



# MORE ON NEGATION IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

---

## MAIS SOBRE A NEGAÇÃO EM PORTUGUÊS BRASILEIRO

Sonia Cyrino<sup>1</sup>

*Universidade Estadual de Campinas*

*Universidade Federal da Bahia*

**Abstract:** There is an innovative use for the negation in Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth, BP): the negative marker *não* 'no' (henceforth, 'low *não*') is possible in a position between the auxiliary and the uninflected verb in perfect and progressive periphrases. Since negation cannot appear in that position in other Romance languages, I discuss a possible analysis for this new construction. First, I discuss the properties of the possible 'inhibited eventualities' in Spanish (Fábregas; González-Rodríguez 2019, 2020, 2021) to check their similarities and differences with BP 'low *não*'. Second, I consider which position could qualify as a syntactic position for 'low *não*' given its properties and the literature on multiple positions for negation (Declercq, 2013). Then, assuming Ramchand (2018)'s proposal, I propose that, differently from English, the auxiliary verbs of both these periphrases are generated inside vP in BP. Additionally, I assume that 'low *não*' became possible in BP due to the loss of lexical verb movement to a high functional category in the language. Thus, the lexical verb moves only as high as a lower (aspectual) projection, whereas the auxiliary separately moves up to a higher position (Cyrino, 2013; Cyrino; Araújo-Adriano, 2023).

Keywords: Negation; Progressive and perfective periphrases; Syntax; Brazilian Portuguese.

**Resumo:** Há um uso inovador para a negação no português brasileiro (doravante, PB), em que o marcador negativo *não* (doravante, *não baixo*) é possível na posição entre o auxiliar e o verbo não-flexionado em perífrases progressivas e perfectivas. Uma vez que a negação não pode aparecer nessa posição em outras línguas românicas, eu discuto uma possível análise para essa nova construção. Primeiramente, eu discuto as propriedades de "eventualidades inibidas" possíveis em espanhol (Fábregas; González-Rodríguez, 2019, 2020, 2021), para checar suas semelhanças e diferenças com o 'nã baixo' do PB. Em seguida, eu considero

---

<sup>1</sup> Email address: [cyrino@unicamp.br](mailto:cyrino@unicamp.br). Research supported by CNPq Grant 303015/2022-5. I thank two anonymous reviewers for their relevant comments and the audience at the IV Encontro de Gramática Gerativa, which took place at the Universidade Federal da Bahia in March 2023, for their helpful insights. Remaining errors are my responsibility.

a posição sintática para o 'não baixo', dadas suas propriedades e a literatura sobre posições múltiplas para a negação (Declercq, 2013). Depois, assumindo a proposta de Ramchand (2018), eu proponho que, diferentemente do inglês, os verbos auxiliares de ambas as perífrases são gerados dentro do vP em PB. Além disso, assumo que o 'não baixo' se tornou possível no PB porque houve a perda de movimento do verbo para uma posição funcional alta na língua. Assim, o verbo lexical sobe apenas para uma posição mais baixa (aspectual), ao passo que o auxiliar se move para uma posição mais alta (Cyrino, 2013; Cyrino; Araújo-Adriano, 2023).

Palavras-chave: Negação; Perífrases progressivas e perfectivas; Sintaxe; Português brasileiro.

## INTRODUCTION

It has been shown in several works (Schwenter, 2005; Cavacante, 2007, 2012; Teixeira de Sousa, 2015, among others) that there are three positions for the negative word *não* in sentential negation in Brazilian Portuguese (BP):

- (1) a. Eu *não* comi o chocolate.  
I not ate the chocolate  
b. Eu *não* comi o chocolate, *não*.  
I not ate the chocolate no  
c. Comi (o chocolate) *não*.  
ate the chocolate no  
'I didn't eat the chocolate.'

(1a) is the unmarked form sentential negation. According to the literature referenced above, (1b) and (1c) are related to pragmatic/discourse functions.

However, more recently another position for the negative word *não* has been noted in the literature about BP (Cyrino, 2010, 2013, 2022a, b; De Paula, 2014): *não* is possible in the slot in (AUX \_\_\_ V<sub>[-finite]</sub>), as seen in (2), where we have data collected from the internet:

- (2) a. Para o caso de você, em algum momento, toivamente se esquecer;  
for the case of you in some moment foolishly forget  
eu nunca *estou não pensando* em você.  
I never am not thinking in you.  
Lit. 'For the case you foolish forget at some moment, I am never not thinking about you.'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22estou%20n%C3%A3o%20bebendo%22&src=typed\\_query&f=top](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22estou%20n%C3%A3o%20bebendo%22&src=typed_query&f=top)) Access: 06/02/23

b. *Tenho não estado* tão presente no Instagram esse ano...  
have not been so present in-the Instagram this year  
'I have not been so present in Instagram this year...'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22tenho%20n%C3%A3o%20sabido%22&src=typed\\_query&f=live](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22tenho%20n%C3%A3o%20sabido%22&src=typed_query&f=live)) Access: 06/02/23

In this paper, I explore these constructions in BP. First, I consider whether the phenomenon analyzed in this paper can be subsumed under the proposal by (Fábregas; González-Rodríguez, 2019, 2020, 2021) about “inhibited eventualities”. After that, I discuss the occurrence of the negation marker in perfect and progressive periphrases in BP and, in section 3, I consider the proposals for four positions in the literature, especially focusing on DeClercq (2013). Finally, in section 4, I present my proposal for this new negation in BP as a focalized negation, and I suggest where its position might be in the syntactic spine, considering Ramchand (2018)’s proposal for periphrastic constructions. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## 1 ON ‘INHIBITED EVENTUALITIES’

The structure with the BP ‘new’ *não*, henceforth, ‘low *não*’, resembles what Fábregas & González-Rodríguez (2020, p. 750) (henceforth, F&G-R) have called ‘*inhibited eventualities*.’ According to the authors, in an instance of an *inhibited eventuality*, “...negation does not scope over the event as an object with time and world parameters, but over the description denoted by the lexical predicate which is conveyed in the event” (see also F&G-R, 2019, 2021).

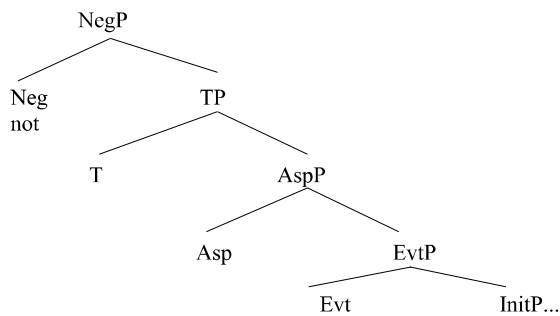
F&G-R assume an Event Semantics account (Ramchand; Svenonius 2014; Ramchand, 2018), whereby the clausal spine is divided in three domains, the lower domain being where the EventP is built, corresponding to the vP.

(3) [c propositions [<sub>T</sub> situations [<sub>v</sub> events]]]

The authors propose that inhibited eventuality readings are different from negated event reading, that is, ‘standard sentential negation’, which denies the existence of an eventuality and would have a structure as (4b) for a sentence as (4a):

(4) a. No puedes hablar  
 NEG can.2SG to.talk  
 ‘You cannot talk.’

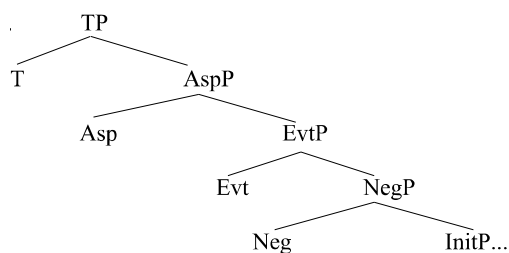
b.



In ‘inhibited eventualities’, on the other hand, negation is introduced below vP, or EventP (see Ramchand, 2008, 2018, among others) and operates on the descriptive content of the event, thus, a structure as (5b) for a sentence as (5a):

(5) a. Puedes no hablar  
 can.2SG NEG to.talk  
 ‘(You) can not-talk

b.



As for periphrases, F & G-R (2019) analyze only (aspectual) periphrastic structures that contain a negative trigger inside them in Spanish, in the structure [AspAux + no + V<sub>[gerúndio/infinitivo]</sub>], as in (6) and (7) ((F&R-R, 2019, ex. (20) and (39)):

- (6) a. Comenzó no *respondiendo*.  
 started not answering  
 '(He) started by not answering.'
- b. Empezó no *respondiendo*.  
 started not answering  
 '(He) started by not answering.'
- c. Continuó no *diciendo* la verdad.  
 continued not saying the truth  
 '(He) continued by not telling the truth.'
- d. Terminó no *votando* en contra.  
 finished not voting in against  
 '(He) finished by not voting against.'
- e. Sigue no *queriendo* ver me.  
 continues not wanting see me.  
 '(He) continues not willing to see me.'
- (7) a. *Empezó a* no *pagar* impuestos.  
 started to not pay taxes  
 '(He) started not to pay taxes.'
- b. *Comenzó a* no *pagar* impuestos.  
 started to not pay taxes  
 '(He) started not to pay taxes.'

However, *no* in *progressive* periphrases is ungrammatical in Spanish (8).

Crucially, as seen above, this is possible in BP:

- (8) \**Está* no *comiendo*.  
 is not eating  
 '(He) is not eating.'

Additionally, as opposed to BP (9), *no* cannot appear inside a prospective periphrasis, (10):

- (9) Amanhã *vou não* correr sozinha.  
 tomorrow go not run alone  
 Lit. 'Tomorrow, I'm going to not run alone.'  
 Intended. 'I'm not going to run alone tomorrow.'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22vou%20n%C3%A3o%20correr%22&src=typed\\_query&f=live](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22vou%20n%C3%A3o%20correr%22&src=typed_query&f=live)) Access: 06-02-23

- (10) a. \*Va a *no* correr  
 b. \*Va a *no* pagar

According to (F&G-R, 2019, 2020, 2021), the “hallmark” of ‘inhibited eventualities’ is the **non-dynamicity** of the complement.<sup>2</sup> But notice that in the possible BP sentence (9) above the predicate *correr* is **not** stative. In fact, it is dynamic, an activity (in Vendler’s, 1967 sense). This is a first sign that the ‘low *não*’ in BP seems to be a different phenomenon from what is possible in Spanish.

Moreover, it is crucial for F&G-R’s analysis of inhibited eventualities that any event description **that lacks an Initiator** will not be able to trigger the negative-event reading (that is, the ‘inhibited eventuality’ reading). However, there are several examples of the ‘low *não*’ with unaccusative verbs (in structures with *ter*+participle and *estar*+ gerund), as in (11), showing the ‘low *não*’ may lack an Initiator in BP.

- (11) a. Só dele *ter não caído* já é uma vitória  
 only of-him have not fallen already is a victory  
 ‘Only (the fact that) it has not fallen yet is a victory.’  
[https://twitter.com/search?q=%22ter%20n%C3%A3o%20ca%C3%ADdo%22&src=typed\\_query&f=top](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22ter%20n%C3%A3o%20ca%C3%ADdo%22&src=typed_query&f=top) Access: 06/03/23
- b. Naquela hora você disse: Mamãe, *estou não morrendo* agora!  
 in-that hour you said mummy am not dying now  
 ‘In that hour you said: Mom I am not dying now.’  
<https://www.passeidireto.com/arquivo/106489343/a-gloria-de-deus-1/2> Access: 06/03/23

---

<sup>2</sup> An anonymous reviewer points out, correctly, that the examples by F&G-R (2019) given in (6) contain dynamic verbs, except for “querer”. However, in that paper, the authors consider that “la posibilidad de interponer una negación entre verbo auxiliar y verbo auxiliado depende específicamente de las condiciones impuestas por el auxiliar, concretamente de si el auxiliar admite en su complemento situaciones no dinámicas.”(F&G-R, 2019, p. 104), and “las perífrasis de gerundio que rechazan la negación como MI [material interpuesto, SC] son precisamente aquellas que exigen que el verbo auxiliado sea eventivo e incluso en algunos casos que defina un avance gradual.” (F&G-R 2019, p. 107). In other words, in that paper, the authors consider the role of the auxiliary in ‘perífrasis de gerundio.’ The extension of that proposal to other languages still awaits research.

Additionally, 'low *não*' is also possible with passives (12), and it may appear between the progressive and the passive auxiliaries (13):

(12) Os patologistas usam a palavra 'negativo' para significar  
the pathologist use the word negative to mean  
que algo foi *não visto* na amostra de tecido.  
that something was not seen in-the sample of tissue  
'The pathologists use the word 'negative' to mean that something was not seen in the tissue sample.'

(<https://www.mypathologyreport.ca/pt/perguntas-frequentes-sobre-relat%C3%B3rios-de-patologia/> Access: 06/03/23)

(13) E *está não sendo decidida* em parlamento também não acho...  
and is not being decided in parliament too not think  
'... and it is not being decided in the parliament either, I don't think'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22est%C3%A1%20n%C3%A3o%20sendo%22&src=typed\\_query&f=top](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22est%C3%A1%20n%C3%A3o%20sendo%22&src=typed_query&f=top)) Access: 06/03/23

BP 'low *não*' does not seem to convey the same meaning as sentential negation. The emphasis is on negating the participle; hence, *não* cannot be replaced by the sentential negation reduced (clitic) form *num*, otherwise possible in BP (14a). In other words, since 'low *não*' is emphatic, a clitic form as *num* is not allowed, since it cannot express that emphasis (14b):

- (14) a. Ela *não tem vivido* bem ultimamente. (simple negation,  $\sqrt{num}$ )  
'She has not lived well recently.'  
b. Ela *tem não vivido* bem ultimamente. ('low *não*', \**num*)  
Intended: 'She has not-lived well recently'

Another indication of this lack of correspondence comes from the fact that 'low *não*' may co-occur with sentence negation, as seen below:

- (15) a. eu tb *não tenho não concordado* com nada  
I too not have not agreed with anything  
Lit. 'I have also not not agreed with anything'  
Intended: It's not the case that I have also not agreed with anything

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22n%C3%A3o%20tenho%20n%C3%A3o%20concordado%22&src=typed\\_query&f=live](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22n%C3%A3o%20tenho%20n%C3%A3o%20concordado%22&src=typed_query&f=live)) Access: 27-02-23

b. não diria gostar mas não estou não gostando dele...

not would-say like but not am not liking of-him

Lit. 'I would not say like but I am not not-liking him.'

Intended: 'I wouldn't say "like", but I am not disliking him'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22n%C3%A3o%20estou%20n%C3%A3o%20gostando%22&src=typed\\_query&f=live](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22n%C3%A3o%20estou%20n%C3%A3o%20gostando%22&src=typed_query&f=live)) Access: 27-02-23

If 'low *não*' is not sentential negation, how can we analyze this negative marker?

Below, by looking at the syntax of negation, I present a proposal that indicates an innovation in the inventory of negative markers in BP.

In this paper, I will concentrate **on structures that are possible in BP but impossible** in Spanish (and other Romance languages, as far as I know), that is, BP structures where *não* appears in perfect (*ter*+participle) and in progressive (*estar*+gerund) periphrases,<sup>3</sup> and I advance a proposal for their structure.

## 2 ON THE 'LOW *NÃO*' SYNTACTIC STRUCTURE

The literature has proposed that negation may appear in four positions in the clausal spine (Zanuttini, 1997; Poletto, 2008).<sup>4</sup> Following that line of research,

---

<sup>3</sup> The intervening 'low' negation in BP prospective (*ir*+infinitive) periphrases –shown above – are **possible**, but it is the focus of another paper (Cyrino, 2023, in progress). The study of such periphrases (prospective and aspectual periphrases) deserves a dedicated investigation since there are properties related to their syntax and semantics (apart from the possibility of an intervening negation in BP) that await further scrutiny.

<sup>4</sup> These proposals have assumed the cartographic approach to syntax. Zanuttini (1997) proposes the following different positions for sentential negation in the clausal spine:

- (i) NegP1: position for sentential negation
- NegP2: position for presuppositional negative markers (ex. Piedmontese *pa*)
- NegP3: position for negative markers as Piedmontese *nen*, which precedes adverbs corresponding to always
- NegP4: negative markers below always, as *no* (in Milanese).

Poletto (2008) also proposes four positions for negative markers, but she relates to etymological types that have developed from homogeneous classes:

- (ii) Neg1: scalar negative markers



Declercq (2013) observes that there is syncretism in negative markers in different languages and, within a nanosyntactic approach, she proposes that negative markers can be arranged in a paradigm that restricts syncretism to contiguous cells. Hence, four different categories of negative markers can be analyzed based on their functions, semantics, scope, and differences in the possibility of stacking items:<sup>5</sup>

(16) Classification of four types of negative markers (Declercq, 2013):

- a. negative polarity markers (Pol<sup>Neg</sup>) (sentential scope)  
*She is not happy, is she?*
- b. focus markers (Foc<sup>Neg</sup>) (scope over untensed predicates)  
*She is NOT happy, isn't she?*
- c. degree markers (Deg<sup>Neg</sup>) (scope over predicate terms)  
*She is non-professional.*
- d. quantity markers (Q<sup>Neg</sup>) (the lowest scope).  
*She is unhappy.*

In that framework, the negative nanospine is inserted as a complex constituent in the specifier of NegP, as in (17): the Split NegP is base generated on a lexical predicate and is, thus, a predicate negator.

---

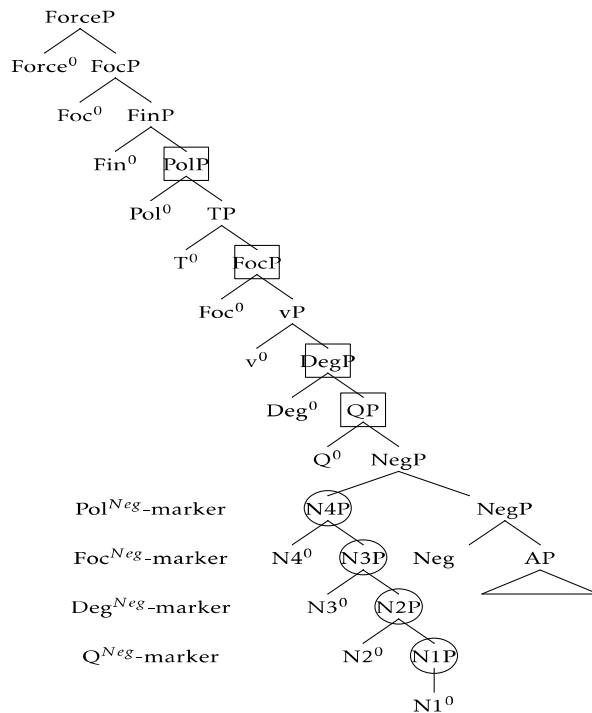
Neg2: minimizers, which are related to diachronic development (as in the Jerpersen's Cycle proposal)

Neg3: quantifier phrases derived diachronically from words as *niente* 'nothing' (*nada*)

Neg4: Focus markers, carrying emphasis, as the polarity item *no* (*não*)

<sup>5</sup> It's important to point out that DeClercq concentrates on instances of NegP as a base-generated projection on the main adjectival predicate in *copular constructions*.

(17) DeClercq (2013, p. 29)



As shown above, since ‘low *não*’ may co-occur with sentential negation in BP, this marker is not the high Pol<sup>Neg</sup> category. Additionally, we observe that, except for Q<sup>neg</sup>, there is syncretism in the lower negative markers in BP (18):

- (18) a. Pol<sup>Neg</sup>: *não*    Eu ***não*** *estou comendo* chocolate. ‘I am not eating chocolate.’  
 b. Foc<sup>Neg</sup>: *não*    Eu *estou comendo* ***não*** chocolate, mas peras. ‘I am eating not chocolate, but pears.’  
 c. Deg<sup>Neg</sup>: *não*    Eu tenho sido um cantor ***não***-profissional. ‘I have been a nonprofessional singer.’  
 d. Q<sup>Neg</sup>: *in-*    Eu tenho sido ***infeliz***. ‘I have been unhappy.’

Given this syncretism and given that ‘low *não*’ does not mark sentential negation, the question is what is its position/type in BP?

Let’s consider Foc<sup>Neg</sup>. First, there is no denial of a proposition previously asserted in Foc<sup>Neg</sup> constructions, but modification or contrast. According to DeClercq (2013, p. 37), the function of Foc<sup>Neg</sup> is ambiguous: “they have either a modifying function (19a) or they function as contrastive negative markers (19b) introducing new or correct information that can be added”:

(19)a. a not very happy man, not long ago

b. John was not happy, but sad

In BP, this is exactly what 'low *não*' does: it does not deny a proposition previously asserted (as Pol<sup>Neg</sup> does), but it seems it can modify (20a) or contrast (20b):

(20) a. Tenho tentado a todo custo não pensar no futuro,  
have tryed at all cost not think in-the future  
fingir que vai continuar tudo mesmo, ignorar o que está por vir.  
pretend that go continue all same ignore the what is to come  
*Tenho não vivido* todo esse tempo.  
have not lived all this time  
'(I) have tried at all costs not to think about the future, pretend that everything is going to stay the same, ignore what is to come. (I) have not lived all this time.'

(<https://saidomeurefrao.wordpress.com/>) Access: 2-11-22

b. ... queria estar bebendo vinho aí. *Estou não bebendo* vinho aí.  
wanted be drinking wine there am not drinking wine there

Int. 'I would like to be drinking wine there. I am not-drinking wine there.'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22estou%20n%C3%A3o%20bebendo%22&src=typed\\_query&f=live](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22estou%20n%C3%A3o%20bebendo%22&src=typed_query&f=live)) Access: 06/02/23

Second, Foc<sup>Neg</sup> markers take scope in a low left periphery Focus Phrase. "Consequently, they do not take scope over the tensed predicate and their scope is restricted to the untensed predicate" (Declercq, 2013, p. 30). This seems to be the case of BP constructions with 'low *não*'. Consider the literal translation and contrast shown in (21):

(21) A Kerline será a pessoa que daqui a duas semanas ninguém  
the Kerline will-be the person that from-here to two weeks nobody  
mais lembrará da existência. Mas eu já *estou não lembrando*  
more will-remember of-the existence but I already am not remembering

Lit. 'Kerline is the person who in two weeks nobody will remember. But I am already not-remembering.'

([https://twitter.com/search?q=%22estou%20n%C3%A3o%20lembrando%22&src=typed\\_query&f=live](https://twitter.com/search?q=%22estou%20n%C3%A3o%20lembrando%22&src=typed_query&f=live)) Access: 06/02/23

As for Deg<sup>Neg</sup>, it is important to point out that DeClercq (2013) discusses only instances of NegP as a base-generated projection on the main *adjectival* predicate in *copular constructions*. In this paper, I am focusing on periphrases constructions and not on copular constructions.

Nevertheless, we know that BP has Deg<sup>Neg</sup> *não*, and it attaches to gradable adjectives and participles:

- (22) a. sob alegação de ser lento, *não*-confiável e parcial (Adj)  
under allegation of be slow, not.dependable and partial  
'under the allegation of being slow, untrustworthy and partial'  
(<https://books.scielo.org/id/3fz/pdf/oliveira-9788523211837-13.pdf>)  
(Campos 2009: 263, ex. (9))
- b. Ao jogar um dado, *não* viciado e numerado de 1 a 6... (Part)  
to-the cast a dice not rigged and numbered from 1 to 6  
'By throwing a dice, unrigged and numbered from 1 to 6...'  
(<https://questoes.grancursosonline.com.br/questoes-de-concursos/matematica/2263647>) Access: 2-02-23

But it is important to notice that in BP (as well as in English, Spanish, French) *não* 'non' may also attach to nouns, as in (23), a deverbal noun:

- (23) ...diante do *não*-pagamento da dívida... (N)  
before of-the non payment of-the debt  
'In face of the nonpayment of the debt...'  
(<https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/busca?q=N%C3%A3o+pagamento+da+d%C3%ADvida>)  
Access: 2-11-22

In sum, BP 'low *não*' expresses contrast/modification, and it attaches to **uninflected verbal** forms in periphrases. Can we assume 'low *não*' corresponds to a 'pure' Neg position in the clausal spine, that is, in a situation in which QP and DegP **do not project**, since these are non-gradable forms? I will propose, in this paper, that 'low *não*' in BP is an instance of Foc<sup>Neg</sup>.

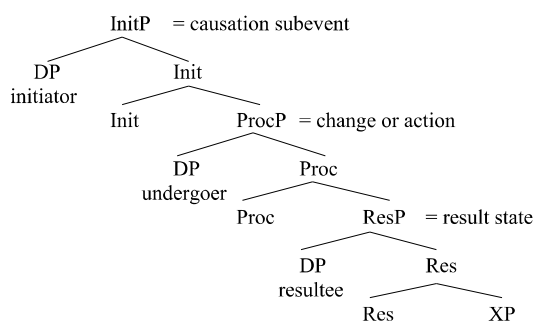
### 3 'LOW NÃO' AS FOC<sup>NEG</sup>

Ramchand and Svenonius (2014) propose a universal functional hierarchy including a strict order among 'epistemic modality' and 'tense' over 'root modality' and 'aspect', the latter over 'argument structure' and 'Aktionsart'. The lower domain is where the EventP is built, corresponding to the vP. Before the combination with EventP, there are 3 primitives that build the descriptive content of the event (Ramchand, 2008, p. 39-42):

- (i) InitP – specifies the causation subevent
- (ii) ProcP – introduces change or process
- (iii) ResP – codifies the result state of the event

Depending on the predicate, all three projections or a subset of them are involved (F&G-R, 2020, p. 753, ex. 56):

(24)



Under this view, the *no/não* that may appear in periphrases will belong either to the situation or to the border between the event and the situation domain. In the case of Spanish, F&G-R (2019, 2021) propose that what will allow negation to appear between an auxiliary and a non-finite verbal form is the

requirements imposed by the auxiliary, that is, whether it admits a non-dynamic verb as a complement, leading to an instance of an inhibited eventuality.

Now turning to a comparative view, we find differences among languages with respect to the constructions possible in BP. We have seen above that negation in between the auxiliary and the lexical verb in perfect and progressive periphrases are not possible in Spanish<sup>6</sup>, but they do occur in BP. As for other languages, I know of one non-Romance language, Lithuanian (Arkadiev, 2015), which allows negation between the auxiliary and the non-finite verb in perfect (25b), but not in progressive (25c) periphrases:

- (25) a. Miegoj-au.  
sleep-pst.1sg  
'I was sleeping / slept.' (Arkadiev, 2015, ex. (5b))  
b. Es-u            ne-miegoj-us-i.  
aux-prs.1sg neg-sleep-pst.pa-nom.sg.f  
'I have not slept.' (Arkadiev, 2015, ex. (8))  
c. Ne-miegoj-au.  
neg-sleep-pst.1sg  
'I was not sleeping / didn't sleep.' (Arkadiev, 2015, ex. (5a))

Interestingly, Arkadiev (2015) observes that when the prefix *ne* 'not' appears attached to the auxiliary in perfect periphrases it does not convey the same meaning as *when it is attached to the lexical verb*. Negation on the auxiliary is used when the speaker denies the relevance of the situation denoted by the verb phrase, whereas negation attached to the non-finite lexical verb is used in cases of an 'inhibited eventuality', that is, when there is a result of no participation in

---

<sup>6</sup> In Italian, the intervening negation is impossible as well. Zanuttini (1996: 189–190) observes that attaching the negation to non-finite lexical verb in perfect periphrasis is ungrammatical, cf. (ib).

(i) a. Maria non ha sempre pagato le tasse. '=25a, 25b' (Zanuttini, 1996, p. 190)

b. \*Maria ha sempre non pagato le tasse. intended '=25a'

English, on the other hand, allows both:

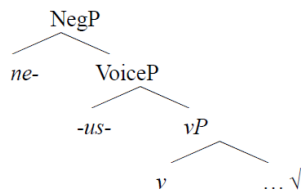
(i) a. Mary hasn't always paid taxes. (NEG > PERF > 'always')

b. Mary has always not paid taxes. (PERF > 'always' > NOT). (Zanuttini, 1996, p. 189)

an event. Arkadiev (2015) proposes a semantic analysis for the semantics of the perfect, especially when an event is involved.<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, F& G-R (2021) compare the impossibility of negation in perfect periphrases in Spanish and its possibility in Lithuanian. The authors propose that when negation follows an auxiliary verb, it is merged in a *Polarity Phrase* placed *below AspP* – both the negation and the participle are built within the event domain. The structure for the inhibited eventuality reading in Lithuanian would be as in (26):<sup>8</sup>

(26)



(F& G-R, 2021, p. 27, ex. (53b))

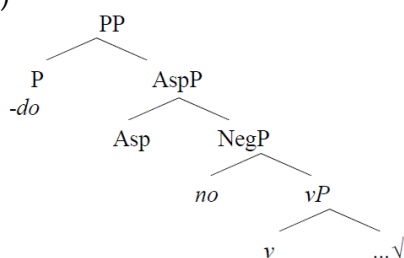
Here, the Neg head does not intervene between the heads, *v* and *-us-*, which form the participle. After head movement, the participle form (*miegoj-us-i*, see (25b)) is formed, with the result that negation precedes the participle.

The difference between Spanish (which does not allow this ‘low negation’) and Lithuanian (which does allow it) lies in the fact that in Spanish, the participle is merged *above AspP*, as proposed by F& G-R (2021), (27):

<sup>7</sup> The use of perfect periphrases in Spanish is different from BP, as is well-known (Giorgi; Pianesi, 1997, a.o.). As we will see below, there are also some restrictions in the use of perfect periphrases in BP.

<sup>8</sup> It is important to notice that F&G-R (2019) consider ‘low’ negation a case of *polarity negation*.

(27)



(F& G-R, 2021, p. 27, ex. (53a))

Hence, in Lithuanian, since participles are formed *in the event domain*, when no participation in the event is intended, negation can appear between the auxiliary and the non-finite verb. As for Spanish, Neg, which is above Asp, intervenes between the heads (*v*) and (*-do*) that are needed to form the participle, and the Head Movement Constraint (Travis, 1984) is violated – the word cannot be formed, and an affix will be stranded.

Considering progressive periphrases, I have not yet found any other language that allows the intervention of negation as is the case in BP. Therefore, more research is clearly in order.

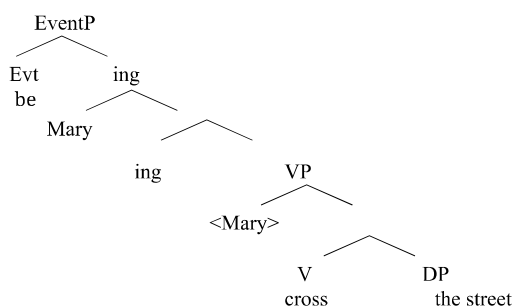
In this paper, I propose that ‘low *não*’ in BP is an instance of  $\text{Foc}^{\text{Neg}}$ , and that  $\text{FocNegP}$  is merged in the low left periphery (Belletti, 2004). In order to account for its position between the auxiliary and the lexical verb, I will assume low verb-movement in BP (Cyrino; Matos, 2005, among others).

Additionally, I assume that FocusP ( $\text{FocNegP}$ ) is merged above AspP in the language. In fact, it has been argued in the literature that FocP (and TopP) in the low left periphery are merged above AspP *in some languages* (see for example Ouwayda; Shlonsky, 2016; Jarrah; Abusalim, 2021).

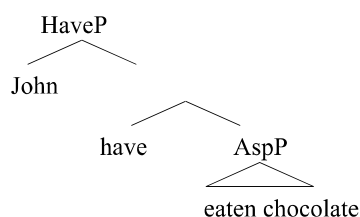
For English, Ramchand (2018), following an Event Semantics account, proposes the following structure for *progressive and perfective periphrases*, respectively:



(28) a.



b.



For BP, given the properties of perfect tenses (see Giorgi; Pianesi, 1997), I propose that not only *estar* but also *ter* are merged in the lower domain: these verbs are inside EventP (see also Cyrino, 2023, in progress). Accordingly, lexical verbs get their suffix *-ndo* and *-do*, inside the Event P.

If both *ter* 'have' and *estar* 'be' are merged inside EventP, following the rationale in Ramchand (2018), semantic properties of these two periphrases should be similar in BP (see Cyrino, 2023). In fact, that seems to be the case: Mendes (2005) compare these two periphrases, *estar+ gerúndio* and *ter+ participípio* in contemporary BP and proposes that they can be analyzed as 'variants of a variable' in Labovian terms.

In my proposal, the auxiliaries *ter* and *estar* are merged inside EventP, and then move to check temporal features in T. In BP there has been loss of lexical verb movement (see Cyrino; Matos, 2005; Cyrino, 2010, among others); the lexical verb moves only as high as Asp (see Cyrino; Matos, 2005).<sup>9</sup> Since I assume that

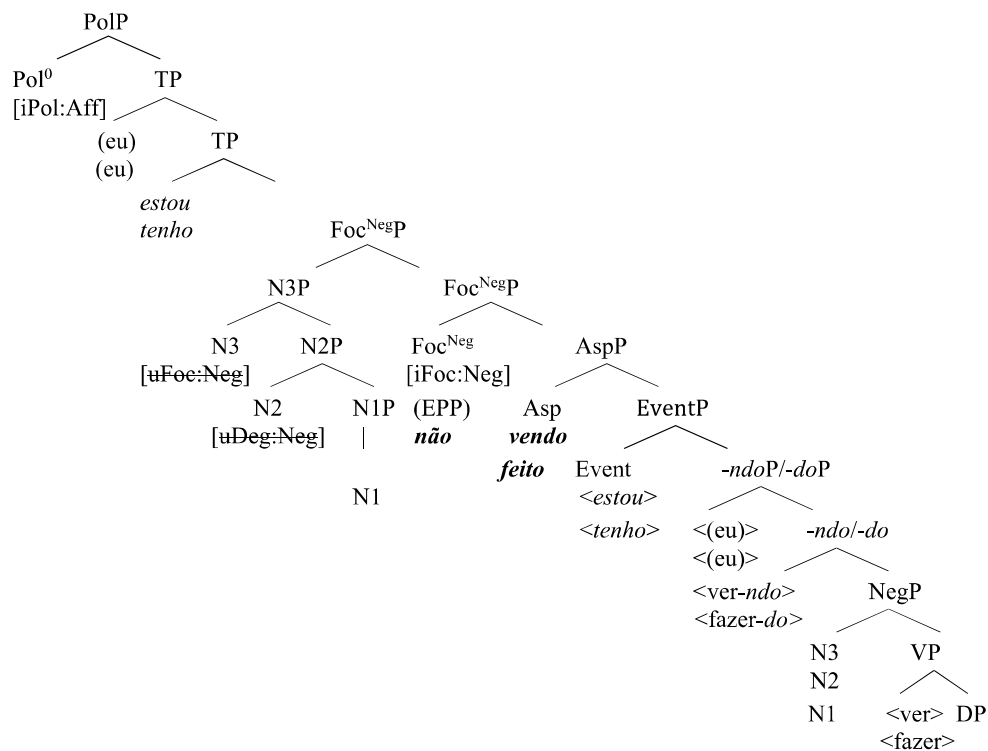
---

<sup>9</sup> I assume the recent proposals for periphrastic tenses in BP (Araújo-Adriano, 2023, Cyrino; Araújo-Adriano, 2023), whereby both auxiliaries and lexical verbs are merged inside the verbal domain.

Foc<sup>Neg</sup> is merged above AspP in BP, ‘low *não*’ remains between the auxiliary and the lexical verb both in perfect and progressive periphrases. These steps are represented in a nanosyntactic tree in (26), for the sentences in (25):

- (25) a. Eu *estou não vendo* ...  
 b. Eu *tenho não feito*...

(26)



#### 4 CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have proposed an analysis for the innovative use of negation in BP, whereby the negative marker *não* may appear between the auxiliary and the main verb in (progressive and perfective) periphrastic structures. I adopted a nanosyntactic view of four positions for negation (Declercq, 2013) and I proposed a derivation of these constructions under Ramchand (2018)’s proposal for periphrastic structures.

Even though this paper advances a proposal that brings a new way of analyzing the syntax of negation in BP, there are still other questions under investigation, namely: (i) is the *Aktionsart* of lexical verbs relevant for the possibility of ‘low *não*’ (cp inhibited eventualities)? (ii) In BP, is there an interaction of this type/position of negation with the other three positions of negation (*Não-V*, *Não-V-Não*, *V Não*)? (iii) How can progressive and aspectual periphrases (with infinitives) that allow ‘low *não*’ be analyzed for BP? (iv) Since the two periphrases, *estar*+ gerundio and *ter*+ *particípio* in contemporary BP have been analyzed as ‘variants of a variable’ in Labovian terms (Mendes, 2005), is there a relationship between that fact and the possibility of ‘low *não*’ in BP? (v) Is there a diachronic co-relation between the loss of complex predicates and the appearance of ‘low *não*’?

The answer to these questions is under investigation (Cyrino, in progress) and may bring more light to the study of negation in Romance.

## REFERENCES

- ARAÚJO-ADRIANO, P. Â. *The present tense analyticisation process in Brazilian Portuguese: a diachronic approach*. 2023. Tese (Doutorado em Linguística) – Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas.
- ARKADIEV, P. 2015. Negative events: Evidence from Lithuanian. In: ARKADIEV, P.; KAPITONOV, I.; LANDER, Y.; RAKHILINA, E.; TATEVOSOV, S. (eds.). *Donum semanticum: Opera linguistica et logica in honorem Barbarae Partee a discipulis amicisque Rossicis oblate*. Moscow: LRC Publishing, 2015. p.7–20.
- BELLETTI, A. Aspects of the low IP area. In: Rizzi, L. (ed.) *The structure of IP and CP: the cartography of syntactic structures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 16–51.
- CAVALCANTE, R. *Negação anafórica no português brasileiro: negação sentencial, negação enfática e negação de constituinte*. 2012. Tese (Doutorado em Linguística) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A negação pós-verbal no português brasileiro: análise descritiva e teórica de dialetos rurais de afro-descendentes*. 2007. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras e Linguística) – Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador.

CYRINO, S. *More on negation in Brazilian Portuguese*. Paper presented at the IV Encontro de Gramática Gerativa, Universidade Federal da Bahia, March 28-30. 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_. *More on negation in Brazilian Portuguese*. Paper presented at the History of Negation Seminar, University of Yale- University of Bologna. October 27, 2022. 2022a.

\_\_\_\_\_. *More on negation in Brazilian Portuguese*. Paper presented at the Romance Linguistics at Cambridge (RoLinC) Seminar. University of Cambridge & University of Newcastle, November 1, 2022. 2022b.

\_\_\_\_\_. On richness of tense and verb movement in Brazilian Portuguese. In: CAMACHO-TABOADA, V.; JIMÉNEZ-FERNÁNDEZ, Á.; MARTÍN-GONZÁLEZ, J.; REYES-TEJEDOR, M. (eds.). *Information Structure and Agreement*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2013. p. 297–317.

\_\_\_\_\_. On complex predicates in Brazilian Portuguese. *Ibéria- International Journal of Theoretical Linguistics*. v. 2, n. 2, 2010. <http://www.siff.us.es/iberia/index.php/ij/index>

\_\_\_\_\_. *A sintaxe da negação o português brasileiro: novas perspectivas de análise e subsídios para o estudo da história da negação*. Projeto Produtividade em Pesquisa, CNPq 303015/2022-5, in progress.

CYRINO; ARAÚJO-ADRIANO, P. Â. *On the loss of verb movement in BP and the emergence of structural gaps in auxiliary + verb constructions*. Trabalho apresentado no IV Generative Grammar Meeting. Universidade Federal da Bahia, 2023.

CYRINO; BIBERAUER, T. *Appearances are Deceptive: Jespersen's Cycle from the Perspective of the Romania Nova and Romance-based Creoles*. Paper presented at Going Romance 23. University of Nice, Nice. 2009.

CYRINO; MATOS G. Local licensers and recovering in VP ellipsis. *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* n. 4. p. 79–112, 2005.

DECLERCQ, K. *A unified syntax of negation*. PhD Dissertation, University of Gent, 2013.  
DE PAULA, D.C.F. *O sintagma verbal em português: construções perifrásticas e não-perifrásticas*. 2014. Dissertação (Mestrado em Linguística) – Universidade Estadual Paulista, São José do Rio Preto.

FÁBREGAS, A.; GONZÁLEZ-RODRÍGUEZ, R. Negation with Participles and Inhibited Events. *Linguistic Analysis*, v. 43, p. 1–2, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_. On inhibited eventualities. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, v. 38, p. 729–773, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_. Perífrasis e indutores negativos: un análisis en términos de domínios. *Onomázedin*, v. 43, p. 95–11, 2019.

GIORGI, A.; PIANESI, F. *Tense and Aspect*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

JARRAH, M.; ABUSALIM, N. In favor of the low IP area in the Arabic clause structure. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, v. 39, p.123–156, 2021.

MENDES, R. *Estar + gerúndio e ter + participípio: aspecto verbal e variação no português*. 2005. Tese (Doutorado em Linguística) – Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas.

OUWAYDA, S.; SHLONSKY, U. The wandering subjects of the Levant: “Verbal Complexes” in Lebanese Arabic as phrasal movement. *Brill’s annual of Afroasiatic languages and linguistics* v. 8, p. 136–153, 2016.

POLETTI, C. On negative doubling. *Quaderni di lavoro ASIT* v. 8 p. 57–84, 2008.

RAMCHAND, G. *Situations and syntactic structures*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_. *First phase syntax*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

RAMCHAND, G.; SVENONIUS, P. Deriving the functional hierarchy. *Language Sciences* v. 46, p. 152–174, 2014.

SCHWENTER, S. 2005. The pragmatics of negation in Brazilian Portuguese. *Lingua*, v. 115, n. 10, p. 1427–1456, 2005.

TEIXEIRA DE SOUSA, L. Three types of negation in Brazilian Portuguese. *Lingua*, v. 159, p. 27–46, 2015.

TRAVIS, L. *Parameters and effects of word order variation*. 1984. Doctoral dissertation – Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts.

VENDLER, Zeno. *Linguistics in philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967.

ZANUTTINI, R. *Negation and clausal structure: a comparative study of Romance languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. On the relevance of tense for sentential negation. In BELLETTI, A.; RIZZI, L. (eds.). *Parameters and Functional Heads: Essays in Comparative Syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. p. 181–207.

*Nota do editor:*

*Artigo submetido para avaliação em: 6 de agosto de 2023.*

*Aprovado em sistema duplo cego em: 22 de novembro de 2023.*