I don't know anymore (and you are annoying me with your questions)', see also (7).

**5. Analysis.** In order to account for this distribution of *mie*, we propose that, like *point*, it semantically denotes propositional negation (i.e.  $[[mie]] = \lambda\phi.\neg\phi$ ); however, unlike *point*, *mie* possesses an extra presupposition: that the interlocutor does not already believe that  $\neg\phi$  (or believe some proposition that entails  $\neg\phi$ , cf. (8)). That is, (unlike *point*) *mie* cannot be used (with neutral affect) in discourses in which interlocutors are assumed to be in agreement, which explains why *mie* is generally unacceptable out of the blue, although it can be used to answer questions and to contradict/correct, as in (5). This being said, the most common use of *mie* in our data is one in which the speaker both corrects the interlocutor who believes/wonders about  $\phi$  **and** expresses annoyance about doing so. We therefore propose that the annoyance/anger at having to correct the interlocutor comes to be encoded in the meaning of *mie* as a higher order indexical (in the sense of Silverstein 2003 or Eckert 2008, among others). This indexicality then allows *mie* to be used simply to communicate annoyance, regardless of whether its presupposition is satisfied, as in (7). Finally, we give a formal analysis of the interaction between *mie*'s presupposition and its affective indexicality within an Optimality Theoretic approach to lexical pragmatics (Blutner 1998, Hendriks & de Hoop 2001, Zeevat 1007, Blutner 2013, a.o.).

**6. Selected References.** **1.** Blutner, R. (2013). Pragmatics in Optimality Theory. Beyond the Words: Content, context, and inference. Mouton de Gruyter. **2.** Cinque, G. (1976). Mica. *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Padova*. **3.** Eckert, P. (2008). Variation and the Indexical Field. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*. 12:453-476. **4.** Frana, I. & K. Rawlins. (2013). Mica questions and bias. Poster at NELS44. **5.** Hendriks, P. & H. De Hoop. 2001. Optimality Theoretic Semantics. *Linguistics & Philosophy*. 24:1-32. **6.** Schwenter, S. (2005). The Pragmatics of Negation in Brazilian Portuguese. *Lingua*.115:1427-1456. **7.** Silverstein, M. (2003). Indexical Order and the Dialects of Sociolinguistic Life. *Language and Communication*. 23: 193-229. **8.** Zanuttini, R. (1997). *Negation and Clause Structure*. OUP.