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A step forward in understanding *pas*: the post-verbal negator in Old Occitan from the perspective of communication and rhetorical strategizing

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Abstract: In recent years, within the cognitive linguistics approach there has been a trend of scholarly research committed to exploring the motivation for language change. The way in which people use language in communication, together with principles of human categorization, are the locus where language change and innovations are to be found. Interactional contexts in particular, seen as playing a crucial role in bringing about syntactic change (Traugott 2010b), have figured prominently in recent contributions on diachronic micro-changes, bringing to the fore the role played by dialogue as both the manifestation of the participants' own voices and the realization of the constant negotiation that characterizes human communication. Against this background, this contribution focuses on a particular use of the Occitan post-verbal negator *pas* in negative rhetorical questions, which was very productive in fifteenth-century collections of religious theatrical texts. It is claimed that these dialogic contexts allowed a polyphonic use of *pas*, crucially restricted to this post-verbal negator, which is key to identifying the reasons behind the eventual establishment of *pas* as the generalized sentential negator in the modern language.

Keywords: negation, post-verbal negator, emphasis, discourse-old, rhetorical questions, modal particle, dialogic contexts, polyphony

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0 Introduction

The process that gave birth to the so-called embracing negation in French is well known and is usually put forward as one of the stereotypical examples of grammaticalization.

Except for some variation in the interpretation and analysis of the exact nature of the semantic and pragmatic import of *pas* in old French (i.e. whether it conveyed emphasis in its earliest attestations), there is overall consensus on the stages that Latin *PASSUS* went through to develop into a marker of post-verbal negation in French. The generally agreed starting point are assumed Latin expressions such as *NON UADERE PASSUM*, lit. ‘not to go a pace/a step’, in which a nominal indicating a small distance (variously also a small quantity/length/weight/value/etc.) is added to the canonical, pre-verbal negator *NON* as a strengthener: ‘not to go even a pace’, that is ‘not to go at all’. In time, the post-verbal nominal undergoes semantic bleaching and its use becomes generalized to all verbs. Its increased frequency leads to an inflationary effect (Dahl 2001), in which the emphasis conveyed by the reinforced negation is lost, and the construction comes to express simple, canonical negation.

While ample attention has been devoted to interpreting these facts in terms of the mechanism of grammaticalization (in its different interpretations), or in establishing the correct sequence of cause-effect mechanisms in the stages of development of post-verbal negation, or in specifying the pragmatic import of the post-verbal negators in their early usage in contrast to the sole use of a pre-verbal negator, the question that has not been addressed yet is why, among the various post-verbal reinforcers that co-existed in a language (cf. French *mie*, *goutte*, *point*, *pas* and Occitan *minga/minja*, *guota*, *ponch*, *pas*),¹ only one in particular should be the “winner” and establish itself over the others. A notable partial exception is Möhren (1980), who adduces the abstractness of meaning of French *mie*, *pas*, *point* and *rien* to explain their faster grammaticalization compared to other nominals of minimal value that were also widely used at the time, such as *noix* or *chiche*: these had a much more concrete meaning and never grammaticalized (ib., 11). Within the former group, though, the reasons behind the establishment of *pas* over the others are not explored. The aim of

¹ This list deliberately omits *ges/jes/gens*, derived from Latin *GENUS* ‘kind, type’. Rather than a minimizer, it can be classified as a *generalizer* (cf. Kiparsky/Condoravdi 2006, 173), and although its addition to pre-verbal *no(n)* contributed emphasis, the exact path followed by its development does not appear to be parallel to that of the minimizer-type elements. However, brief reference to it is made in footnote 18.

this contribution is to address this question for the establishment of Occitan *pas* as the generalized marker of negation, looking for a possible answer into those constructions that were restricted to *pas* and did not admit any of its “competitors”.

It is notoriously difficult to establish the reason (or reasons) behind specific developments in given structures, especially so when investigating earlier stages of a language and relying solely on written sources. Within the Generative tradition, changes in linguistic patterns are generally explained by means of speaker-based or structural properties that are internal and specific to language. Within the Cognitive Linguistics tradition, on the other hand, language change is seen as the result of the way people use language in communication, as their focus is on principles of human categorization, as well as pragmatic and interactional principles deriving from language as a communicative system (i.e. usage-based). In Traugott/Dasher’s (2002, 42) words, “[...] innovation and change does not occur primarily in the process of perception and acquisition, but rather in the process of strategic choicemaking on the part of SP[eaker]/W[riter] and interactional negotiation with AD[dressee]/R[eader]”.

In an inspiring contribution, Traugott (2010b)² illustrates the role played by interactional contexts, or dialogic language use, as a salient external motivation for language change, bringing to the fore dialogue as the manifestation of the participants’ own voices as well as the realization of the constant negotiation that characterizes human communication. This negotiation is evident in the participants’ management and expression of their own views, as well as their consideration of the other participants’ beliefs and attitudes, and how the two sets relate to each other, which can be seen in the participants’ linguistic choices.³ Of particular interest in this function, are so-called polyphonic expressions (in the general sense of Ducrot 1984), linguistic markers that are able to voice more than one point of view, a property that results from the “conventionalization of effects in dialogic exchanges” (Waltereit/Detges 2007, 74). It is precisely in dialogic contexts, I claim, that a modal-particle usage of *pas* emerged and contributed to

² Traugott’s work joins a wider trend of scholarly research committed to exploring the motivation for language change (cf. White 2003; Radden/Panther 2004; Nölke 2006; Fischer 2007; Waltereit/Detges 2007; Panther/Radden 2011; Traugott 2014; Schwenter 2016; Jiajun 2017; Pietrandrea 2018).

³ There are clear echoes here of Traugott’s two notions of *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity* (and their corresponding diachronic processes of subjectification and intersubjectification), already present in her (1982) work, and then refined and revised by her and a multitude of researchers over the past 30 years or so. I deliberately avoid making this link explicit at the moment; I make brief reference to intersubjectification and its role in the process of grammaticalization in §5.

speeding its grammaticalization, eventually leading to its establishment as the generalized sentential negator.

Before discussing rhetorical questions in §2, this article looks at the first emergence and subsequent development of *pas* between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, highlighting its emphatic contribution to negation and its use to negate discourse-old state of affairs in §1. A comparison with the modal use of *be* follows in §3, and §4 and §5 present the discussion and analysis.

1 *pas* between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries

In modern Occitan, sentential negation obtains through the use of post-verbal *pas* which serves as the sole negator. *Pas* follows the finite verb (*Aquel can es **pas** lo de mon paire* ‘That dog is not my father’s’) and in compound tenses it is found between the auxiliary and the participle (*Soi **pas** anat a Marsilha* ‘I have not gone to Marseille’). The original pre-verbal negator *no(n)* can still be found on its own in the spoken language in formulaic expressions or proverbs (*Qui minge plan et caguo fort, **n**’age poeu de la mort* ‘Those who eat well and defecate powerfully, do not fear death’), and in some constructions such as *ni non... ni non...* ‘neither... nor...’ (*La Maria **ni non** manja **ni non** beu* ‘Mary neither eats nor drinks’), but it is otherwise restricted to highly formal and written contexts in this variety.

In Old Occitan, the preverbal negator *no(n)* remained the dominant strategy to form negation until at least the sixteenth century. During the period between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries it could also be reinforced by a variety of post-verbal markers, of which *pas* was one; by the eighteenth century, pre-verbal *no(n)* was generally lost, and *pas* could negate a sentence by itself. By the end of the nineteenth century its co-occurrence with pre-verbal *non* was largely restricted to the written language (Schwegler 1990, 163–164).

The source of the data discussed in this article are eleven texts⁴ in verse from the Lengadocian area, composed between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, extracted from the second part of the *Concordance de l’occitan médiéval* (COM2,

⁴ These are the texts included, organised according to century (each title is followed by its COM2 code, also used in the examples):

11th: *La Canso de Sancta Fides* (CSF).

12th: *Girart de Rosselhon* (GDR); *Roman de Jaufré* (JAU).

13th: *Flamenca* (FLA); *Canso de la Crotzada* (CCA).

14th: *Guilhem de la Barra* (GDB); *Breviari d’Amor* (BRV).

Ricketts 2005). The texts from the fifteenth century are mystery plays dramatizing major biblical events; they are based on extensive use of dialogue, and especially in *Lo Jutgamen General* ‘the Last Judgement’, a trial, this takes the form of accusations, denial of those accusations, condemnations, justifications for one’s actions and raising of objections. The result is a highly dialogic context that favours the employment of polyphonic elements and a use of language that is probably as close as can be expected to the spoken language of the time.

Figure 1 offers a quantitative overview of the development of *pas* during this period, showing its first appearance (12th c.), rise⁵ (13th c.) and establishment (15th c.). The numerical frequency of *pas* (naturally always co-occurring with pre-verbal *no(n)*) is to be interpreted in relation to the frequency of pre-verbal *no* (*n*) on its own.

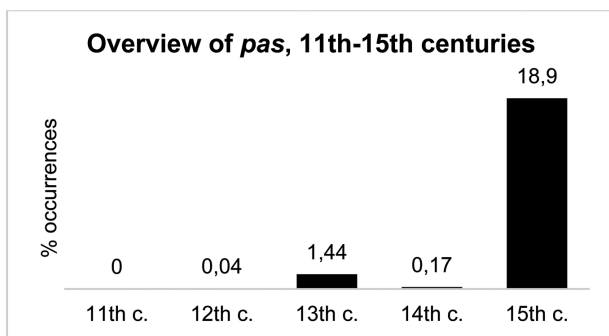


Figure 1: Overview of *pas*.

The first occurrences of *pas* in the corpus are from the end of the twelfth century:

- (1) a. “Seiner, aintz irai ieu ab vos,”/ Ditz mos seiner Galvan, “si-us plas,/ Que sol **n’en** anaretz vos **pas!**”/ “Neps,” ditz lo rei, “no-n parletz plus,/ C’ab me non anara negus,/ E no m’en sonetz motz oimai!” (JAU 200–205).

15th: *Lo Jutgamen General* (JDE); *Mystère rouergat de la Passion* (MDP2); *Mystère rouergat de l’Ascension* (MDA); *Mystère rouergat Joseph d’Arimathie* (JAR).

5 In the two texts chosen for the fourteenth century there are very few attestations of *pas*, a total of 10 across approximately 40000 lines of text. The main strategy to form sentential negation in both texts is by the use of pre-verbal *no(n)* alone. The longer text, *Breviari d’Amor*, is a didactic, encyclopaedic text with no dialogical stretches (“non-fiction is written from the perspective of a single speaker, whose goal and knowledge-base are more uniform”, Givón 2018, 104), which could go some way to explaining the very low incidence of *pas*.

“Lord, I will go with you”,/ says my lord Galvan, “if you like,/ so that on your own you will not go PAS!⁶”/ “Nephew,” says the king, “don’t speak anymore,/ that with me nobody will come,/ and don’t say any more about it to me now!”.

- b. [...] *e fer del cap a la paretz/ ez laisa-s en terra cazer,/ tan autz con es, per gran poder./ Mas Jaufré non s’es pas mogutz/ per tal, c’aissi es esperdutz,/ c’ades cuja eser feritz* (JAU 3942–3947).

‘[...] banging their heads against the wall/ and letting themselves fall on the floor,/ from their full height, with great force./ But Jaufré has not PAS moved/ because, now lost,/ he now thought he was going to be wounded’.

Given that in both instances *pas* co-occurs with the pre-verbal negator *n(on)*, which at this stage was the predominant strategy to negate a sentence, its presence must “add” something to the negation. In (1a), king Arthur is in a forest with his men when he hears someone crying for help: he decides to investigate and declares that he is going without any of the others. His nephew offers to accompany him, so that he would not go alone. *Pas* here can have three possible interpretations: it could be interpreted in its literal meaning and refer to an interval of space, as in ‘not go a step on your own’; it could negate the “discourse-old” proposition (in the sense of Hansen 2009) ‘king Arthur will go alone’; or it could be taken to have an intensive reading of ‘go not at all alone’.

In (1b), Jaufré is being held captive in Brunissen’s castle, and is sleeping in the great hall where her knights are watching him. At some point, the watchman gives a signal and all the knights begin to cry out and mourn. When Jaufré asks the reason for this, all the knights start to beat him. When later the same signal is given, Jaufré does not move. Since he is lying down, a literal interpretation of *pas*, as in ‘he did not move a step’, seems unlikely; it is possible, though, that it has an intensive reading of ‘at all’ or ‘in the least’. Equally, it could refer to Jaufré’s previous actions, i.e. getting up and asking questions, and negate that proposition.

Although no firm conclusions can be drawn on the basis of two examples, it seems plausible to think that from its earliest occurrences *pas* could function as a reinforcer of simple negation (i.e. that obtained by means of *no(n)* alone), possibly with an intensive reading of ‘not at all’, and that it was used to negate discourse-old propositions. The evidence for the thirteenth century and (the little that is available) for the fourteenth century supports this interpretation: negation with *no(n)* ... *pas* always refers to a state of affairs described earlier in the text, as in (2), in which the knights, fighting a losing battle and in desperate need of sup-

⁶ In order to establish as closely as possible the pragmatic properties of *pas*, it is necessary to consider the context for each example carefully. Hence, to avoid misinterpretations and not to pre-empt the result of the discussion, on first presenting ambiguous cases *pas* will remain untranslated.

port, greet the king's arrival with great joy, as they think he will help them; however, he has not come to do this:

- (2) [...] *e tuit sei cavalier, que n'an gran gaug agut/, que cujan per lui estre ladoncas manten gut/, que ilh eran sei ome, sei amic e sei drut/; e si se foran ilh; mas non es pas vengut .../ que el non a poder, ni forsa ni vertu/, mas cant son de preguieira, si el ne fos crezut/* (CCA 27:010–015).

'[...] and all his men ran forward to meet him in great joy,/ who imagined they would be then supported by him/ as they were his vassals and his friends, very dear to him;/ and so they were; but he had not PAS come [to bring support]/ as he had no power, nor strength nor virtue,/ but could only pray, if he were to be believed'.

Similarly to previous examples, as well as negating a discourse-old proposition, *pas* may also be interpreted in its intensive reading of 'not at all'. Indeed, the two are not mutually exclusive,⁷ as is argued below, and throughout these centuries it is very often impossible to distinguish the two uses of *pas*. Furthermore, the use of *pas* was restricted to negative contexts in which it could be within the scope of the pre-verbal negator *no(n)*, making it a negative polarity item (NPI).

It is now necessary to clarify the exact meaning of the two notions, "intensive reading" and "discourse old", that have been so far used in an intuitive sense. "Intensive reading", (or, as it is generally called in most literature on non-canonical negation, *emphasis*), has received much attention, and yet a clear definition remains elusive. The emphatic reading derives from a scalar implicature: because elements such as *pas* denote low points on a pragmatic scale, when within the scope of a negative marker they allow a pragmatic inference of negation of the entire scale (Fauconnier 1975), which easily leads to a generalized, emphatic reading that asserts that a situation does not hold *at all*. I choose to adopt the definitions offered by Israel (1996, 643) and Larrivée (2014, 121), since they are centred on the role of the speaker and the choices speakers make in their use of language. For Israel, emphasis is an expression of the speaker's attitude that the informative strength of their proposition is high (i.e. more informative than some other proposition available in the context); for Larrivée, it is an "unmitigated assertion" of their views. Emphatic negation has predominantly been related to the function of emerging negative markers used in addition to (or instead of) markers of canonical negation (Kiparsky/Condoravdi 2006; van Gelderen 2011; Larrivée/Ingham 2011; Breitbarth/Lucas/Willis 2013), making its role pivotal in the development of

⁷ The two can in fact be mapped onto the same lexical item, as with Calabrian *mancu* (Ledgeway 2017, 111), which can be both the negator of a presupposition and an emphatic negator depending on the position it occupies with respect to the verb (a reflection of its different positions within the syntactic tree).

new negative markers in the process of becoming conventionalized expressions of negation.

In terms of “discourse old”, I once again choose an approach that focuses on the unfolding of communication. I follow Hansen (2009) and Hansen/Visconti (2009), who in turn adopt Birner’s (2006, 37) re-definition of discourse old using Prince’s 1992 categories of hearer- and discourse-status, and understand it in terms of inferential links to previous discourse that belongs to the common ground.⁸ This new definition includes not only what has been explicitly mentioned in the previous discourse, but also what has simply been inferred, in other words in all cases in which there is an inferential link to the information evoked in the preceding discourse.

Returning to the link between the use of emphatic negation and discourse-old propositions, it seems intuitive to assume that the denial of a proposition that has already been asserted in the discourse should require more “cognitive effort” than the denial of a proposition new to the discourse. Adapting Waltereit/Detges’ (2007, 75–76) analysis of emphatic assertion, it could be claimed that an intensive type of negation (uttered by Voice 2) is used when denying a proposition that is already established in the discourse (uttered by Voice 1):

- (3) Voice 1: *p* is the case.
Voice 2: *p* is not the case AT ALL.

The two need not be immediately adjacent: the necessary condition is that the state of affairs uttered by Voice 1 be “activated” (in the sense of Lambrecht 1996, 93–105, following Chafe 1987, 25–26); however, the closer they are, the stronger the resulting contrast. Equally, if the denial is of a proposition that is held as an assumption or belief by the interlocutor but has not been explicitly verbalized, the interpretation of the reinforcer would be of the denial of a presupposition (cf. Italian *mica*):

- (4) Voice 1: assumes that [*p* is the case].
Voice 2: *p* is not the case AFTER ALL.

Taking Waltereit/Detges’ “scalar argumentation” (2007, 76), (3) and (4) can be inserted into the sequence in (5), ranked according to decreasing strength of assertion (cf. also Givón 2018, 94):

- (5) assertion that *p* is the case
assumption that *p* is the case

⁸ The term “common ground” is used here in its non-technical meaning that simply refers to some shared generic information or to information that has already been asserted in previous discourse.

canonical denial: p is not the case

denial of an assumption: p is not the case AFTER ALL

denial of an assertion: p is not the case AT ALL

Whether Voice 1's belief has been explicitly verbalized and asserted or simply inferred has an impact on the interpretation of the reinforcing negator. Visconti (2009, 943–944) proposes a (diachronic) shift between the two interpretations, from emphatic to negation-of-a-presupposition, along a cline with one end being closely linked to a “textual” mode (to do with building links between different stretches of text) and the other end centred on the interaction between speaker and hearer, more specifically pertaining to the speaker's awareness of the hearer's beliefs and attitudes.⁹ I take up the discussion of these two concepts again in §4 and §5.

2 *pas* in the fifteenth century: polar negative questions

In the fifteenth century there is a surge in the use of *pas*: out of 1259 occurrences of sentential negation across the four texts analysed, 238 are realized by *no(n) ... pas*. In many examples *pas* co-occurs with *serta(s)/sertanamen*, an affirmative adverbial meaning ‘certainly, for sure, indeed’: in these contexts, *pas* negates a discourse-old state of affairs that belongs to the common ground (the dying as a result of having eaten the forbidden fruit in (6a), and the declaration of the Samaritan woman that she has no husband in (6b)), but can also be interpreted as having an emphatic reading of ‘not at all’:

- (6) a. Eva: “*Sertas nos non ausam pas toquar,/ quar nostre maestre nos ho a devedat/ he nos ha dich que se ne mangavem/ que encontinen sertas moriam.*”/ La serpen: “*Ma bela sor, d’aquo no duptetz pas,/ quar veramen no qual pas,/ se d’aquel fruch vos autres mangatz,/ per aquo sertas no moriretz pas, [...]*” (MDP 183–186).
 ‘Eve: “For sure we do not dare touch it,/ because our master has forbidden us to/ and he has told us that if we ate of it/ immediately for sure we would die.”/ The snake: “My beautiful sister, of that do not doubt PAS,/ because in truth it doesn’t matter PAS,/ if of that fruit you will eat/ for that certainly you will not die PAS, [...].”’

⁹ Visconti bases this proposal on the development of Italian *mica* between the thirteenth and the twentieth centuries, but it seems plausible that this suggestion applies more broadly.

- b. *Jhesus: “Femna, vertadieyramen as dich/ que non as ponch de marit./ Sinc maritz as agutz veramen/ he aquel que as de presen/ sertas **no** es **pas** ton marit”* (MDP 407–409).
‘Jesus: “Woman, you have rightly said/ that you have no husband at all./ Five husbands you have had in truth/ and he who you have at present/ certainly is not PAS your husband”’.

Just as in the previous centuries, there are also examples in which both an emphatic and a non-emphatic reading are possible, and the context is not sufficient to resolve the ambiguity. Differently from previous centuries, though, in the fifteenth-century texts there is a high number of instances of *pas* in negative polar questions, which, I claim, hold the key to revealing further aspects of the nature of *pas*.

A considerable number of instances of *pas* are found in polar negative questions, and this is particularly evident in *Lo Jutgamen General* (JDE): out of 106 total occurrences of *pas*, 31 are found in polar negative questions. Some examples are given in (7):

- (7) a. *He, diguas, **no** as **pas** tu dic/ A tota ta posteritat he co[m]paniha,/ Quant tu eras en la granda monarchia/ “Veramen ieu soy Dieu/ He soy sertanamen asetiati/ En la cadieyra de Dieu”?* (JDE 202–207).
‘And, tell me, haven’t you PAS said/ to all the members of your tribe and your group,/ when you were still in the celestial monarchy/ “I am the true God/ and I am seated indeed/ in God’s throne”?’.
- b. ***No** vos soy ieu **pas** estat promés/ En la vostra ley/ En la quala es estat promés/ Que Dieu vos trametria hun propheta/ Del miech de vestres frayres/ He seria senblable a Moyses?* (JDE 310–315).
‘Haven’t I PAS been promised to you in your Law/ in which it has been promised/ that God would send a prophet/ from among your brothers/ and similar to Moses?’.

Significantly, there are no instances of *pas* in wh-questions: negative wh-questions are not well represented in the text, with only 7 out of a total of 59 containing negation, and, crucially, none containing *pas*. The majority of polar questions, on the other hand, do. Table 1 provides an overview of questions and negation in JDE.

Table 1: Overview of questions in JDE

Yes/No questions		Wh-questions	
With negation	42	With negation	7
Without negation	8	Without negation	52
Negation with <i>pas</i> :	31	Negation with <i>pas</i> :	0
Total: 109 questions (both positive and negative)			

In general terms, although interrogatives are the canonical form for seeking information, there is a difference between polar and wh-questions, in that while the latter are truly “open” questions, where the identity of the questioned wh-variable is established by choosing from an open set, polar questions expect only two possible answers:¹⁰ an affirmative or a negative one (Karttunen 1977; Krifka 2015; Roelofsen/Farkas 2015, among others). In this respect, we could say that while wh-questions are *seeking information*, polar questions are *seeking confirmation* (Bongelli/Riccioni/Vincze/Zuczkowski 2018, 31).

Negative polar questions have been shown to differ from their positive counterparts in conveying a bias (cf. Ladd 1981; Romero/Han 2002, 2004),¹¹ in that their utterer can have some expectations on the answer. In English, this can be seen in questions with so-called pre-posed (or high) negation of the *Don't you speak Italian?* type (the utterer had an expectation that the addressee spoke Italian), as opposed to the low negation *Do you not speak Italian?*, which does not imply the same presupposition (Romero/Han 2004). Although both a positive and a negative bias are compatible with negative polar questions (Ladd 1981, 166), experimental evidence (Domaneschi/Romero/Braun 2017) shows that high negation questions are produced more readily when a positive original speaker's belief (e.g. X speaks Italian) is followed by some negative or non-informative contextual evidence (i.e. X does not, in fact, speak Italian), while when there is no original belief and the speaker is met with negative contextual evidence (i.e. X does not speak Italian), questions with low negation are preferred. The production of high negation questions is therefore favoured by a clash between the positive belief held by the speaker and some negative evidence that becomes available to them. This distinction between speaker expectations and contextual evidence highlights the fact that negative polar questions can convey two types of bias: original speaker bias and contextual evidence bias. Original speaker bias (as originally considered by Ladd 1981) for a given proposition p is the “[b]elief or expectation of the speaker that p is true, based on his epistemic state prior to the current situational context and conversational exchange” (Domaneschi/Romero/Braun 2017, 3), that is original speaker bias is dictated *a priori* by the speaker's private beliefs or by some general knowl-

10 Bongelli/Riccioni/Vincze/Zuczkowski (2018) capture the difference between the two in terms of the speaker's epistemic positions, one of not knowing (wh-questions) and one of uncertainty (polar questions).

11 This is a simplification, as according to Büring/Gunlogson (2000, 12) positive polar questions are not completely neutral either, as they show an incompatibility with contexts in which there is “compelling contextual evidence” against the proposition questioned. These are very specific cases, which do not have a direct bearing on the data at hand; therefore, I will go along with this simplification and leave this specification aside.

edge. Contextual evidence bias (as formulated by Büring/Gunlogson 2000, 7) for a given proposition *p*, on the other hand, is the “[e]xpectation that *p* is true (possibly contradicting prior belief of the speaker) induced by evidence that has just become mutually available to the participants in the current discourse situation” (Domanešchi/Romero/Braun 2017, 4). In this second type, the bias is therefore based on evidence related to the situation at hand, and may be different from an original, *a priori* bias that may have existed. Although the high versus low negation of polar questions is a language-specific distinction, I believe the factors that are behind the choice hold cross-linguistically.

Concluding, negative polar questions are pragmatically different from their positive counterparts in that they convey a bias, which can either be an *a priori* one or the result of newly available evidence.

The set of negative polar questions under investigation appears, however, to be different from the negative polar questions discussed above, in that they are not seeking confirmation, and furthermore seem to be compatible with a positive bias only: the positive answer is in fact overtly provided by their utterer in a number of cases.

- (8) a. *Mossenhor lo jutge, metatz lo cas/ Que en tal prejudici ieu agués pecat./ He las! no ha pas pecat Adam senblablamen?/ He si a el veraïamen!* (JDE 258–261).
 ‘Sir the Judge, consider the hypothetical case/ that I have really committed the sins that have been attributed to me,/ Alas! Did Adam not PAS sin in a similar way?/ Indeed, he truly has!’.
- b. *He no era pas plus rasonable/ De resucitar ho de/ Gerir hun ladre/ Lo jorn del vostre sabat?/ He si era verayamen./ [...] (JDE 507–511).*
 ‘And was it not PAS more reasonable/ to raise from the dead or to/ heal a thief/ the day of your Sabbath?/ And so it was in truth,/ [...]’.
- c. *Quar quant el me hac reneguat/ No fés pas el huna gran penedensa?/ He si fés el sertanamen* (JDE 966–968).
 ‘Because when he disowned me/ didn’t he PAS make a great penance?/ He certainly did’.

These appear to be a very specific type of negative polar questions: they are rhetorical questions, which formally resemble canonical questions, displaying, for example, subject-verb inversion, but have the illocutionary force of a “strong assertion” of the opposite polarity to what is apparently asked (Sadock 1971; 1974). That is, a rhetorical positive question has the illocutionary force of a negative assertion, and a rhetorical negative question has the illocutionary force of a positive assertion. Because they neither seek information nor (generally) elicit an answer from the addressee, they are also labelled as “redundant” questions (Rohde 2006, 135): the speaker uses rhetorical questions to bring to the fore, for the addressee’s benefit, information already present in the common ground that the

addressee may have forgotten (or may be conveniently ignoring). Their purpose is, therefore, to synchronize discourse participants' beliefs and commitments (ib.), or, more precisely, to highlight what the utterer of the questions believes to be "relevant" (in the sense of Wilson/Sperber 1995, 158)¹² to the hearer. Considering questions in terms of relevance, an interesting opposition appears: while information-seeking questions are relevant to the speaker, in that the answer will update their own information and fill a gap in their own knowledge, rhetorical questions are relevant to the hearer, in that the speaker already knows the answer to the question they are asking, but they signal to the hearer that the information referred to is relevant to them (Gutiérrez Rexach 1998, 143). Summing up, rhetorical questions have two main functions: they express the speaker's point of view as a strong assertion, and they reveal the speaker's awareness that their informational content is relevant to the hearer.

Turning back to the examples in (8), all the information brought forward by the speaker (i.e. Adam's sin in (8a), the justness of healing and raising from the dead on the Sabbath in (8b), and in (8c) the long punishment endured by Saint Peter after disowning Jesus) belong to the common ground and are relevant to the hearer. All the answers provided contain the affirmative particle *si/sy*, from Latin *sic*, which marks, above all, insistence (Jensen 1994, 282). *Si/sy* appears in affirmative statements that follow a negative question or statement (often expressing the outcome of a personal reflection, when within a monologue), and it is in complementary distribution with the other affirmative particle, *hoc*, from the Latin neuter demonstrative *hōc* (ib., 283), which is used in an affirmative answer to a positive question:

- (9) a. *LO JUTGE: [...] So estatz els ben condapnatz?*
The Judge: '[...] Have they been justly condemned?'
- b. *LO EXISTENS: Hoc, senhor, sertanamen* (JDE 523–525).
The Jury: 'Yes, Lord, certainly'.

12 Ellingworth (2013, 67) notes the very high frequency of rhetorical questions in the Gospels and Acts, "writings that come from a mainly oral society", where they appear solely in dialogue. This is expected, since rhetorical questions figure more frequently in speech than in written texts, and "therefore more in so-called oral societies that use speech more than writing". A high number of rhetorical questions figure also in dialogues in the Old Testament, chosen, over the corresponding statement, for stylistic reasons based on their "greater emotional impact" (ib., 68), as well as for their pedagogical function. Furthermore, Ellingworth also adds that New Testament Greek did not formally distinguish between a declarative and an interrogative in terms of word order, and identifying polar questions was also complicated by the fact that the oldest New Testament manuscripts did not use question marks (ib., 66). This difficulty would then be replicated in any further translations, as must have been the case here, too.

It is a well-known fact that “affirmation of the positive alternative when the question is negative requires some special device”, as Holmberg (2016, 60) puts it, and the existence of two series of affirmative particles is witnessed cross-linguistically. I return to the significance of this in §4 below.

Negative polar questions without *pas* do not have a rhetorical interpretation: the few examples found in JDE all have a negative bias, as suggested by the evidence brought forward in the surrounding text. As such, they have been translated using high negation:

- (10) a. *Tu que parlas enaisi/ **No as tu legida la Sreptura.**/ En Ezechiel en lo ters capitol,/ Que dis enaisi:/ Que ieu iey comandat als pastors/ Que de lors fedas feseso bona guarda/ He que las prediqueso grandamen,/ Ho autramen se gardeso/ De morir eternalmen?/ Mas veramen vos autres/ No avetz pas fach como los pastres/ Del Vieilh Testamen,/ Mas lor avetz mostrat/ Lo cami de malvestat [...]* (JDE 685–698).
 ‘You who speak like this/ haven’t you read the Scriptures,/ Ezechiel chapter 3,/ where it says this:/ I have ordered to the shepherds/ to guard attentively to their sheep/ and to preach well to them,/ or they would otherwise/ be condemned to eternal death?/ But in truth you/ have not acted at all like the shepherds/ of the Old Testament,/ but you have shown them/ the way to evil [...]’.
- b. *He las! **no auras tu pietat de mi**/ Per so que ieu te iey fach servici/ He iey fach so que me as comandat?* (JDE 2586–2588).
 ‘Alas! Won’t you have pity on me/ since I have served you faithfully/ and I have done what you ordered me?’.

Both questions have a contextual evidence bias. It is part of the core competences of High Priests to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures; however, God reprimands them for not having acted at all according to his commandments as laid out in the book of Ezechiel. This evidence brings forth the suspicion that they have not, in fact, read the Scriptures, providing a negative bias to the question. In the second example, Sloth has been repeatedly calling Belfegur for help. When Belfegur eventually appears, rather than hasten to help Sloth, the demon declares that it will make Sloth serve its sentence as it deserves, for eternity. Sloth then implores the demon to have pity on it, since it has been a faithful servant throughout its life on earth, which would grant at least a reduction of the sentence: however, Belfegur’s indifference, currently demonstrated, contradicts that expectation, feeding into a negative bias for the question posed.¹³

¹³ There are two further questions with pre-verbal *no* only, with a first person singular, conditional verb: *He las! Paubre, no salhiriey ieu d’aisi/ Huna hora en tota ma vida?* (JDE 1993–1994) ‘Poor me! Won’t I leave this place/ one hour in my whole life?’; *He las! no poyriey ieu morir/ Davant que senda dedins lo potz?* (JDE 2306–2307) ‘Alas! Couldn’t I die/before descending into the well?’. In

From the interpretative contrast between negative polar questions with and without *pas*, it must therefore be concluded that it is the presence of *pas* that coerces the rhetorical reading: pre-verbal *no(n)* acts at the propositional level by formally marking the question as negative, while *pas* operates at the illocutionary level, performing an assertive speech act. This fits in with the complete absence of *pas* in wh-questions, which are, in this text, genuine, open information-seeking questions that are not compatible with an assertion.

3 A comparison with *be(n)*

At this point, it is instructive to make an excursus and take a look at the behaviour of *be(n)* derived from Latin *BĒNĒ*. Generally speaking a manner adverb meaning ‘well, rightly’, *be(n)* can also modify adjectives and adverbs: in this case it expresses intensity and can be translated as ‘very’. As a manner adverb, *be(n)* follows the finite verb (and precedes the past participle, when present):

- (11) a. *He las! la Mort, se te play/ De me ausire, tu faras be; [...]* (JDE 1894–1895).
 ‘Alas! Death, if you felt like/ killing me, you would do well; [...]’.
- b. *He vos autres los avetz ben gasardonatz, [...]* (JDE 337).
 ‘And you have rewarded them well/rightly, [...]’.

As an intensifier, it immediately precedes a (scalar) adjective or a noun (cf. 12), or a past participle used in an adjectival way, which usually yields a new (i.e. non-literal) meaning (cf. 13):¹⁴

both cases the utterer is well aware that their punishment is for eternity and cannot be escaped. In a sense, these questions have a negative bias; however, both questions seem to have the illocutionary force of a wish (e.g. ‘I wish I could leave this place just for an hour/May I die before descending into the infernal well!’), an interpretation favoured by the presence of the conditional form of the verb. These are very specific instances of yet another reading offered by a negative question, suggesting that there is a complex interaction between the formal structure of a sentence, its illocutionary force and the presence of negation.

14 In a similar, albeit different case, *be*, too, can be found with one specific past participle: in the text there are four examples of *be* + the past participle of *venir* ‘come’. However, *be* does not convey intensity at all: these are fixed collocations of the two words meaning ‘welcome’. *Ben* occurs only once in the same construction, *Vos siatz lo tres que ben vengut* ‘You are very welcome here’ (JDE 1617), suggesting that *ben* and *be* were used interchangeably by speakers in their manner adverb use. Anglade (1921, 185) remarks that Latin intervocalic ‘n’ (as in *BĒNĒ*) had become word final and, hence, unstable in the majority of words, possibly causing the *ben/be* alternation. However, in the particular use discussed in (14) below, only *be* is found: this is significant, as it suggests that the two are, in fact, distinct, with *be* possibly having reached a further stage of grammaticalization than *ben*.

- (12) a. *Mas ieu m'en vau encontinen/ Trametre hun de mos mesatgies,/ Quar sertas ieu ne iey **ben mesties**, [...]* (JDE 1072–1074).
 'So, I am going without delay/ to meet one of my messengers,/ because for sure I of it have great need, [...].'
- b. *He las! no te sove pas,/ Quant en lo monde tu eras,/ De las bonas via[n]das que mangavas?/ Manten en te seran **ben amaras**, [...]* (JDE 2093–2096).
 'Alas! Don't you remember,/ when you were in the world,/ all the good foods that you used to eat?/ Now for you they will be very bitter, [...].'
- (13) a. *Venetz sa, mos angials **ben uratz** [...]* (JDE 2).
 'Come here, my very-wanted (i.e. blessed) angels [...].'
- b. *Hor sa, mos **ben amatz** [...]* (JDE 521).
 'So now, my very-loved (i.e. beloved) [...].'

There are some further contexts in which *be* (but not *ben*) is found. In a handful of negative polar questions, *be* occurs in conjunction with pre-verbal *no(n)*; while its contribution to the meaning of the sentence clearly cannot be equated with either its manner adverb or its intensifier uses, it is not immediately clear what its function is:

- (14) a. *Per que davant lo jutge tu me acusas?/ He las! no sabes **be** tu que ton mal conselh,/ Ton fastich he ton erguelh/ De Paradis te an fach tonbar?* (JDE 194–197).
 'Why do you accuse me in front of the Judge?/ Wretched! Don't know BE you that it was your perverse inspiration,/ your presumption and your pride/ that made you fall from Heaven?.'
- b. *He las! no sabetz **be** vos autres/ Que ieu devesigui la Mar Roga/ Quant lo poble de Israël ne pasava?/ So es estat notori/ Per tot lo universal monde* (JDE 609–613).
 'Alas! Don't know BE you/ that I divided the Red Sea/ when the people of Israel were crossing it?/ This was known/ all around the world'.
- c. *Ieu te ho aseguri per ma fe;/ He te gratarem tant las esquinas/ Quant seras dedins lo potz/ Que no te sove[n]ra pas de nos,/ Mas maudirás tot joru la hora/ Quant as comeses tanses de mals./ He las! no podias **be** tu emagenar/ Que enaisi el t'en penria?* (JDE 2496–2503).
 'I assure you by my faith;/ and we will scratch your back so much/ when you are inside the well/ that you will not remember us/ but you will curse every day the time/ when you committed so much evil./ Alas! Couldn't BE you imagine/ that you would be punished so?.'

All these examples are complex clauses and *be* co-occurs with a verb of cognition (to know, to imagine) in the main clause; the inverted subject-verb word order of questions is found, and *be* follows the finite verb, it precedes the inverted subject pronoun as well as the non-finite verb if one is present (cf. *emagenar* in (14c)).

3.1 A comparison with French *bien*

Instances of modern French *bien* in polar questions that closely resemble these Occitan cases have been analysed by Hansen (1998) and Waltereit/Detges (2007) as *bien* in its modal particle use:

- (15) *Vous avez bien reçu mon message?*
 you have *bien* received my message
 ‘You did receive my message, didn’t you?’ (Waltereit/Detges 2007, 63, ex. 4).

In terms of word order, Waltereit/Detges notice that this use of *bien* is highly constrained, and the modal reading only obtains when it occupies the position immediately following the finite verb (and preceding the non-finite one, when present). Used in polar questions, French *bien* has a positive bias: it asserts the event over which it takes scope, in this case, that the hearer received the speaker’s message. Furthermore, *bien* expresses a strong affirmation on the part of the speaker, and it opposes a strong counter-expectation on the part of the hearer. Through the use of *bien* the speaker reveals their awareness of the opposite belief being held, in this case, by their hearer (cf. Hansen 1998, 114): *bien* is, in other words, polyphonous, a term introduced by Ducrot (1984) to refer to a linguistic item that evokes opposing points of view held by different participants in a conversation. In this specific example, the speaker is denying the hearer’s denial that they received the letter. Put schematically,

- (16) Hearer (X)’s belief: ¬A
 Speaker (Y)’s utterance: ¬(¬A)

where A stands for the proposition ‘X received Y’s letter when X = hearer and Y = speaker’.

As mentioned above, in order to affirm a state of affairs which is either openly or implicitly denied, a simple declaration is not sufficient. If a state of affairs A has already been denied (i.e. ¬A), in order to claim that A holds, the speaker will need to do more than simply affirm it: in this case, the affirmation is that A does not only hold, but ‘it even holds WELL’ (Waltereit/Detges 2007, 75), or ‘it REALLY holds’, or, yet still, ‘INDEED it holds’. The speaker’s utterance is therefore a strong assertion of the opposite state of affairs believed by the hearer. In this sense, *bien* is parallel to negation (Hansen 1998, 114; 133–134; Waltereit/Detges 2007, 76) in that both imply the opposite point of view, *bien* by asserting a certain state of affairs and denying its (implied) denial, and negation naturally implicating the opposite point of view by denying its existence. Both *bien* and negation are polyphonous, a property that becomes particularly evident in dialogic or interactional contexts in which a number of speakers (and hence,

points of view) interact, unfolding in continual dialogue that necessarily builds on and relates to previous information. The expression of an individual's point of view and its simultaneous relation to the views held by other participants to the conversation naturally favours the use of linguistic elements linked to the expression of subjectivity as well as intersubjectivity. In time, these may become conventionalized, and items with an originally lexical meaning may develop into modal particles that function at the speech-act level. It is in fact in dialogic exchanges that the conventionalization of this affirmative use of *bien* came about (Waltereit/Detges 2007): when considering its three (main) uses (manner adverb, intensifier, affirmative particle), Hansen (1998, 128) identifies in the manner adverb the basic use out of which the intensifier and, in turn, the affirmative particle, developed, much along the lines of the reasoning above.¹⁵ This instance of polysemy is the result of a series of semantic shifts: from bringing a positive evaluation on a process, a manner adverb such as *bien* will often imply the process having taken place thoroughly, exhaustively and completely (ib., 126–128). Verbs of cognition make a particularly favourable environment for this shift to take place, since *understanding something well*, for example, equals to understanding it *thoroughly*. The degree of understanding hence comes to the fore, allowing the shift from manner to high intensity. This new extension of the meaning of *bien* is compatible with the modification of scalar adjectives and nouns, with which it appears first. When it modifies verbs a new opportunity for expansion naturally presents itself: once again with verbs of cognition, which seem to represent a very fertile bridging context (in the sense of Evans/Wilkins 2000, 550), there is an opening for a shift in focus from, say, *feeling something thoroughly*, to *the core*, to an affirmation that *something, indeed/for sure/definitely, is felt*.

In most examples with cognitive verbs, the manner adverb and intensifier readings of *bien* are undistinguishable. The final stages of the development of *bien* as an affirmative particle see it being used in contexts in which the intensifier meaning is no longer available, such as in *C'est bien la première fois que ça m'arrive!* 'This is the first time this has happened to me (I tell you)!' (Hansen 1998, 128, ex. 3), uttered in response to a presupposed or explicit assertion that 'this has happened before'.

¹⁵ Traugott/Dasher (2002, 40) also comment on the same directionality typically involved in the shift from "meanings that function at the propositional level (e.g. manner adverbials in event structures), to meanings with scope over the proposition (e.g. sentential adverbials), to meanings with scope over the discourse unit (e.g. adverbials in discourse marker function)".

Concluding, as a modal particle French *bien* is polyphonous, it operates at the speech-act level (expressing a strong affirmation in contexts where a strong counter-expectation exists) and it is syntactically restricted.

3.2 Back to Occitan *be*

Let us now turn back to the Occitan examples with *be* in (14) and discuss their wider context in light of the discussion of French *bien*. (14a) is uttered by Saint Michael as a response to Lucifer's protestation of innocence (JDE 106–147) over all the sins that have been attributed to him. The response, *He las! no sabes be tu que ton mal conselh,/ Ton fastich he ton erguelh/ De Paradis te an fach tonbar?*, is a strong assertion rather than a genuine question that puts forward a view of what happened that starkly contrasts with Lucifer's declaration, witness also the preposing to a focalised position of the phrases expressing the real reasons (i.e. *ton mal conselh, ton fastich he ton erguelh*). It could be translated as 'Alas! You know *full well* that it was your perverse inspiration, your presumption and your pride that made you fall from Heaven'.

Similarly, (14b) is God's response to the complaint put forward by pagans and idol-worshippers: they lament the unfair and unequal treatment received from God (JDE 568–586). In his answer, God reminds them of his great compassion for all men, whom he wanted to save by becoming man (600–604). He then questions them on why they did not believe when he performed great miracles in their presence, such as the separation of the waters of the Red Sea. This is a world-wide-known event that they, too, must have known about. Yet, they did not believe. Once again there is a strong affirmation, *He las! no sabetz be vos autres/ Que ieu devisigui la Mar Roga/ Quant lo poble de Israël ne pasava?*, on the expectation that the pagans and idol-worshippers would deny any knowledge of it. Here, too, it could be translated along the lines of 'Alas! You know *full well* that I divided the Red Sea when the people of Israel were crossing it', further supported by the additional statement made by God, *So es estat notori/ Per tot lo universal monde* (612–613) 'This was known throughout the world'.

The last example, (14c), is part of the final response by Satan to Envy, part of a long exchange between the two that starts at (2358). Envy has been condemned, and as the time to be thrown into the infernal well approaches, it expresses regret at its actions on earth. It calls Satan for help twice (2413–2415; 2449–2459). Satan denies it any help, saying that Envy has found the medicine that it deserves (2460–2482), lays out the details of the way Envy will be tortured for eternity (2495–2501), and then declares *He las! no podias be tu emagenar/Que enaïsi el t'en penria?*, questioning how Envy could have possibly not imagined the punishment

its behaviour would incur. A suitable translation would be ‘Alas! You *must* have imagined that you would be punished so’.

The examples in (14) formally look like polar questions (e.g. exhibiting subject-verb inversion), but they are clearly not genuine questions: on the speech-act level they are strong assertions of a personal point of view¹⁶ that clearly goes against the view held by the hearer. The immediate context for the questions in (14) contains declarations by their intended hearers to the effect that the opposite state of affairs to the one referred to by the questions holds. In terms of possible restrictions on the use of *be*, in spite of the obvious limitations, we can see that it is only found in polar questions which are main clauses, in the position immediately following the finite verb, with verbs of cognition, which were claimed above to provide a bridging context that favours shifts in meaning. Crucially, just like French *bien*, Occitan *be* is also polyphonous, being uttered as a strong affirmation by the speaker with the awareness of their hearer’s opposite view. All these properties strongly point to *be* being a modal particle, displaying the properties listed by Waltereit/Detges (2007, 63), that is being conventionally tied to particular speech-act types, having fixed scope and occupying a fixed syntactic position. Finally, the fact that *no(n) ... be* questions, are, just like *no(n) ... pas* questions, strong assertions, suggests that they, too, are instances of rhetorical questions.

4 Returning to *pas*

There are striking parallels between the *pas*- and the *be*-rhetorical questions. There are, however, subtle differences, that become evident when considering the source of the views with which the rhetorical question contrasts.

Let us consider (17), a negative polar question that contains both *pas* and *be*, with *pas* immediately following the finite verb and *be* following the inverted subject pronoun:

- (17) *He no sabes pas tu be/ Que aquelses que hom ensenja en be/ Tot jorn sa sapiensa multiplica?* (JDE 171–173).

‘And not know PAS you BE/ that all those things that man teaches for the good/ multiply his knowledge in eternity?’.

¹⁶ The subjective contribution of *be(n)* is also mentioned by Jensen (1994): as reinforcing the modal value of an exhortation or a polite command expressed by *voler* + infinitive (ib., 206, e.g. *volhas me donc be escotar* ‘please, listen to me’), and as amplifying subjectivity when used in addition to the subjunctive mood (ib., 257, e.g. *ben o crey que Deus aya de mi mercey* ‘I truly believe that God will have mercy on me’). Note the verb of cognition in the last example, making it very similar to the French *bien* examples discussed above.

This is God's reply to Lucifer, in a long exchange that includes (14a) above and sees Lucifer declaring his innocence and God and St Michael pointing out his fallacies. In particular, God, referring back to Lucifer's statement that he had been made perfect in his knowledge and been given great wisdom, asks a genuine question, 'Why did you not make use of it?' (170). With his "perfect knowledge" Lucifer would have known that, when teaching to do good, knowledge is multiplied in eternity. However, it must be concluded that Lucifer did not know about it, witness also God's later declaration 'But you did not learn nor keep this lesson' (174–175). Thus, the source of the view with which God's question contrasts is not Lucifer itself (although clearly Lucifer holds that view), but the common ground: this suggests that in (17) *be* is not used as a modal particle. Significantly, *be* does not occupy the immediately post-verbal position, as it does in (14), and I claim that this blocks the modal particle reading of *be*: here it is a manner adverbial/intensifier meaning 'well, for sure'.

(17) is nevertheless not a genuine question. It is a rhetorical question marked as such by the presence of *pas*, witness also the contrast expressed with information present in the common ground. It must be concluded that the position immediately following the verb in polar negative questions is occupied by elements that have the ability to force a rhetorical reading. Hence, both *pas* and *be* can give rise to a rhetorical reading by occupying that position.

We therefore have the following structures:

- | | |
|--|---|
| (18) <i>pas</i> -rhetorical questions: | <i>no</i> (<i>n</i>) + V + <i>pas</i> + subject pronoun |
| <i>be</i> -rhetorical questions: | <i>no</i> (<i>n</i>) + V + <i>be</i> + subject pronoun |

In spite of the limited data available, there is a strong indication that both *pas* and *be* occupy the same position in their respective *pas*- and *be*-rhetorical questions, and, conversely, that the two particles have the same function. Based on this evidence, I claim that *pas*, too, was a modal particle (MP) in rhetorical questions in fifteenth-century Occitan.

Givón (1995, 114) re-interprets the traditional notion of modality understood as a property of propositions independent of their communicative context, into a communicative-pragmatic role, placing its *raison d'être* firmly within the epistemic states and communicative goals of the speaker and hearer. More specifically, linguistic items with modal content as well as expressing the degree of commitment with which, for example, the speaker asserts a state of affairs, they also encode an anticipation of the hearer's reaction. This interactional view of modality is exploited by Waltereit/Detges (2007, 74) to clarify their understanding of "modal particle": a particle is modal in the sense that it "crucially refer[s] to the participants' stance towards speech acts". It is, in other words, polyphonous. With these specifications, the modal nature of *pas* becomes clear. Furthermore,

the fact that *pas* is not found in negative *wh*-questions is naturally accounted for: as genuine information-seeking questions they do not provide the strong counter-expectation context that is needed to license *pas* MP. As a final observation, there is evidence that further supports the identification of two distinct uses of *pas*: while in its emphatic use *pas* behaves as an NPI, falling within the scope of pre-verbal *no(n)*, this was no longer the case for *pas* MP, since negative rhetorical questions that are interpreted as positive assertions do not admit NPIs (cf. Han 2002, 205).

Just like *be*, *pas* acts as a polarity-reversing element, licensed by the speaker's awareness of a strong counter-expectation to the content of their utterance, which, for both particles, is held by the hearer. What distinguishes them is the source of that opposing view: in the case of *be* it is the hearer themselves (to whom the questions are directly addressed, witness *be* only co-occurring with second person pronouns in rhetorical questions) and their beliefs; in the case of *pas* the source of the opposite view is the common ground/general knowledge. In *be*-rhetorical questions, the speaker makes a very strong assertion against the hearer's views; in *pas*-rhetorical questions, the speaker intends to bring to the hearer's attention some relevant information from the common ground. However, while the question is a strong affirmation at the *speech-act level*, *pas*-rhetorical questions are still perceived as negative at the *propositional level*, *vis-à-vis* the presence of *si/sy* in the answer.

Let us summarise in a schematic way the properties of *no(n) ... pas* as used between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, which I shall label 'textual correlator' (TEXT), and *no(n) ... pas* in its modal particle use in the fifteenth century:

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------|
| (19) a. | <i>no(n) ... pas</i> TEXT: | Common ground: | A |
| | | Speaker's utterance: | ¬A |
| b. | <i>no(n) ... pas</i> MP: | Hearer's belief: | ¬A |
| | | Speaker's utterance: | ¬(¬A) |

In (19a) negation of A is at the *propositional level*, and I claim that this is contributed purely by the presence of pre-verbal *no(n)*, which remained the dominant strategy to form negation until at least the sixteenth century, and is therefore the propositional (or logical) negator. The contribution of *pas* can be seen at the *textual level*, where it allows/facilitates reference to a discourse-old state of affairs, creating a correlation between different stretches of text. Given that throughout this period *pas* always co-occurred with *no(n)* and within its scope, it is plausible to assume that *pas* started to become associated with polarity reversing properties in the mind of the speakers.

In (19b) the first negative operator in the Speaker's utterance is contributed by pre-verbal *no(n)* which acts at the *propositional level*. Although the illocutionary

force of the question is that of a strong positive affirmation, the question remains semantically negative, as demonstrated by the presence of *si/sy* (an element that is only licensed as a response to a negative question) in the answer that some *pas*-rhetorical questions receive (cf. (6)). It must be concluded, therefore, that the contribution made by *pas* is not at the propositional level: I claim that *pas* operates at the *speech-act level*, turning a negative question into a positive assertion.

The facts described here all point to a change in progress, in which (at least) two different uses of *pas* and three uses of *be(n)* co-existed alongside each other. As mentioned above, just like the Catalan affirmative particle *sí* (Batllori/Hernanz 2008, 4),¹⁷ *pas* TEXT, *pas* MP and *be* are only found in main clauses: these syntactic restrictions are to be expected, since it is a characteristic feature of grammaticalizing items that they tend to appear in independent clauses first, and only gradually make their way into subordinate clauses (Givón, 1976, 170).

5 *pas* TEXT, *pas* MP and beyond

If the interpretation of the Occitan facts is on the right track, it follows that *pas* is polysemic: there are two functions (i.e. *pas* TEXT and *pas* MP) mapped onto a single form. These two functions, I propose, are semantically related via metonymy, understood as the result of a shift in meaning warranted by the contiguity between the two functions that belong to the same cognitive domain, or “frame” (in the sense of Koch 1999, 146). In this case, the conceptual domain is abstract in nature, and has to do with different levels of analysis of language units (e.g. textual vs contextual) and different levels of interpretation (e.g. speech-act vs propositional).

It was suggested in the previous section that pre-verbal *no(n)* represents the negative operator active at the propositional/truth-value level, and that since its first occurrence, *pas* contributed to an emphatic reading of that negation, by virtue of indicating a very small interval on an imaginary scale. Its emphatic value granted its use in the denial of discourse-old state of affairs: as already mentioned, the denial of a proposition that is already present and hence “established” in the discourse, requires a stronger strategy. As a consequence, *pas* became closely associated with the property “discourse old”. By referring back to discourse-

¹⁷ Similarly, Hansen/Visconti (2009, 144) observe that the French post-verbal negators *pas* and *mie* are found “overwhelmingly” in independent clauses in twelfth and thirteenth century texts, and their presence in subordinate clauses rises “fairly steadily” over the following centuries.

old content, and hence creating links between different stretches of text, *pas* can be considered polyphonous at the textual level.

Through metonymy, *pas* shifts from being polyphonous at the textual level to being polyphonous at the interpersonal (or contextual) level, by creating correlations between different points of view (cf. Visconti 2015 who claims a similar development for Italian *mica*). Crucial for the development of the contextual polyphonous character of *pas* are dialogic contexts in which the conversation naturally unfolds by building on what has been said before: each participant expresses their own thoughts in relation to other participants' and to the common ground.

Neither of the post-verbal negators that co-existed with *pas* in the fifteenth century (*ponch* and *ges*),¹⁸ and none of the others that had a presence in Occitan

18 There is one isolated example of *ges* in a negative polar question that at first sight may suggest a rhetorical reading (in *Mystère rouergat Joseph d'Armathie* (JAR)). The question is uttered by Caiaphas, who is talking to Nicodemus after having imprisoned his uncle Joseph of Arimathea:

(20) *Hor sa, Nicodemus, vulhatz nos escota./ Pueys que sains etz vengut,/ an vos volem parlar./ Etz vos ges dels disipulis/ d'aquest malvat truan/ que ha convertida la gen?* (JAR 3751–3756).

'Listen here, Nicodemus, please listen to us./ Since you have come here,/ we want to talk to you./ Are you GES of the disciples/ of that evil cheat/ who converted people?'

I do not think this is a rhetorical question for a number of reasons. Firstly, considering formal features, there is no pre-verbal negator *no(n)*, *ges* follows the inverted subject pronoun, unlike *pas* in the rhetorical questions in (7) and (8) above that precedes it, and it is followed by a prepositional genitive. At this time, *ges* co-occurred with *no(n)* when used as part of sentential negation. This suggests that *ges* here is acting as a phrasal negator, in its quantifier use. Secondly, considering the context, Caiaphas knows that Nicodemus is one of Jesus' followers. After his first question (in (20)), Caiaphas continues: does Nicodemus want to oppose their law which is good by being a disciple of that evil man? He then tells Nicodemus to take his time to answer his first question, and later on (3794) suggests that he should seek advice on the answer he should give. He clearly wants Nicodemus to think carefully and is offering him an opportunity to deny that he is one of Jesus' disciples. This context clearly does not align with rhetorical questions, in which "[t]he represented thought or proposition is held as a presupposition in the information state of the speaker", it is considered relevant for the hearer, and "not relevant to [the speaker]" (Gutiérrez Rexach 1998, 144). The information, more specifically Nicodemus' answer to his question, is clearly relevant to Caiaphas. Siarl Ferdinand (p.c.) suggests that (20) has in fact the illocutionary force of a command or a warning: 'Be nothing like (Have nothing to do with) the disciples of that evil cheat ...!'. Jensen (1994, 108) points out that the imperative requires that any pronouns (whether subject or not) follow it, much resembling the word order in questions, which could have also prompted the scribe to add a question mark at the end of the sentence. Although it is very difficult to come to a firm conclusion on the basis of one isolated example, given these facts and also the discussion in footnote 13 of another instance of a negative polar question with the illocutionary force of a wish, it seems plausible to

at some stage (*minga/minja* and *guota*) seem to appear in rhetorical questions: it is only *pas* that displays polyphonous (in the interpersonal sense) properties, and it is precisely this, I claim, that allowed it to conventionalize as the generalized sentential negator. Its constant pairing with pre-verbal *no(n)*, it was claimed above, caused *pas* TEXT to be also associated with negation or, more specifically, with polarity reversing, in the mind of the speakers. In rhetorical questions *pas* reverses the polarity of the negative question into a strong positive affirmation. In time, this polarity reversing ability of *pas* shifts through metonymy from the speech-act level to the propositional level (or, in other words, from the pragmatic to the semantic level), conventionalizing *pas* into a negator at the propositional level in the modern language.

Table 2 summarises the development of *pas*:

Table 2: Metonymic developments of *pas*

<p>1. <i>pas</i> TEXT [with pre-verbal <i>no(n)</i>] <i>pas</i>: emphatic negation and/or negation of discourse-old information; polyphonous at the textual level; by appearing with <i>no(n)</i> starts to be associated with polarity reversing.</p>	<p><i>intersubjectification</i></p> <p>2. <i>pas</i> MP [with pre-verbal <i>no(n)</i>] <i>pas</i>: denies a strong counter-expectation; polyphonous at the interpersonal level; reverses the polarity of the question into a positive affirmation (at the speech-act level).</p>
<p>3. <i>pas</i> NEG on its own <i>pas</i>: sentential negator; reverses the polarity of the sentence (at the propositional level).</p>	<p><i>conventionalization</i></p>

The shift from *pas* TEXT to *pas* MP is a clear indication of an increase in intersubjectivity, which in turn reveals an ongoing process of intersubjectification, understood as “a change which results in the development of meanings that explicitly reveal recipient design: the designing of utterances for an intended audience [...] at the discourse level” (Traugott/Dasher 2002, 31). The subsequent shift, from *pas* MP to *pas* sole negator, is the conventionalization of its polarity reversing ability, which turns it into the logical negator, that is a sentential negator at the propositional level. Although it is plausible to assume that at stage 1 *pas* was already becoming associated, in the mind of the speakers, with polarity reversing properties by virtue of always co-occurring with pre-verbal *no(n)*, it is clear that those properties had not yet been acquired: *pas* contributed at the textual level, allowing reference to a discourse-old state of affairs, but it was not able to express

conclude that here, too, there is a mismatch between form and function. Crucially, I maintain that no post-verbal marker other than *pas* could contribute a rhetorical reading to a polar question.

negation on its own. Stage 2 was instrumental for *pas* to become the generalized sentential negator in that its MP use afforded it the possibility to express polarity reversing properties. The presence of *pas* in a negative question had the ability to turn it into a positive assertion by denying a counter-expectation, that is changing its polarity at the speech-act level (cf. Krifka's 2017, 366–369 related notion of denegation of speech acts). Through metonymy, the polarity reversing properties of *pas* were re-analysed as acting at the propositional level, and this led to the final stage of the development of *pas*, when it established itself as the conventionalized sentential negator. The lack of modal-particle properties of all the other post-verbal negators, which prevented them from occurring in rhetorical questions, is also what prevented them from reaching Stage 3 and becoming themselves sentential negators.

The crucial role played by dialogic contexts in bringing about syntactic change can also be seen at work with other negators. Visconti (2009, 945) discusses the development of the property of Italian *mica* to refute the implied interlocutor's point of view, and finds a correlation (ib., 943) between an increased use of *mica* in dialogal contexts and an increase in the ability of *mica* to deny states of affairs that are inferable (rather than explicitly activated). *Mica*, too, had a strong polyphonic character, that shifted from the textual to the interpersonal, reflecting an increase in intersubjectivity, or, in other words, "the locutionary agent's expression of his or her awareness of the addressee's attitudes and beliefs, [...]" (Traugott 2010a, 33).

The link between intersubjectivity/intersubjectification and language change/grammaticalization has long been recognised and explored in detail (cf., for example, Traugott 2010a, 32, "(i)ntersubjectivity is the ambient context in which linguistic change takes place and to which linguistic change contributes", and Veloudis 2018, 130, "[...] it is exactly in cases of intersubjectification, where the highest degree of speaker's involvement is to be found [...], that grammaticalization comes into play [...]"). In the case of Occitan *pas*, its modal use, which represented an advanced stage of intersubjectification, was instrumental in its establishment as the sole sentential negator.

Before concluding, I would like to turn briefly to very similar contexts for French *pas* that have been labelled "puzzling use[s]" by Eckardt (2006, 143) and discussed in Price (1978; 1993). Price notices that the first instances of *pas* used on its own occur in French in the second half of the fifteenth century in rhetorical polar questions. The discussion of these questions has centred around the issue of whether they are positive or negative (cf. Eckardt 2006, 143–145); however, a closer look reveals that these are, in fact, negative rhetorical questions that imply a positive answer. One example (in Price 1993, 192) is (21):

- (21) *Suis je pas bele dame et gente,/ digne de servir un pseudome,/ E fust empereres de Rome?*
(Roman de la Rose, 5768–70).
‘Am I PAS a beautiful and gentle lady,/ fit to serve a(ny) ‘prudhomme’,/ were he emperor of Rome?’.

Considering the context of (21), (‘I have no wish for you to remain without a sweetheart. If it pleases you, fix your thoughts on me. [...] I would like to become your beloved [...]’), it is clear that the question is rhetorical and negative, ‘Am I not a beautiful and gentle lady ... ?’, suggesting the answer ‘Of course I am’.

Price (1993, 192) reports *ne*-less polar interrogative sentences with post-verbal negators collected between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries:

Table 3: French *ne*-less interrogatives

	1230	1300–1450	1450–1500
<i>mie</i>	2	0	1
<i>pas</i>	3	1	84
<i>point</i>	11	45	142

A striking fact is that *mie* and *goutte* were only very marginally recorded in rhetorical questions (the latter did not, in fact, ever appear), and neither survived as sentential negators in modern French. *Pas* and *point*, on the other hand, by later Middle French are well established, and both survive in modern French, the former as the generalized post-verbal negator (also used on its own in spoken French), the latter in very formal and written contexts. Although I have not had the chance to study these examples in detail within their contexts, it seems possible that both *pas* and *point* were polyphonous and this is what allowed them, but *pas* in particular, to win over their competitors *mie*, *goutte* and *giens*, and survive in modern French. This is just a speculation at this stage, and it deserves further research within the Oïl dialects, especially in terms of offering an explanation of why, given the higher occurrence of *point*, it was *pas* in the end that “won out”.

6 Conclusions

In this article I have claimed that the conventionalization of *pas* as the generalized sentential negator in Occitan was made possible by its polyphonous nature which allowed it to be used as a modal particle in polar rhetorical questions. The mechanism that enabled the semantic shift undergone by *pas* was metonymy,

which extended its polyphonous nature from the textual to the contextual, and its polarity reversing properties from the speech-act to the propositional levels. The contexts that allowed and, in fact, enhanced, this process were dialogic contexts, in which different points of view from different speakers are represented, and in which the constant negotiation of human communication is represented in the speakers' turns, by the expression of their own views, as well as their awareness of the other participants' beliefs and attitudes.

A close investigation of dialogical texts and a thorough understanding of the pragmatic context for each example have enabled me to offer what I hope is a step further in understanding *pas* and the motivations behind its grammaticalization as the sentential negator in Occitan, which are also potentially relevant to its French cognate in the *Oïl* varieties.

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