Neither, (n)or nothing and *hardly* in negative concord constructions in traditional dialects of British English[1]

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Resum. *Neither, (n)or nothing* i *hardly* en construccions de concordança negativa en els dialectes tradicionals de l'anglès britànic. En aquest article, investigo, dins d'un marc minimista, com es compon en anglès britànic no-estàndard la concordança negativa en construccions que contenen l'adverbi negatiu *neither*, l'extensor general *(n)or nothing*, i l'adverbi escalar *hardly* emprant dades del corpus Freiburg English Dialect. Sostinc que *neither*, *(n)or nothing* i *hardly* estableixen una relació de concordança sintàctica amb un altre element negatiu dins l'oració, cosa que resulta en la interpretació com a negació simple de la cadena formada per vàries expressions de la negació.

Paraules clau: concordança negativa, *neither*; *hardly, (n)or nothing;* concordança sintàctica, dialectes tradicionals de l'anglès britànic.

Abstract. *Neither, (n)or nothing* and *hardly* in negative concord constructions in traditional dialects of British English. In this paper, I investigate, within a minimalist framework, how negative concord is composed in non-standard British English constructions containing the negative adverb *neither*, the general extender *(n)or nothing*, and the scalar adverb *hardly* using data from the Freiburg English Dialect corpus. I argue that *neither*, *(n)or nothing* and *hardly* establish a relation of syntactic agreement with another negative element in the clause which results in a single-negation interpretation of the chain formed by several instances of negation.

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1. Introduction

The term negative concord (NC) describes the fact that multiple instances of logical negation are interpreted as single negation. NC, which is common in non-standard varieties of English (Ladusaw 1992; Anderwald 2002, 2005; among others), though not mandatory, is attested in most traditional dialects of British English (Anderwald 2005). This is shown in (1) with examples from the Freiburg English Dialect corpus (FRED)[2].

(1) a. I won't do no more   (HEB_018. Hebrides)
    b. I know this sounds funny, but nobody didn't notice it
                                                        (SAL_023. Shropshire, Midlands)
    c. No, I was never in no strikes   (YKS_005. Yorkshire, North)
    d. Nobody paid n' regard to them!   (SFK_038. Suffolk, Southeast)

NC in non-standard English has been studied by primarily focusing on (i) the co-occurrence of the sentential negative marker *not/-n't* with negative quantifiers such as *nobody*, *nothing* or *never* and (ii) the co-occurrence of negative quantifiers in the same clause (Anderwald 2002, 2005). Other negative elements such as *(n)or nothing*, *neither* and *hardly* have not received much attention in connection to NC, as they occur marginally in these kind of constructions and, therefore, are not perceived as central to the study of clausal NC (Anderwald 2002). However, NC patterns involving these expressions, (2), should be able to be accommodated within a theory of NC in non-standard English.

(2) a. And the bombs didn't disturb that much neither
                                                        (SAL_017. Shropshire, Midlands)
    b. And uncle Albert, he wouldn't do nothing, hardly
                                                        (CON_005. Cornwall, Southwest)
    c. And there wasn't no carpet, no linoleum, or nothing like that on the floor
                                                        (KEN_011. Kent, Southeast)
    d. There was no correspondence through post nor nothing about it, because it was
       that secret   (WES_017. Westmorland, North)

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2. For the FRED examples, the transcript number, county and major dialect area appears in parentheses.

The purpose of this article is twofold: first, I describe in which traditional dialects of British English *neither*, *(n)or nothing* and *hardly* co-occur with other instances of negation by using the data from FRED; second, I integrate the discussed data into a minimalist theory of NC as syntactic agreement between an interpretable negative feature and one or more uninterpretable negative features (Zeijlstra 2004, 2012; Penka and Zeijlstra 2010). The article is organised as follows. In section 2, the characteristics of FRED are presented and the geographical distribution of the three expressions under study is described. In section 3, the ingredients of the analysis put forward in section 4 for *neither*, *(n)or nothing* and *hardly* are addressed in turn. Finally, section 5 concludes.

2. The data

The data discussed in this article have been collected from the FRED corpus, which was compiled at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg between 2000 and 2005 using material from oral history projects. FRED is a monolingual corpus of spoken dialect data consisting of face-to-face interviews with Non-Mobile Older Rural Males (Chambers and Trudgill 1980). Therefore, it represents the traditional dialects of British English of the second half of the 20th century and is an appropriate source of data for the study of NC as a non-standard grammatical feature. FRED contains 2.5 million words and covers 9 major dialect areas. The dialect areas and counties where *neither*, *hardly* and *(n)or nothing* are attested in NC constructions are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. DIALECT AREAS AND COUNTIES WHERE *NEITHER*, *HARDLY*
AND *(N)OR NOTHING* ARE ATTESTED IN NC CONSTRUCTIONS

Dialect areas	Counties	(Chapman code)
Outer Hebrides		(HEB)
Scotland-Highlands	Inverness-shire	(INV)
	Sutherland	(SUT)
Scotland-Lowlands	Angus	(ANS)
	Dumfriesshire	(DFS)
	Perthshire	(PER)
	Selkirkshire	(SEL)

North	Durham	(DUR)
	Lancashire	(LAN)
	Northumberland	(NBL)
	Westmorland	(WES)
	Yorkshire	(YKS)
Midlands	Nottinghamshire	(NTT)
	Shropshire	(SAL)
Wales	Denbighshire	(DEN)
	Glamorgan	(GLA)
Southeast	Kent	(KEN)
	London	(LND)
	Suffolk	(SFK)
Southwest	Cornwall	(CON)
	Devon	(DEV)
	Oxfordshire	(OXF)
	Somerset	(SOM)
	Wiltshire	(WIL)

2.1. Neither

There are 23 examples in which *neither* occurs as part of a NC construction in FRED, geographically distributed as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF *NEITHER* IN NC CONSTRUCTIONS IN FRED

Dialect areas	Counties	Number of examples
Scotland-Lowlands	Angus (ANS)	1
North	Durham (DUR)	1
	Lancashire (LAN)	1
	Westmorland (WES)	3
	Yorkshire (YKS)	1

Midlands	Shropshire (SAL)	3
Southeast	Suffolk (SFK)	9
Southwest	Cornwall (CON)	1
	Somerset (SOM)	2
	Wiltshire (WIL)	1
Total		23

In 20 out of the 23 examples, *neither* is sentence-final, as illustrated in (3).

(3) a. And there was no great light neither   (ANS_003. Angus, Scotland-Lowlands)
  b. I never never got paid for that neither   (DUR_003. Durham, North)
  c. A lot of the boats didn't have toilets on neither   (SFK_004. Suffolk, Southeast)

In the remaining 3 examples, *neither* occurs before the verb twice, (4a, b), and once in a *neither… nor* construction that co-occurs with the sentential negative marker, (5). What (3)-(5) have in common is their single-negation interpretation in spite of the fact that there are other instances of negation in the same clause.

(4) a. You could neither get wood and no coal   (SAL_031. Shropshire, Midlands)
  b. If you got that locked, you couldn't neither get your reversing lever one
    way or the other   (SFK_006. Suffolk, Southeast)
(5) And his slake trough was under the hearth, so that he hadn't very far neither
  to take his hot iron nor his cold iron   (WES_017. Westmorland, North)

2.2. (N)or nothing

Or nothing, which can also occur with an apparently extra negative form (i.e., as *nor nothing*), is a general extender (Overstreet and Yule 1999): it is a nonspecific expression that extends the meaning of a complete utterance by putting emphasis on a minimum amount (i.e., *nothing*). In all traditional dialects of British English where *(n)or nothing* is attested, it occurs clause-finally, as illustrated in (6) and (7).

(6)   a. They wouldn't put blindin' or nothing on   (HEB_018. Outer Hebrides)
      b. Oh, they were very, very very docile, you know, never interfered with
         nobody or nothing   (DFS_001. Dumfriesshire, Scotland-Lowlands)
(7)   a. They didn't dig a pit nor nothin' to burn this charcoal
                                                (SAL_039. Shropshire, Midlands)
      b. So anyhow they never had no – never had no glasses nor nothing in them
         days, you know   (CON_006. Cornwall, Southwest)

Tables 3 and 4 show the geographical distribution of *(n)or nothing*. When both forms are attested in a given county, the percentage of occurrence of each is indicated in the fourth column.

Table 3. Geographical distribution of *or nothing* in NC constructions in FRED

Dialect areas	Counties	No. of examples	%
Outer Hebrides	(HEB)	4	40%
Scotland-Highlands	Inverness-shire (INV)	1	--
	Sutherland (SUT)	1	--
Scotland-Lowlands	Dumfriesshire (DFS)	1	--
	Perthshire (PER)	1	--
	Selkirkshire (SEL)	1	--
North	Durham (DUR)	1	--
	Northumberland (NBL)	1	--
	Westmorland (WES)	1	25%
Midlands	Nottinghamshire (NTT)	2	28.57%
	Shropshire (SAL)	2	50%
Wales	Denbighshire (DEN)	3	--
	Glamorgan (GLA)	2	--
Southeast	Kent (KEN)	6	--
	London (LND)	5	--
	Suffolk (SFK)	19	--

Southwest	Cornwall (CON)	2	50%
	Devon (DEV)	13	--
	Oxfordshire (OXF)	1	--
	Somerset (SOM)	6	25%
	Wiltshire (WIL)	4	--
Total	77		

TABLE 4. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF *NOR NOTHING* IN NC CONSTRUCTIONS IN FRED

Dialect areas	Counties	No. of examples	%
Outer Hebrides	(HEB)	6	60%
North	Lancashire (LAN)	1	--
	Westmorland (WES)	3	75%
Midlands	Nottinghamshire (NTT)	5	71.43%
	Shropshire (SAL)	2	50%
Southwest	Cornwall (CON)	2	50%
	Somerset (SOM)	2	75%
Total	21		

2.3. Hardly

There are 17 examples of *hardly* in NC constructions in FRED. Table 5 shows their geographical distribution.

Table 5. Geographical distribution of *hardly* in NC constructions in FRED

Dialect areas	Counties	Number of examples
North	Northumberland (NBL)	1
Southeast	Kent (KEN)	3
	Suffolk (SFK)	6
Southwest	Cornwall (CON)	1
	Devon (DEV)	1
	Somerset (SOM)	5
Total		17

In 9 out of the 17 examples, *hardly* occurs before the verb, (8). On 2 occasions, it occurs after the verb and right before an *any*-object, (9), and on 3 occasions, at the end of the clause after a pause, (10).

(8) a. Now they can't hardly get fisherman now, can they?
                                    (SFK_004. Suffolk, Southeast)
      b. And and no, no boy's family hardly ever come and visit any of them
                                    (SOM_012. Somerset, Southwest)
(9) a. You never see hardly any of them   (SFK_038. Suffolk, Southeast)
      b. If you were up there when that was flat a [sic] calm, you never got hardly
         anything   (SFK_004. Suffolk, Southeast)
(10) a. And I've never changed, hardly   (NBL_007. Northumberland, North)
      b. You don't know what your pal was doing, hardly
                                    (DEV_006. Devon, Southwest)

3. Analysis of the data: the ingredients

In the following subsections, I discuss (i) the assumption that NC involves agreement of an interpretable negative formal feature with one or more uninterpretable negative formal features in its c-command domain (Zeijlstra 2004 and ff.; Penka and Zeijlstra 2010); (ii) the lexical variation that exists between negative quantifiers in Standard English and in traditional dialects of British English; and (iii) the analysis of *hardly* as 'almost not' in Standard English, but as a polarity-sensitive item in non-standard English (Partee 2004).

3.1. NC as syntactic agreement

One of the central assumptions of Minimalism (Chomsky 1995 and ff.) regarding the design of language is that linguistic expressions are assembled in the syntax by combining an array of lexical items selected from the Lexicon in a one-time operation and then handed over for interpretation to the interface with the conceptual-intentional system (the Logical Form, LF), and to the interface with the articulatory-perceptual system, (the Phonetic Form, PF). For a syntactic object to be legible at the interfaces, the formal features of all lexical items in the derivation must be interpretable and, hence, uninterpretable features must be deleted by means of Agree —formalised in (11) following Zeijlstra (2012).

(11) Agree
    α can agree with β iff:
    a. α carries at least one uninterpretable feature and β carries a matching
       interpretable feature
    b. β c-commands α
    c. β is the closest goal to α

<div align="right">(Zeijlstra 2012: 514)</div>

Zeijlstra (2004 and ff.) puts forward an account of NC as syntactic agreement between an interpretable negative feature, [iNeg], and one or more uninterpretable negative features, [uNeg]. This is illustrated in (12) for a NC language such as Spanish, where the strikethrough indicates that [iNeg] checks the [uNeg] feature by means of Agree.

(12) a. No   he   visto   nada
       not   have.1SG   seen   nothing
     'I didn't see anything'
    b. No$_{[iNeg]}$ he visto nada$_{\text{[uNeg]}}$

Most traditional dialects of British English allow NC, as shown in (1) and (2) above. Therefore, I assume that, as in the Spanish example in (12), the sentential negative marker carries an [iNeg] feature in traditional dialects of British English, while the other (apparently) negative expression that it c-commands bears a [uNeg] feature. This analysis is extended to NC constructions with *neither*, *(n)or nothing* and *hardly* in section 4.

3.2. On the feature characterisation of neither and (n)or nothing

As was illustrated in (1), the data in FRED show that so-called negative quantifiers such as *nobody*, *nothing* and the like may co-occur with the sentential negative marker, as well as with other negative quantifiers in traditional dialects of British English. This is not possible in Standard English where, as shown in (13b) —which is the Standard English counterpart of (1b)—, the negative marker cannot co-occur with pre-verbal negative quantifiers and, as illustrated in (13a, c, d), *any*-indefinites are required in post-verbal position if a sentential negative marker or a pre-verbal negative quantifier occur in a structurally higher c-commanding position.

(13) a. I won't do any more
      b. I know this sounds funny, but nobody noticed it
      c. No, I was never in any strikes
      d. Nobody paid any regard to them!

Hence, traditional dialects of British English and Standard English contrast with respect to the inherent negativity of the so-called negative quantifiers. Following Zeijlstra (2004), I will assume that such contrast is lexical: while *nobody*, *nothing*, etc. bear an interpretable negative feature [iNeg] in Standard English, they carry an uninterpretable negative feature, [uNeg], in traditional dialects of British English. Two [iNeg] features cannot co-occur unless a Double Negation interpretation is intended and, hence, NC is not possible in Standard English; by contrast, [uNeg] features need to be checked by establishing an Agree relationship with an [iNeg] feature and, hence, NC is widely attested in negative constructions in traditional dialects of British English.

As shown in the examples in (3), the adverb *neither* can also be assumed to carry an [iNeg] feature in Standard English (where only *either*, its non-negative counterpart, would be allowed in the contexts featured in (3)), but a [uNeg] one in traditional dialects of British English.

With respect to the general extender *(n)or nothing*, I assume *nor* to be a negative conjunction carrying [iNeg] in Standard English (and hence incompatible with the negative quantifier *nothing*, which also carries [iNeg]), but a conjunction bearing a [uNeg] feature in traditional dialects of British English.

3.3. On the internal structure of **hardly**

While it seems clear that *hardly* is an adverb, there is no consensus with respect to which kind of adverb it is. *Hardly* has been claimed to be a negative adverb (Klima 1964), an extent adverb (Potsdam 1998), an approximative adverb (Horn 2002), and a degree adverb (Ernst 2002; Pullum and Huddleston 2002). Interestingly, *hardly* successfully goes through the tests that Klima (1964) uses as diagnostics for sentential negation, as can be seen in (15a) for a sentence such as (14).

(14) Peter hardly drinks.

(15) a. (Mary does not often drink)
          Peter hardly drinks, either.   [*either*-conjoining]
      b. Peter hardly drinks, not even in weddings.   [*not even* continuation]
      c. Peter hardly drinks, does he?   [positive tag]
      d. Peter hardly drinks and neither does Mary.   [*neither* tag]

However, notice that (14) is not synonymous with (16), but with (17) (Partee 2004).

(16) Peter doesn't drink.
(17) Peter almost doesn't drink (i.e., Peter doesn't drink very often).

Therefore, I assume, in line with Quirk *et al.* (1972) and Partee (2004) that, in Standard English, *hardly* has the internal structure in (18), where, crucially, negation scopes under the 'almost' component (Partee 2004, p. 239).

(18) hardly (Peter drinks) = ALMOST (NEG (Peter drinks))

The effect of the 'almost' component in *hardly* results in the interpretation of (14) being 'close to ¬p' rather than '¬p', which is the interpretation of (16). That is, the 'almost' component in *hardly* is responsible for its scalar behaviour, whereas the internal negation (represented as 'NEG' in (18) above) is responsible for (14) successfully going through Klima's tests for sentential negation. In short, what *hardly* has in common with *neither* and *(n)or nothing* is that negation is an essential part of its semantics. Hence, *hardly* is also expected to contrast in Standard English and traditional dialects of British English

along the same lines as *nobody*, *nothing*, etc., the adverb *neither* and the conjunction *nor* do, namely in the (un)interpretability of their negative formal feature[3].

4. *Neither, (n)nor nothing* and *hardly* in NC constructions in FRED

As shown in (1) above, prototypical NC constructions in traditional dialects of British English involve (i) a negative marker with scope over the verb (*-n't*), (ii) the adverb *never*, or (iii) a pre-verbal n-indefinite. *Neither* also co-occurs with these three kinds of elements in FRED, as illustrated in (19a-c). In the case of (19a), I assume that the sentential negative marker in English carries an [iNeg] feature. Hence, Agree would operate as represented in (20). For (19b-c), by contrast, given that *never* and other n-indefinites carry a [uNeg] feature in traditional dialects of British English when they occur in NC constructions, I assume, in line with Zeijlstra (2004), that the insertion of a Last Resort negative operator, $Op\neg_{[iNeg]}$, which permits Agree, is triggered by the presence of otherwise unchecked [uNeg] features. This is represented in (21) and (22) where the [uNeg] features of *never* and *neither* in (19b), and of *no forn*, *no great light* and *neither* in (19c) would not be c-commanded by any structurally higher negative element bearing an [iNeg] feature if the Last Resort abstract negative operator were not inserted. The triggering of an abstract negative operator that guarantees that a requirement of one or more formal features is satisfied ([uNeg] in this case) salvages the derivation[4]. Notice, as well, that following Matushansky (2006), sentential negation is assumed to be merged in the Specifier of an Aux(iliary) P(hrase), which is a functional category sandwiched between T(ense)P and vP. Whether sentential negation is ultimately Spelled-Out as *not* or as *-n't* depends on whether Neg° undergoes morphological merger (m-merger) with the Aux(iliary) head or not. M-merger "results in the head adjunction structure traditionally associated with head movement" (Matushansky 2006, p. 70).

(19) a. My father wouldn't allow that neither   (LAN_004. Lancashire, North)
       b. He never went to Great Ormes neither   (SFK_037. Suffolk, Southeast)
       c. There was no forn, and there was no, no great light, neither
                                                    (ANS_003. Angus, Scotland-Lowlands)

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3. As *nobody*, *nothing*, etc. are non-negative dependent elements in traditional dialects of British English, they will be referred to as n-indefinites (Haspelmath 2005) rather than as negative quantifiers in the rest of the paper.

4. Although not represented in (20)-(22), the subject raises to the Specifier of T(ense)P. I also assume auxiliary *be* to be merged in v° and raise to Aux° when inflected for Tense (Ross 1969, Jackendoff 1972, Emonds 1976, Pollock 1989 and Chomsky 1991, among others), and that adverbs are adjuncts (Pollock 1989, Iatridou 1990, Johnson 1991 and Bowers 1993, among others).

(20)   [$_{AuxP}$[$_{Aux°}$[$_{Aux°}$would][$_{NegP/Neg°}$-n't$_{[iNeg]}$]][$_{vP}$my father allow that [$_{vP}$[$_{AdvP}$neither $_{[uNeg]}$]]]]

(21)   [$_{NegP}$Op¬$_{[iNeg]}$ [$_{TP}$[$_{T°}$][$_{vP}$[$_{AdvP}$never $_{[uNeg]}$][$_{vP}$he went to G. O. [$_{vP}$[$_{AdvP}$neither $_{[uNeg]}$]]]]]]

(22)   [$_{NegP}$Op¬$_{[iNeg]}$[$_{TP}$[$_{T°}$][$_{AuxP}$[$_{Aux°}$was][$_{vP}$[$_{DP}$no$_{[uNeg]}$great light][$_{v°}$ t$_v$][$_{vP}$[$_{AdvP}$neither $_{[uNeg]}$]]]]]]

As illustrated in (23) and (24), the sentential negative marker *-n't* and an n-indefinite also co-occur with the general extender *(n)or nothing* in FRED.

(23)   a. There wasn't no Central Hall or nothing like that, see
                                          (SAL_018. Shropshire, Midlands)
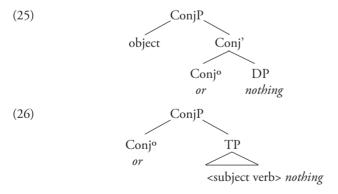   b. See, but they got no pension or nothing   (KEN_003. Kent, Southeast)
(24)   a. You couldn't do no papers nor nothing
                                          (NTT_014. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)
       b. So anyhow they never had no – never had no glasses nor nothing in them
          days, you know   (CON_006. Cornwall, Southwest)

A question that comes to mind when coming across data such as (23) and (24) is whether *or* —which, following Johannessen (2005), is assumed to be the head of Conj(unction)P— coordinates two objects (one of which is an n-indefinite), as in (25) (Johannessen (2005)), or if, by contrast, it selects a partially elided T(ense) P(hrase) that contains *nothing* in an object position, (26). As indicated by the angled brackets in (26), the subject and the verb in the TP that is the complement of Conj° are affected by ellipsis. Hence, they are not Spelled-Out, yielding the sequence *or nothing*.

(25)

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                    ConjP
                  /       \
            object         Conj'
                          /     \
                      Conj°      DP
                       or      nothing
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(26)

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                    ConjP
                  /       \
            Conj°          TP
             or          /    \
                   <subject verb> nothing
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As shown in (27), a negative quantifier in a (partially elided) TP selected by Conj° (e.g. (28)) can only have scope over the clause it occurs in. That is, (27) is interpreted as

in (28), where only the coordinated clause introduced by *or* receives a negative reading due to the presence of *nothing*.

(27) I will eat potatoes or nothing.
(28) I will eat potatoes or <I will eat> nothing.

Notice that if (26) were the default syntactic construction for clauses with *or nothing*, (24c), repeated here as (29), should not be considered non-standard, as it would correspond to (30), with angled brackets indicating ellipsis. As the negative quantifier *nothing* would raise to take scope over the verb in the coordinated clause only, its negativity should not interfere with that of the negative quantifier *no pension* in the clause above ConjP. Notice, however, that in Standard English the counterpart of (29) is (31).

(29) See, but they got no pension or nothing.
(30) See, but these, they got no pension or <they got> nothing.
(31) See, but they got no pension or anything.

The unacceptability of (29) in Standard English is hence taken to support the analysis of the general extender *(n)or nothing* as having the structure that Johannessen (2005) assumes for coordinated objects (see (25) above). In addition, *nor* in *nor nothing* is clearly the negative-looking counterpart of *or*. That is, *nor* in *nor nothing* seems to contain the morphological mark (*n-*) that is associated to other n-indefinites such as *nobody*, *nothing*, or to the adverb *neither*, and it is best analysed as the conjunction *or* plus negative morphology (*n-*) rather than as the complex conjunction 'and also/either not' (Wurmbrand 2008). As in the case of *neither*, *nor* is assumed to carry a [uNeg] feature in traditional dialects of British English.

The example in (29), where *no pension* and *or nothing* co-occur in the same clause, is analysed in (32). As both n-indefinites have been assumed to be specified as [uNeg] in traditional dialects of British English, the insertion of a Last Resort Op¬$_{[iNeg]}$ is the only possible way in which their [uNeg] formal features can be checked (Zeijlstra 2004).

(32) [$_{NegP}$Op¬$_{[iNeg]}$[$_{TP}$ [$_{T°}$]   [$_{vP}$ [$_{v°}$ got]   [$_{ConjP}$ [$_{DP}$ no$_{[uNeg]}$ pension]]   [$_{Conj'}$ [$_{Conj°}$ or] [$_{DP}$ nothing$_{[uNeg]}$]]]]]

As discussed above, the sentences in (24), with *nor* rather than *or*, have an extra [uNeg] feature in the chain, as shown in (34) for (24a)/(33). As can be seen in (34), (Multiple) Agree applies, with the [iNeg] feature of the sentential negative marker *-n't* Agreeing with the [uNeg] features of the lower n-indefinites.

(33)   You couldn't do no papers nor nothing (NTT_014. Nottinghamshire, Midlands)

(34) $[_{AuxP}[_{Aux°}[_{Aux°}$could $[_{NegP/Neg°}$ -n't $_{[iNeg]}]]][_{vP}$ you $[_{v°}$ do] $[_{ConjP}$ $[_{DP}$ no $_{[uNeg]}$ papers] $[_{ConjP}$ $[_{ConjP}$ $[_{Conj°}$ nor$_{[uNeg]}]$ $[_{DP}$ nothing$_{[uNeg]}]]]]]]$

As was the case for *neither* and *(n)or nothing*, *hardly* also co-occurs with the sentential negative marker and the adverb *never* above v°, (35), in the data from FRED.

(35)   a. Now they can't hardly get fishermen now, can they?

(SFK_004. Suffolk, Southeast)

b. You never hardly see a woman in a pub in them days

(KEN_001. Kent, Southeast)

The sentences in (35) diverge from their Standard English (approximate) counterparts in (36) in that *hardly* expresses sentential negation in (36), but not in (35).

(36)   a. They can hardly get fishermen now
b. You hardly ever saw a woman in a pub in those days

As argued for *neither* and *(n)or nothing*, in those traditional dialects of British English where *hardly* co-occurs with other negative elements, it participates in an Agree chain, as its negative feature is uninterpretable. This is illustrated in (37), where, following Partee's (2004) suggestion that *hardly* may be a polarity-sensitive alternate of *almost* in non-standard English, *hardly* has been assumed to be a negative polarity item (endowed with [uNeg]) that is licensed by negation, an anti-veridical operator (Giannakidou 1998, 2006).

(37) $[_{AuxP}$ $[_{Aux°}$ $[_{Aux°}$ can $[_{NegP/Neg°}$ -n't $_{[iNeg]}]]]$ $[_{vP}$ $[_{AdvP}$ hardly$_{[uNeg]}]$ $[_{vP}$ they $[_{v°}$ get] $[_{NP}$ fishermen]]]]$

The scalar behaviour of *hardly* in traditional dialects of British English (recall that *hardly* softens the negative assertion by yielding the interpretation 'close to ¬p' rather than '¬p') fits well with Chierchia's (2006) assumption that polarity items are scalar items that introduce alternatives within smaller domains. In addition, unlike in Standard English, where linguistic evidence suggests that *hardly* is to be analysed as the combination of 'almost' and negation —as in (18) above—, the data in FRED suggest that in traditional dialects of British English *hardly* is best analysed as a negative polarity item that is the polar counterpart of *almost*. In other words, in traditional dialects of British English,

hardly does not contain 'almost' as part of its structure; rather, it is similar to it in meaning, but, as it is a polarity item, it comes with a particular licensing requirement: it needs to be c-commanded by an anti-veridical operator such as negation. Thus, *hardly* is allowed to occur under the scope of negation in traditional dialects of British English.

With respect to the data where *hardly* occurs at the end of the clause, Quirk *et al.* (1985) observe that "[i]n very informal use, hardly can be at E [end of a clause] without prosodic weight: (She used to write a lot but now) she doesn't write at ÀLL hardly" (p. 583). In these cases I take *hardly* to be right-adjoined to the vP, so that Agree between a higher negative element above v° and *hardly* obtains.

5. Conclusion

In this paper I have used data from the FRED corpus to investigate how NC is composed in traditional dialects of British English in constructions with *neither*, *(n) or nothing* and *hardly*, which are usually neglected in the study of NC in non-standard English, where negative quantifiers have always been the central issue. The geographic distribution of the negative items under study across traditional dialects of British English has been described, and their syntax accommodated into a theory of NC as (multiple) syntactic agreement between an interpretable feature and one or more uninterpretable feature(s).

In particular, it has been argued that *neither*, *(n)or nothing* and *hardly* carry a [uNeg] feature in traditional dialects of British English, which is responsible for their behaviour as negative polarity items that need to co-occur with a structurally higher instance of negation specified as [iNeg]. By participating in an Agree chain, their [uNeg] feature is deleted and a NC reading is assigned to the sentence.

Our analysis has made it possible to accommodate the use of *(n)or nothing*, *neither* and *hardly* in NC constructions in non-standard English into a syntactic agreement-based theory of NC. However, a number of issues still remain to be further investigated.

First, given that NC is optional in non-standard English (Anderwald 2002, 2005), it is predicted that *neither*, *hardly* and *or nothing* should also be attested in FRED as conveying a negative meaning (i.e., occurring in non-NC constructions). New corpus searches should verify this prediction and help us measure to what extent and how often these elements occur in NC or non-NC constructions. In the same vein, it would also be relevant to complement the study of the patterns of NC in non-standard English with empirical data on how often n-indefinites such as *nobody*, *nothing*, etc. express single negation rather than NC in non-standard English. Anderwald (2002) compared the occurrences of n-indefinites in NC constructions in the spoken sub-component of the British National Corpus to their Standard English counterparts (i.e., combinations of a negative element and an *any*-indefinite), but not to instances of single negation (i.e., constructions where negation seems to be contributed by the n-indefinite alone).

Second, our analysis of *nor* in *nor nothing* as the *or*-conjunction plus negative morphology involves assuming that two lexical entries for *nor* exist in English: one which is a complex conjunction that combines the meaning of 'and', 'also/either' and 'negation', and one which seems to be a variant of *or* that occurs in negative contexts. How these two entries for *nor* are distributed in the grammar of (non-standard) English speakers is a topic that deserves further attention.

Last but not least, expressions such as *rarely*, *seldom*, *little* and *few* which, like *hardly*, express some form of negativity have not been addressed in this paper. In similarity to the case of *hardly*, however, it would be expected that these expressions could possibly occur in NC constructions in non-standard English. Corpus data should answer whether this prediction is borne out. If it were, the attested patterns could be compared to those reported for *hardly*. All in all, the issues suggested for further research should allow us to deepen even more our understanding of the patterns and mechanisms of NC in non-standard English.

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