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The syntax of emphatic negation in Modern Irish

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In this paper I argue, following proposals by Laka (1990), Aboh (2010), De Clercq (2013; 2020a), and Greco (2019; 2020a, b) among others, that negation has a dedicated position in the left periphery where it takes wide scope over the lower sentential material. This position is separate and independent from the TP-level PolP, and it can convey sentential negation on its own. As evidence for this, I present data from Modern Irish concerning an emphatic marker known as Demonic Negation from McCloskey (2009; 2018). I argue that this element is a true semantic negator rather than a metalinguistic negator, and that it is base generated in a polar projection immediately dominating FocP, independently from the lower positions where sentential negation is standardly encoded. This has a broader relevance for the general theory of the syntactic encoding of negation, since it demonstrates that negative markers can be base-generated in their highest scope position, and thus that they need not always originate in the VP-layer as proposed in recent research. Additionally, the possibility of raising a constituent to the SpecFocP to the right of the Demonic Negation is exploited to express scalar negation and Focus/constituent negation, bypassing the Irish restriction which prevents negation from being expressed below the inflectional layer (Acquaviva 1996).

1 Demonic Negation: An introduction

In this paper, I will examine the syntax of an emphatic negative construction in Modern Irish, known as Demonic Negation (henceforth, DemNeg) after McCloskey (2009; 2018), in which negation is realised by the expressions *dheamhan* or *diabhal*. These originally meant 'demon' or 'devil' and derive from the expressions *do dhemahan/don diabhal*, 'to a demon/to the devil'. The construction is exemplified below:[1]

(1)   a.   Dheamhan duine   a   bhuaileann   sé.
               demon   person   that   hits   he
               'Not one person does he hit.'

            b.   Dheamhan a   mbuaileann sé   aon   duine.
               demon   that hits   he   any   person
               'Indeed, he doesn't hit anybody.'

I propose that *dheamhan* is a semantic expression of sentential negation, and that it is base-generated in a dedicated left-peripheral position. I will also propose that it has immediate scope over FocP, and that XPs can be moved to SpecFocP to express scalar or Focus negation in combination with *dheamhan*.

My hypothesis will be that, while sentential negation may originate in an argument-like fashion as a VP-internal category in some languages, this is not a universal syntactic property of negation, and that, as proposed by Greco (2019; 2020a, b), Delfitto & Vender & Melloni (2019), and Halm & Huszár (2021), it is possible for it to be base-generated in its scope position.

The peculiarities of the syntactic realisation of Irish negation offer several insights into the analysis of left-peripheral negation as presented in previous literature (cf. §2), as does the expressive origin of the Irish emphatic negator. DemNeg is the result of the syntacticisation of an idiomatic negative expression, which suggests that its position was at a certain point identified with that of a dedicated projection in the left periphery, a negative or polar one of which *dheamhan* was interpreted as a realisation. Moreover, while pragmatically DemNeg is a 'special' negation in the sense of being emphatic, semantically it is equivalent to ordinary sentential negation both in its licensing capabilities and, especially, in its potential interpretations, which cover the whole semantic range that is available to standard negators (denial, scalar/focus negation, etc.) and not just a specialised, expletive, or metalinguistic use as an 'external negator' (cf. Horn

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[1] The Irish examples are constructed by me, if not attributed to a different source. The other Irish examples in this paper are taken from the *Gaois* Corpus of Contemporary Irish (G) (https://www.gaois.ie/en/corpora/monolingual/), the Historical Irish Corpus (CSnaG) and the *Foclóir Mháirtín Uí Chadhain* of the Royal Irish Academy (FMUC) (http://corpas.ria.ie and https://focloiruichadhain.ria.ie), the Doegen Records Web Project (D) (https://doegen.ie), and the *Foclóir* corpus (F) (http://corpas.focloir.ie/). The geographical provenance of the examples is indicated in the text when the corpora report it. The glosses of examples from other sources were occasionally adapted to the glossing standards of the present work. Earlier versions of this work were presented at IGG47, GLOW45, and WCCFL40, for which cf. also D'Antuono (in press).

1985; 1989). Finally, its alternation between a Bare and a DemNeg + XP construction provides an insight into the relation between negation and Focus in the CP domain. This relation is motivated semantically in the first place: negation and Focus (Contrastive Focus especially) are functionally akin due to their complementary properties (cf. Delfitto & Fiorin 2014 on the complementary properties of linguistic—and not just logic—negation): both operators split some domain in half, negation by opposing truth and falsehood due to the Law of Non-Contradiction, and Focus by opposing an alternative to all others. The composition of negation and Focus allows them to derive, in addition to the ordinary polarity-reversing reading of negation, scalar and contrastive readings, as will be illustrated for the Irish case.

The paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, I present and compare derivational and 'peripheral' approaches to the syntax of negation, to illustrate that it is possible for negation to be base-generated in its final (sentential or propositional) scope position. In Section 3, I lay out the theoretical approach to Irish clausal syntax, verb movement, and Ā-dependencies that will be assumed in this paper. In Section 4, I provide a description of the Irish negative system, discussing Acquaviva's (1996) theory of sentential negation. In Section 5, I provide a syntactic and semantic analysis of DemNeg in relation to the standard expression of negation in the language and consider the broader theoretical implications of DemNeg with respect to the syntactic encoding of sentential negation. Section 6 concludes.

2 The syntactic elusiveness of negation

One of the most striking aspects of negation is the variability of its syntactic encoding, both cross-linguistically and, sometimes, within the same language. What is most striking is that the logic counterpart of negation is embodied in the relatively straightforward Boolean negative connective ¬. Conversely, linguistic negation can be encoded on several lexical categories (adverbs, indefinites, verbs) and in several syntactic positions along the clausal spine, a multiplicity of possible syntactic and categorial expressions for negation which is widespread cross-linguistically (cf. Bernini & Ramat 1996). This one-to-many encoding is both intriguing and problematic. With respect to the several syntactic positions where it can be realised and to Moro's (2016) observation that negation must be lexically realised and cannot be substituted by syntactic operations like movement (cf. also Horn 1989), Poletto (2020) notes that for this reason negation represents a theoretical problem especially for cartographic approaches, which assume the 'one head, one feature' principle.

Several solutions have been proposed for this hypertrophic syntactic encoding of negation. Zanuttini (1997), who analyses the expression of negation in Northern Italian dialects, individuates four possible projections where negation can be encoded, each with a different semantic makeup and function. The sequence of negative projections in Zanuttini's (1997) work reaches down from above the TP into the aspectual layer, as exemplified in this structure from Poletto (2008) (slightly modified):

(2) $[_{\text{NegP1}}$ *non* $[_{\text{TP1}}$ V + $_{\text{Agr}}$ $[_{\text{NegP2}}$ *pas* $[_{\text{TP2}}$ $[_{\text{AdvP}}$ already] $[_{\text{NegP3}}$ *nen* $[_{\text{Asp perf}}$ $V_{\text{past part}}$ $[_{\text{Asp gen/progr}}$ $[_{\text{AdvP}}$ always] $[_{\text{NegP4}}$ *no*]]]]]]]]]

Zanuttini's sequence is reprised by Poletto (2008; 2017), who proposes that the different negative markers are generated in a VP-internal sequence of NegPs, and later distributed in Zanuttini's four NegP projections in a doubling process. She further notes that the relation between the different negative markers and their positions is semantically and etymologically motivated: NegP4 corresponds to Focus negators (like answer particles), NegP3 originates from negative indefinites, NegP2 from minimisers, and NegP1 from scalar negation. De Clercq (2013; 2020b) advances a similar hypothesis in a nanosyntactic framework, in which negation is likewise semantically encoded in a low NegP, with a 'nanospine' composed of four different negative specifications which are subsequently realised in corresponding positions along the main clausal spine. These latter theories try to reduce the syntactic variety of negation to a unitary semantic encoding, and, crucially, seem to individuate the origin of negation in the argumental or eventive layer, close to VP. Sentential negation is thus *derived* according to Poletto and De Clercq: movement operations allow VP-internal negation to reach its sentential scope position (TP or PolP depending on the specific framework), in any case scoping above the finite verb where the event is encoded, as proposed by Acquaviva (1996) (cf. §4).

The idea of a low syntactic origin for negation is thus one that has been explored by many, over the course of many years. Nonetheless, another not necessarily antagonistic view of negation was developed during those same years, holding that negation, especially sentential or clausal negation, has a dedicated position in the left periphery which it must reach for sentential scope to obtain. This idea, which can be traced back at least to Laka (1990), was also advanced by proponents of the VP-internal origin theory, like De Clercq (2013; 2020a). Kramer & Rawlins (2011) also propose a left-peripheral ΣP/PolP, which hosts answer particles, and an association between negation and CP, especially with respect to quantifier scope, is explored by Potsdam (2013). More recently, Greco (2019; 2020a; b) proposed that expletive negation, and in particular an Italian incarnation of expletive negation participating in a marked construction which he names Surprise Negation, is base-generated in the higher left periphery, selecting a FocP whose Specifier is filled by movement of the TP. Greco's view is particularly important since, as noted above, he concludes that negative markers can be generated in their highest scope position and that the scope of high negators is not necessarily a derived one. Greco (2020a: 805) attributes the following structure to Surprise Negation, in which the whole TP moves to the Specifier of the FocP and the expletive negator *non* occupies a C position:

(3)   E   non   mi   è   scesa   da-l   treno Maria?!
        and   EXPL.NEG 1SG.DAT is   descended from-the   train Maria
        '*Mary* got off the train!'
        $[_{\text{CP}}$ E non $[_{\text{FocP}}$ $[_{\text{TP}}$ mi è scesa dal treno Maria] [Foc°] [… t_{TP} …]]]?!

One of the most unequivocal statements of this view comes from Aboh's (2010) study of Gbe negation. Aboh notes that Gbe negation is expressed by a left-peripheral particle which is adjacent to FocP, where Focus particles in turn occur. Aboh thus proposes to expand the cartography of the left periphery by adding a NegP which is situated above FinP and below FocP (Aboh 2010: 133):

(4)   [_{ForceP} [_{Force°} ɖɔ̀ [_{InterP} [_{Inter°} à [_{TopP} [_{Top°} àjí [_{FocP} [_{Foc°} wè [_{NegP} [_{Neg°} ǎ [_{FinP} [_{Fin°} ní[XP]]]]]]]]]]]]

Successive roll-up movement of these functional projections derives the following surface structure, in which the order of the grammatical particles is reversed (Aboh 2010: 132):

(5)   [É   ɖù   nú]   ǎ   wè   à?
        3SG eat thing NEG FOC INTER
        'Is it that s/he has not eaten?'

Though Aboh's analysis differs from Greco's in the position of the negative element (which heads its own NegP and follows FocP), it indicates that Gbe languages express negation in a left-peripheral functional projection, which in turn means that the negative particle *ǎ* is base-generated in its scope position. As can be seen from this brief overview, the question of the syntactic encoding of negation is far from settled. While the VP-internal origin theory is intriguing and is supported by an impressive research output, it is not yet clear whether negation can be taken to originate in a single syntactic-semantic position in the clause.

3 Background on Irish morphosyntax

In this section I will lay out my assumptions regarding the derivation of Irish finite clauses (§3.1) and the realisation of Ā-dependencies (§3.2), to serve as a background for the analysis of standard and Demonic negation.

3.1 A brief overview of Irish clausal syntax

Irish is noted for its VSO order and for its rich system of complementisers. For the sake of brevity, I will start with the description of a negative sentence:[2]

(6)   Ní   bhuail-eann   sé   aon   duine.
        COMP.NEG hit-PRS.HAB   he   any   person
        'He doesn't hit anyone.'

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[2] For the same reasons of brevity, I will have to leave out of this discussion the description of Irish non-finite negation.

The element responsible for encoding sentential negation in (6) is *ní*. According to McCloskey (1996b), *ní* is a negative complementiser, which is realised on C° (cf. also Moscati (2006)). This means that the standard syntactic position for the expression of sentential negation (and the only possible one) is left-peripheral.

I will adopt McCloskey's (2017) recent analysis of Irish clause structure, according to which its VSO order is derived by movement of the finite verb to a PolP. The structure for (6) is thus as follows:

(7) $[_{CP}$ Ní $[_{PolP} [_{Pol°}$ bhuaileann$_i]$ $[_{TP}$ sé$_j$ t_i $[_{vP}$ t_j t_i $[_{VP}$ t_i $[_{DP}$ aon duine$]]]]]]]$

The adoption of the structure in (7) has several motivations. Firstly, as noted by McCloskey (2017), there are two possible subject positions in Irish. One is reserved for indefinite subjects, which can appear below *v*P peripheral adverbs (8a) and is characteristic of existential constructions, and the other is higher and reserved for definite subjects (8b):

(8)   a. Ní   raibh *riamh* diospóireacht fá   na   nithe   seo.
            COMP.NEG was   ever   debate   about the   things   this
            'There was never any debate about these things.'
                        (Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, Liam Lillis Ó Laoire, Seán Súilleabháin (eds.), *Pobal na Gaeltachta*, Spiddal: Cló Ua Iar-Chonnacht, 2000, 187)

        b. Ní   raibh sé *riamh* in aer chomh garbh.
            COMP.NEG was   he ever   in air   so   rough
            'He had never been in such a rough air.'
   (G, Dermot Somers, *Ar Muir is ar Sliabh*, Dublin: Cois Life, 2009, 6)

Thus, indefinite subjects do not move out of *v*P, while definite subjects move to the canonical subject position in SpecTP.

The second relevant aspect of the structure in (7) concerns verb movement. If in all cases the subject never moves higher than SpecTP, one must account for the fact that the finite verb is always higher than the subject. Crucially, McCloskey (2017) proposes that the landing site of the finite verb is a polarity phrase, akin to Laka's (1990) ΣP. Consider the following example:

(9)   Mur'   dtéigh-inn   agus iad   caill-eadh, mhuirbh-feadh siad mé.
        if.NEG go-COND.1SG and them lose-NFIN   kill-COND   they me
        'If I were not to go and they were to lose, they would kill me.'
                        (Eoghan Ó Dhomhnaill, *Scéal Hiúdaí Sheáinín*, Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1940, 132)

Mura is a negative conditional complementiser realised in C° (a negative version of *má*, 'if'). From that position, it scopes over both conjuncts in the sentence above. Nonetheless, while the conditional import applies to both conjuncts, the negative import only applies to the first one: (9) means 'if I don't go and they *do* win', not 'if I don't go and they *do not* win', which would be expected if the negative component of *mura* had the same scope of its conditional component. For this reason, McCloskey (2017) proposes that negation is realised in a position that is situated below C° in Irish, and that this position is a PolP. Negative complementisers are in turn the result of Agree between an [iNeg] feature on Pol°, which is identified as the locus of polarity and hence of negation in Irish, and a [uNeg] feature on C°. PolP is necessarily lower than CP and higher than TP. Since we also know that the verb is in turn higher than TP, it follows that Pol° is the best candidate as the landing site of the finite verb.[3] The derivation of an Irish finite clause like (6) goes as follows:[4]

(10)

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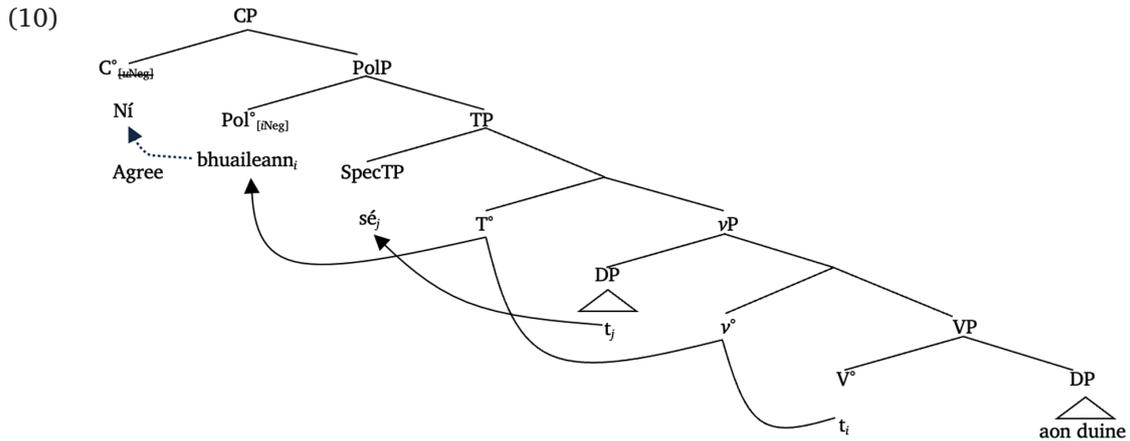
[3] There are several arguments proposed by McCloskey (2017) and Bennett & Elfner & McCloskey (2019) that corroborate this position. One is related to verbal fragment answers to *yes-no* questions (or 'Responsive Ellipsis', as the author(s) call it). These are demonstrated both in English and in Irish to target TP, which is argued to be the complement of PolP in both languages. The other is related to the expression of Verum Focus in Irish, which is marked by stress on the (clitic) subject pronoun due to its incorporation to the verb in Pol° (the real target of Verum Focus accent). Since there is no space for a detailed illustration of these facts, I refer the interested reader to the full treatment in the literature.

[4] McCloskey's (2017) proposal is slightly simplified here, as he also claims that there is a second TP above PolP where a limited set of gnomic, past, and conditional distinctions is expressed. This higher TP is the position occupied by the copula (cf. (22), (24)), as well as the position of the tense markers that are adjacent to complementisers, as exemplified below:

(i)   Ní-*or*   bhuail   sé   aon   duine.
      COMP.NEG-PST   hit.PST   he   any   person
      'He did not hit anybody.'

For simplicity, I will omit this higher TP in the structures in the next pages, as it plays no role in my argumentation.

3.2 Irish 'relativising' complementisers

The second salient aspect of Irish syntax is the realisation of Ā-dependencies. Irish morphologically distinguishes between movement and resumption. In the case of Ā-movement to the left periphery, the complementiser *aL* is employed. The letter L stands for 'lenition', and the complementiser is so glossed because it lenites the initial consonant of the following verb (11a). In the case of resumption, the homophonous complementiser *aN*—where N stands for 'nasalisation'—is used, which nasalises the initial consonant of the following verb (11b). The negative marker *ní* is a member of the class of complementisers across which no Ā-dependency takes place. While in positive matrix sentences this position is not realised, in positive subordinate clauses it is realised as *go,* as exemplified in (11c). This class of complementisers is employed in complementation.

(11)   a.   Duine$_i$ a   bhuail-eann sé t_i.
            person *aL* hit-PRS.HAB he
            'A person that he hits.'

        b.   Duine$_i$ a   mbuail-eann sé é$_i$.
            person *aN* hit-PRS.HAB he him
            'A person whom he hits (him).'

        c.   Sílim   go   mbuail-eann sé daoine.
            I.think COMP hit-PRS.HAB he people
            'I think he hits people.'

McCloskey (2002; 2009), proposes the following structures for (11a) and (11b) respectively:

(12)   a.   Duine$_j$ [$_{CP}$ aL [$_{PolP}$ [$_{Pol°}$ bhuaileann$_i$] [$_{TP}$ sé t_i [$_{vP}$ t_i [$_{VP}$ t_i t_j]]]]]]
            person   *aL*   hits   he

        b.   Duine$_j$ [$_{CP}$ *Op*$_j$ aN   [$_{PolP}$ [$_{Pol°}$ mbuaileann$_i$] [$_{TP}$ sé t_i [$_{vP}$ t_i [$_{VP}$ t_i é$_j$]]]]]]
            person   *aN*   hits   he   him
            'A person whom he hits.'

This is the model I will assume throughout this paper and which can be summarised in this fashion following McCloskey (2002): (i) a C° whose specifier is filled by Internal Merge is realised as *aL*; (ii) a C° whose specifier is realised by External Merge is realised as *aN*; (iii) a C° whose specifier is unfilled is realised as *go*. In (12a), *duine* moves to the left periphery, which triggers the appearance of the *aL* complementiser. In (12b), *duine* is base-generated in the left periphery, and the resumptive chain between it and the pronoun *é* triggers the appearance of the *aN* complementiser.

    McCloskey assumes that in the *aN* case the relation between the element at the top of the dependency and that at the bottom is mediated by a null operator. This move has to do with

the necessity of explaining some cases of 'mixed chains' instantiating a type of successive cyclic movement in which a clause headed by an *aL* complementiser dominates another headed by the *aN* complementiser. These cases are problematic, since the element that triggers the appearance of the *aL* complementiser cannot have moved from its base position in the clause headed by *aN* (since this form of the complementiser excludes that movement has taken place). The problematic structure is exemplified below:

(13) Duine   a   cheapann Seán a   mbuaileann Liam   é.
      person *aL* thinks   Seán *aN* hits   Liam   him
      'Someone who Seán thinks Liam hit.'

This problem is easily solved by proposing that what moves is not the element at the top of the chain, but rather the null operator, which mediates the relation between the various elements that participate in the chain itself, as illustrated below, where the resumptive *é* agrees with *Op*, and this later moves to the Specifier of the higher CP headed by *aL*:

(14) Duine [$_{CP}$ *Op*$_i$ *aL* [$_{PolP}$ cheapann [$_{TP}$ Seán … [$_{CP}$ *t*$_i$ *aN* [$_{PolP}$ mbuaileann [$_{TP}$ Liam [$_{VP}$ *é*$_i$]]]]]]]]

The fact that nothing moves in the *aN* case means that Irish resumptive pronouns can be used when movement is barred by island effects, as noted by McCloskey (1979) and Oda (2012):

(15) a. *an   fear   a   phóg   mé   an   bhean   a   phós.
         the   man   *aL* kissed I   the woman   *aL* married
         'the man who I kissed the woman who married'   (McCloskey 1979: 30)

      b. an   fear   a-r   phóg   mé   an   bhean   a   phós   sé.
         the   man   *aN*-PST   married I   the woman   *aL* married he
         'the man who I kissed the woman who *he* married'   (Oda 2012: 26)

It must be noted, though, that the form of the complementiser is not merely associated with the 'passing' of the element that moves across it. In fact, McCloskey (2002) associates each of the lexical forms of Irish complementisers with a specific featural makeup: a complementiser which bears both an Operator feature and an EPP-feature is realised as *aL*, while *aN* is taken to bear an EPP-feature, which requires its Specifier to be filled, but not an Operator feature which would be associated with movement. Finally, *go* is the lexical realisation for a complementiser that has neither feature—that is, its Specifier must not be filled to satisfy the EPP and, consequently, no Operator feature is there to trigger movement to that position. In this way the form of complementisers and the movement—or lack thereof—of a constituent across it receives a unified featural explanation (cf. **Table 1**).

	go	*aN*	*aL*
EPP-feature	✗	✓	✓
Op-feature	✗	✗	✓

Table 1: Featural specifications of Irish complementiser forms according to McCloskey (2002).

From what was said so far, it should come as no surprise that embedding and relativising complementisers are in complementary distribution:

(16) An duine (*go) a (*go) bhuaileann sé.
    the person COMP *aL* COMP hits   he
    'The person he hits.'

This fact has important consequences for the syntax of negation, too. These so-called relativising complementisers have negative, past, and negative past forms, which are identical with those of embedding complementisers of the *go* type, as exemplified below:[5]

(17) a. Síl-im   nach   mbuaileann sé daoine.
        think-PRS.1SG COMP.NEG hits   he people
        'I think he does not hit people.'

   b. An duine nach   mbuaileann sé.
        the person *aL*.NEG hits   he
        'The person he does not hit.'

We can draw some conclusions about the expression of sentential negation in Irish from the fact that embedding and relativising complementisers are in complementary distribution. We never get a hypothetical 'negative marker + complementiser' sequence like the following:

(18) An duine (*ní)   a (*ní)   bhuaileann sé.
    the person COMP.NEG *aL* COMP.NEG hits   he

This is of course expected: if negation is of the same category as complementisers, and if *go* and *a* complementisers are in complementary distribution, it follows that 'negation' in Irish cannot occur analytically, that is, independently of embedding or relativising complementisers.

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[5] Greco (2020a: 817) supports his proposal of a C-level position for negation citing these Irish negative complementisers.

Summing up, standard sentential negation in Irish is invariably realised on complementisers, never as an independent projection. Since both embedding complementisers of the *go* type and relativising complementisers of the *aL/aN* type head their projection CP, it follows that negation is also realised as a head in Irish—or rather *on* a head. But apart from this syncretic quality, Irish sentential negation has other interesting syntactic and semantic properties, which I illustrate in the next section.

4 Irish Negation

Acquaviva (1996: 305) notes that "negation is expressed only once, on the inflected verb"[6] and, additionally, "in Irish whenever NegP is projected, Neg° must be lexically realized"[7] (Acquaviva 1996: 307). In McCloskey's (2017) updated terms, the position in which negation is semantically encoded is slightly lower than C°, in PolP. *Ní* is thus not a 'free', non-configurational negative marker, which can be realised in various clausal positions, but an expression of sentential negation which is syntactically fixed:

(19)   *Buaileann sé ní   duine, ach asal.
         hits   he NEG person but donkey
         'He hits not a person, but a donkey.'

Moreover, Acquaviva argues that sentential negation involves the projection of a NegP which expresses the Boolean negative connective ¬, but this is not a variable-binding operator in itself; rather, "the (higher) inflectional node in a clause is associated with an abstract existential operator, which by default closes the variables which are left open in its scope" through existential closure (Acquaviva 1996: 297). The author goes on to claim that the Boolean operator ¬ merges with the existential operator and that the resulting negated existential acts as an unselective binder and performs existential closure of the variables in its scope (Heim 1982), including that of the event position associated with the predicate (Higginbotham 1985).[8] Acquaviva (1996: 298, (67)) gives the following definition of sentential negation:

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[6] Acquaviva's phrasing can be confusing out of its context: 'on the inflected verb' here refers to the fact that in Irish (negative) complementisers, and pronominal subjects when present, form a prosodic unit with the finite verb (the so-called verbal complex).

[7] This empirical generalisation is effectively exceptionless: Irish lacks a paradigm of negative concord items, let alone negative quantifiers and, as will be discussed in the next pages, it cannot express constituent negation/Focus negation (i.e., for constituent negation a left-peripheral negator must be merged in the left periphery and the negated constituent must be moved to its right in a cleft sentence, cf. (47)). For monotone decreasing quantifiers, cf. the next pages. The only exception would be affixal negation, which Irish can express below the left periphery (e.g., *oiriúnach*, 'appropriate', *mí-oiriúnach*, 'inappropriate'). Nonetheless, this only amounts to the projection of a NegP in an approach like De Clercq's (2013; 2020b), where negation originates in the argumental/eventive layer.

[8] An anonymous reviewer notes that to equate linguistic negation with the Boolean operator ¬ is problematic for all those cases in which no truth value is involved, as in the case of questions, imperatives, and possibly, I believe, of all

(20)   Sentential negation = closure of the event variable by a negated existential operator

Since according to Acquaviva the projection of NegP is always associated with the presence of the abstract existential operator in the inflectional node, and since whenever NegP is projected in Irish Neg° must always be lexically realised, the author's conclusion is that the only truly negative sentences are those in which an overt negative marker (i.e., a negative complementiser) is present. Coupled with the requirement that negation be expressed only once, this predicts the absence in Irish of other expressions of negation that might be found below the inflectional node, like negative quantifiers, a prediction that is borne out. Moreover, this view makes an interesting point about the negativity of downward entailment: Acquaviva (1996: 288) notes that what other languages may express with a positive sentence and monotone decreasing quantifier (like *few* in the English translation below) is expressed as a full negative sentence in Irish:

(21)   Ní-l   mórán cairde   aige.
        COMP.NEG-be.PRS many   friends at.him
        'He has *few* friends.'

Also as a way of accounting for the numerous syntactic and semantic similarities between negation proper and monotone decreasing quantifiers (Klima 1964; Ladusaw 1979), Acquaviva claims that the reason for this Irish behaviour is that both with negation and with monotone decreasing quantifiers a NegP is projected, which in Irish must be lexically realised. In fact, such downward-entailing elements as those meaning *scarce*(*ly*) or *hardly* are only grammatical in clefts:

(22)   a. Is   fánach   a   thagann sé.
            COP   scarce   *aL* comes   he
            'He scarcely ever comes.'

        b. *Tagann   sé   fánach.
            comes   he   scarce

According to Acquaviva (1996), there are two reasons for this. Firstly, he proposes, in line with the literature, that the Irish copula (*is* in (22a)) does not come with an open event position, differently from lexical verbs (cf. Adger & Ramchand 2003, who make the same point for Scottish Gaelic). This breaks the association between sentential negation and the event variable:

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those propositions that are by themselves nonveridical regardless of the presence of negation. I absolutely agree with the reviewer and as specified below I do not espouse Acquaviva's view on this point. Nonetheless, his analysis hinges on the 'compositional' nature of sentential negation as a combination of ¬ and ∃ and it is impossible to illustrate Acquaviva's theory without stating this point.

since no event is present (in the higher clause where *fánach* is), NegP is not projected. Secondly, the ungrammaticality of (22b) follows from the impossibility of 'negation identification' (i.e., concord) between sentential negation and monotone decreasing quantifiers, a cross-linguistically valid restriction (here exemplified with Italian *a malapena*, slightly adapting the author's example):

(23) Gianni   non ha   a malapena tre   amici.
      Gianni   not has   scarcely   three   friends
      'It is not the case that Gianni has scarcely three friends.' but '#Gianni has scarcely three friends.'

This means that, for independent reasons, even if *fánach* caused NegP to be projected in (22b), the result would be syntactically and semantically ill-formed. On the other hand, the fact that NegP is not projected in (22b) despite the presence of a monotone decreasing quantifier violates the Irish condition that whenever NegP is projected Neg° must be lexically realised. The only option left is to express monotone decreasing quantifiers in positive clefts, which are not eventive and in which no NegP is projected.[9] By the same token, Irish lacks a paradigm of negative quantifiers like the German *kein* or *nie-* series, which would amount to a subperipheral syntactic realisation of negation. Its only way of realising a negative dependency is represented by polarity sensitivity, which is generally assumed to involve a form of semantic, not syntactic licensing,[10] and thus not to imply the projection of a NegP below PolP as in negative quantification. For this reason, all Irish negative indefinites are polarity items. These facts are crucial, because they disqualify Irish for a bottom-up analysis of the derivation of negation, leaving only the top-down, left-peripheral analysis as a working solution for the language.

While Acquaviva's description of the syntax and semantics of Irish negation is very convincing, it has some problematic aspects. To begin with, while it is true that negation is always sentential in Irish (a concise if brutal way of summarising Acquaviva's generalisation), the presence of sentential negative morphology is not always associated with an event in Irish. Acquaviva himself notes that there is wide agreement in the literature on the non-eventive nature of the so-called Irish 'copula', a predicator which nonetheless does have a negative form—and crucially, as exemplified in (24), not necessarily as the result of the presence of an event position in a lower clause, as Acquaviva (1996: 309) suggests as a solution for this problem:

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[9] More recently, Acquaviva's hypothesis that monotone decreasing quantifiers are elements that project a NegP has received theoretical and typological corroboration from the nanosyntactic analysis of quantifiers for *many* and *few* conducted by De Clercq (2017), who argues that across languages the structure of quantifiers corresponding to *few* (what the author calls 'negative Q-words') includes a NegP, which is overtly realised by the (standard) sentential negator in some languages.

[10] For an analysis of this claim—which does not mean that syntax does not play any role in facilitating or hindering polarity licensing—cf. Dočekal (2020).

(24) Ní   dochtúir   mé.
      COP.NEG   doctor   me
      'I am not a doctor.'

Another possible problem concerns the idea that Irish can only express negation in a single position associated with the highest inflectional node, and that there cannot be any other true expression of semantic negation in the clause. This does not follow from Acquaviva's generalisation: that all Irish negation is sentential does not mean that there can be only one position or only one way in which it is realised.[11] As anticipated in §1, there is indeed reason to believe that the expression of negation in Irish may not only be lower than C°, but also higher. This idea will be illustrated in the next pages, which will be devoted to the study of Demonic Negation.

5 The syntax and semantics of Demonic Negation

For reference, I repeat example (1) below, with slightly updated glosses:

(1)   a. Dheamhan duine   a   bhuaileann sé.
          demon   person aL   hits   he
          'Not one person does he hit.'

      b. Dheamhan a   mbuaileann sé aon duine.
          demon   aN   hits   he any person
          'Indeed, he doesn't hit anybody.'

DemNeg only occurs in the left periphery, as expected of an Irish negator. Any use in another position is impossible:[12]

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[11] To be fair to Acquaviva, he never explicitly rejects this possibility, but he implicitly excludes it by saying that negation is only expressed once *on the inflected verb*, i.e., on complementisers.

[12] With respect to embedding, generally speaking DemNeg is a root phenomenon. Yet, at least some predicates can take a Demonic clause as a complement, a fact noted both by Ó Siadhail (1980: 55, ex. (65)):

(i)   Shaoil   mé dheamhan lá   iomráidh   a   bhí   agat   air.
      think.PST I   demon   day consideration.GEN aL   be.PST at.2SG   on.3MSG
      'I think you didn't give it a single day of consideration.'
                        (Eoghan Ó Domhnaill, *Scéal Hiúdaí Sheáinín*, Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1940, 263)

and by McCloskey (2018):

(ii) Feic-fidh tú   dheamhan beo   a   bheas   mé ráithe   ó   inniu.
      see-FUT   you demon   alive aL   be.FUT.REL I   three.months from today
      'You'll see that I won't be bloody alive three months from now.'
                        (Máirtín Ó Cadhain, *Athnuachan*, Dublin: Coiscéim, 1995, 52)

(25) *Bhuail sé dheamhan duine (ach asal).
     hit   he demon   person but donkey
    'He hits no person/not a person(, but a donkey).'

DemNeg comes in two forms, both of which involve the formation of an Ā-dependency: (1a) is what I will call 'DemNeg + XP'. In this construction, the negator is followed by a constituent, which can be a noun, a predicative adjective, an adverb, a PP, etc. (cf. Ó Siadhail 1980; 1989). In the construction in (1b), which I call 'Bare DemNeg', the negator appears on its own in the left periphery, and a full clause follows it.

One aspect of the two sentences above is particularly important in light of what was said in §3.2. When *dheamhan* is followed by another constituent, the relativising complementiser is in the *aL* form that is triggered by movement, as evidenced by the lenition of the initial consonant of the following verb. When *dheamhan* occurs on its own to the right of the complementiser, this takes the form *aN*, as is made evident by the nasalisation of the initial consonant of the verb. This poses an apparent problem. The *aN* complementiser is associated with base-generation, the *aL* one with movement of a constituent to the left periphery. This seems to suggest that the constructions in (1a) and (1b) are structurally different. What motivates this difference? The related question, then, concerns what it is that moves in the *aL* case. Clearly, what distinguishes the *aL* case from the *aN* one is only the presence of the constituent after *dheamhan*. Movement to the left periphery takes place in that case, but not in the *aN* construction.

McCloskey proposes in McCloskey (2009, 2018) that *dheamhan* is a negative marker that is base-generated in the specifier of CP, and that the following constituent moves to a second specifier of the same projection, as also hinted at in McCloskey (2011). Since according to Richards (2001) second specifiers appear below first specifiers, the relevant facts follow: *dheamhan* is base-generated in the first specifier of CP, which *per se* motivates the occurrence of *aN* in the Bare DemNeg case, while subsequent movement of the XP to the second specifier motivates the occurrence of *aL* in the second case:

(26) $[_{CP}$ $[_{Spec1}$ *dheamhan*$]$ $[_{Spec2}$ *duine*$_i]$ *aL* $[_{PolP}$ *bhuaileann* $[_{TP}$ *sé* T°$[_{VP}$ $[_{DP}$ t$_i]$ V° … $]]]]$

Though it solves the problem of complementiser morphology, (26) cannot be accepted into a cartographic analysis, since it posits the existence of multiple specifiers rather than proposing that different projections are involved in multiple realisations of left-peripheral elements.

While observing that the matter deserves further investigation, McCloskey also notes that the conditions under which this phenomenon is possible may be similar to those for 'embedded root phenomena', which means that the possibility of embedding DemNeg is in any case not free or unrestricted.

For this reason, I also adopt a slightly different version of McCloskey's analysis of Ā-dependencies and propose that elements that appear at the top of these chains are not in the specifier of C°, but rather in a separate projection, which I label FP for now.

(27) a. $[_{FP1}$ dheamhan $[_{FP2}$ F2° $[_{FinP}$ aN $[_{PolP}$ $[_{Pol'}$ mbuaileann$_i$] $[_{TP}$ sé t_i $[_{vP}$ t_i $[_{VP}$ t_i $[_{DP}$ duine]]]]]]]]]

   b. $[_{FP1}$ dheamhan $[_{FP2}$ [duine]$_j$ F2° $[_{FinP}$ aL $[_{PolP}$ $[_{Pol'}$ bhuaileann$_i$] $[_{TP}$ sé t_i $[_{vP}$ t_i $[_{VP}$ t_i t_j]]]]]]]]

Both in (27a) and (27b), *dheamhan* is base-generated in a left-peripheral functional projection FP1 (I remain agnostic as to whether it sits in its specifier of in its head position).[13] In (27b), the XP moves to another left-peripheral projection FP2, causing the appearance of the *aL* complementiser.

Nonetheless, this proposal has the disadvantage of leaving the adjacency between *dheamhan* and the XP unexplained, which calls for a specific analysis since, under (27b), they do not form a constituent (a predicament which is less pressing in McCloskey's analysis). This latter prediction is hard to test, though: the fixed position of the demonic complex means that most constituency tests cannot be performed, and the adjacency of *dheamhan* and of the XP is predicted both by the present analysis, and by one for which they form a single constituent. The very existence of Bare DemNeg (i.e., the fact that *dheamhan* is independent from the presence of a following constituent) seems to support the idea that the two components are separate phrases, but it does not constitute positive evidence.

As a way to get around the difficulty of applying movement tests to DemNeg, an anonymous reviewer suggests that the non-identity effects that are examined by Adger & Ramchand (2005) to demonstrate their theory that Ā-dependencies in Irish and Scottish Gaelic are always base-generated, i.e., that neither language has Ā-movement, could be used as a sort of indirect

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[13] An anonymous reviewer notes that, apart from not changing the analysis of DemNeg in relevant ways, for the cross-linguistic validity of the 'theory of high negation' it is not necessary, or even desirable, to establish whether high negators are merged in the head or Specifier of the relevant projection. Moreover, from a cartographic point of view, it is in principle possible for languages to realise the left-peripheral negative marker either as an adverbial (an XP) in the Specifier of the projection or as a particle in the head position. While in Zanuttini's (1997) understanding the nature of the NegP in which the marker is merged usually carries over to the phrasal vs head nature of the marker, with NegP1 hosting head or clitic markers and lower NegP's being associated with XP markers, left-peripheral negation is assumed not to be part of the etymologically, hence structurally, conditioned sequence of NegP's (cf. Poletto 2008). As illustrated by Aboh, left-peripheral negation may well be realised as a particle in Gbe. Clearly, assuming that *dheamhan* is a particle means that the Irish marker underwent a diachronic change from XP to particle, i.e., from Specifier to head. In fact, as noted in the introduction, DemNeg starts out as a PP of the form *do dheamhan/don diabhal* ('to a demon/to the devil'). The generalised loss of the preposition in the construction may indicate a structural 'lightening' of the negative item, associated with grammaticalisation and, potentially, with a structural shift from Specifier to head/particle which is well attested in the literature on diachronic change, and known as Head Preference Principle (HPP) after van Gelderen (2004).

constituency tests for the independent movement of the XP. These tests involve case and gender mismatches, lack of Condition C reconstruction, etc. A representative Scottish Gaelic example is given in (28) (Adger & Ramchand 2005: 178, ex. (52); note that Scottish Gaelic does not have the *aL/aN* distinction):

(28) 'S   e   caileag bheag   a   bha   thu   a'   bruidhinn
      COP it girl   small.F COMP.REL be.PST you   PROG   speak.VN
      {*rithe/ris/*ri}.
        with.3FSG/with.3MSG/with
      'It was a small girl you were talking to.'

In this example, the inflected preposition that is coindexed with the feminine *caileag bheag* is in the unmarked (default) masculine, rather than in the feminine or uninflected in preposition stranding, as would be expected if the noun were extracted. Such cases are all over the place in Goidelic and accounting for them in terms of movement or lack thereof would introduce in this paper a complex matter which does not belong in it. But precisely because these non-identity effects are ubiquitous in Irish, I certainly do not expect DemNeg to constitute an exception to them: as the reviewer notes, they could only indicate that the XP in DemNeg does *not* move. Yet, McCloskey (2009: 12–15) notes that these non-identity effects do not always arise in Irish. Consider the following examples:

(29) a. Tá   mé   i   mo   chodladh.
          be.PRS I   in   my   sleep
          'I am asleep.'

      b. {I   mo/   *in-a} chodladh is   dóiche   a   bhí   mé.
          in   my   in-his sleep   COP   probable *aL* be.PST I
          'It's asleep that it's probable that I was.'

The stative predicate in (29a) requires agreement with its subject. In the cleft in (29b) agreement also takes place between the clefted predicate and the subject in the lower clause, while the masculine, which would be expected as default if the stative predicate were base-generated in the left periphery, is ungrammatical. This indicates that the stative predicate in the cleft has undergone agreement with the subject prior to being extracted. DemNeg also allows these agreement effects to go through (Jim McCloskey, p.c.):

(30) Dheamhan in-*a*   codladh a-tá   sí.
      demon   in-her sleep   *aL*-be.PRS she
      'She is not asleep.'

In (30), the non-leniting feminine form of the possessive *a* is employed, not the default masculine, which would cause lenition of the initial consonant of the following noun (i.e., *ina chodladh*). Consider also the following example, which involves the expression *corraí (dhá) chois a dhéanamh*, 'to move (one's) foot':

(31)   Dheamhan   corraí   dh-á   cois   a   dhéan-fadh sí.
          demon   movement to-her foot.DAT *aL* do-COND   she
          'She did not make a move.'

<div align="right">(FMUC, s.v. daidhce)</div>

Here, too, there is agreement between *dh-* and the subject, resulting in the non-leniting feminine inflected proposition *dhá*. Moreover, the expression is somewhat idiomatic (as also suggested by the form *cois*, the archaic dative of *cos*). Adger & Ramchand (2005: 169–170) also note that idioms tend to lose their idiomatic meaning when they are broken up in clefts. According to them, that is because, since the clefted part of the constituent is base-generated in the left periphery, the unitary lexical meaning of the idiom is never conveyed in the first place:

(32)   Bidh   e   a' toirt sop   às   gach seid.
          be.FUT he taking   wisp from each bundle
          'He's not a very concentrated person.'

(33)   'S ann às   gach seid   a   bhitheas   e a' toirt sop.
          it's   from each bundle COMP.REL be.FUT.REL he taking wisp
          *'He tries his hand at *everything*.'
          OK 'It's from every bundle that he has taken a wisp.'

Again, McCloskey (2009) note that Irish allows idiomatic expressions to preserve their meaning:

(34)   a.   Fuair sé bás.
              got   he death
              'He died.'

        b.   Is é an bás   deiridh a cheap-fá   a   gheobhadh sé.
              COP it the death last   *aL* think-COND.2SG *aL* get.COND   he
              'It was the last way that you would have expected him to die.'

<div align="right">(Tomás de Bhaldraithe (ed.), Seanchas Thomáis Laighléis,
Dublin: An Clóchomhar, 245)</div>

(35)   Is   é   do   choileach a   ghlaoigh nuair a   casadh Bob Rolder ort!
          COP it   your   rooster   *aL* called   when *aL* met   BR   on.2SG
          'It was your lucky day when you happened to meet Bob Rolder.'
                            (F, Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé, *Greenhorn*, Dublin: Coiscéim, 1997, 191 [Munster])

DemNeg very commonly allows idiomatic expressions related to (minimal) movement to be broken up in this way:

(36)   Dheamhan mo chos ná mo chnámh féin a   rach-as   thairis seo.
          demon   my foot nor my bone   self *aL* go.FUT.REL beyond this
          'I will not move an inch beyond this point.'
                         (CSnaG, Micheál Breathnach, *Seilg i measc na nAlp*, Cumann Oideachais
                                                na hÉireann, 1913, 65)

These data, which parallel those by McCloskey and set apart the Irish examples from the Scottish Gaelic ones, suggest that the XP to the right of *dheamhan* is extracted from the lower clause, after operations like agreement have taken place, and resulting in the reconstruction under Ā-movement which allows idiomatic expressions to make sense as lexical and semantic units.

    Incidentally, (27) also predicts that we should get a structure with 'DemNeg + XP + *aN*'. In other words, the XP in (27b) should be allowed to be base-generated in the left periphery and undergo resumption, just as in the general case exemplified in (1). In fact, this prediction is borne out (37):

(37)   Dheamhan *duine*$_i$ a   gcuir-fidh tú   neimh *ann*$_i$ aríst go brách.
          demon   person *aN* put-FUT   you poison in.3MSG again to   Doomsday
          'You will never poison someone again.'
                         (CSnaG, Pádraic Mac Aodháin, *Tóruigheacht Mhadadh na Seacht gCos*,
                                         Dublin: Brún agus Ó Nualláin, 1905, 22)

5.1 DemNeg+XP

What remains to be explained is the syntactic adjacency of the two elements in the *aL* case, then, as well as the adjacency between the demonic complex and the complementiser. As illustrated above, according to McCloskey (2009; 2018) this follows from the syntactic adjacency of the multiple specifiers of CP. Since in a cartographic perspective this solution is not viable, what I would like to propose is that in the *aL* case what one gets is the structure below:

(38)
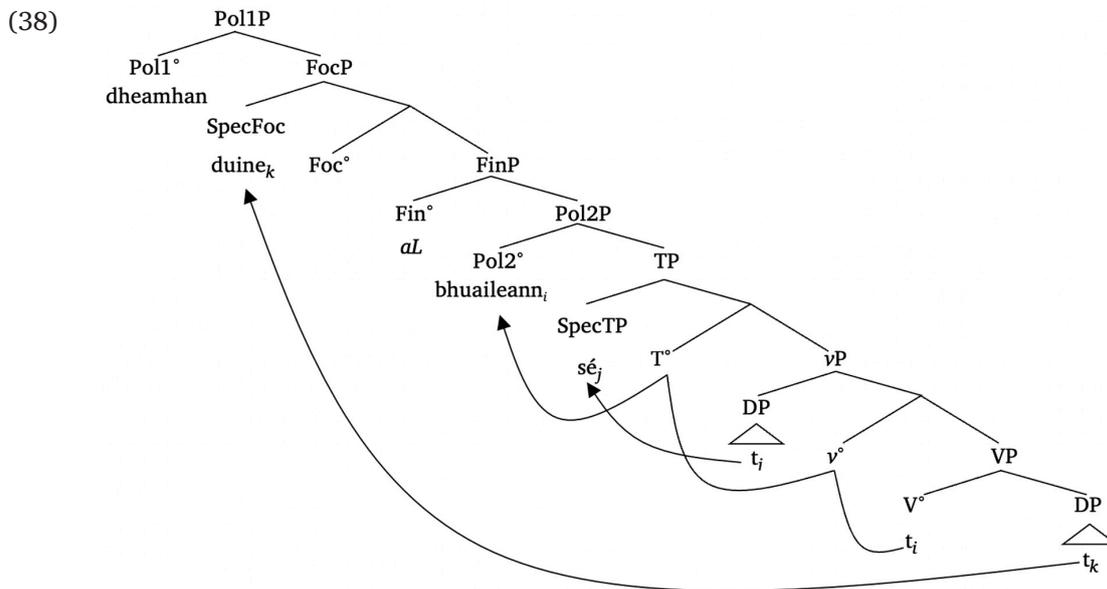
Dheamhan is base-generated in a higher projection that encodes the left-peripheral 'sentential polarity'. Of course, I take this to be the same position in both cases. I thus propose that *dheamhan* is an incarnation of the highest syntactic expression of polarity, whose positioning in the left-periphery was previously proposed by Greco (2019; 2020a, b). This assumption has several consequences. First, under this analysis DemNeg is a monoclausal structure. The fact that the lower clause is headed by the positive complementiser *a* (i.e., has the positive, not the negative form of the complementiser) means that it is *dheamhan* that is responsible for negating the sentence, and thus that it is not a left-peripheral metalinguistic negator or an 'external negator' (Horn 1985; 1989; Martins 2014; 2020). Still, the fact that a sentence with DemNeg does not need a further negative marker for sentential negation to arise does not mean that it *cannot*. An anonymous reviewer notes that the present analysis would be made stronger if *dheamhan* could co-occur with the lower standard negation on Pol°/C°. As Jim McCloskey (p.c.) notes, this cooccurrence is indeed routinely possible and, crucially, regularly gives rise to a double negation reading, *not* to a concord reading, as exemplified below:

(39)   Dheamhan mórán duine   nach   raibh   i   láthair.
        demon   many   person COMP.NEG be.PST in presence
        'There were not many people who were not present.'

This point is also relevant because it means that, after all, Acquaviva's (1996) generalisation that Irish obeys the 'one sentence, one negation' rule is not so stringent: Irish indeed cannot have two expressions of negation below PolP, but it has no problem coupling standard negation with an additional emphatic negator.

Several facts indicate that *dheamhan* is indeed an expression of descriptive/sentential negation. This is confirmed, apart from the ability of giving rise to double negation with a lower marker, by the fact that it licenses negative indefinites (40a), polarity-sensitive minimisers like *duine ná deoraí*, 'person nor stranger', i.e., 'anybody at all', and exceptives (40b):

(40)   a. Dheamhan a   dtáinig *aon* mheirg air.
           demon   *aN* came   any rust   on.it
           'It did not rust at all.' (lit. 'No rust came on it.')

                                     (G, Pádraic Breathnach, 'Bainne glas na heasóige',
                                            The Irish Times, 24 October 2016)

       b. Dheamhan *duine   ná   deoraí* a   bhí   thart   *ach an fáilteoir*.
           demon   person nor stranger *aL* be.PST around but the receptionist
           'Nobody at all was around but the receptionist.'

                                   (G, Máirín Mhic Lochlainn, 'Ní mar a shíltear a bhítear',
                                            Feasta 67(10), 1 October 2014, 6–7)

Metalinguistic negators, on the one hand, are like DemNeg in being compatible with a lower expression of negation, with which they yield a double negation at the logical level (41). On the other hand, they are incapable of licensing polarity items (42). Following Horn's (1985; 1989) classic analysis, this is because metalinguistic negation is a pragmatic operator functioning at discourse level, and as such it cannot license PIs, which need a semantic rather than pragmatic licensing (cf. also Martins 2020):

(41)   *Like hell* I wo*n't* come to the party.

(42)   *Like hell I read *anything*.

In this connection, with respect to Acquaviva's (1996) observations, note that monotone decreasing quantifiers do occur in clefts with a lower negative complementiser (and a higher positive copula):

(43)   Is   annamh nach   bhfeic-feá   muintir na   háite   ag
           COP rare   COMP.NEG see-COND.2SG people the.GEN.F place.GEN PROG
           bualadh isteach.
           hit.NFIN in
           'You would scarcely not see the locals come in.'

                                (G, 'Mo Chamchuairt sa Talamh Naofa', *Feasta* 62(1),
                                         1 January 2009, 28, Colm Ó Neachtain)

In (43), sentential negation is realised on the negative complementiser, which in McCloskey's (2017) terms means that it is encoded on the Pol° occupied by the finite verb. The second aspect that is relevant to the structure in (38) is the position that is assigned to the XP. As mentioned above, McCloskey (2009; 2018) takes this element to sit in SpecCP. This is also the approach he takes in general for the structure of Ā-dependencies (cf. McCloskey 2002). There are several reasons to propose that the XP raises to SpecFocP. Firstly, there are some similarities between DemNeg and Germanic Negative Inversion. Negative Inversion is taken by some authors, in particular Haegeman (2000), to be the result of movement of the negated constituent to a Contrastive or Corrective Focus position, along the following lines:

(44)   Not a single man did I see.
        $[_{\text{FocP}} [_{\text{DP}}$ Not a single man$]_i$ Foc° $[_{\text{FinP}}$ did$_j$ $[_{\text{TP}}$ I $[_{t°}$ $t_j]$ $[_{\text{VP}} [_{\text{DP}}$ t_i $]$ see$]]]]$

The same type of interpretation can be associated with the demonic constituent:

(45)   Dheamhan duine   a   chonaic sé.
        demon   person *aL* saw   he
        'Not a (single) person did he see.'

In (45), the NP that follows *dheamhan* is not referential; rather, it seems to denote a scalar endpoint, or perhaps even to have a kind reading, deriving an interpretation that is similar to the scalar interpretation of NPs in negative inversion. This idea is also reinforced by the use of minimisers in this context, which also denote a non-referential scalar endpoint. Such minimisers are polarity-sensitive items licensed only under nonveridical operators:

(46)   Dheamhan *deoir* a   d'fhan   ann.
        demon   tear   *aL* PST-remain in.it
        'Not a drop was left in it.'
                                              (D, *An fathach*, Tomás Mac Con Iomaire, 1930 [Galway])

Ostrove (2013) notes that Irish only expresses constituent negation with a negative cleft sentence. This is the natural consequence of the Irish restriction on the expression of negation below PolP since, as noted above (Acquaviva 1996), a lower expression of negation would be ungrammatical in Irish:

(47)   Ní   Seán a   chonaic mé, ach Liam.
        COP.NEG Seán *aL* saw   I   but Liam
        'I saw not John, but Liam.'

Now, crucially, DemNeg can indeed express constituent/contrastive negation, as in (48–49). It follows, then, that in these cases the import of DemNeg (or, rather, the interpretation of the contrastive constituent) is not scalar, but contrastive:[14]

(48)   Dheamhan ceachtar de-n   dá   thearma, ach 'pónaire chorruigh', a-tá   ag de
       demon   either   of-the two   term   but trefoil   marsh.GEN   aL-is at de
       Bhaldraithe agus Ó Dónaill, ámh.
       Bhaldraithe and   Ó Dónaill though
       'Neither of the two terms is in de Bhaldraithe's and Ó Dónaill's dictionaries, though, but rather *marsh trefoil.*'
                            (G, Pádraic Breathnach, 'Lá eachtrúil i measc na dtuirbíní gaoithe',
                                                              The Irish Times, 13 November 2017)

(49)   Dheamhan isteach ná   amach a bhí   aici,   ach in-a   staic i   lár   an
       demon   in   nor   out   aL was   at.her but in-her post   in middle the
       gheata.
       gate.GEN
       'It would go neither in nor out, but (stayed) right in the middle of the gate.'
                                                              (FMUC, s.v. *daidhciúil*)

DemNeg can also be employed in denials, as in the following example (Ó Siadhail 1980: 49; our italics):

(50)   A: Bhí   siad siúd bocht.
           be.PST they there poor
           'Those people were poor.'

       B: Dheamhan *bocht* a bhí   siad siúd   ariamh.
           demon   poor   aL be.PST they there ever
           'They were never *poor.*'
           (Sample by Bríd Ní Chearbhaill, Na Machaireacha, Derrybeg, Tyrconnell [Donegal])

In (50), B's denial focusses on the interlocutor's claim that the people who are referred to were poor, and while denial as an external negator scopes over full propositions, the part of the

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[14] Syntactically, this analysis is similar to the one proposed by Etxepare & Uribe-Etxebarria (in press) for constituent negation of quantified expressions, where the constituent is moved to SpecFocP and to the right of a left-peripheral NegP, a strategy which they call 'illusory Constituent Negation' (cf. also Collins 2020):

(i)   No   todo el   mundo está contento.
      NEG   all   the world is   happy
      'Not everyone is happy.'

preceding utterance to which the speaker objects (the predicate) is highlighted by raising it to a Focus position. In a way, DemNeg + XP is perfectly identical to Bare DemNeg: in both cases the negator scopes over the whole sentence, but with DemNeg + XP a constituent has moved to the SpecFocP of that sentence, independently of the presence of *dheamhan*.

Further evidence for analysing the XP following *dheamhan* as sitting in SpecFocP comes from fragment answers that are derived from DemNeg, in which ellipsis takes place right after the XP:[15]

(51) A: An   bhfuil   aon   churach   ag   dul   siar?
          COMP.INTER   be.PRS   any   curragh   PROG   going   back
          'Is any curragh going back?'

      B: Ní-l,   muise.   Dheamhan   churach   <a-tá   ag   dul   siar>.
          COMP.NEG-be.PRS   indeed   demon   curragh   *aL*-is   PROG   going   back
          'Not a single one (is going back).'
                        (G, Maitiú Ó Coimín 'An bhfaighfidh an Ghaeilge bás in Árainn go deo?, etc.',
                                                    Tuairisc.ie, 2016 [Pádraig Mac Piarais, Aran, 1898])

Kramer & Rawlins' (2011) analysis of answer particles as sitting in a left-peripheral ΣP/PolP chimes in with the fact that DemNeg can be used as an answer particle to yes-no questions, rather than as an answer to constituent questions. This is especially interesting with respect to the position defended here that DemNeg is a sentential negator, and not just a constituent negator, not even in the DemNeg + XP case.

A further argument from cartography comes from the fact that DemNeg appears below topical material:

(52) *Seachas   na   súile,*   dheamhan   mórán   suntais   a   thabhar-fadh   duine   di.
       except   the   eyes   demon   much   interest.GEN   *aL*   give-COND   person   to.her
       'Except for the eyes, one would not pay much attention to her.'
                                            (G, Máirín Mhic Lochlainn 'Ní mar a shíltear a bhítear',
                                                            Feasta 67(10), 1 October 2014, 6–7)

Following Benincà & Poletto's (2004) analysis of the left periphery, topics are consistently situated above the Focus layer, which is exactly the positioning we find with respect to DemNeg. These facts corroborate the hypothesis that *dheamhan* sits in a Focus position, in line with the semantic import of the construction and with the parallels with similar negative focalisation strategies like Germanic Negative Inversion.

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[15] For an analysis in similar terms of constituent and Demonic fragment answer in Irish, cf. D'Antuono (in press).

What can be concluded from the data above is that DemNeg, despite its emphatic character, is not a metalinguistic negator, but rather an expression of semantic (sentential) negation. The variability in the interpretation of DemNeg constitutes evidence for this: the interpretation of DemNeg is not limited to metalinguistic negation or denial, and the variability itself is due to the interpretation that is given to the focussed XP (that is, whether a scalar, contrastive, or metalinguistic interpretation is involved).

5.2 Bare Demonic Negation

(53) illustrates what Bare DemNeg looks like so far:

(53)
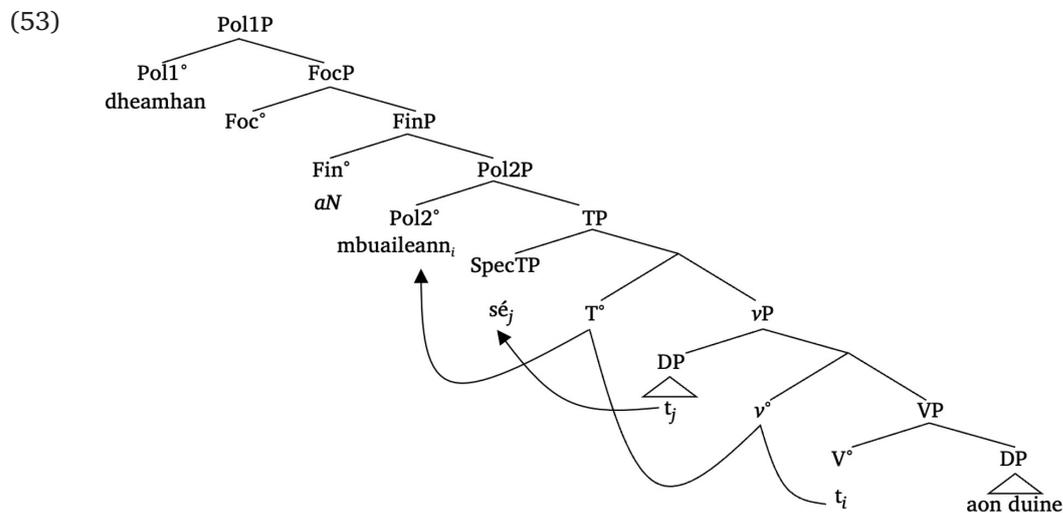
The presence of the *aN* complementiser with Bare DemNeg represents an important piece of evidence in favour of the base generation of *dheamhan*. Given its syntactic properties, *aN* is the complementiser that is used not only when the XP at the top of the Ā-dependency is base-generated in the left periphery, but also when it is reprised by a resumptive element. That is because, quite obviously, in the *aN* case the XP does not leave a trace and it can thus usually be coindexed with a resumptive pronoun. Usually, but not always: McCloskey (2002) notes an interesting interaction between the semantics of adverbial phrases and *aN*/resumption. Durative and frequency adverbials only take *aL*, as in (54). Others (locative, manner, and temporal) can freely alternate between the use of *aL* and *aN*, as exemplified in (55–56). Reason adverbials, on the other hand, can only take the *aN* complementiser (57):

(54) Cá   fhad a   bhí   tú   ann?
      how   long *aL* be.PST you   there
      'How long were you there?'

(55) Siúd an chéad áit   a chuala mi-se   é.
     that the first   place *aL* heard I-EMPH it
     'That's the first place I heard it.'   (Ó Laoire 1999: 62)

(56) Sin   an áit   a   bhfuair mé é.
     that the place *aN* got   I   it
     'That's the place I got it.'   (Ó Laoire 1999: 62)

(57) Sin é an fáth   a   raibh sé anseo sa Danmhairg.
     that it the reason *aN* was   he here   in Denmark
     'That's the reason he was here in Denmark.'

                    (G, Orna Ní Choileáin, *Canary Wharf*, Dublin: Cois Life, 2009, 137)

McCloskey (2002) explains the variable behaviour of adjuncts with the variation in the availability of a null pronominal category for the corresponding adverbial. (Null) pronominals corresponding to locative and temporal adverbials are indeed very common (Cinque 1990), and the *aN* case is simply the result of the coindexation of the locative/temporal adverbial with such a null pronominal. Thus, the *aL/aN* alternation in these cases is merely a reflection of the optionality in the choice of movement vs resumption. On the other hand, there are no (null) pronouns corresponding to other adverbial types, including durative and frequency ones, which leaves movement as the only option in this case, triggering the appearance of the *aL* complementiser.

The most interesting observation by McCloskey (2002) concerns the obligatoriness of *aN* with reason adverbials. He notes that Rizzi (1990; 1996) argues that the interrogative (i.e., left-peripheral) forms of reason adverbials are always base-generated in SpecCP. This view was updated with the introduction of IntP (cf. also Rizzi & Bocci 2017: 5), in whose specifier reason interrogatives like *why* are base-generated. Base-generation of reason adverbials in this position differentiates them from other *wh*-elements, and the fact that Irish reason adverbials only occur with *aN* confirms this view. The *aN* complementiser is thus triggered not so much by resumption, but rather by External Merge of an item in the specifier of CP, regardless of whether the constituent above *aN* is later resumed. This would mean that there is no need to assume the presence of a resumptive element, not even a null one, whenever *aN* is realised. It is for this reason that McCloskey (2009; 2018) takes *dheamhan*, too, to be base-generated in the left periphery, without need to ask with what it is coindexed.

This should obviously not lead one to think that *dheamhan* is an adjunct: what this negator and reason adverbials or adjuncts have in common is merely the fact that both are externally merged above CP. Notably, the fact that in DemNeg + XP the presence of an XP triggers the appearance of the *aL* complementiser means that its morphology, which is of the *aN* type when bare *dheamhan* is present, is overwritten by the subsequent movement operation. The exact description of this mechanism of overwriting depends upon the model of the relation between

syntax and morphology one adopts (realisational or postsyntactic theories of morphology, like nanosyntax and Distributed Morphology, seem especially well equipped to deal with this specific case), but clearly the morphology that signals Internal Merge (the *aL* complementiser) takes precedence over that for External Merge (the *aN* complementiser) when both operations take place (that is, when *dheamhan* is merged and the XP is later moved). This is also in line with Adger & Ramchand's (2005) idea that *aL* has one more feature than *aN*. In their model, the completive complementiser *go* is featureless, *aN* has a feature [Λ] which is interpreted as predicate abstraction, and *aL* has that feature plus an [ID] feature, which is interpreted as a variable that ensures the pairing of the complementiser with a lower *pro* category. Similarly, McCloskey (2002) bases his analysis on the idea that *aL* has both an EPP feature and an *Op*-feature, *aN* only has an EPP feature, and *go* has neither. The fact that *aL* is under both analyses understood to be featurally richer than *aN* also explains why the *aL* morphology overwrites the *aN* morphology: since *aL* is more specific, the Elsewhere Condition selects it and rewrites *aN* as *aL*, because grammar finds in the lexicon an element that is more specific for the featural makeup of the C° node in that case. Likewise, *aN* is selected as it is more specific than *go* when an EPP/[Λ] feature is present on C°.

Taking stock of this observation, we can now draw a conclusion of some importance. DemNeg is a true semantic negator, as evidenced by its interpretational and functional versatility and licensing capabilities. It is also clearly base-generated in the left periphery (indisputably so in the case of Bare DemNeg). Ergo, semantic/sentential negation can be externally merged in its scope position and does not have to move there from a VP-internal negative projection.

In the case of non-emphatic sentential negation (negative complementisers), one could still maintain a (relatively) lower origin for negation. De Clercq's (2013: 114) PolP corresponds not only to Zanuttini's (1997) NegP1, but also to what she calls 'sentential negative polarity', the position responsible for making a sentence negative, even in languages in which the sentential negative marker appears below TP. She also assumes that PolP, and not FinP, is the lowest projection (i.e., the edge) of the left periphery. As mentioned, McCloskey (2017) also links the expression of negation in Irish to an Agree relation between the interpretable polarity features on PolP and the unintepretable ones on CP, of which the negative form of the complementiser is the morphological reflex.

But in the case of DemNeg, no relation seems to take place between the negator and PolP. Rather, the polarity of Pol° seems to be not so much positive as *neutral*, or *unmarked*: once *dheamhan*, a descriptive negator in Horn's (1989) terms, is merged in the left periphery nothing else is needed in the lower projections to negate the sentence. Given McCloskey's (2017) analysis, negative complementisers are not the locus of negation, but merely a manifestation of its presence in the position that is immediately below, PolP. No such marking is necessary when another expression of negation like *dheamhan* is present, and thus there is no need to enrich Pol°

with a [*i*Neg] feature to cause the appearance of negative morphology on its usual bearer, C°. Hence, neither Pol° nor C° present any trace of negative morphology, since Agree with DemNeg has no reason to take place. Moreover, proposing that Pol° needs to agree with *dheamhan* would have the additional unwelcome consequence of treating it as the probe in the case of standard negation and as the goal in that of DemNeg. The fact that, as shown in (39), it is possible to merge an additional negation in Pol° and that it regularly gives rise to double negation in composition with DemNeg confirms this analysis.

The proposal that DemNeg is a left-peripheral incarnation of sentential negation also makes sense of its pragmatic properties. Ramchand & Svenonius (2014: 169) propose that Fin° (Fin* in their model) is the head which "needs to combine with a situational description to create a proposition by binding off the situational variable s, anchoring it (expressing a relationship to) the utterance situation s*". Just as in their model situations constitute an enrichment of events, propositions are further enriched with discourse features. This is interesting with respect to its relation to DemNeg especially for this reason: DemNeg is a *finite* negator. Irish only has one nonfinite negator, *gan* (base-generated in Pol° according to McCloskey (2017)). Secondly, the authors add that "the proposition is a relationship between a situation and an assertor and contains information about the speaker and speaker attitude as well as encoding of familiarity and novelty of the information to the members of the utterance situation". That is where the 'emphatic' character of DemNeg comes in: emphatic negation is usually associated with a stronger commitment on the part of the speaker, and in this strict sense DemNeg may be described as a *propositional* negator (where the term 'proposition' is understood in the attitudinal sense of Ramchand & Svenonius 2014), rather than a *sentential* one: one that selects FinP once this has combined with the situational variable, to yield a pragmatically enriched negation. The view that DemNeg is linked to a precise pragmatic attitude on the part of the speaker also explains why it is only compatible with finite assertions: *dheamhan* is incompatible with questions or imperatives, because it is a specialised negator that expresses a strong commitment to the negative truth value of the lower proposition. It stands to reason that clause types that specify no truth value are incompatible with *dheamhan*. This is not due to the fact that *dheamhan* is negative, though, but with the fact that it is emphatic, which in turn is the consequence of its left-peripheral position. In this sense, DemNeg represents a confirmation of Greco's (2020a: 777) idea that the interpretation of negation is dependent on the position in which it is realised, and that a left-peripheral negator will have certain pragmatic and speaker-oriented properties because of the domain in which it occurs.

The concept of propositional negator may also justify the fact that Irish, a parsimonious language when it comes to the expression of negation, has two semantic expressions of negation just a phrase apart. Although identical in semantic terms, these two exponents have a different function at the pragmatic level. The expression of negative emphasis is enough to motivate the presence of DemNeg in the scant negative paradigm of the Irish language. Moreover, one can view the development of DemNeg as a case of syntacticisation of discourse (Haegeman & Hill 2013):

dheamhan, as was mentioned above, derives from *do dheamhan,* 'to a demon' (the initial consonant of *dheamhan* still bears the lenition—graphically *h*—that was caused by the preposition *do,* 'to', now mostly absent from the construction). Although we have no record of the pragmatic prehistory of DemNeg (the earliest use I could trace, in the 17ᵗʰ century, is already modern-looking), what happened in the development of DemNeg is that a *hell*-word, not dissimilar from English *like hell,* received a fixed position in syntax because of its strict association with negative meaning, thus becoming syntacticised. Importantly, especially from a cartographic perspective, syntacticisation requires an expression to be identified with a syntactic position, and such a position must obviously be available in syntax. The fact that DemNeg developed from a *hell*-word (i.e., an external, pragmatic negator) into a sentential/propositional negator also constitutes evidence that a potent expression of polarity exists in the syntactic structure *above* FinP, such that speakers could at a certain point in its history identify DemNeg with the lexical realisation of that position.

5.3 Bare Demonic Negation and fragment answers

I would like to conclude this analysis with some considerations on the strategy that derives fragment answers from Bare DemNeg, which has a general relevance for the syntax of Irish negation. Consider the following elliptical use of Bare DemNeg. As mentioned above, DemNeg can serve as a basis for emphatic negative fragment answers to both constituent questions and yes-no questions in Irish:

(58) A: An   bhfaca tú   duine   ar   bith?
         COMP.INTER saw   you   person on   earth
         'Did you see anybody?'

     B: Dheamhan   duine/   é.
         demon   person it
         'Nobody at all/Not at all.'

Now, while with answers based on DemNeg + XP fragment ellipsis cuts off after the focussed constituent, with answers derived from Bare DemNeg *dheamhan* does not appear on its own, but is followed by the pronoun *é,* 'it', which as far as I know does not occur in non-elliptical versions of Bare DemNeg. I identify this pronoun with those which Ostrove (2013: 42) takes "to be some kind of anaphoric element which is co-referential with the embedded clause (McCloskey 1996a)", in other words a sentential pro-form. The question is what this pro-form precisely co-refers with in demonic fragments. The answer comes from the very interesting interaction of demonic answers with negative antecedents:

(59) A: Ní   fhaca tú   í   ó   chuir sí   an   ruaig ort   mar sin.
         COMP.NEG saw   you her since put   she the rout   on.you   like that
   'You haven't seen her since she chased you away, then.'

B: Dheamhan é.
demon it
'Not at all.' (= 'Indeed, I have not seen her.')
(CSnaG, Pádraic Ó Cónaire, *Béal an Uaignis*, Dublin: Talbot Press, 1921, 64)

Crucially, bare demonic fragments to negative questions or statements of the *dheamhan é* type confirm the negation of the previous utterance (i.e., they do not convey double negation). This means that the negative polarity of the previous utterance is not reprised along with the rest of the propositional content by the pro-form *é*, which is rather unmarked (i.e., non-negative) as in the non-elliptical cases of DemNeg seen above. This tells us much about which constituent the pro-form co-refers with. The general understanding for Irish syntax is that what follows the position of the finite verb is one large postverbal constituent that includes all the clausal material to the exclusion of the finite verb (for an overview of this long-held claim, cf. McCloskey (2011; 2017)). This structure is illustrated below for the sentence *Ní fhaca mé duine*, 'I did not see a person/man':

(60)

PolP   TP
[FIN, [*i*Neg]]
Ní fhaca   mé aon duine
NEG *saw*   *I   any man*
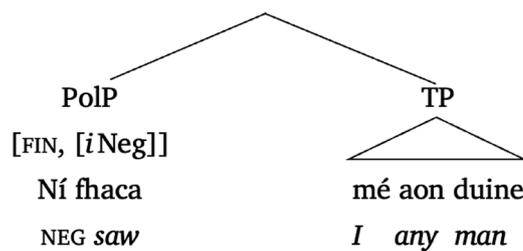
If, following McCloskey (2017), the position of the finite verb is PolP, then the 'large constituent' that is its sister is TP/IP. Importantly, PolP is also the lowest position in which polarity, and hence negation, is encoded in Irish. Since pro-forms can only co-refer with constituents, and since the TP forms one constituent to the exclusion of the finite verb, the reason the pro-form *é* does not cause double negation with *dheamhan* is that it co-refers only with TP, not with PolP + TP. Now, since polarity (positive or negative) is absent from (the lower) TP in Irish, being instead encoded on PolP (the landing site of the finite verb) or in a higher position, it follows that in demonic fragments the pro-form *é* can never include the polarity of the previous utterance, but only the polarly unmarked situation encoded in TP, prior to composition with PolP. This being so, the negation of DemNeg will never compose with a sentential negation present in the previous utterance, and thus double negation does not arise in fragment answers based upon Bare DemNeg. This brings the present analysis of DemNeg once more in line with Greco's (2019; 2020a, b) treatment of Surprise Negation, another kind of left-peripheral 'special' negation which sits in the CP layer and is followed by movement of TP to the SpecFocP, the position I propose for the TP pro-form *é* in demonic fragments.

Perhaps the most interesting conclusion one can draw from (60) is the following: since Pol° is the lowest position in which negation can be expressed, this would mean that (sentential) negation in Irish is nothing but 'constituent negation of TP', an intriguing result for those approaches that seek to unify sentential and constituent negation. And since no expression of negation can be found in Irish below PolP (not just emphatic negation), the idea that negation does not necessarily originate in the thematic layer in all languages receives further corroboration.

6 Conclusions

The relevance of Irish Demonic Negation extends beyond the syntactic encoding of negative polarity in the Goidelic languages. Its most relevant aspect is that DemNeg is a potent expression of semantic negation which is base-generated in the left periphery. This demonstrates that negation is not necessarily an operator which originates in a VP-internal position: while for some languages this appears to be the case, the Irish facts demonstrate that negation can be externally merged in its final scope position (that of sentential polarity) and take fully formed propositions as arguments. The diachrony of DemNeg is also relevant: (*do*) *dheamhan* is originally a *hell*-word, a pragmatic negator which speakers have identified with a semantic expression of negation, an aspect which has some important theoretical consequences for the syntax of negation.

The first concerns cartography: if this phenomenon can be taken as a case of syntacticisation (intended as the association of a previously pragmatically marked phenomenon with a fixed syntactic position and semantic function), then DemNeg is a clue to the presence of a dedicated polar position in the left periphery, of which *dheamhan* was interpreted as a lexicalisation by speakers at some point in its history.

The second consequence relates to the pragmatically marked nature of DemNeg, and of other left-peripheral negators. If the left periphery is the locus in which the junction of syntactic and discourse phenomena takes place, then the speaker commitment and emphasis associated with DemNeg can be understood as a consequence of syntacticisation: since DemNeg is a C-level negator, it comes to be related to the speech act and to the attitude of the speaker. This is also true of other 'metalinguistic' and pragmatic negators, like English *like hell*, which nonetheless do not convey sentential (i.e., featural or semantic) negation, but rather a type of idiomatic, or 'lexical' negation.

The third consequence concerns the relative position and polysemy of left-peripheral negation. DemNeg can perform a wide range of functions, expressing emphatic, contrastive, and scalar negation. This polysemy DemNeg has in common with true semantic negation, and it differentiates it from the highly specialised functions of special negators, like denial markers and metalinguistic negators. The root of this diversity is not to be sought in the lexical and semantic makeup of the marker itself, but rather lies in the compositional interaction of negation with the rest of the clause, particularly with the interpretation of the constituent that can appear to its right: a contrastive interpretation of the XP in the DemNeg + XP case gives rise to contrastive negation, a scalar element

to scalar negation, and so on. But in all cases, *dheamhan* comes out as a propositional negator, i.e., one that takes the whole proposition as its argument. The positioning of the PolP where *dheamhan* sits to the immediate left of FocP is in line not only with the possible interpretation of the construction as contrastive/scalar, but also with previous speculations on the relative position of Polarity and Focus in the left periphery, as hypothesised by Potsdam (2013) and Rizzi (1997).

Finally, the analysis presented in this paper has some consequences for some language-specific issues in Irish syntax. First of all, it suggests that the alternation between *aL* and *aN* is regulated by a sort of overwriting mechanism, obeying principles like the Elsewhere Condition and the Superset Principle: the most specific lexical item for the featural specifications on the C-head wins, to the effect that the *aN* complementiser that appears when *dheamhan* is base-generated in the left periphery is rewritten as the more specific *aL* when an XP moves to SpecFocP. Fragment answers based upon Bare DemNeg (*dheamhan é*) also provide an insight into the constituency of the Irish sentence: the pro-form *é* reprises a previous utterance to the exclusion of its polarity, which confirms (i) that the phrase which co-refers with *é*, TP, indeed forms a large constituent which includes all the clausal material to the exclusion of the finite verb, and (ii) that the polarity of the Irish sentence is encoded in a position which is in turn higher than TP, either the PolP which is the landing site of the finite verb or a higher, left-peripheral one. This also indirectly confirms the present claim that negation does not originate in a VP-internal position, contrary to the claim found in some recent research (which is thus valid and relevant, but arguably not universal).

Some loose ends remain, of course. The first relates to the way in which base-generation/movement of an element in the left periphery influences the form of the complementiser in Irish. In the cartographic model assumed here one must tweak McCloskey's idea whereby what influences the form of the complementiser is whether and how its specifier is filled, and perhaps its featural makeup. A looser idea of activation of the left periphery seems more apt given the premises of the present analysis: when the left periphery is activated in some way, whether by External or Internal Merge, then the complementiser takes one of the Ā-forms. This view is somewhat problematic, though, since it is easier to conceive of the morphological changes in the form of the complementiser in terms of a Spec-Head relation: it remains unclear how the activation of the left periphery should induce a change in the morphology of its lower edge. A cartographic analysis of the Irish left periphery is not our chief concern here, but if one wants to maintain the cartographic paradigm (which excludes multiple specifiers as in McCloskey's 2009; 2018 formulation), then this aspect remains an issue for future research on Irish Ā-dependencies. The second issue is construction-specific and relates to whether the XP following *dheamhan* is always in SpecFocP, or whether more positions and interpretations, possibly topical ones, are available for it. Of course, the validity of the conclusions reached above is also subject to further verification and scrutiny.

Abbreviations

1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, COMP = complementiser, COND = conditional, COP = copula, DAT = dative, EMPH = emphatic, EXPL = expletive, F = feminine, FOC = Focus, FUT = future, GEN = genitive, HAB = habitual, INTER = interrogative, M = masculine, NEG = negation, NFIN = non-finite, PL = plural, PROG = progressive, PRS = present, PST = past, REL = relative, SG = singular, VN = verbal noun.

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Competing interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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