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Negative Concord in Classical Greek

Case Study: Xenophon

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Abstract

Ancient Greek has at its disposal a complex system of negatives (n-words and negators) that can combine in different ways. Drawing on Xenophon's works, I will show various patterns reflecting the combinations of negatives (negator and n-words) in Ancient Greek sentences; due to its relatively free word order, the place of negative elements may vary considerably. I pay special attention to n-words and negative spread, which is markedly developed in Ancient Greek, and examine the differences between non-strict negative concord languages (like Italian and Spanish) and *specific* non-strict negative concord languages (like Ancient Greek), arguing for scalar properties of negation.

Keywords

negative concord; Xenophon; Ancient Greek; specific non-strict negative concord language; negative spread; combinations of negatives; negative polarity items

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1. Introduction

Considering the large amount of literature on negation and cognate topics in general linguistics as well as in individual languages, it may be said that Ancient Greek (hence AG) has been investigated rather poorly. We have at our disposal treatments in scientific grammar books; like those of Kühner & Gerth (1904: pp. 178–224), Schwyzler & Debrunner (1950: pp. 590–599), or the more recent ones; such as those by Crespo (2003: pp. 222–225) and Basile (2001: pp. 101–113), or a book-length study by Moorhouse (1959). All these works are characterized by a practical approach that does not reflect the development and new insights as we can find them in studies on modern languages. Indeed, we have a few studies with more satisfying and modern approaches, like those by Denizot (2011, 2012, 2013) and some other works analysing the development of negation throughout the history of Greek language (including Modern Greek), like Horrocks (2014), Willmot (2013) and many studies by Giannakidou (e.g. 2006, 2011, Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017), oriented rather towards Modern Greek (and other modern languages), as well as the recent monograph by Chatzopoulou (2019). These authors mostly prefer a synthetic approach, where AG is only used as a stepping stone to the investigation of subsequent linguistic periods.

My research is focused on Ancient Greek of the classical period (namely on Attic) and mainly based on the corpus of Xenophon, because of its genre-variety embracing dialogic, narrative, and didactic prose; occasionally, I also use examples from other prose authors.

The aim of my article is to show different patterns displaying negative structures occurring in Attic. Due to its relatively free word order and complicated morphology, AG, which is considered to be a non-strict negative concord language (Willmott 2013; Horrocks 2014; Muchnová 2016), displays – at first glance – considerable variation in mutual position of different morphologically negative items occurring in the same sentence, and also variation in their position with respect to the verb. I consider, naturally, the use of negative items of the same kind, i.e. (1) negator οὐ (‘not’) with its compounds: indefinite pronouns οὐδεῖς (fem. οὐδεμία) ‘no one, none, nobody’, οὐδέν ‘nothing’, adv. ‘not at all, in no way’ and adverbs οὐδαμῶς ‘in no wise’, οὐδαμοῦ ‘nowhere’, οὐδαμῆ ‘in no place, in no direction’, οὐδαμόθεν ‘from nowhere’, οὐδαμοῖ ‘towards or in no place’, etc., (2) negator μή (‘not’) with its compounds: indefinite pronouns μηδεῖς (fem. μηδεμία) ‘no one, none, nobody’, μηδέν ‘nothing’, and adverbs μηδαμῶς ‘in no wise, not at all’, μηδαμοῦ ‘nowhere’, etc. Both negators and their n-words¹ series occur in complementary distribution, οὐ-items being used in assertions, while μή-series is confined to prohibitions, wishes, conditional protasis, etc. (i.e. to **non-veridical contexts**).² I have focused my research on the area with οὐ and its compounds.

1 The term **n-words** refers to negated forms of indefinite pronouns, adjectives and adverbs; it was coined by Laka in 1990 to label Spanish indefinites like *nadie* ‘n.one’ (= ‘anyone/no one’), *nada* ‘n.thing’ (= ‘anything/nothing’), *ningún* ‘any/no’, *nunca* ‘(n)ever’, etc., that is items beginning with /n/ (cf. Willis 2013: p. 30).

2 According to Giannakidou (2017: p. 21) a **non-veridical context** is “one where truth inference seems to be suspended”; in other words, assessing the sentence whether it is true or false is not possible.

2. Patterns of negative concord

The negator οὐ usually occurs in preverbal position, as in the following example (the verb is in bold, the negator is underlined):

/1/ Λύσανδρος οὐκ **ἀντανήγαγε**... (*Mem.* 2.9.3) ~ “Lysander did not sail out against him...”³

Unlike English, AG allows – within a clause – for two or more elements that are intuitively judged to be negative; the resulting reading is negative. This phenomenon, called negative concord (hence NC), can be defined as the occurrence of multiple morphologically negative items in a sentence that expresses a single negation.⁴ Logically, of course, two negations are supposed to produce affirmation.

Studies dealing with general linguistics and modern languages often show examples like /2/ considering them prototypic for negative concord languages:⁵

/2/ ἐκεῖνό γε οὐκ ἂν ἔτι **πείσαις** ἀνθρώπων οὐδένα ὡς... (*Hier.* 1.16.5) ~ “But this, now, you will (litt. can) not persuade anyone to believe, that...”

In this case, the negator οὐ is preverbal, while the n-word is postverbal; thus, we can formulate the pattern: neg + verb + n-word. In this pattern the forms of the lemma οὐδεῖς, are mostly used as independent arguments (cf. /2/) or modifiers (cf. /3/):

/3/ οὐ γὰρ **ἔωρων** πολέμιον οὐδένα... (*Anab.* 4.4.8.3) ~ “for there was no enemy within sight...”

Surprisingly, this pattern only rarely attests n-words in the form of adverbial modifiers, as οὐδαμῶς ‘in no wise’, οὐδαμοῦ ‘nowhere’, οὐδαμόθεν ‘from nowhere’, οὐδαμοῖ ‘towards/ in no place’. On the other hand, οὐδέν with an adverbial sense (i.e. functioning not as object, but as an adverbial accusative ‘not at all, in no way’) is quite frequent:

/4/ Ἐμοῦ μὲν τοίνυν ἀκούετε ὅτι οὐκ **ἀδικοῦμεν** τὸν Ἀσσύριον οὐδέν. (*Cyr.* 2.4.8.2.) ~ “let me tell you that we are not guilty of doing any wrong to the Assyrian.” (litt. ‘in no wise’)

The pattern **neg + verb + n-word** is not so frequent in AG as one might expect (about 10 occurrences in the whole Xenophon’s corpus). On the other hand, there are some variations, e.g. οὐδέ + verb + n-word (/5/ and /6/) following a negative clause, and οὔτε + verb + n-word (/7/):

3 The translations are taken from *Perseus Digital Library*, with slight modifications, if needed (cf. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>). Greek texts are borrowed from the *TLG* (<http://www.tlg.uci.edu>).

4 Multiple occurrences of negatives lead to an intuitive impression of a ‘concord’ between n-words and negator (within the negative statement), like in the case of agreement of “he reads”, where the 3. person of singular is expressed twice: by means of personal pronoun and by the ending -s.

5 Like Slavic languages, cf. Czech: “O tom bys nepřesvědčil nikoho z lidí.” (= translation of the example /2/).

/5/ ἀλλὰ μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς οὐκ ἔγωγε αὐτοὺς διώξω, οὐδ' ἔρει οὐδεὶς ὡς ἐγώ... (*Anab.* 1.4.8.5) ~ “I shall not pursue them, nor shall anyone say about me that...”

/6/ ὁ δὲ Κοιρατάδας τῇ μὲν πρώτη ἡμέρᾳ οὐκ ἔκαλλιέρι οὐδὲ διεμέτρησεν οὐδὲν τοῖς στρατιώταις. (*Anab.* 7.1.40.3) ~ “As for Coeratadas, on the first day he could not get good omens from his sacrifices nor did he serve out any rations at all to the troops”;

/7/ ὁρῶν δὲ οὔτε πόλιν αὐτῷ προσχωροῦσαν οὐδεμίαν... (*Hell.* 7.5.9.2.) ~ “However, when he perceived that no city was coming over to him...”

Sometimes the verb is missing and can only be understood from the previous context. Such cases are further neglected because of the impossibility to assign a preverbal or postverbal position to the n-word:

/8/ Ξενοφῶντα δὲ οὐκ ἔκάλει, οὐδὲ τῶν ἄλλων στρατηγῶν οὐδένα. (*Anab.* 7.6.4.1) ~ “Xenophon, however, he did not invite, nor any one of the other generals.”

Considering the mutual position of **negator + n-word + verb**, we can theoretically define altogether six different patterns:

<i>preverbal n-word</i>	<i>postverbal n-word</i>
n-word + verb + neg (0 occ.)	verb + n-word + neg (0 occ.)
neg + n-word + verb (1 occ.)	verb + neg + n-word (0 occ.)
n-word + neg + verb (1 occ.; cf. Denizot 2012 below)	neg + verb + n-word (10 occ. οὐ)

The results documented by the table are quite surprising. The order with **postverbal** negator, i.e. **n-word + verb + neg** as well as **verb + n-word + neg** (line 1), and **verb + neg + n-word** (line 2), is not – as far as I know – attested (but cf. the section 4 on alone-standing postverbal οὐ).⁶ From the three patterns with **preverbal** neg only one (**neg + verb + n-word**) shows satisfying evidence, cf. /2/ and /3/. The **preverbal position** of an **n-word** in combination with **neg** is quasi inexistent, although the pattern **n-word + neg + verb** is claimed by grammar books⁷ to yield the double negation reading. However, recently Camille Denizot (2012)⁸ proved that such examples are extremely rare, quasi inexistent (cf. also Muchnová 2016: pp. 190–195). In all AG literature, she found 2 or 3 examples

6 The examples with οὐδέ + οὔτε are left aside.

7 Linguistic tradition of AG (Kühner & Gerth 1904; Schwyzer & Debrunner 1950; Smyth 1984; Basile 2001; Crespo 2003, etc.) do not operate with preverbal and postverbal positions of negator and n-words with respect to the verb, but with mutual positions of simple vs. compound negatives. The particles οὐδέ and οὔτε are usually classified as compounds (cf. Kühner & Gerth 1904: pp. 204–205; Humbert 1972: p. 364), but their interpretational ambiguity (contributing partly to NC, and partly to DN reading) and the fact being particles (conjunctions), and not indefinite pronouns or adverbs, attest rather their incline to the negator.

8 Denizot (2012) deals with simple and compound negatives, as is usual in traditional Grammar books of AG, and not with their position to the verb. Her approach is based on the free word order in AG, which makes the position of the argument with respect to the verb less important than in languages with fixed word order. Checking all her examples, I found that her interpretation also holds for approaches challenging the position of the verb.

with double negation reading (i.e. somehow positive reading),⁹ and 2 or 3 examples with negative concord reading.

The pattern **neg + n-word + verb**, surprisingly, seems to be very rare; in Xenophon, it only occurs e.g. with a participle (instead of a finite verb, cf. the example /9/, where (οὐ μόνον) οὐδὲν κακὸν is the object of the participle νοοῦσα), or without a verb (cf. /10/), or with the negative particle οὔτε or οὐδέ instead of οὐ (cf. /11/):

/9/ Σὺ δ' εὖ εἰδὼς ὅτι ἃ λέγει σοι ἡ μήτηρ οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν κακὸν νοοῦσα λέγει, ἀλλὰ καὶ βουλομένη σοι ἀγαθὰ εἶναι ὅσα οὐδενὶ ἄλλω,... (*Memor.* 2.2.9.7) ~ “You know well that there is no malice in what your mother says to you; on the contrary, she wishes you to be blessed above all other beings.”

/10/ ... οὐ μέντοι ὄφελός γε οὐδὲν αὐτῶν εἰς πόλεμον. (*Cyr.* 8.8.21.1) ~ “but they are of no use in war.”

/11/ ... οὔτε πρὸς τὴν γέφυραν οὐδεὶς ἦλθε τῶν πολεμίων.... (*Anab.* 2.4.23.2) ~ “... nor did anyone of the enemy... come to the bridge.”

Considering the examples quoted so far, one could conclude that AG is a strict NC language, like Slavic languages. However, seeing the rare occurrences of the five sequences in the table above, we must state that there are some differences. As a result, I suggest – as an initial step – to regard AG as a non-strict NC language (cf. Muchnova 2016; Willmott 2013; Horrocks 2014) like Italian and Spanish, where the preverbal sequence n-word + neg is avoided as an ungrammatical construction (Horrocks 2014: p. 49 “*Nessuno non ha visto Gianni”; Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017: p. 12; Willis 2013: pp. 33–34 “the sentential negator must be omitted when the n-word precedes the finite verb”). That means that “Nessuno non ha visto Gianni” is not fine, unless a double negation (hence DN) reading is intended. In fact, DN reading yields something like positive reading, as in “John didn’t see no one” = “John did see someone” (cf. Gianollo 2018: p. 2, claiming as correct “Nessuno non è venuto” = “Everybody came”).¹⁰

Hitherto, it may seem that the variation of morphologically negative items is not so wide-ranging. However, AG also features more complicated structures of sentences with negative meaning and multiple negative items, as the examples /12/, /13/ and /14/ show:

/12/ = extended /11/ ἐπὶ μέντοι τὴν γέφυραν ὄμως φυλακὴν ἔπεμψαν· καὶ οὔτε ἐπέθετο οὐδεὶς οὐδαμῶθεν οὔτε πρὸς τὴν γέφυραν οὐδεὶς ἦλθε τῶν πολεμίων... (*Anab.* 2.4.23.2) ~ “After this the Greeks went to rest, yet they did, nevertheless, send a guard to the bridge; and no one attacked the army from any quarter, nor did anyone of the enemy ... come to the bridge.”

/13/ δῆλον δὲ τοῦτο τῇ ὕστεραία ἐγένετο· οὔτε γὰρ ὑποζύγιον ἔτ' οὐδὲν ἐφάνη οὔτε στρατόπεδον οὔτε καπνὸς οὐδαμῶ ἧλθον. (*Anab.* 2.2.18.2) ~ “This became clear on the following day, for not a pack animal was any more to be seen nor camp nor smoke anywhere near.”

9 There is one example in Xen. *Symp.* 1.9.4. ἔπειτα τῶν ὁρώντων οὐδεὶς οὐκ ἔπασχέ τι τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπ' ἐκείνου. ~ “there was not one of the onlookers who did not feel his soul strangely stirred by the boy”; i.e. “everyone felt something” (interpretation with double negation, corresponding to traditional rules).

10 On the other hand, “*Nessuno non è venuto” is not fine.

/14/ Ἄλλ' οὐδέπωποτε αὐτήν, ἔφη, οὔτ' εἶπα οὔτ' ἐποίησα οὐδὲν ἐφ' ᾧ ἡσχύνθη... (*Memor.* 2.2.8.5) ~ “But I have never yet said or done anything to cause her shame.”

3. Preverbal n-word without negator

Another more salient argument in favour of the non-strict NC hypothesis¹¹ is the possibility of a preverbal n-word being the sole (standing-alone) negative element in the sentence, be it subject (cf. /15/), object (cf. /16/) or an adverbial sentence constituent (cf. /17/); pattern: **n-word + verb**:

/15/ ἐπεὶ δ' οὐδεὶς αὐτῷ ἐμάχετο ἐκ τοῦ ἀντίου... (*Mem.* 1.8.23.3) ~ “Since, then, there was no one in his front to give battle to him...”

/16/ νικῶντες μὲν οὐδένα ἄν κατακάνοιεν (*Anab.* 3.1.2.5) ~ “if they should be victorious, they could not kill anyone,…”

/17/ ἐθαύμαζον ὅτι οὐδαμοῦ Κύρος φαίνοιτο (*Anab.* 1.10.16.3) ~ “they wondered that Cyrus was nowhere to be seen.”

This pattern with standing-alone preverbal n-word is frequent in AG and occurs in non-strict NC languages (Italian, Spanish), as was mentioned at the end of the previous section, but also in DN languages like English.

4. Postverbal n-word without negator

In addition to these properties shared with non-strict NC languages, AG has a special property: **postverbal n-word** (pattern: **verb + n-word**) without a preverbal negator. It means that the preverbal negator is not obligatory in AG and can be omitted, but it is not *a priori* excluded, as we saw in the example /2/ and others. In both cases (with negator and without it), we obtain negative reading:

/18/ καὶ ἀπέθανε μὲν οὐδεὶς αὐτῶν. (*Hell.* 5.4.53.4) ~ “(and the Sciritans, upon seeing them, fell back at a faster pace than a walk.) Now not one of them was killed;”

/19/ ἀδικοῦντες δ' οὐδὲν φεύγοιεν (*Hell.* 5.2.9.4) ~ “(they) had been exiled for no wrong-doing.”

Such a sequence (**verb + n-word**) without a preverbal negator (or another n-word) is illicit in Spanish and Italian (Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017: p. 12). As for AG, this sequence has been challenged by Horrocks (2014: p. 61) arguing that postverbal οὐδεὶς only occurs when the verb has been fronted over because of contrast or emphasis. Of course, such a word order is not pragmatically neutral. This does not mean, however, that postverbally placed n-words do not exist in the given language; instead this fact (the emphasis

11 N-words in strict NC languages cannot occur without the negator (cf. Czech “*Nikdo nepřišel.*” ~ “*Nobody came.*”).

and so on) explains why this sequence is allowed alongside the more neutral and more frequent construction with preverbal n-word. My investigation shows that postverbal n-words are rare, but not extremely; I identified some 13 occurrences of the sole lemma οὐδείς in postverbal position¹² in Xenophon's work *Hellenica*, which is some 10% of the total of sole οὐδείς occurrences in this work. Consequently, it appears that the position parameter, which is so important in non-strict NC languages like Spanish and Italian, is less relevant in AG. Notice that in case of alone-standing postverbal or preverbal n-word, we are not dealing with NC: n-word seems to function as a sentential operator (marker) of negation.

5. Postverbal negator

Interestingly, the negator, which is normally a preverbal proclitic (without accent), sometimes occurs at the end of the sentence, receiving an accent. This phenomenon is primarily assigned to the poetry in reference grammars, but our investigation shows that it is not unusual in the prose as well:

/20/ καὶ τὰ ἀκόντια ἐπεδείκνυ μὲν οὐ̃, ... (Cyr. 2.4.22) ~ "As for the hunting spears, he did not show them to him..."

Such sentences do not contain any n-word. Xenophon's work attests some 50 instances, mostly with ellipsis of the verb:

/21/ οὗτος δ' ἦν καλὸς μὲν, μέγας δ' οὐ̃. (Anab. 4.4.3.5.) ~ "This was a beautiful river, though not a large one."

A closer examination shows that this position of οὐ̃ is caused by contrast, emphasis, focalisation or stress, etc. Even if this is not a pragmatically neutral word order, as in the case of postverbal n-words, I believe that these instances should not be omitted when considering the expression of negation in AG.

6. Οὐδέ and οὔτε

Beside the negator οὐ̃, AG has two negative particles οὐδέ and οὔτε, which are compounds of the negator οὐ̃ and a coordinator: In case of οὐδέ, the coordinator δέ (additive and adversative),¹³ in case of οὔτε, the additive coordinator τε. There are semantic, syntactic and pragmatic differences between both particles, which were thoroughly investigated by

12 Excluded are the examples like ἡ δὲ γνώμη σκοπεῖ οὐδὲν ἥττον μὴ τι πάθη ἢ ὅπως βλάβη τι τοὺς πολεμίους (Hell. 5.3.7.6) ~ "judgment aims no less to escape harm than to inflict it upon the enemy" where the negation is not sentential.

13 However, the origin of οὐδέ is sometimes questioned.

Denizot (2013) and Lambert (2012). As for the coordinative use, οὐδέ means ‘and not’ or ‘nor’, and according to standard grammar books and dictionaries, typically occurs after a negative sentence¹⁴ (after a positive sentence, the coordinator would be καί οὐ ‘and not’):

/22/ = /5/ οὐκ ἔγωγε αὐτοὺς διώξω, οὐδ’ ἐρεῖ οὐδεις ὡς ἐγώ... (*Anab.* 1.4.8.5) ~ “I shall not pursue them, nor shall anyone say about me that I...”

/23/ ὅτι οὐδαμοῦ Κῦρος φαίνοιτο οὐδ’ ἄλλος ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ οὐδεις παρήει. (*Anab.* 1.10.16.3) ~ “that Cyrus was nowhere to be seen and that no one else had come to them from him;”

In contrast, οὔτε is mostly repeated, οὔτε ~ οὔτε ~ (οὔτε) ‘neither ~ nor ~ (nor)’ and often used as a constituent negation.

/24/ ἐθαύμαζον ὅτι Κῦρος οὔτε ἄλλον πέμπει ... οὔτε αὐτὸς φαίνοιτο. (*Anab.* 2.1.2.3) ~ “they wondered that Cyrus neither sent anyone else... nor appeared himself.”

The combination of οὐδέ // οὔτε with different n-words needs further investigation, also with respect to conjunctive and adverbial uses of οὐδέ, among other things.

7. NPI πώποτε ‘anytime’

In addition to morphologically negative adverbs of time (οὐδεπώποτε 13 occ. in Xenophon; οὐδέποτε 21 occ.; οὐπώποτε 4 occ.; οὔποτε 21 occ. ‘never’) AG often uses the adverb πώποτε ‘anytime, (n)ever yet’, which is built up on the adverb πώ ‘up to this time, yet’ and the adverb of time ποτε ‘at some time // at any time, ever’. Πώ as well as πώποτε is said to be a negative polarity item (NPI; cf. Denizot 2011). NPIs are words that only “occur in a limited set of environments, prototypically in the scope of negation” (Penka 2015: p. 309), and can never by themselves contribute negative reading of the utterance, as in following examples:

/25/ οὐ γὰρ πώποτε¹⁵ τοῦτ’ ἔμαθον (*Smp.* 2.19.7) ~ “for I had never¹⁶ learned it.”

/26/ ὁ μὲν δῆμος ... οὐδὲν πώποτε ἔνεκα χρημάτων ὑμᾶς ἠδίκηκεν. (*Hell.* 2.4.40) ~ “But the people ... never did you any wrong for the sake of money; (while you,...)”

On the other hand, the NPI πώποτε also occurs in questions, relative and conditional clauses; that is in specific non-negative environments (**non-veridical contexts**), cf. also

14 Cf. Kühner & Gerth (1904: p. 293); Lambert (2012: pp. 99–100) et Denizot (2013: p. 33); on the other hand Montanari (s.v. οὐδέ) quotes at the first place οὐδέ as conjunction not preceded by a negation.

15 It is obvious that the use of πώποτε is somehow similar to the use of English *any*, which also functions as an NPI.

16 The reference translations of Xenophon’s work often drop the word ‘yet’.

Denizot (2011: p. 190) and LSJ *s.u.* I found some 8 out of 51 instances in Xenophon. As such, *πώποτε* should be considered as a **weak** NPI:¹⁷

/27/ ποίαν γὰρ νύμφην *πώποτε* τοσοῦτοι ἵππεις ... **προύπεμψαν**...; (*Hell.* 4.1.9.) ~ “For what bride was ever escorted by so many horsemen ... (as would escort your wife to your house?)”

Sometimes the negator is joined directly to *πώποτε*, so that the compound n-word *οὐπώποτε* ‘never (yet)’ obtains. Its use is limited, Xenophon only has four occurrences:

/28/ ὅτι οὐπώποθ’ οὗτος ὁ ποταμὸς διαβατὸς γένοιτο πεζῇ (*Anab.* 1.4.18) ~ “that this river had never been passable on foot”

In /28/, the n-word *οὐπώποτε* functions as a sentential negation (negation operator). It is noteworthy that the temporal adverb *οὐπώποτε* as well as its cognate *οὐδεπώποτε* rarely occurs with other negative items. Perhaps this is connected to the fact that *πώποτε* is a currently occurring word, and the negator *οὐ*, which is part of *οὐπώποτε*, can be separated from the adverb *πώποτε* by one or several words, like in the sequence *οὐ γὰρ πώποτε* in our example /25/. It follows that the univerbation in this case is philologically fragile (cf. also Montanari sub *οὐ* /5D/ and LSJ sub *οὐ πώποτε*).

The situation seems to be different for adverbs of place like *οὐδαμοῦ* ‘nowhere’ (Xenophon: 20 occ.), *οὐδαμῆ* ‘in no place, in no direction’ (5 occ.), *οὐδαμόθεν* ‘from nowhere’ (6 occ.), *οὐδαμοῖ* ‘towards or in no place’ (1 occ.) and adverbs of manner like *οὐδαμῶς* ‘in no wise’ (10 occ.), where the univerbation is fixed, perhaps because of extremely low incidence of the second part of these compounds (cf. adverbs *ἀμοῦ*, *ἀμῆ*, *ἀμοῖ*, *ἀμῶς*, *ἀμόθεν*, *ἀμόθι*, cf. LSJ and Montanari, *s.u.* *ἀμός*).¹⁸ This fact suggests that there are no NPIs denoting place, at least of the type as *πώποτε* is.

8. Negative spread

Hitherto, I have only discussed one type of NC, **negative doubling**. Some linguists distinguish it from another type of NC, **negative spread**. In both cases, we are concerned with one semantic negation in a clause with two or more morphologically negative elements. Thus, negative concord encompasses three different configurations:¹⁹

- (a) **Negative doubling:** negator + one n-word.
- (b) **Negative spread:** two or more n-words

17 Penka & Zeijlstra (2010: p. 775): “NPIs like *any* that are allowed to occur in all kinds of downward entailing (or non-veridical) contexts are dubbed ‘weak NPIs.’”

18 Xenophon attests no occurrence of simple *ἀμοῦ*, etc. A search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) reveals that these simple adverbs mostly occur in idioms *ἀμῆ γέ πη*, *ἀμοῦ γέ που*, *ἀμῶς γέ πως*, etc., found particularly in Plato, and especially in *Leges* (e.g. *ἀμοῦ γέ που* ‘somewhere’ *Leg.* 641e), always in positive context.

19 Cf. e.g. Willis (2013: p. 33) and Zeijlstra (2004: pp. 62ff).

(c) **Negative doubling and negative spread** (the combination of both phenomena): structures with a negator and multiple n-words.

Czech, as a strict-NC language, does not exhibit negative spread independently, negative spread is always associated with negative doubling (because the negator is obligatory).

AG attests all three possibilities: example /2/ refers to negative doubling, examples showing negative spread and the combination of both types of NC follow.

Negative spread is quite an important and frequently-occurring phenomenon in AG and displays interesting patterns. Consider two examples for illustration:

/29/ ἡμῶν δ' οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν ἀντεπιμελεῖται (*Anab.* 3.1.16) ~ “but on our side no one is planning any counter-measures at all.”

/30/ εἶγε ἀφ' ἡμῶν γε τῶν ἐν μέσῳ οὐδεὶς οὐδέποτε ἄρξεται (*Cyr.* 2.2.3.3) ~ “if they are never going to begin with us here in the middle.”

In the most frequent combination the n-word οὐδεὶς is the subject of the sentence, while the second n-word is οὐδὲν, functioning as the object, as in our example /29/; but adverbial n-words are also possible (/30/). Another striking property is the preverbal position of both n-words. Though linguists examining modern languages often show the pattern **n-word + verb + n-word** (e.g. Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017: p. 12) for illustration, AG seems more frequently to attest the preverbal pattern **n-word + n-word + verb** (cf. also Gianollo 2018: p. 1).

We even can find examples with multiple n-words in preverbal position, but this phenomenon is rare and does not occur in Xenophon:

/31/ οὐδεὶς εἰς οὐδὲν οὐδενός ἂν ἡμῶν οὐδέποτε γένοιτο ἄξιος. (*Plat. Phileb.* 19.b.7–8)²⁰ ~ “none of us can ever be of any use in anything.”

Notice, however, that negative spread in AG seems to be limited to n-words that function – in the clause – as subjects, objects or adverbials; I did not find any instance of n-word exhibiting negative spread, while functioning as determiner (οὐδεὶς ἄνθρωπος). This observation is in line with the claim of Giannakidou & Zeijlstra (2017: p. 14) that “although negative spread in non-strict NC languages is fine with “bare” n-words, that is with n-words as independent arguments, it seems degraded when n-words are used as modifiers or determiners.”

Multiple **negative spread** is isolated in **postverbal position** and is only found in other authors than Xenophon:

/32/ περαινείς δὲ οὐδέποτε οὐδὲν πρὸς οὐδένα αὐτῶν (*Plat. Theaet.* 180a7) ~ “and you never make any progress whatsoever with any of them.”

20 Most occurrences are found in Plato, e.g. *Plat. Parm.* 166a2 οὐδενὶ οὐδαμῆ οὐδαμῶς οὐδεμίαν κοινωνίαν; *Resp.* 495b5 οὐδὲν μέγα οὐδέποτε οὐδένα, *Leg.* 731c3; *Tim.* 29e1, etc.

The absence in Xenophon's works also holds for the **circumverbal** pattern, that is **n-word + verb + n-word** (ex. /33/), and, for the **combination** of negative spread and negative doubling (ex. /34/):

/33/ οὐδὲν ἔπασχε δεινὸν οὐδέεις (Dem. 20.23.8–9) ~ “and none would be hardly treated.”

/34/ οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγ’ ἄν ἔδωκ’ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν (Dem. 19.81.1–2) ~ “for I would never pay a man a farthing.”

However, the combination of negative spread and negative doubling **does** also occur in Xenophon, but not with the negator οὐ; it occurs with the coordinating particles οὐδέ or οὐτε:

/35/ οὐδ’ ἄλλος δὲ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ μάχῃ ἔπαθεν οὐδεὶς οὐδὲν, (Anab. 1.8.20.6) ~ “nor, for that matter, did any other single man among the Greeks get any hurt whatever in this battle...”

The use of negative spread in AG is a very interesting phenomenon and deserves further research (cf. Muchnová, *Negative spread in Ancient Greek*, in preparation).

9. AG as a non-strict NC language

AG, which is a **non-strict** NC language, must be distinguished from Modern Greek that is a **strict** NC language (as has been argued by Giannakidou *passim*) like Slavic languages, i.e. the presence of the negator is compulsory. Furthermore, as I tried to demonstrate, AG is a non-strict NC language, but not exactly in the same way as Italian and Spanish are, because:

- the postverbal n-word alone is able to assure the negative reading of the sentence, while in Spanish or Italian the negator is obligatory (cf. section 4.);
- in preverbal negative spread in Spanish, the reading seems to be ambiguous: NC or Double Negation. E.g. the sentence “Nadie nunca volvió a Cuba” has two interpretations (a) “Nobody ever returned to Cuba”, (b) “Nobody never returned to Cuba”, with DN reading (Herburger 2001: p. 306), while in AG only the NC reading is available.

On the other hand, in **Catalan** and in **West Flemish**, the sentential negator is optional with a preverbal n-word, yielding in both cases (with and without a negator) the NC reading, cf. Giannakidou & Zeijlstra (2017: p. 12) or Willis (2013: p. 40). In contrast, in Spanish, as we already saw (section 4.), the sentential negator must be omitted with a preverbal n-word, unless we accept double negation reading. Languages like **Catalan** are called “optionally non-strict NC languages”. Though this is not exactly the case of AG, it is a hint that we may distinguish more than three language types with respect to the expression of negation, and that negativity is a gradable property. This view is in line with that mentioned by Giannakidou & Zeijlstra (2017: p. 13) that “sensitivity of n-words ... to the presence of negation or of another n-word looks gradient”.

10. Are n-words semantically negative or not?

An issue we have not addressed so far is the nature of n-words. Literature on the nature of n-words and NPIs is huge and the most relevant theories have been discussed e.g. in Willis (2013), Penka (2015), Giannakidou & Zeijlstra (2017) and others. All concepts have their pros and cons and linguists are far from unanimous. Some Hellenists assumed that n-words can be interpreted as negative quantifiers (Denizot 2012: p. 65, n. 3), or that they are inherently negative compounds, being made up of the negator and another element (Willmott 2013: pp. 303 and 329). I must add that today this idea has been largely abandoned by the majority of linguists working in the field of modern languages. An interesting and stimulating view is held by Horrocks (2014: p. 80): negative indefinites such as οὐδεῖς, οὐδέν behave as negative quantifiers when they precede the verb; when they follow the verb and the negator οὐ is present, they behave as NPIs.

The most viable standpoint seems to me to be the hypothesis of the ambiguous nature of n-words (like in Horrocks 2014). In my opinion, AG **n-words** function as **negation operators** when used **alone** (negative quantifier), be it in preverbal or postverbal position. However, when the negator οὐ is present, then it is οὐ that functions as negation operator and consequently, **n-words** are **not negative (NPIs)**. The idea of “two different analyses of the same n-word within a given language“ is mentioned by Giannakidou – Zeijlstra (2017: p. 6) and can be supported by the fact that other words may also attest different uses. For instance, indefinite expressions are used as NPIs as well as FCIs (free choice items),²¹ like ‘any’ in English (cf. Penka 2015: p. 19).

This notwithstanding, there is a problem with negative spread: we saw that the structure with two (mostly preverbal) n-words is current in AG. Which of the clause-mate n-words is NPI and which is negative operator? Horrocks (2014: p. 61, n. 31) argues reasonably that when οὐδεῖς is associated with following negative other than the negator οὐ, the second n-word is always **treated as an NPI**. A similar idea can already be found in Herburger (2001: p. 295), mentioning the possibility that the first n-word is licensing the second n-word as an NPI.

However, nowadays several linguists have claimed that n-words themselves are not the bearers of semantic negation. Rather, they are supposed to be semantically non-negative. That is why I have cautiously spoken about morphologically or intuitively negative words, and not about semantically negative words. Hedde Zeijlstra (2004), for example, formulated a hypothesis on ‘interpretable’ negative features [i-neg], ‘uninterpretable’ negative features [u-neg] and abstract negative operators (without a phonological realization), which seems to be attracting more and more adherents and which seems to be able to solve the problem of two clause-mate n-words.

21 *Any* triggers free-choice reading in non-negative contexts, being interpreted as a universal quantifier: “Any student in my class can solve this problem set”. (cf. also Giannakidou & Zeijlstra 2017: p. 6).

11. Summary

I have endeavoured to show in a case study (Xenophon) that AG is a language with a rich set of patterns combining different (intuitively) negative elements, their mutual position and their position with respect to the verb, but also featuring alone-standing n-words. In comparison with other languages, AG further displays a plentiful negative spread system, especially in preverbal position. Contrary to my claim (Muchnová 2016), I argue that AG is not a **non-strict negative concord language** (unlike Modern Greek), but rather a **specific non-strict NC language** (like Catalan or West Flemish), exhibiting some differences in respect to Spanish and Italian (non-strict NC languages), especially the presence of **postverbal n-word** without a (**preverbal**) **negator**, and attesting scalar properties of the negation.

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