

# On the status of the Negative Marker *no* in logudorese Sardinian

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Although the question of Negative Polarity Items has given rise to a large amount of literature, the same cannot be said about the status of sentential negative markers such as Italian *non*, Castilian *no*, Occitan *pas*, Romanian *nu*, Catalan *no*, Portuguese *não*, etc. Few studies have been devoted to the morphosyntactic status of these markers, which are often assumed to be clitics. The aim of this work is to question the status of the logudorese negative marker *no*. As an operator which has scope over the sentence, negation may have a special status and its classification inside or outside some given category may not be so straightforward. In Molinu (1992: 144), it is argued that “la particella proclitica /non/ ‘non’ perde /-n/, ma nonostante l’incontro di due vocali non avviene l’elisione, segno che ad un livello più profondo /-n/ continua ad operare: /non ammentan nùdda/ > [no ammentana nùdda] ‘non ricordano niente’; /non éssas/ > [no éssaʃa] ‘non uscire!’”<sup>1</sup>. In other words the underlying form of the negative marker *no* would be /non/, witness *raddoppiamento sintattico* in examples such as (1) (cf. Molinu (op. cit, p.146) and Molinu (1988-89: 30)):

(1)

[no bbɛniɖi] ‘non viene’ (‘He / she doesn’t come’)

[no ffaɛɖɖaɖa] ‘non parla’ (‘He / she doesn’t speak’)

[no kkɛrene] ‘non vogliono’ (‘They don’t want’)

These are not, though, the only contexts in which the negative marker may be used. In other cases, such as (2), the negative marker /non/ shows up as *nono* [ˈnɔno]

(2)

[proitte nɔno] ‘perché no?’ (‘Why not?’)

[m á nnáɖu ɟi nɔno] (‘He / she told me that not’)

In examples such as (2), Molinu (op. cit) holds the view that “la particella negative /non/ ‘no’ (in questo caso tonica) aggiunge obbligatoriamente [-o]: [ˈnɔno], [pro’itte ˈnɔno] ‘perché no?’” (p.144).<sup>2</sup>

The respective distributions of [ˈnɔ] and [ˈnɔno] will be discussed, and it will be asked a) whether they constitute two allomorphs of one and the same linguistic entity; b) whether the first is a clitic and the second a Prosodic Word; and c) whether the properties of these markers are shared by other markers in the language.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> « The negative particle /non/ ‘not’ loses /-n/, but despite the contact of two vowels no elision occurs; this shows that at a deeper level /-n/ still is active: /non ammentan nùdda/ > [no ammentana nùdda] ‘they don’t remember anything’; /non éssas/ > [no éssaʃa] ‘don’t go out!’”.

<sup>2</sup> « The negative particle /non/ ‘not’ (in this case it is tonic) obligatorily adds [-o]: [nɔno], [proitte nɔno] ‘why not?’”.