Negative concord in English and Romance: syntax-morphology interface conditions on the expression of negation

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4 Negative Concord in Non-Standard English

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of NC in a number of Non-Standard varieties of English. Most of the examples that have been considered are from Non-Standard British English varieties, but some data from African American English (AAE), are also discussed in the second part of the chapter.

The main source of data for the British varieties is the Freiburg English Dialect corpus, FRED, which can be said to be representative of the traditional varieties of British English. A smaller sample of examples of NC have also been taken from the BNC-SpS, the sub-corpus of the British National Corpus that contains spontaneous spoken data (cf. Anderwald 2002: 11-14). The AAE data, on the other hand, come from the literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that the phenomenon of NC in Non-Standard varieties of English can be adequately characterised by extending the account that was put forward in chapter 3. In other words, I argue in this chapter that Standard English diverges from Non-Standard varieties of English which implement Strict NC in that the latter tolerate the accidental repetition of negative features in Spell-Out domains. This makes the use of PF operations such as Obliteration or Impoverishment unnecessary in negative contexts.

Concerning Impoverishment, it will be argued that n-indefinites in Non-Standard varieties of English do not have to raise to Spec, NegP in Negº not carrying an EPP-feature. Since they are not in the same Spell-Out domain as the negative marker, neither Impoverishment nor Obliteration are attested with post-verbal indefinites.

The differences and similarities that can be observed between Standard English and Non-Standard varieties of English are thus reducible to (i) whether a particular variety has a ban against the repetition of negative features in Spell-Out domains and (ii) whether n-indefinites raise or not (i.e. whether Negº carries an EPP-feature). While (i) accounts for the fact that Non-Standard varieties of English that implement Strict NC diverge not only from Standard English, but also from those varieties of Non-Standard English that implement Non-Strict NC with respect to pre-verbal n-indefinites, (ii) results in the differences that are attested with respect to post-verbal n-indefinites in Standard English and the rest of Non-Standard varieties of English.

The remainder of the chapter is organised as follows. Section 4.2 summarises the main features of the FRED corpus, including how it was compiled, and what is the
average profile of informants. Following the same procedure, the main characteristics of the BNC-SpS are outlined in section 4.3.

Section 4.4 is devoted to reviewing some literature on the study of NC in Non-Standard British English. In subsections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, Anderwald’s (2002 and 2005) work is presented. Anderwald’s study, which is framed within a functional-typological framework, is relevant for this dissertation because it constitutes a very comprehensive study of the patterns of NC that occur in Non-Standard British English.

My analysis of the data as a syntax-morphology interface phenomenon is provided in section 4.5. The account is completed with the study of NC in AAE, in section 4.6, which is a variety of American English that is especially renowned for extensively using NC. Negative inversion, a well-attested phenomenon in AAE, is also given some thought, as it seems to be closely connected to the morphological constraints that affect the expression of negation in English. Finally, section 4.7 summarises the main claims and conclusions of the chapter.

4.2 The FRED corpus

4.2.1 Overview

FRED69 is a monolingual spoken-language dialect corpus where the traditional varieties of British English spoken in the second half of the 20th century in Great Britain are represented. Compiled between the years 2000 and 2005 at the English Department of Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, FRED contains full-length interviews with native speakers from nine different regional areas of Great Britain – namely the Southeast, the Southwest, the Midlands, the Northeast, the Hebrides, Wales, the Isle of Man and Scotland, which is further sub-divided into the Lowlands and the Highlands.

The texts that make up the corpus come from oral history projects where informants are asked to talk about their life memories. The interviews were usually conducted in the informant’s home, and took the form of face-to-face conversations between a

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69 FRED was compiled by the research project group ‘English Dialect Syntax from a Typological Perspective’ at the English Department of the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg under the supervision of Professor Bernd Kortmann. All the information relative to the corpus that appears in this section can be accessed online at http://www.anglistik.uni-freiburg.de/institut/lskortmann/FRED.
native English interviewer and an informant. The Observer’s Paradox\(^70\) was overcome by asking the informants to talk about their own lives: although the interviewees were fully aware of being recorded, the genuine interest the interviewers showed for their memories distracted their attention from their linguistic behaviour.

At present, FRED contains approximately 2.5 million words and 300 hours of recorded speech. The informants, both male and female, come from 163 different locations in 43 counties, contained in the aforementioned 9 major dialect areas. The interviews are transcribed orthographically and are accessible as machine-readable material. Most of the transcripts are also accessible as sound files.

### 4.2.2 Compilation of the corpus

The compilation process of FRED consisted in gathering good-quality recordings of oral history interviews from various sources such as material contributed by other fieldworkers who made their data accessible, historians, local museums, libraries and archives from all over Great Britain. All the interviews, which are between 30 and 90 minutes, were recorded between 1968 and 2000, mostly during the 1970s and 1980s. Due to the fact that the interviewer tried to step back most of the time, the linguistic productions of the informants are long stretches of monologue where a number of relevant non-standard morphosyntactic features are easily observable.

During the process of compilation, those interviews which were selected as more relevant for the purpose of investigating the morphosyntax of British English varieties were then digitalised and stored as sound files in DVDs. They were subsequently transcribed by English native speakers and staff with linguistic training. Some recordings were transcribed for the first time, while others, which already included a transcription of the oral material, were thoroughly revised and adapted to the FRED markup. The revision of already transcribed material was a crucial step in the FRED corpus compilation, as it allowed researchers to re-insert a number of non-standard morphological, syntactic and discourse features which, though present in the recordings, had been omitted in the transcripts for oral history projects owing to the fact that the latter did not have a linguistic scope.

File names indicate the text identification, consisting of three capital letters which specify the county of the informant\(^71\), and a three-digit running number (e.g.

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\(^70\) The Observer’s Paradox is a very well-known phenomenon in sociolinguistic research. It captures the fact that when the informant is aware that linguistic research is being conducted, he or she switches to a more formal variety of his or her language.

\(^71\) The counties are indicated using the Chapman county code.
LAN_002 would indicate that the text comes from Lancashire and is the second file out of the 23 that were collected in the same county. The header for each file also provides the identification of the speaker(s)—which was coded in order to keep anonymity—the speakers’ age at the date of recording, his or her year and decade of birth, and the speakers’ sex. All this material is searchable with concordance tools such as the ones provided by WordSmith.

4.2.3 The informants

The majority of the informants of the FRED corpus are NORMs, which stands for Non-mobile Old Rural Male. NORMs typically left school at the age of fourteen or even younger and have not had any significant mobility within the British territory.

While targeting NORMs has been generally assumed to be highly advisable practice for the study of traditional dialects, it is also true that the use of NORMs has been criticised within the field of sociolinguistics for not providing data that are representative of the whole speaking community. Since NORMs have lived in a particular area most of (or all) their life, their linguistic behaviour has not had any significant influences from any other varieties and their linguistic productions can be said to be representative of the dialect area they are in; the speech of NORMs cannot be claimed to be representative of the speech of younger speakers in urban communities, however. This is one of the reasons that motivated the use of the spoken part of the British National Corpus as a source of data to corroborate the findings that resulted from the study of FRED.

A caveat is in order at this point: while it was my intention to base the analysis of NC in Non-Standard English in real utterances, the ultimate purpose of this dissertation is not to conduct any kind of quantitative or sociolinguistic study that tries to answer research questions like how often NC occurs in the speech of speakers or whether it is significantly related to social variables such as age or educational background. The goal of the present dissertation is to provide an account of NC in purely syntactic terms. The use of corpora, therefore, must be understood as an attempt to enhance a grammatical account of the various ways in which NC is implemented in Non-Standard English.

The study of the regional distribution of NC has not been a central issue in the present dissertation, either. This is because our attention has been concentrated on the characterisation of the actual examples and the syntactic and morphological mechanisms that make it possible for them to be attested in the speech of the informants. The fact that NC (or multiple negation, as it is often referred to in the literature) is a general non-standard feature of English, rather than a dialectal form
associated with a particular region of the English-speaking world, sanctions the possibility of approaching this linguistic phenomenon from a formal point of view.

The use of real examples from a corpus, on the other hand, has been extremely valuable, as it made it possible to discover that intra-speaker variability (i.e. variation within the productions of a single speaker) exists in the expression of NC in English. This is something that could have not been inferred solely on the basis of the data that can be found in the literature.

4.3 The spoken part of the BNC

4.3.1 The BNC corpus

The British National Corpus, BNC, aims at characterising contemporary British English ‘in its various social and generic uses’ (Aston and Burnard 1998: 28). The corpus was compiled in the 1990s and contains around 100 million words. Although ninety percent of the corpus is made up of written texts, the spoken part of the BNC, which represents ten percent of the corpus, contains about 10 million words, which is quite a large amount of material.

Not all the spoken texts in the BNC are spontaneous, however. Rather, some material comes from formal contexts such as meetings, debates, lectures or radio programmes where the linguistic material that is uttered has been planned in advance. A part of the spoken part of the corpus, nonetheless, known as the demographic component, is made up of ‘informal encounters recorded by a socially-stratified sample of respondents, selected by age group, sex, social class and geographic region’ (Aston and Burnard 1983: 31). Only this sub-part of the spoken component of the BNC, which amounts to approximately 5 million words, has been searched for data on NC.

4.3.2 The BNC-SpS: compilation and informants

The data for the demographic component of the spoken part of the BNC, the BNC-SpS, were collected by the informants themselves. A total of 124 informants, who were selected using random location sampling procedures, were given a tape recorder and received instructions to record their spontaneous linguistic productions
as well as those of the people they interacted with during a week. All the speakers were over 15 years old and from all over the United Kingdom. There were approximately an equal number of men and women spread over five different age groups and four social classes.

The BNC can be searched with the SARA software, which allows the user to look for particular words and phrases in the totality of the corpus or in each individual sub-part. Associated with each example that satisfies the searching parameters, there is an alphanumerical label corresponding to the text identification and a number which indicates the clause where the example can be found. For example, the code KB7 8628 would allow us to retrieve the example in (1a), which is located in the text identified as KB7, clause 8628; conversely, the label KCT 5178, would result in the example in (1b), in text KCT, clause 5178.

(1) a. I’m not doing nothing for you (BNC, KB7 8628)  
    b. I hope nobody ain’t been swearing (BNC, KCT 5178)

In the next section, after reviewing some relevant literature on the study of Non-Standard British English, I put forward my own account of NC in regional varieties of English. It must be said that my conclusions are mostly reached on the basis of FRED, an extremely user-friendly corpus that contains an enormous amount of information that is of use to the analysis of such a complex phenomenon as NC is in Non-Standard English. The data from the BNC-SpS have been mainly used to confirm that most of the patterns that are observed in the traditional varieties of English are also found in contemporary British English. I direct the reader to Anderwald’s (2002) thorough analysis of the BNC-SpS, which is presented in section 4.4.1, for a complete overview of what can be observed in the BNC-SpS with respect to negation and the phenomenon of NC.

### 4.4 Negation in Non-Standard British English

In this section, Anderwald’s (2002 and 2005) research on the system of negation in Non-Standard British English is reviewed in detail. Both works are framed within a functional typological approach, and provide a very thorough description of the patterns of NC that arise across different varieties of British English, as well as an

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72 The BNC-SpS also contains data from the University of Bergen COLT Teenager Language Project, whose informants were 16 years old or under. The data were collected for the BNC using the same procedure as above.
accurate description of the distribution of the sentential negative marker and n-indefinites in the observed NC constructions.

While the data in Anderwald (2002) come from the BNC-SpS, Anderwald (2005) also includes data from an almost completed version of FRED. The conclusions in both pieces of research are, therefore, of immediate relevance for the present dissertation.

### 4.4.1 Anderwald (2002)

In her chapter on NC in Non-Standard British English, Anderwald (2002) tries to answer two main research questions. On the one hand, she is interested in finding out to what extent NC can be claimed to be present in contemporary British English; on the other hand, she seeks to establish which main patterns arise in terms of the distribution of the sentential negative marker and other negative elements –n-indefinites or n-words in the present dissertation’s terminology.

Anderwald’s starting assumption is that NC in Non-Standard English is ‘a matter of quantitative variation rather than an ‘all or nothing’ situation in English dialects’ (Anderwald 2002: 104). Optionality of NC, together with the fact that all speakers are under the influence of Standard English, where NC is apparently disallowed, results in the prediction that NC must be a very heterogeneous phenomenon in British English.

The first step in Anderwald’s study consisted in searching for -n’t, not, nobody, no one, nothing, nowt, none, never, nowhere and no (used as an adjective) in the BNC-SpS (see section 4.3.2) to further identify instances of NC, i.e. examples where more than one negative element co-occurred. She only considered the data of those speakers whose regional origin had been tagged, which resulted in a sample of 1,281 speakers. Her results were charted into a table, reproduced below in (2).

(2) **NC in the BNC-SpS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BNC code</th>
<th>Dialect area</th>
<th>Total (=possible occurrences)</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XEA</td>
<td>East Anglia</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XHC</td>
<td>Home Counties</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XHM</td>
<td>Humberside</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIR</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLC</td>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The column labelled as **Total (=possible occurrences)** lists the total number of negative utterances in the sample, which includes examples where the searched elements appear in isolation, and examples where they co-occur with other n-words or with any-indefinites. The column **NC** shows the actual number of utterances which contain an NC construction, and the last column displays the percentage that NC structures represent out of the total number of negative utterances. The conclusion is that NC is present in all dialect areas, albeit to a different extent. It is also quite remarkable that a difference seems to exist between the North and the South, though this issue is dealt with more thoroughly in Anderwald (2005).

The second step in Anderwald’s (2002) study is aimed at establishing the patterns in the distribution of the sentential negative marker and the various n-indefinites that participate in NC, which corresponds to her second research question. Her findings are again charted in (3).

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73 According to Anderwald (2002: 105), the figures for Humberside should be disregarded, as they are based on the data of only 4 speakers. In addition, these seem to speak Standard English, as Humberside also scores 0 % in other non-standard features studied using the same corpus.
NEGATIVE CONCORD IN ENGLISH AND ROMANCE: SYNTAX-MORPHOLOGY INTERFACE CONDITIONS ON THE EXPRESSION OF NEGATION

(3) Co-occurring negative elements in the BNC-SpS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd element</th>
<th>n’t</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>not</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>nobody</th>
<th>hardly</th>
<th>now</th>
<th>no one</th>
<th>nowt</th>
<th>none</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>240 (17)</td>
<td>9 (16)</td>
<td>132 (6)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>265</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>178 (16)</td>
<td>33 (7)</td>
<td>14 (8)</td>
<td>10 (5)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>237</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>24 (3)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
<td>13 (6)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nothing</td>
<td>28 (9)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or no</td>
<td>9 (6)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nobody</td>
<td>8 (2)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nor</td>
<td>16 (7)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nowhere</td>
<td>19 (5)</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nothing</td>
<td>8 (5)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or no</td>
<td>5 (1)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or nobody</td>
<td>6 (3)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Anderwald 2002: 107)

The first column on the left indicates the first negative element that occurs in the NC constructions observed in the BNC-SpS, whereas the first row contains the n-indefinites that appear second. The numbers in brackets stand for the number of dialect areas (see table in (2)) where a particular combination of first and second negative elements is found. The unbracketed figures indicate the total number of occurrences of a given combination. For instance, as indicated in the first cell of the table, no in its adjectival use occurs 240 times in utterances where -n’t is the second negative element in 17 different dialect areas.

A further observation is that the combinations that are found in the sample are not random but structured orderly. In addition, if some elements that are of marginal importance for the study of clausal NC such as negative conjunctions, or paratactic structures such as or nothing are removed from the table in (3), which results in (4).

As can be observed, in (4), the sentential negative marker not and -n’t, the contracted form, occupy the same column, and so do nowt and nothing, which are regional variants, and nobody and no one, which are stylistic alternates.

(4) Co-occurring monoclausal morphological NC elements in the BNC-SpS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2nd element</th>
<th>n’t</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>not</th>
<th>no</th>
<th>nobody</th>
<th>hardly</th>
<th>now</th>
<th>no one</th>
<th>nowt</th>
<th>none</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nothing</td>
<td>221 (18)</td>
<td>57 (18)</td>
<td>10 (5)</td>
<td>11 (1)</td>
<td>269</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>251 (18)</td>
<td>9 (16)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>none</td>
<td>29 (10)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>16 (8)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobody / no one</td>
<td>12 (5)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nowhere</td>
<td>12 (7)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 Anderwald (2005)

Anderwald (2005) compares the findings from the BNC-SpS to the data in FRED. As a novelty, she also explores whether it is possible to talk about a regional distribution of NC, thus addressing an issue in the study of NC in Non-Standard British English which, as she acknowledges, has been neglected in the literature up to date.

In order to determine whether there are significant differences among the various dialectal areas of Great Britain with respect to the frequency of use of NC, Anderwald (2005) adds a new column to the table in (2) (see previous sub-section), labelled Region, which specifies the geographical location of each dialect area as either South, North or Midlands. In addition, a “C” is added the ‘Celtic’ varieties of English.

The resulting table, reproduced below, confirms that, as suggested in Cheshire, Edwards and Whittle (1993), NC is regionalised. She observes that there are indeed statistically significant\(^74\) differences between the North and the South, and the South and the Midland regions with respect to the use of NC. Her figures indicate the existence of a Mid-North continuum that diverges from the South rather than a threefold differentiation of the North, the Midlands and the South. In addition, the variable ‘Celtic’ does not seem to be relevant for this regional distribution.

\(^74\) Statistical significance at p<0.01.
Anderwald (2005) subsequently compares the regional areas that make up the groups ‘South’, ‘Midlands’ and ‘North’ against each other. In general lines, she reports that the whole of the North—with the exception of the North East, which, in recent times, has been very innovative in a linguistic sense and is more similar to the South than to the rest of the North— and the Midlands are homogeneous with respect to the use of NC, while the South is not. Such a lack of homogeneity in the South is attributed to the Home Counties, which disrupt the otherwise consistent behaviour of the other southern neighbouring areas such as the South Midlands, East Anglia and London. The Home Counties, according to Anderwald, behave in a more standard way than London, linguistically speaking.

In order to further support her observations of the North / Midlands versus South regionalisation of NC, Anderwald (2005) also analyses an extensive wealth of data from an almost completed version of the FRED corpus. She follows the same steps that were used for her analysis of the BNC, and reports the same patterns in terms of structural distribution of the elements that occur in NC constructions (see tables in (3) and (4)). A remarkable difference between the two corpora, however, is that NC occurs in FRED twice as often as in the BNC-SpS. The figures for NC in FRED are represented in (6), where the 9 major dialectal areas covered by FRED (see section
4.2) have been collapsed into 6 broader regions. According to Anderwald (2005), once Scotland and Wales are let aside, the North of England displays a significantly different behaviour from the Midlands and from the South. The figures clearly show that NC is more frequent in the South than in more northerner areas.

(6) **FRED: Negative Concord per dialect region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Anderwald 2005: 217)

Anderwald (2005) explains her two main conclusions, namely that NC is spread all over Great Britain (Anderwald 2002 and 2005) but that it is more frequent in the South than in other areas by discussing the fact that Standard English, which she assumes not to allow NC, is typologically rare in the languages of the world (Bernini and Ramat 1996; Haspelmath 1997). She argues that negative structures without overt NC (i.e. Standard English constructions with a sentential negative marker and an any-indefinite) penetrate into English via language contact with Old Norse, which is crucial to account for the North-South differences in frequencies of occurrence of NC. It is expected that those varieties that have had the longest contact with the Old Norse system of negation display a lower use of NC. Anderwald’s (2005) figures, both from the BNC and the FRED corpus support this expectation.

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75 There is a more detailed table in Anderwald (2005: 126), with separate figures for each of the counties that make up each 9 dialectal areas.

76 For a description of the system of negation in Old Norse, see Anderwald (2005: 131) and the references therein.
4.5 The syntax of NC in Non-Standard British English

4.5.1 Introduction

The aim of the present section is to provide a syntactic account of the distributional patterns of NC in Non-Standard British English observed in Anderwald (2002, 2005), with special emphasis on the contrast between Strict and Non-Strict NC, and intra-speaker variability. For this purpose, the FRED corpus was searched, and a total of 1,498 examples of NC were found.

After searching for nobody, nothing, nowhere, none, never, adjectival no, noone, no-one, neither and nor in the corpus, those hits that displayed NC were copied onto an Excel spreadsheet and given a descriptive coding for their syntactic structure (e.g. Do + n't + n-word for an example of the type But I don’t know nothing now, deer; or n-word + do + n’t for a sentence like I know this sounds funny, but nobody didn’t notice it; etc.).

Once coded, the examples were re-ordered automatically in such a way that common patterns would become easily visible. Each pattern was then given a colour code, which was consistent across varieties, to facilitate further cross-dialectal comparison of the data. Alternatively, the speaker’s alphanumeric identifications were also alphabetically ordered with the purpose of spotting any instances of intra-speaker variability (i.e. inconsistencies in the use of Strict and Non-Strict NC constructions).

For the BNC-SpS, the same system was used both for the word searches and for the (colour) coding of the patterns that emerged in the data. The only difference is that only a number of random samples of hits were downloaded, since the design of the SARA software often makes it difficult to download the whole set of matching data that a word search yields. Since the aim of the present dissertation is not to perform frequency studies, but to investigate the phenomenon of NC in Non-Standard English syntactically, 277 examples were considered to be enough to study the syntactic nature of NC in Non-Standard contemporary British English.

The data show that examples of Strict NC are only found in Wales, in some counties in the Southwest, the Southeast and the Midlands, and in the Hebrides. Likewise, clear examples of Non-Strict NC involving a pre-verbal n-indefinite and no sentence negative marker are only observed in one county of the Southwest, two counties of

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77 Such a procedure was suggested by Dr. Lieselotte Anderwald during a three-month research stay at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. She confirmed that downloading a considerable number of random samples from the BNC-SpS would result in a representative pool of data if totals were not relevant for the research question, as is the case in this dissertation.
the Southeast, and two counties of the Midlands region. Examples of the same speaker switching from Strict to Non-Strict NC are only observed in one county of the Southwest, and one county of the Southeast area. The rest of the data contain a variable number of post-verbal n-indefinites with a negator in NegP. Subsections 4.5.2 to 4.5.5 address each of these three observations in turn.

4.5.2 Strict NC varieties

As discussed in chapter 1, in those languages where NC is defined as Strict, the negative marker always co-occurs with the n-indefinites in all positions. Therefore, to evaluate whether the Non-Standard varieties that are being considered are Strict or not, examples of pre-verbal n-indefinites co-occurring with the sentential negative marker must be found. Consider the sentences in (7). (7a) is from Wales, (7b-d) are from the Southwest, (7e-g) belong to the Southeast, (7h) is from the Midlands, and (7i) from the Hebrides.

(7)  a. Neither of my brothers wouldn’t do anything.  (FRED, DEN_004)
    b. ‘Cause nobody didn’t have a terrible lot of cows.  (FRED, CON_005)
    c. I mean ‘cause nobody haven’t give us a penny.  (FRED, SOM_005)
    d. Half the footpaths about ‘ere nobody don’t know where they are.  (FRED, WIL_011)
    e. Yes, and no people didn’t trouble about gas stoves then.  (FRED, KEN_005)
    f. None of his men wasn’t allowed to smoke.  (FRED, KEN_010)
    g. He was seasick all trip and no-one didn’t see after him.  (FRED, SFK_012)
    h.. I know this sound funny, but nobody didn’t notice it.  (FRED, SAL_023)
    i. None of them couldn’t do anything.  (FRED, HEB_018)

The data in (7) correlate with examples such as the ones in (8). The latter have been taken from the exact same transcripts as the utterances in (7).

(8)  a. I say, no I’m not having no doctor.  (FRED, DEN_004)
    b. And uncle Albert, he wouldn’t do nothing, hardly.  (FRED, CON_005)
    c. We couldn’t afford to pay nobody, see?  (FRED, SOM_005)
    d. They don’t never use them.  (FRED, WIL_011)
    e. No, he wouldn’t do no household chores.  (FRED, KEN_005)
    f. I said, well I can’t see, I said, I ain’t no light, you know.  (FRED, KEN_010)
g. Now they call some of these chaps engineer, but they don’t know nothing about an engine.  
(FRED, SFK_012)

h. And just after that you’d hear sounds you don’t hear no longer.  
(FRED, SAL_023)

i. I didn’t say nothing.  
(FRED, HEB_018)

Since in both (7) and (8) the n-indefinites in the clause co-occur with the sentential negative marker, I claim that Strict NC varieties are not sensitive to the Filter against the accidental repetition of negative features in the same Spell-Out domain. Such a constraint, that was introduced in chapter 3 and is arguably responsible for the application of remedial PF operations in the morphological structure, has been repeated here for convenience as (9).

(9) */negative marker/ /polarity morpheme/ if
    (i) /negative marker/ and /polarity morpheme/ are adjacent, and
    (ii) NEGATIVE MARKER and POLARITY MORPHEME agree.

The obedience to (9) can be represented as a continuum that has Strict NC languages / varieties at one of the ends and languages such as Standard English, which has morphological mechanisms that ensure that (9) be satisfied, at the other pole. Non-Strict NC varieties / languages, as will be discussed shortly, can be placed in the middle.

Returning to Strict NC, a few instances of pre-verbal n-words co-occurring with the sentential negative marker are also found in my sample from the BNC-SpS ⁷⁸. These have been listed in (10) and, as happens in the FRED corpus, they are found alongside examples of post-verbal n-indefinites within the scope of negation, as illustrated in (11).

(10) a. Nobody don’t bother with them do they?  
(BNC-SpS, KB7 13664)
b. But nobody’s not doing cabaret spots with trumpets.  
(BNC-SpS, KC2 2999)
c. I hope nobody ain’t been swearing.  
(BNC-SpS, KCT 5178)
d. I mean like they said none of them had never been on the dole before.  
(BNC-SpS, KD1 939)

(11) a. Can’t I do nothing?  
(BNC-SpS, KB7 13369)

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⁷⁸ No regional information has been included for the BNC-SpS.
b. Don’t she know nothing? (BNC-SpS, KC2 3159)
c. Fifty quid aren’t neither here nor there is it? (BNC-SpS, KCT 4897)
d. Now they ain’t got none. (BNC-SpS, KD1 729)

4.5.3 Non-Strict NC varieties

Non-Strict NC languages display a well-known asymmetry between pre-verbal and post-verbal n-indefinites: while the latter always occur with a negative marker, the former do not. This is illustrated in (12) with data from the FRED corpus.

(12) a. …and nobody used to say nothing to him. (FRED, CON_003)
b. Nobody said nothing about it. (FRED, KEN_002)
c. Nobody paid n’ regard to them! (FRED, SFK_038)
d. Nobody’d no idea. (FRED, NTT_005)
e. Nobody’d got nothing, that’s the way it was. (FRED, NTT_005)

To spot true occurrences of Non-Strict NC (and not potential switches to Standard English), only cases of a pre-verbal n-indefinite co-occurring with a post-verbal one have been considered. Notice that if a pre-verbal n-word occurs in the absence of the sentential negative marker, the construction is ambiguous between Standard English and true Non-Strict NC.

For Standard English, it has been claimed in chapter 3 that the PF operation known as Obliteration removes the negative syntactic terminal, thus resulting in no lexical insertion for the interpretable negative feature that renders the sentence negative. Obliteration has been argued to be ultimately motivated by the obedience to the constraint in (9). In cases of true Non-Strict NC, the negative marker only fails to be Spelled-Out with pre-verbal n-words. The observed ambiguity between Standard English and Non-Strict NC constructions with pre-verbal n-indefinites is assumed to follow from the fact that the same PF operation, namely Obliteration, applies in both cases.

Therefore, the relevant question is not why Non-Strict NC varieties are like the Standard when n-indefinites occur pre-verbally, but why they are crucially different when they occur post-verbally. It is the case that in Standard English two PF operations –Obliteration and Impoverishment– result in two different ways of

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79 This is why in my sample from the BNC-SpS, there is only one clear example of Non-Strict NC, which is the following:

(1) And nobody’s gonna give me nothing for that are they? (BNC-SpS, KCU 7783)
expressing negation that are truth-conditionally equivalent. However, in Non-Strict NC varieties of English, post-verbal indefinites tend not to be affected by any of the two.

An account of these facts, which I develop by resorting to the concepts and machinery that were introduced in chapter 3, is given in the next section. The main claim is that in Non-Strict NC varieties of English, Agree at a distance suffices to value the [iPol: ] feature of Polº. Since n-indefinites do not have to move to Spec. NegP, which lacks the EPP-feature, Obliteration and Impoverishment are, unlike in Standard English, generally unattested with post-verbal n-indefinites.

4.5.4 On the syntactic behaviour of n-indefinites

Recall that in chapter 3, it was argued that in Standard English post-verbal n-indefinites specified with a negative polarity feature raise out from VP to Spec. NegP to satisfy the EPP-feature of Negº. This either triggers Obliteration of the negative marker, which fails to be phonologically realised, or Impoverishment of the n-indefinite, which is Spelled-Out as the default form any-. The ultimate reason for these two operations in Standard English is a Filter that prevents two negative features, which are syntactically identical (i.e. they agree), to be accidentally realised in the same Spell-Out domain. The PF operations and the Filter are repeated here as (13) and (14) for convenience.

(13) a. [Neg] Obliteration rule, Standard English
[+Neg] → Ø / ______ [+]polarity: negative]Spell-Out

b. [Neg] Impoverishment rule, Standard English
[+]polarity: negative] → [+polarity] / [+[Neg] ______ ]Spell-Out

(14) */negative marker/ /polarity morpheme/ if

(i) /negative marker/ and /polarity morpheme/ are adjacent, and

(ii) NEGATIVE MARKER and POLARITY MORPHEME agree.

To account for why (15a) is an alternative to (15b), both being truth-conditionally equivalent, it was assumed that the Vocabulary Items for the polarity morpheme that is part of indefinites in Standard English is the one in (16). While (15b) involves
Obliteration of the negative marker, and thus the insertion of (16a), (15a) is a result of Impoverishment and involves the insertion of (16c), the Elsewhere form.

(15)  
   a. I didn’t see anybody.  
   b. I saw nobody.  

(16)  
Vocabulary for Standard English indefinites

   a. [+polarity: negative] \( \leftrightarrow \) /n\(\text{au}\)/ /\(\text{\_\_}\)\(\sqrt{\text{\Root}}\)
   b. [+polarity: assertive] \( \leftrightarrow \) /s\(\text{am}\)/ /\(\text{\_\_}\)\(\sqrt{\text{\Root}}\)
   c. Elsewhere: [+polarity] \( \leftrightarrow \) /\(\text{enl}\)/ /\(\text{\_\_}\)\(\sqrt{\text{\Root}}\)

Let us start by considering some data which show that in Non-Standard varieties of English, regardless of whether they implement Strict or Non-Strict NC, Impoverishment is not a common strategy. This is illustrated in (17) for Non-Strict NC varieties.

(17)  
   a. He wasn’t no fool.                 (FRED, CON_003)  
   b. But they couldn’t do nothing with me.              (FRED, KEN_002)  
   c. But there wun’t none of that in them days.  (FRED, SFK_038)  
   d. You don’t get none now.    (FRED, NTT_005)

The question to be asked is then why n-indefinites occurring post-verbally fail to trigger Obliteration of the negative marker and do not Impoverish. It will be claimed that the answer is that they do not raise to Spec, NegP, hence not creating the configuration that would require Obliteration / Impoverishment to apply so that the Filter in (14) is not violated.

Obliteration, on the other hand, seems to operate with pre-verbal n-indefinites under the same conditions as in Standard English. This is why in the examples in (18), the subject n-indefinites do not co-occur with an overt negative marker. Notice, however, that they can co-occur with a post-verbal n-indefinite.

(18)  
   a. …and nobody used to say nothing to him. (FRED, CON_003)  
   b. Nobody said nothing about it. (FRED, KEN_002)  
   c. Nobody paid n’ regard to them! (FRED, SFK_038)  
   d. Nobody’d no idea. (FRED, NTT_005)  
   e. Nobody’d got nothing, that’s the way it was. (FRED, NTT_005)

The hypothesis that is defended here to account for the facts above is that, unlike in Standard English, Agree suffices to value the uninterpretable polarity feature of
post-verbal n-indefinites (i.e. Neg° does not carry an EPP-feature). This allows them to remain VP-internal and, hence, in a different Spell-Out domain. The result is that n-indefinites with overt negative morphology can co-occur with an overt negative marker without constituting a violation of the Filter that was argued to operate in Standard English\textsuperscript{80}. This is represented in the tree in (19).

\[
\text{(19) PolP} \\
\hspace{1cm} \text{Spell-Out domain} \\
\hspace{2cm} \text{Pol} \\
\hspace{3cm} [\text{iPol:Neg}] \\
\hspace{4cm} v^*P \\
\hspace{5cm} V' \\
\hspace{6cm} [\text{iPol:Neg}] \\
\hspace{7cm} \text{VP} \\
\hspace{8cm} \text{Spell-Out domain} \\
\hspace{9cm} \text{n-indefinite}_1 \\
\hspace{10cm} v^* \\
\hspace{11cm} V \\
\hspace{12cm} t_i \\
\hspace{13cm} \text{Agree; valuation of [iPol: ] as [iPol:Neg]} \\
\]

As shown in (20), various n-indefinites in the same clause do not trigger the application of Impoverishment. However, the pre-verbal n-indefinite in (20) triggers Obliteration.

\[
\text{(20) a. They couldn’t get nothing from nowhere. (FRED, GLA}_005) \\
\text{b. Nobody’s got time for nothing these days. (FRED, SAL}_027) \\
\]

Obliteration is also attested in constructions with an expletive, as the subject sits in Spec, v^*P, which is in the same Spell-Out domain as the sentential negative marker.

\textsuperscript{80} As shown in (1), various n-indefinites in the clause can surface with negative morphology simultaneously. In these two particular examples, the lower n-indefinite is within a PP.

\[
\text{(1) They couldn’t get nothing from nowhere. (FRED, GLA}_005) \\
\]
However, this configuration does not necessarily trigger Impoverishment of the other post-verbal n-indefinites in the clause, which remain in a lower phase.

(21) a. There were no guards in none of the presses. (FRED, NTT_014)
    b. When he came back there was no work for noone. (FRED, NTT_010)
    c. There were nowhere for nobody to go. (FRED, GLA_005)

To sum up, it has been argued in this section that in Non-Standard varieties of English n-indefinites do not generally raise to Spec, NegP, whose polarity feature lacks the EPP-property. This blocks the application of PF operations when indefinites occur post-verbally: they remain VP-internal and, thus, can surface with negative morphology and co-occur with the negative marker.

In the case of Strict NC varieties, Obliteration is not only unattested with post-verbal n-indefinites, but also with pre-verbal ones, as the Filter that forbids the co-occurrence of two negative features in the same Spell-Out domain is not part of the grammar.

4.5.5 Intra-speaker variability

In this section, cases of intra-speaker variability observed in the FRED corpus are reported. In other words, FRED contains examples of two speakers, identified as

I take that to follow from the influence of Standard English. In a way, these utterances result from a mixture of two separate grammars: on the one hand, the subject n-indefinite does not trigger Obliteration of the negative marker; on the other hand, Impoverishment of post-verbal n-indefinites is attested. It could be argued that Polº has an EPP-feature, as in Standard English and the Filter is active in the vP phase in examples (1a, b). This is why n-indefinites within the PP Impoverish. Since object n-indefinites sit in Spec, NegP, their Spell-Out is not decided until CP is sent to Transfer. At that point of the derivation, the Filter seems to be inactive. For the examples in (1c, d), on the other hand, a plausible explanation is more difficult to find; bearing in mind that Strict NC varieties are not constrained by the Filter, it is expected that Obliteration does not apply. Surprisingly, however, Impoverishment does.
CAVA_TC and KentPB, who produced both Strict and Non-Strict NC constructions in their linguistic productions. This phenomenon has been unveiled by searching examples of NC in a corpus of spontaneous speech and although it is not really widespread, it deserves some comment, as, to my knowledge, it has not been formally addressed in the literature on the syntax of NC in Non-Standard varieties of English.

The contradictory NC data produced by two of the informants of FRED are found in two transcripts, CON_004 and KEN_011, which belong to the Southwest and the Southeast dialectal areas respectively. Some of the transcripts in FRED contain data of more than one speaker, but it was checked that this was not the case for the two transcripts in question. In addition, the interviewer’s utterances were excluded from the word searches, thus eliminating the possibility that the reported examples were uttered by two different people. The alternation in (22) and (23), therefore, occurs in the speech of a single speaker in both transcripts.

(22)  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Strict} \\
\text{a. But they, nobody didn’t know your life till after you’re dead.} \\
\text{b. Nobody didn’t know.} \\
\text{Non-Strict NC} \\
\text{c. Nobody said nothing to him.}
\end{array}
\]

(23)  
\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{Strict} \\
\text{a. so that nothing didn’t lay down in the dirt.} \\
\text{b. We never used to go near the public houses, nobody didn’t much.} \\
\text{Non-Strict NC} \\
\text{c. Well they all begun snickering, nobody would own up to nothing.}
\end{array}
\]

No instances of intra-speaker variability were observed in the BNC-SpS, and even in the FRED corpus, from which a larger pool of data were obtained, this phenomenon is not common. However, it is interesting to note that our account allows us to accommodate these kind of data which, as will be seen in chapter 5, are very similar to what is attested in Catalan, a Romance language where the sentential negative marker seems to be optional in pre-verbal n-word constructions for a number of speakers. In addition, a stage in which both Strict and Non-Strict NC co-exist is expected if languages can change from one type of NC to the other. Diachronic data from Romance languages (e.g. Spanish) and the case of Catalan show that this kind of change is indeed possible.
So far it has been assumed that the crucial difference between Strict and Non-Strict NC is that in the latter, but not in the former, a language-particular condition exists that forbids the co-occurrence of negative features in the same Spell-Out domain. Given this assumption, therefore, intra-speaker variability reduces to variable commitment to the language-particular condition that bans the accidental co-occurrence of negative features in Spell-Out domains.

Potential switches from a Strict or a Non-Strict NC variety to Standard English reduce to two main circumstances: Strict NC varieties diverge from Standard English in that the former is not constrained by the Filter that bans the co-occurrence of negative features in Spell-Out domains; Standard English departs from Non-Strict NC varieties in that n-indefinites do not raise to Spec, NegP to value the [iPol:] feature of Polº, thus not triggering Obliteration with post-verbal n-indefinites.

4.5.6 The case of never

As reported in Anderwald (2002), the occurrence of never as the first element in n-indefinite + n-indefinite combinations in the BNC-SpS corpus notably outweighs that of other n-indefinites. The same trend, which was already reported in Tottie’s (1991) work based on the London-Lund corpus, can also be observed in FRED. This has led us to investigate whether never can be analysed as an n-indefinite proper or if, by contrast, it should be regarded as a negative marker, as has been suggested in the sociolinguistics literature by Cheshire (1998), as well as within the study of pidgins and creoles (Labov 1973).

In this section, I argue that the second view can account for a wide number of cases involving never that occur in the FRED corpus. Nonetheless, I also show that some room must be left for the lexical ambiguity of never.

On the basis of the high frequency of occurrence of never in a pre-verbal position in the data in FRED, it could be argued that never is an n-indefinite that diverges from other n-words such as nobody, nothing and the like in that it always (and not only when it is to be fronted) bears an uninterpretable valued Focus feature for which it can be probed to a pre-verbal position.

In the present account, extraction of never from v*P to a left peripheral position should proceed through Spec, NegP and, once in the CP phase, its negative feature should trigger Obliteration of the negative marker in Non-Strict NC varieties. Crucially, this should not be the case for Non-Standard varieties that implement Strict NC: since these varieties are not constrained by a Filter that disallows the accidental co-occurrence of two negative features in the same Spell-Out domain, never should be able to co-occur with the negative marker if it were an n-indefinite.
Interestingly, this is not what is observed in the FRED corpus for Strict NC varieties. The examples in (24b-c) and (25b) show that, contrary to what is expected, never occurs pre-verbally in n-indefinite + n-indefinite combinations (either as the first or the second element) in the absence of the sentential negative marker, while for other n-words, the negative marker is overt.

(24)  a. When we went off Kildas, to try a new ground, no one couldn’t work. (FRED, SFK_031)
    b. I never had nothing off it. (FRED, SFK_031)
    c. No one never interfered with doun on the store. (FRED, SFK_031)

(25)  a. And nobody hadn’t’ve told I what it were for. (FRED, WILL_010)
    b. And nobody’d never ask her any questions. (FRED, WILL_010)

Examples (24a) and (25a) are evidence if favour of assuming that the speakers in the files SFK_031 and WILL_010 have a system of Strict NC. Therefore, (24b-c) and (25b) should have an overt negative marker if never is a regular n-indefinite. The question is, then: if for the speakers in (24) and (25) there seems to be no Filter disallowing accidental occurrences of repeated negative features in the same Spell-Out domain, as has been claimed to be the case for the expression of Strict NC, why should the Filter be triggering Obliteration in the morphological component in the case of never?

The data above are not problematic if it is assumed that never is a negator that carries [iNeg] features. This has already been suggested in Cheshire (1998: 131), who claims that never ‘should be seen as a negative item in its own right rather than as equivalent to the words in the class of [n]o-negation expressions with which it is conventionally classed’.

In cases of Strict NC, the accidental repetition of negative features is perfectly tolerated at any stages in the derivation, as shown by the fact that the negative marker always co-occurs with n-indefinites in Strict NC. The analysis of never as a negator allows us to group (24b-c) and (25b) with the rest of the examples of Strict NC without having to claim that these varieties can exceptionally resort to Obliteration, or that they are sensitive to the relevant Filter only in the case of never.

Never as a negator is assumed to bear an uninterpretable valued Focus feature, too. This is in line with Cheshire (1998: 132), who defines never as ‘an emphatic

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82 Zeijlstra (2004) argues that the negative marker in Strict NC languages is semantically non-negative. What conveys negative meaning to the clause is an abstract operator that is merged into the structure so that no uninterpretable negative features are left unchecked. Under this view, never, if assumed to be a negator with interpretable negative features, would be taking up the function of the abstract operator and not that of -n’t.
negator, whose time reference is determined by the linguistic context in which it occurs’. She also observes that it is not always the case that speakers use *never* to refer to universal temporal negation (i.e. the action that is predicated will obtain in none of the potential occasions); rather, she comments on evidence that show that *never* is sometimes used to refer to single episodes in the past. Some of the examples she considers for the non-universal, episodic use of *never* have been listed in (26).

(26)  

a. He got ready to spring down from on high right among the spears of the goblins… But he never leaped.  

b. Kay never went to Delft on Tuesday … she stayed with our friends in Rotterdam (American university professor)  
   (Cheshire 1998: 130)  

c. Marie: I had to do a lot of banging and my n my hands as you can see took quite a long time … about three or four hours just to do it  
   Jenny: Was that at school you made that?  
   Marie: No I never went to school today.  
   (Cheshire 1998: 134)

In the case of Non-Strict NC, conversely, it has been claimed that the repetition of negative features is offending if these are sent to Spell-Out in the same Transfer operation, i.e. if they are in the same Spell-Out domain. This is the context where Obliteration applies. If *never* is argued to be a negator, it should be subject to Obliteration when occurring in n-indefinite + *never* combinations. The data show that this is not the case, though. Therefore, it is better to assume that it is a regular n-indefinite that overtly raises from a v*-P-adjunct position to Spec, NegP. This triggers Obliteration of the negative marker. Insertion of *ever* as a result of Impoverishment is not attested, probably because of the Focus feature, which always places *never* in a pre-verbal position.

In the corpus there are other clear cases that show that *never* is not always a negator. Consider, for instance, the examples in (27), (28) and (29). In these cases, we would be forced to assume that two negative elements with interpretable negative features can co-occur without cancelling each other out if *never* was uniformly analysed as a negator.

(27) We never didn’t know what that meant.  
   (FRED, LAN_012)
In these examples, *never* must be analysed as an n-word that carries uninterpretable polarity features with a negative value. This means that the ambiguity of *never* between a negator and an n-indefinite is reduced to the (un)interpretability of its [Neg] features. Hence, it can be concluded that *never* is in a transitional stage: it was traditionally an n-indefinite, but it can nowadays be a proper negator in some Non-Standard varieties of English.

### 4.5.7 Hiberno-English any-subjects

Labov (1972a: 135) claims that subject n-indefinites such as *nobody* or *nothing* are derived by incorporation of negation into the indeterminate *any*-forms. The rule that is responsible for this operation is labelled Negattrac and is claimed to be obligatory in all varieties of English for subjects. For objects, conversely, Negattract is optional, thus resulting in the following paradigm:

(30) a. Nobody phoned us.
    b. *Anybody didn’t phone us.
    c. Mary phoned nobody.
    d. Mary didn’t phone anybody.

Contra Labov, it is assumed in the present piece of research that lexical items such as *nobody, nothing* and the like are not derived by an incorporation rule. Rather, in line with Zeijlstra (2004) they are claimed to be indefinites that can be morphologically marked for negation. Translated into the framework in which this dissertation is embedded (see chapter 2), this means that n-words carry a (valued) uninterpretable polarity feature. According to Pesetsky and Torrego (2004), uninterpretable features (regardless of whether they are valued or not) have to enter in an Agree relation with an interpretable counterpart to be marked for deletion.

*Any*-words are just one possible phonological exponent for indefinites. *Any*-indefinites are the phonological realisations of indefinites with a polarity morpheme valued as neither assertive nor negative, or else, the result of an Impoverishment process in a particular (negative) context. In the present account, Impoverishment cannot affect pre-verbal n-indefinites when the feature this operation targets is to be Spelled-Out topmost.
Such a limitation correlates with the traditional observation that polarity items require to be bound (i.e. properly c-commanded) by a suitable operator. This is why they are banned from occurring in subject position in negative sentences: (31b) is ruled out because the any-word has raised to a position where it cannot be c-commanded by the negative operator.

Since the absence of subject any-indefinites has been assumed to be a property of all varieties of English (Labov 1972a, b), the data in (31), which have been reported to occur in Hiberno-English (Harris 1984; Henry 1995; Filppula 1999), are of great interest here.

(31)

a. Any country couldn’t stand that.
b. Anybody won’t know where we went.
c. Now, anything is no sin.

(Filppula 1999: 180)

The data in (31) have traditionally been analysed as challenging Labov’s (1972a, b) claim that Negattrac is obligatory for subjects in all varieties of English. In addition, these data are also problematic for the general theory of NPI-licensing, as the any-words are not c-commanded by negation83.

However, if any-subjects could be analysed as something different from a polarity item, the data in (31) would no longer be problematic. Not being polarity items, any-subjects would not necessarily have to be subject to the c-command condition that holds for PI licensing.

This is actually the position that I will take here. The remainder of the section is devoted to arguing that any-words in these HE constructions are not NPIs, but,

83 Duffield (1993) tries to account for these constructions in syntactic terms. He assumes that they are NPIs (so they must be bound by negation at some point of the derivation), and proposes that, to be properly licensed, at least one Case-marked member of the NPI-chain must be c-commanded by a negative operator. The main implication of such an assumption is that NP-traces could count for NPI-licensing if they can be Case-marked. This seems to be the case, as shown by independent evidence related to the possibility of finding lexical subjects in non-finite clauses and the phenomenon of Single Concord. Spec, TP (which is below AgrP, the final landing site of inflected verbs) is taken to be a Case-position, so a trace in Spec, TP is argued to be c-commanded by Neg, which means that even when NPIs occur in subject position, there is at least one Case-marked member of the chain (i.e. the trace in SpecTP) which is c-commanded by Neg. Since SpecTP is not a possible Case-position in Standard English (SE) subject NPI-licensing is ruled out and the difference between HE and SE in terms of NPI-licensing options is reduced to a difference in Case-marking possibilities. Duffield’s account, however, does not capture the fact that, as discussed later in the section, any-subjects seem to occur only in non-episodic contexts.
rather, free-choice items (FCIs)\(^{84}\). As is well-known, FCIs are not subject to the same licensing requirements as polarity items\(^{85}\).

Harris (1984) suggests that sentences like the ones in (31) are available in HE due to the influence of the Gaelic Irish (GI) substratum. GI does not have negative indefinites like Standard English *nobody*; rather, in GI ‘[n]egation must instead be expressed as a clause-initial particle attached to the main verb, and indefinite NPs or adverbials within its scope may be marked as polarity items’ (Acquaviva 1996: 287). This is shown in (32).

(32)  
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Ní thiocfadh le haon duine a chloisteáil.} \\
& \text{neg could-come with any person his hearing} \\
& \text{‘Nobody could hear him’} \\
& \text{(Acquaviva 1996: 287)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{Ní raibh aon duine sa bhaile.} \\
& \text{neg be + past any person in-the home} \\
& \text{‘Nobody was at home’} \\
& \text{(Harris 1984: 305)}
\end{align*}

However, there is a fundamental difference between the examples in (31) and the ones in (32): while the *any*-constituents under study are properly c-commanded by sentential negation in GI, they are not in HE. Thus, while the GI data canonically fit into the classical theory of PI licensing, the HE data clearly do not. Besides, similar examples to the ones in (31) are also attested in Old English (Mazzon 1999: 38), as shown in (33). This indicates that while it may well be the case that GI reinforces the use of structures such as the ones in (31), it is not the ultimate source for the HE construction under study.

(33)  
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{þe ænig mon ne mæg monnum areccan?} \\
& \text{that any man not can to men explain} \\
& \text{‘…that no man can explain to men?’}
\end{align*}

\(^{84}\) This possibility was suggested to me by Josep Quer.

\(^{85}\) As discussed in this section, whether NPI-*any* and FCI-*any* are just two possible interpretations of *any* or if, by contrast, they are two different lexical items is controversial. Assuming, in line with the Distributed Morphology model, that *any* is the phonological exponent of a feature-bundle, NPI-*any* could be distinguished from FCI-*any* in that the former bears a polarity feature, whereas the latter does not. The same phonological exponent is inserted for both feature-specifications, but FCI-*any* needs to occur in a semantically appropriate environment (i.e. a non-episodic context). Why Standard English and most Non-Standard varieties of English do not allow FCI-*any* to occur in subject position in negative non-episodic contexts is probably due to markedness: since a more specific form exists (i.e. n-indefinites) for negative contexts, an FCI-*any* subject is not a possibility in negative sentences even if the context is non-episodic.
b. And riht is þæt ænig cristen man blod ne þycge
   ‘…and the law is that no Christian drinks blood’
   (Traugott 1992: 268)

   (34)
   a. I didn’t see anybody in the park.
   b. Anybody likes to have some free time.

It is widely argued in the literature that any has two different readings. As illustrated in (34), any (and its derivates) can be interpreted as a negative polarity item (NPI) in the first example and as an FCI in the second.

Dayal (2004) argues that any is a universal. However, she claims that its universality can be conjoined with an existential statement. That is, from Dayal’s point of view, there are two ways in which universality can be expressed: if any is a universal quantifier on its own, universality is said to be expressed directly; by contrast, it may be the case that any is supplying a condition of universality to an existential statement, which would be a case of indirect universality. Dayal’s (2004) claim amounts to saying that in those cases where FCI any seems best interpreted as an existential, it must still be regarded as a universal, the existential meaning coming from other elements in the sentence.

Giannakidou (2001) and Horn (2001), on the other hand, take FCIs to be indefinites with no inherent quantificational force, which they inherit from other elements in the sentence. Giannakidou further claims that they are polarity items which typically occur in non-veridical non-episodic contexts. Such an analysis stems from the

86 Giannakidou (1998, 1999) makes a distinction between Affective Polarity Items (APIs) and Negative Polarity Items (NPs). APIs are PIs that need to be licensed by a non-veridical operator such as a modal verb, questions and negation, among others. By contrast, NPs need to be licensed by antiveridical operators,
observation that FCI *any* seems to be able to contribute existential meaning in sentences such as the one in (35) below, which can be paraphrased as ‘Press some key, it doesn’t matter which one’. Horn calls these kind of examples free-choice imperatives, and notes that they do not function as commands, but as requests or invitations. This amounts to saying that the meaning of *any* does not equal that of the universal quantifier *every*, nor the existential *some*.

(35) Press any key to continue.

Giannakidou also notes that the fact that FCI *any* differs from other universals in that it cannot contribute a universal reading in isolation remains unexplained in the approach that treats *any* as a universal quantifier. Actually, the universal meaning of FCI *any* seems to come from an external operator.

In the light of these data, Giannakidou (2001) claims that if *any* is assumed to be a universal quantifier, it cannot be claimed that there is just one *any*. Rather, it must be treated as quantificationally ambiguous, the research question being, therefore, how to decide what the meaning of FCI *any* is if it sometimes contributes a universal reading and sometimes an existential one. The answer to this question is to be found, according to Giannakidou (2001), in languages which, unlike English, display different paradigms for FCIs and APIs.

The data from Greek, and other languages such as Spanish and Catalan, where FCIs are morphologically distinct from APIs is interpreted by Giannakidou (2001) as evidence for treating *any* as an indefinite à la Heim (1982) which ‘contributes merely a predicate and a variable to be bound by an intensional Q(uantificational) operator, binding also a situation or a world variable, and which must be present in the structure higher up’ (Giannakidou 2001: 665). Under this view, if the binding operator has existential force, *any* will receive an existential interpretation; but if the binding operator carries universal force, *any* will be interpreted as a universal.

Giannakidou (2001) also discusses *almost / absolutely* modification and the possibility of FCI *any* to co-occur with exceptives, which are two of the arguments that have been commonly used in the literature to argue that FCI *any* is a universal. Judging from some Greek and Spanish data, she concludes that *almost* and *absolutely* modification is not a valid test for universality. Actually, she claims there is evidence that *almost* modification is possible whenever there is some kind of plurality implied in the item that *almost* modifies. With respect to *almost / absolutely* modification, Horn (2005: 15) points out that the restriction of *almost* is not that it needs to occur with universal quantifiers, but that it modifies determiners which are a subset of the non-veridical ones. Negation and the preposition *without* are antiveridical operators. See section 1.2.1.2.
that can be interpreted as precise values. Likewise, *absolutely* modifies scalar endpoints, not only universals.

Concerning the ability of FCI *any* to occur with exceptives, which are phrases introduced with *but, save and except*, among others, Giannakidou (2001) observes that despite being generally assumed that exceptives can only be associated with universal quantifiers, there is some cross-linguistic evidence that shows that this is not an accurate claim. Horn (2001) gives the following examples to illustrate that both FCI *any* and NPI *any* can host exceptives, and further adds that other non-universals such as *little but I except* can host exceptives, too.

(36) a. I’d live in *any* big city except for New York.            (FCI *any*)
b. I wouldn’t live in *any* big city except for New York.            (NPI *any*)

The conclusion is, therefore, that the ability of FCI *any* to occur with exceptive phrases is not a reliable test for its universality. Dayal (2004) objects to such criticism by pointing out that these two tests do not show that FCI *any* is not a universal, but rather, that they fail to distinguish universal elements from others which are not.

A number of asymmetries between universal quantifiers and FCIs are also discussed in Giannakidou’s (2001) paper. While these differences constitute a problem for the universalist account of *any*, they are compatible with the indefinite analysis, as they are evidence that FCI *any* behaves as an indefinite. The asymmetries are the following: unlike true universals, FCIs can be used as predicate nominals and can bind pronouns in donkey-anaphora, which is a property of existentials; unlike universals, FCIs cannot take inverse scope. If FCI *any* were a universal, it would be expected to behave on a par with other universals.

Finally, Giannakidou (2001) discusses a number of constructions where the interpretation of FCIs seems to be existential rather than universal, such as imperatives, permissions, modals, conditionals and relative clauses. She also shows that FCIs display quantificational variability with Q-adverbs such as *usually* and *always*. While these constructions are a problem for an analysis of FCIs as universals, Giannakidou shows that they can be easily accommodated under the indefinite approach.

Examples of supplementary and numeral *any* such as (37) are discussed by the defenders of the indefinite approach as evidence against the universal nature of FCI *any*. Since *any* cannot be replaced by another universal quantifier such as *every*, these examples are problematic for the universalist view.

(37) Take an apple, any apple.
Dayal (2004) accounts for the facts above by claiming that the antecedent clause in (37), *take an apple*, states that an apple will be chosen in at least one accessible world. That is, the antecedent clause supplies an existential statement. The supplementary clause *any apple*, on the other hand, contributes universality as well as another possibility modal. In other words, (37) could be paraphrased as in (38). The second modal that supplementary *any* introduces has been underlined.

(38) Take an apple / it could be any apple you choose.

Dayal assumes that the core meaning of FCI *any* is direct universality. Indirect universality only arises when other elements contribute the existential meaning. She accounts for examples like (35), repeated here as (39) for convenience, by claiming that world knowledge creates an existential bound: we know that there is more than one key in a keyboard and thus it can be claimed that the context against which the sentence in (39) is interpreted supplies the existential meaning—like antecedent *any*—while *any* contributes a condition of universality. She also claims that if there is no indefinite in the antecedent clause, there cannot be an existential bound to the universality of *any*. This is illustrated in (40).

(39) Press any key to continue.

(40) *Peter could buy the house, any house.

I align with the defenders of the indefinite view of FCI *any* and assume that it occurs in generic or non-episodic contexts. Unlike NPIs, FCIs do not contain any lexical requirements to be bound by negation or a negative element; rather, they need to be bound by non-veridical operators (Giannakidou 2001).

I propose that examples such as (31) and (33) for HE and OE respectively contain FCI *any* in non-episodic contexts. More examples of HE are provided in (41). The context has been included so it is clear that the *any*-subjects do not occur in sentences that can possibly receive a single episode interpretation.

(41) a. but from that day out, anyone that was on the meitheal, or anyone in the parish never said a bit t’him, or never done…made a move to have sport on him or anything like that.

b. Although anybody don’t seem to like to live in Russia… They’re all trying to get out of it.
c. You know, any fellow wouldn’t bother joining if the wasn’t interested enough to try.

(Filppula 1986)

In all the examples that have been found in the literature, any-subjects occur in non-episodic contexts. They either contain modal verbs, which are non-veridical operators, or are construed with a tense (e.g. simple present) that forces a generic interpretation of the sentence. Notice that (41a) contains never, which is clearly interpreted as expressing universal time reference, as it is in the context of the expression from that day out.

Further evidence in favour of the view that any-subjects are indefinites in HE comes from the fact that they display scope differences with respect to universal quantifiers. Filppula (1999: 180) reports having observed the following data in his corpus of HE.

(42)

a. Everybody don’t benefit by tourist at all.
Interpretation: Not everybody benefits from tourists at all.

b. Everybody doesn’t use it to a good advantage.
Interpretation: Not everybody uses it to a good advantage.

These data show that universal quantifiers can occasionally surface to the left of negation, while their interpretation is the one where they scope under the negative operator. This is not so with any-subjects, which, as (43) shows, are interpreted as scoping over negation.

87 Interestingly, there is some counterevidence to this claim in African American English. In the script of the film Malcolm X, owed to Baldwin, Perl and Lee (1992), there is a passage uttered by Malcolm X that reads as follows:

‘… Father means you’re taking care of those children. Just ‘cause you made them that don’t mean you’re a father. Anybody can make a baby, but anybody can’t take care of them. Anyone can go and get a woman but anybody can’t take care of a woman. This is the type of teaching that the honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us so we can build the moral fiber of our people’

In the following examples any-subjects in negated sentences have been paired with affirmative sentences containing FCI any-words. However, the interpretation is different from the HE examples in that the any-subjects scope under negation, as was the case for the universal quantifiers in (42).

(1) Anyone can make a baby, but anybody can’t take care of them (= not everybody can…)
(2) Anyone can go and take a woman, but anybody can’t take care of a woman (= not everybody can…)
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(43)

a. Any country couldn’t stand that.
   Logical form: For every country x is such that x couldn’t stand it.

b. Ængum ne marg se craeft losian
   anyone not can the skill abandon
   ‘Nobody can abandon his skill’
   Lf: For every person x is such that x cannot abandon his skill.

The OE and HE data seem to show that any-subjects are not inherently universals. However, the examples that have been examined also show that any-subjects seem to acquire a universal reading when not occurring under the scope of negation.

If any-subjects are treated as FCIs in HE and OE, the examples in (31), (33) and (41) can be accommodated: as required by FCIs, all the contexts any-subjects occur in are non-episodic; moreover, they all contain non-veridical operators (e.g. modals, generic and habitual operators) other than negation that can bind the FCI. In addition, in being considered indefinites, it can be claimed that they inherit (universal) quantificational features from such operators.

4.6 African American English

This section is devoted to the description and analysis of negation in African American English (AAE), which is one of the most attractive varieties of English to study the issue of NC since, as pointed out by Martin and Wolfram (1998: 19), ‘researchers have noted that AAE speakers tend to use more pleonastic negatives [= NC] than Anglo-American speakers of vernacular dialects’. As reported in the pioneering work by Labov (1972a, b), AAE is certainly renowned for allowing a large number of n-words in a clause that will ultimately be interpreted as containing one single negation. Labov (1972a: 178) refers to such a fact as ‘the extraordinary proliferation of the negative’, and uses the examples in (44) to illustrate it.

(44)

a. Once you get an even break, don’t fuck it up, cause you might not
   never get no time see ‘im again. Larry H., 15, Jets

b. I ain’t never had no trouble with none of ’em. William T., 25,
   Florida

c. You better not never steal nothin’ from me. Jesse H., 16, Jets

d. He ain’t not no Jenkins. Speedy J., 15, Cobras

In addition, in AAE, it is often observed that when the subject is an n-indefinite, the canonical subject-auxiliary word order is inverted, yielding sentences like the one in
(45). This phenomenon, which is referred to in the literature as negative inversion (Labov 1972a; Martin and Wolfram 1998; Rickford 1999; Howe and Walker 2000; Green 2002) is addressed in subsection 4.6.3.

(45) Don’t nothing come to a sleeper but a dream. (Bf, 60s)

(example from Green 2002: 78)

In subsection 4.6.1 a brief introduction to the history of AAE is provided, and two opposing hypotheses about its origin are outlined. In subsection 4.6.2, I present some data of NC in AAE that are available in the literature and show how they can be accommodated under our present analysis. The examples where subject n-indefinites follow the negated auxiliary are addressed in section 4.6.3. In line with Sells, Rickford and Wasow (1995, 1996), I have assumed that while most examples with negative inversion can be analysed as involving movement of the auxiliary to the left-periphery of the clause, some existential constructions have to be analysed by means of a construction that does not allow movement at all. For the auxiliary inversion analysis, it is assumed that movement is triggered by Focus.

### 4.6.1 Introduction to the history of AAE

The variety that is here referred to as African American English has received many different names throughout the years: Negro dialect, Negro English, Black English, Black Vernacular English and the most recent African American English are just a few (Green 2002: 6). However, all these different labels ultimately name a fully-fledged grammatical system that is different from other varieties of American English (Dillard 1972; Labov 1998), but which also shares some features (e.g. NC and the absence of the third person singular present tense -s) with other Non-Standard varieties of English (Martin and Wolfram 1998: 17; Rickford 1999: 11).

Two hypotheses have been put forward about the origin of AAE which are commonly known as the creolist and the anglicist hypotheses (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998). The former defends the view that AAE is based on a creole (Dillard 1972; Rickford 1998 among others) and emphasises the existence of a number of similarities between AAE and English-based creoles. A process of decreolisation is assumed to have taken place through time: as a result of a language-contact situation with the surrounding varieties, AAE became similar to the other varieties of English. Gullah, a recognised creole which has survived to present day in the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, is regarded as evidence for the creole origin of AAE.
The *anglicist* hypothesis (Mufwene 2000; Poplack 2000; Walker 2000; Howe and Walker 2000, among others) by contrast, maintains that AAE can ultimately be traced back to the varieties of English spoken in the British Isles, which are also the source of other Anglo-American dialects. That is, when African slaves arrived to North America, they brought different African languages with them, but after some generations, only traces of these African languages survived, since African American speakers learned the white English varieties that surrounded them. Gullah is, under this view, seen as ‘an anomaly among black varieties’ (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998: 176).

Although the debate between these two hypotheses is still ongoing and raises controversy among scholars, I will not take a position with respect to which of the two accounts is superior, as what is relevant for the present dissertation is the fact that, nowadays, the system of negation in AAE is comparable to that of other Non-Standard English varieties regardless of whether AAE originated as a creole or resulted from language contact with Non-Standard British English varieties. This sketchy introduction to the history of AAE is, thus, meant to acknowledge that, apart from synchronic descriptions and discussions of the phonological, lexical, morphological and syntactic features of AAE, the origins of AAE also generate a deep interest.

Since the aim of the present dissertation is to provide a syntactic account of NC in several Non-Standard varieties of English, the remainder of the section is devoted to providing and analysing data on NC and negative inversion in AAE. The underlying idea is that what has been said in chapter 3 and in the first half of the present chapter can also be successfully extended to the case of AAE.

### 4.6.2 NC in AAE

This section contains examples collected from a number of published works on AAE. Some of them belong to the classical literature on the topic, whereas others are fairly recent and include data taken from songs, movies and the media alongside spontaneous data. Following this practice, complementary data have been used from a fiction book (*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston)88 and a

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88 According to Green (2002: 178, 179), ‘[t]he works of Zora Neale Hurston are particularly noted for the language of the characters and the use of black dialect. (…) Hurston uses a fair amount of phonological, syntactic, semantic and lexical features in her representation of AAE. (…) Hurston’s characters spoke the language of folk, a language they could use to express their innermost thoughts, growth and connection to the culture. This language can certainly be characterized by its richness, expressiveness and metaphorical properties, but it is important to note the specifically AAE linguistic patterns Hurston used to make the speech appear to be authentic.’
movie script (Save the Last Dance written in 1999 by Adler, Johnson and Edwards) to back up theoretical points about AAE.

After close observation of the data that was gathered from the literature on AAE, one can conclude that the contrast between Strict and Non-Strict NC (see chapters 1 and 3) is not of much relevance to the scholars who have studied the linguistic features of the Non-Standard variety spoken by most African Americans. For instance, it could be concluded, by looking at the data in Green (2002), that NC in AAE is Strict. That is, the sentential negative marker always co-occurs with n-indefinites. This is illustrated in (46) and (47) for post-verbal and pre-verbal n-indefinites respectively.

(46) a. I sure hope it don’t be no leak after they finish. (Bm, 60s)
b. If you don’t do nothing but farm work, your social security don’t be nothing. (Bm, 60s)
c. Bruce don’t want no teacher telling him nothing about no books.
d. I don’t never have no problems. I jus’ don’ like the stuff that be happening. (Bf on national news television interview)
e. Sometimes it didn’t have no chalk, no books, no teacher. (Bm, 80)
f. I ain’t never seen nobody preach under announcements. (Bm, 50s)

(Green 2002: 77)

(47) a. No game don’t last all night.
b. Nobody can’t tell you it wasn’t meant for you.
c. Nothing don’t come to a sleeper but a dream.

(Green 2002: 79)

Describing AAE as a Strict NC variety is consistent with Wolfram’s (2004: 332) claim that ‘AAE also participates in a type of NC that involves a preverbal indefinite and verb negated as in Nobody don’t like him’. However, the issue of whether AAE implements Strict or Non-Strict NC is not as straightforward as it may seem. Consider the data in (48) below.

(48) a. Nobody don’t like that.
b. Nobody ain’t never gonna make him take nothing no more.
c. Nobody saw nothing out there that looked like no bear.
d. Nobody got no gas.
e. Never say that to nobody.

(Martin and Wolfram 1998: 19 and 21)
The examples in (48a) and (48b) are instances of Strict NC, but the sentences in (48c-e) are clear examples of Non-Strict NC. This is very much in line with Labov’s 1972b: 806) claim that ‘NEGCONCORD99 is never obligatory to the pre-verbal position’. In other words, in Labov (1972a, b) it was already observed that the sentential negative marker did not necessarily attach to auxiliaries, do, or modals when the indefinite occurred in a pre-verbal position. This leads us to conclude that while Strict NC is quite widespread in AAE, instances of Non-Strict NC are also observed. Labov (1972a: 180; 1972b: 806) reports the following:

(49)  
(a) Nobody was after ‘im. Lawrence W., 15, Jets
(b) Nobody fights fair. Henry N., 29, Bronx

Non-Strict NC is also attested in the movie script of the film Save the last dance, which is about the experience of a white adolescent who has to start a new life in a neighbourhood dominated by AAE speakers. Although the sample of data displaying NC is rather small, the data show that there is a tendency towards using negative inversion when subject n-indefinites co-occur with the sentential negative marker, as illustrated in (50). These examples co-exist with at least one example of Non-Strict NC, reported in (51), where the negative marker has been affected by Obliteration.

(50)  
(a) Wasn’t nobody tryin’ to read them though.  
(b) Ain’t nobody watchin’ you but me90.
(51) Nobody’s as fly as me.

By contrast, in Zora Neale Hurston’s book Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937, re-edited in 1991)91, there are many instances of Strict NC, as illustrated in (52). There are also some instances of Strict NC with never as a negator, (53), and two instances of Non-Strict NC, listed in (54).

(52)  
(a) Well, nobody don’t know if it’s anything to tell or not. (p. 5)
(b) Nothin’ couldn’t ketch me dese few steps Ah’rn goin’ (p. 7)
(c) None of ‘em didn’t even remember whut his name wuz, but dey all knewed de bloodhound part by heart. (p. 14)
(d) But nothing can’t stop you from wishin’. (p. 21)

99 NEGCONCORD is ‘an optional rule for almost all dialects of English. In this respect, it resembles negative postponing of the standard language. Both represent rightward movement of the negative beyond the verb, and they seem to share a strongly emphatic character.’ (Labov 1972b: 803).

90 Notice that this sentence could also be interpreted as ‘There isn’t nobody watchin’ you but me’.

91 Z. N. Hurston uses eye dialect: the spelling is meant to reflect a particular pronunciation.
In short, the data that have been considered show that both Strict and Non-Strict NC are observed in AAE. This alternation can be taken to indicate that AAE may occasionally obey the Filter that prevents the accidental repetition of negative features in Spell-Out domains, which was shown to trigger Obliteration of the negative marker in Standard English when it co-occurred with pre-verbal n-indefinites and post-verbal n-indefinites, which raised to Spec, NegP, and when it co-occurred with subject n-indefinites in Non-Strict NC varieties.

However, as will be discussed in further sections, even if it is assumed that AAE can occasionally be observed to make use of Obliteration (supposedly triggered to undo a configuration with too many negative features in the same Spell-Out domain), it is clear from the data that it does so under very restricted conditions that will be accurately defined.

Summarising, let us assume that while AAE mostly implements Strict NC, it sometimes switches to Non-Strict NC. Given this possibility, cases of intra-speaker variability (see section 4.5.5) are also expected to occur in AAE. This is indeed the case, as seen in the speech of Robby, one of the speakers of AAE that appear in a non-fiction piece of writing by John Wideman, as reported in Green (2002).

Another clear case of intra-speaker variability is attested in the published data on NC for early AAE: the example is found in Howe and Walker (2000: 129), who include, after each example, the variety it was produced in (i.e. SE, which stands for Samaná English), the speaker’s identification and the location of the token. For (55) and (56) below, therefore, it is sure that the same speaker produced both Strict and Non-Strict NC constructions. For (55), notice the example in (c): inside the sentence I have marked in italics, there is an occurrence of a subject n-indefinite in the

(53) a. Ah never called mah Grandma nothin’ but Nanny, cause dat’s what everybody on de place called her. (p. 12)
    b. But nothin’ never hurt me ‘cause de Lawd knowed how it was. (p. 24)
    c. Den de big bell ring in Atlanta and all de men in gray uniforms had to go to Moultrie, and bury their swords in de ground to show they was never to fight about slavery no mo. (p. 25)
    d. Mah fust wife never bothered me ‘bout choppin’ no wood nohow. (p. 33)

(54) a. A whole heap uh talk and nobody doin’ nothin’ (p. 43)
    b. Nobody else on earth kin hold uh candle tuh you, baby (p. 132)
absence of the negative marker which is assumed to have undergone Obliteration. The rest of the examples in (55)\textsuperscript{92} are instances of Strict NC.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(55)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item A new day’s starting and nobody don’t like it. Nobody don’t want to be here, (p. 230)
\item My dream’s coming true. Ain’t nothing in the way. (p. 125)
\item Them kids loved me, I could get them to do things nobody else could. This one named Timmy. Ain’t nobody ever heard him say a word. (p. 136)
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

(Green 2002: 194. From John Wideman’s Brothers and Keepers, 1984)

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(56)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item Nobody here went (SE/003/625)
\item Nobody didn’t go (SE/003/625) (Howe and Walker 2000: 129)
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

Let us conclude this section by paying attention to two facts about AAE that may complicate the task of accounting for NC in such a variety. First, although NC is extremely frequent in AAE and much more widely attested than in other Non-Standard varieties of English, it is not absolutely categorical. For instance, Labov (1972a: 184-185) reports the use of a Standard English form by one girl, Pam, who had been almost consistently using NC in her speech. It had been suggested in the conversation that fortune-telling could result in the death of someone’s family, to what Pam uttered (57). Very interestingly, some time later, Pam also produced (58), which contains NC.

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(57)]
No. I don’t want anybody to die in my family.
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(58)]
They ain’t nobody died in my family.
\end{enumerate}

The second fact to take into account is that AAE speakers also produce sentences where n-indefinites occur in the absence of an overt negative marker. Howe (2005: 191) reports the following examples, which are taken from rap songs:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(59)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item y’all talkin’ loud plus y’all sayin nuthin’. (Madlib, Real Eyes, 1:43)
\item I’m never hittin’ no coke, that’s no joke. (Madlib, Astro travelling, 0:36)
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{92} All these examples correspond to the speech of Robby.
c. to this I be no stranger.  
   (Phife (A Tribe Called Quest), Rumble in the Jungle, 1:34)

d. we gonna get paid regardless, so if it’s no crowd we could just pretend.  
   (J-Live, add-a-cipher, 3:37)

e. say goodbye, you got no class.  
   (Redman, Maaad Crew, 1:06)

f. your armour no match for me.  
   (Diverse, Certified, 2:08)

g. I see no changes.  
   (2Pac, Changes, 0:17)

The almost- (but not total-) categorical nature of NC in AAE can be argued to follow from two main properties of negation in AAE. First, the polarity feature of Polº in AAE does not generally have the EPP-property, so the right configuration for PF operations to apply with post-verbal n-indefinites if the Filter is active does not obtain. Occasionally, Polº is, like in Standard English, endowed with the EPP-feature, which accounts for the occurrence of constructions where n-indefinites do not depend on an overt negative marker. Second, Impoverishment does not seem to be part of the grammar of AAE, which tolerates the co-occurrence of redundant negative morphology.

93 Cases of multiple NC like (46c), (48b) and (48c) are difficult to analyse in a uniform fashion. The example in (46c), here repeated as (1), may be accounted for by assuming that want is a restructuring verb in AAE, thus taking a VP complement. The negation in the matrix clause can then license the indefinites within the VP complement of the main verb.

Bruce don’t want no teacher telling him nothing about no books.

By contrast, the examples in (48b) and (48c), here repeated as (2), are more complex in terms of structure.

a. Nobody ain’t never gonna make him take nothing no more.

b. Nobody saw nothing out there that looked like no bear.

In future research, I plan to investigate to what extent the examples in (2) can be analysed as involving Laka’s (1990) C[Neg]. The research question would be whether it is possible for n-indefinites in deeply embedded positions to establish an Agree relation with the uninterpretable polarity feature of a Cº head. Laka defends the view that negative complementisers are selected by verbs such as deny or doubt in Standard English, which allows embedded NPIs to be licensed, as shown in (3).

   (Laka 1990: 169)

The examples in (4) show that the inherently negative feature of a verb such as deny is not able to license NPIs. These are licensed only if deny selects for a Cº head.

   (Laka 1990: 169)
In general lines, Strict NC is more widely attested than Non-Strict NC in AAE. Within the present proposal, this amounts to saying that AAE is not generally sensitive to the Filter against the accidental co-occurrence of negative features in Spell-Out domains.

However, it has also been shown that AAE can sometimes implement Non-Strict NC. Therefore, it is plausible to assume that, for a number of speakers of AAE, Obliteration, which is ultimately triggered by the language-particular condition that disallows the presence of too many negative features in Spell-Out domains, is part of their grammar.

In AAE, regardless of whether it implements Strict or Non-Strict NC, negative inverted structures contain an overt negative marker are attested. Next section provides an answer as to why this is possible even in speakers that have a tendency to produce examples that are typical of a Non-Strict NC variety. Recall that the restriction in Non-Strict NC with respect to the co-occurrence of subject and fronted n-indefinites and the negative marker follows from a language-particular constraint that disallows having too many negative features in the same Spell-Out domain. This means that negative inverted structures with an overt negative marker should not be attested in the productions of AAE speakers who use Non-Strict AAE, contrary to fact.

94 Only a very few examples of long-distance licensing of n-indefinites have been found in the FRED data. Some examples belong to Strict NC varieties, which have been argued not to be sensitive to the Filter. The example in (2) is from a Non-Strict NC variety, whereas for the examples in (3), there is not enough evidence to decide whether they belong to Strict or Non-Strict NC varieties.

(1) a. I didn’t want to see no football. (FRED, CON_005)
b. You can’t have no-one write. (FRED, CON_005)
c. I didn’t get the chance to have no recreation. (FRED, KEN_004)
d. I didn’t bother to go to no other pit once I was idle. (FRED, GLA_003)
e. I’ve never been to market to buy no heifers. (FRED, SOM_005)

(2) We didn’t use to take notice of them. (FRED, CON_003)

(3) a. You won’t never want to touch nothing. (FRED, SFK_028)
b. They don’t want to shoot no nets. (FRED, SFK_023)
c. They didn’t use to pay no regard. (FRED, SFK_016)
d. You haven’t got to work no titlers. (FRED, SFK_036)
4.6.3 Negative inversion in AAE

As introduced in the previous section, even when AAE comes as a Non-Strict NC variety, negative inversion (NI henceforth) is attested. As this is unexpected under our account for the reasons outlined above, the issue is in need of clarification. Let us review some pioneering pieces of research on this phenomenon before I put forward my proposal to explain why the Filter against the accidental repetition of negative features in Spell-Out domains does not result in Obliteration of the negative marker in NI constructions in AAE.

NI was formally addressed for the first time in Labov, Cohen, Robins and Lewis’s (1968) early work in AAE. As is illustrated in (60), it consists in the negated auxiliary surfacing to the left of the subject n-word and is often described as being an emphatic construction.

(60) a. Doesn’t nobody really know that it’s a God, you know. Larry H., 15, Jets
b. Didn’t nobody see it, didn’t nobody hear it! Benjamin S., 45, N.Y.C
c. Ain’t no white cop gonna put his hands on me! Jesse H., 16, Jets
d. Ain’t nobody in my family Negro! Boot B., 12, Thunderbirds

(examples from Labov 1972a: 187-188)

Labov et al.’s (1968) analysis of NI is revised in Sells, Rickford and Wasow (1995, 1996), who point out two inadequacies of the account: (i) it does not cover all the attested data and (ii) it proposes two distinct mechanisms to derive NI examples without explaining why these two mechanisms should co-occur. Let us address each of the two ways in which NI can allegedly be derived in Labov et al. (1968) by considering (61) and (62).

(61) Won’t nobody catch us. (Labov 1972a: 188)

(62) Ain’t no black Santa Claus. (Sells, Rickford and Wasow 1996: 609)

While it is argued that (61) is derived by means of auxiliary movement to the category C, (62) is assumed to contain a null expletive and involves no movement at all. Under this account, (62) would be equivalent to (63).
By contrast, an example like (61) would be derived from the structure in (64). The mechanism would be similar to the one that derives (66) from (65) (Klima 1964).

(64) Nobody won’t catch us.
(65) I seldom go to the movies.
(66) Seldom do I go to the movies.

In minimalist terms95, (61) could be represented as shown in (67). Notice that it has been assumed that subjects are base-generated in Spec, *vP and move to Spec, TP. The derivation, thus, would involve two independent movements: subject movement to Spec, TP, and head movement of the auxiliary from T to C.

95 Sells, Rickford and Wasow (1996) update Labov et al. (1968) to the Government and Binding framework. I have done something similar with Sells et al. (1996) and the Minimalist Program.
If the sentence contains a negated form of *be*, however, another analysis is possible. For instance, for a sentence like (68), Labov et al. (1968: 284, quoted in Sells, Rickford and Wasow 1996: 600) suggest that *nothin’ happenin’* can be analysed as ‘the predicate in an existential construction with a deleted expletive subject’, where *happenin’* is ‘a reduced relative clause modifying *nothin’*’. This is represented in (69).

(68) Ain’t nothin’ happenin’.
While both analyses are often interchangeable, a number of cases can only be adequately captured by the representation in (67). This is the case, for instance, of (61). Likewise, the example in (62) above and the sentences in (70) below, can only be analysed as in (69), for the analysis in (67) would imply that the sentences have been derived from the ones in (71), which are ungrammatical.

(70)  

(a) Ain’t nothin’ you can do about it.  
      (Labov 1972a: 189)  

(b) Ain’t nothin’ went down.  (NYC, Jets, 18, Labov et al., ex 359)  
      (example taken from Sells et al. 1996: 594)  

(c) Won’t be no Moon in this room tomorrow.  (SoS, p. 119)  
      (example taken from Sells et al. 1996: 603)  

(71)  

(a) *Nothin’ ain’t that you can do about it.  
      (Labov 1972a: 189)  

(b) *Nothin’ ain’t went down.  
      (Sells et al. 1995: 9)  

(c) *No Moon won’t be in this room tomorrow.
Sells, Rickford and Wasow (1995, 1996) initially propose a uniform analysis that can account for all the data in Labov et al. (1968). However, when considering new data of their own collection, as well as judgements from a number of speakers, they are forced to dismiss their analysis and re-accept a contemporary version of what was proposed in Labov et al. (1968) and Labov (1972a, b).

Sells et al. assume that sentences like (72) and (73) involve no movement and receive very similar underlying representations, which they call Internal Subject and Existential. The main difference between the two is that in the Existential analysis, the n-indefinite is the head of an NP complement of I. The NP, in turn, has a CP relative clause modifier.

(72)
```
IP
   NP
      I'
         I
            ain’t
               (can’t)
               NP
                  nothin’
                     (nobody)
                        VP
                           V'
                              happenin’
                                 (tag you then)
```

Apart from discussing the Auxiliary Inversion analysis of NI that is put forward in Labov et al. (1968), Sells, Rickford and Wasow (1996) also put forward their own account of NI using the Optimality Theory framework. They show that the syntax of NI in AAE follows from the interaction of a number of syntactic constraints, whose ranking yields varying grammatical outputs. I have only concentrated on the analyses in GB-style and the data that have been shown to be relevant to either dismiss or accept them.

The trees in (76) and (77) are reproduced exactly as they appear in Sells et al. (1996: 606).
Sells et al. argue that the analysis in (67) cannot be correct for the sentences in (74) and (75), which involve an overt C. Since the Doubly-Filled Comp Filter prevents two elements from occupying the C category at the same time, it is concluded that it cannot be assumed that the negated auxiliary moves to C.

(74)  I know a way that [can’t nobody start a fight].

(Chicago, 12, Labov et al., ex. 370)

(75)  Pilate they remembered as a pretty woods-wild girl “that [couldn’t nobody put shoes on].” (SoS, p. 234)

(Sells et al. 1996: 603)

However, sentences like (74) and (75) were judged ungrammatical by the AAE speakers that Sells et al. consulted in the 1990s. In addition, the speakers totally accepted the sentences when the overt C was removed, as predicted by the Doubly-Filled Comp Filter. Examples (74) and (75), thus, can no longer be used as counterevidence for a T-to-C analysis of part of the contemporary AAE data.

With respect to the Existential analysis, Sells et al. (1995, 1996) found that, contrary to what was expected, the speakers’ judgements apparently pointed out the inadequacy of the CP relative clause modifier being part of the representation in contemporary AAE. While Labov et al. reported that sentences like (76) were acceptable, this was not the case for the AAE speakers Sells et al. consulted. The
paraphrase in (80b) shows that an omitted subject relative pronoun is present in the sentence.

(76)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a.</th>
<th>(*) Ain’t nothing went down.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Labov et al. 1968: e.g. 359; Sells et al. 1995: e.g. 17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| b. | Ain’t nothing that went down. |

Sells et al. in addition, report that their informants favoured (81b) over (81a). Nevertheless, as shown by the examples in (78), the unacceptability of (81a) follows from the impossibility of omitting subject relative pronouns. Thus, the conclusion is that the Existential analysis is not incorrect: rather, the unacceptability of (76) and (81b) in contemporary AAE is related to whether the relative pronoun can be omitted or not.

(77)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a.</th>
<th>?Before they invented them kicks, ain’t nobody could do that (e.g. jump so high). (rejected by some of our 1992 consultants, in favour of (b))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Before they invented them kicks, couldn’t nobody do that. (EPA, 16, 1992) (Sells et al. 1996: 620)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(78)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a.</th>
<th>Ain’t nothin’ you can do. (Labov et al., ex. 358; EPA judgements, 1992)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Ain’t no way in the world you can miss it. (SoS, p. 269) (Sells et al. 1996: 620)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sells, Rickford and Wasow’s (1995, 1996) conclusion is that in contemporary AAE, the Internal Subject derivation in (76) is no longer part of the grammar. Rather, unambiguously existential constructions can be analysed as resulting from a constraint that blocks the possibility of having T-to-C movement. Such a constraint is labelled as PredIntact and establishes that a predicate nominal phrase, or its head NP, cannot be moved to Spec, TP, as it does not need to check its case features. I adopt this view to account for unambiguously existential sentences.

For those examples that are ambiguous between an existential and a non-existential representation, I entertain the idea that they are always derived via T-to-C movement, except when the expletive is overt. In that case, I argue that the Subject
Internal analysis is still tenable and that the subject remains in its base-generated position, as standardly assumed for expletive there-constructions. All other examples displaying NI are analysed as involving T-to-C movement, in line with Labov et al. (1968) and Sells et al. (1995, 1996). The negated auxiliary ain’t (see section 4.6.5) is assumed to be the phonological exponent of the negative marker when it head-joins to the auxiliaries be and have (in the present tense), and do (both in the present and past tenses). The negated auxiliary is inserted under T. The various possible structures are represented in (80) to (82) for the examples in (79).

(79)

a. Ain’t nothing you can do.
b. Ain’t nothing happenin’.
c. Can’t nobody do me like Jesus.

(Green 2002: 79)
(81) a.  

C' probes inside TP and vP in parallel: the negated auxiliary moves to C' and the subject n-indefinite to Spec, TP.

b.  

The expletive in Spec, TP prevents the n-indefinite from moving out from Spec, vAUX P.
As was discussed in previous sections, the configurations in (80) to (82) should be problematic for those AAE speakers who have a system of Non-Strict NC, where negative features cannot co-occur in Spell-Out domains. Although AAE, as discussed earlier in the chapter, generally implements Strict NC and, hence, tolerates NI constructions, why these are also allowed by those speakers who may occasionally produce negative sentences with Non-Strict NC needs to be explained.

When Polº/Negº projects into PolP/NegP, Obliteration can theoretically apply if a variety bans the morphophonological realisation of more than one negative feature in the same Spell-Out domain. However, as seen later in this section, once the CP-split hypothesis is assumed (Rizzi 1997), the Cº head that probes into the TP can be defined as Focus. That is, both ain’t and other negated auxiliaries in NI constructions bear a Focus feature, which is crucial to account for the fact that Obliteration does not occur in NI. The negative feature in Focº in NI constructions, contributed by the head-adjoined Negº in ain’t and in other auxiliaries such as can’t or shouldn’t, cannot be deleted because, otherwise, the resulting feature-matrix would not correspond to any lexical item that could possibly be inserted under Focº.
That Focus is likely to be what blocks Obliteration can be seen in the contrast that exists between the pairs in (83) and (84). While speakers who allow Non-Strict NC would basically attribute to (87a) the same meaning as to (87b), they would not do so with (88a) and (88b), which is ungrammatical. Why the examples in (83) are both possible while (88b) is not is an issue that will be taken up again in section 4.6.5, which contains a characterisation of *ain’t within the DM model. It will be shown that while it indeed seems possible to Obliterate the head-adjoined Negº that determines that certain auxiliaries be phonologically realised as *ain’t, this is not an option in NI constructions that involve Focus.

(83)  
   a. Nobody be worried for Peter.  
   b. Nobody ain’t worried for Peter.

(84)  
   a. Ain’t nobody worried for Peter.  
   b. *Be nobody worried for Peter.

Although it has often been claimed that NI is emphatic (Labov 1972a, b; Green 2002), Sells et al. (1995, 1996) do not accept the hypothesis that NI is triggered by affective or emphatic reasons. One of their arguments is that this would not account for why SAI does not obtain with positive sentences, which can also be emphatic.

This argument is not really strong, as Standard English does have the possibility of emphasising positive sentences by means of SAI to a certain extent. Actually, Swan (1995), in his Practical English Usage, reports that Americans and some British speakers may use inverted constructions in exclamations. Consider the examples in (85), from Swan, as well as the examples in (86), which have been taken from a textbook for Advanced students of English.

(85)  
   a. Boy, am I hungry!  
   b. Was I furious!  
   c. Wow, did she make a mistake!  
   d. Have you got a surprise coming!  
   e. Am I mad!  

(Swan 1995: 194)

(86)  
   a. It’s a rare quality, but boy do you know when you’ve found it!  
   b. I love Christina Aguilera. Wow, can that girl sing!  
   c. Man, is it hot today!  
   d. Am I glad to see you!

(Swan 1995: 288)
e. Was I surprised when I got the message!

(Cunningham, Moor and Comyns Carr 2003: 79)

As suggested earlier, if Rizzi’s (1997) proposed structure for the left-periphery of the clause is adopted, T-to-C movement in NI constructions can be analysed as movement of the negated auxiliary to $\text{Foc}^\circ$. As has been noted by Sells et al. (1995: 21), there is a contrast between (87a) and (87b): the former is not emphatic while the latter is.

(87)  
  a. Nothin’ ain’t happenin’.
  b. Ain’t nothin’ happenin’

As mentioned earlier, the sentence in (87a) would probably surface as (88) if uttered by an AAE speaker with a Non-Strict NC system. However, (87b) would be the same for speakers of both varieties of AAE (that with Strict NC and that with Non-Strict NC) because of the blocking effect exerted by the $[\text{Focus}]$ features of the auxiliary that Negation head-joins to.

(88)  
  Nothin’ be happenin’.

The trees in (81) and (82) can be redrawn as (89) and (90). $C^\circ$ has been replaced by $\text{Foc}^\circ$, which triggers movement of the negated auxiliary and accounts for the emphatic nature of NI constructions. The rest of the representation remains the same.
(89)  

```
(89) FocP
    |   Foc'
    |   Foc
    |   ain't
    |   TP
    |   nothin'
    |   T'
    |   NegP
    |   Neg
    |   [iNeg]
    |   vAUXP
    |   vAUX
    |   vP
    |   v
    |   v
    |   happenin'
```
4.6.4 On the feature characterisation of *ain’t*

The next two sections retake the issue of why the negative morphology always surfaces on the auxiliary in NI constructions even for those speakers who can produce Non-Strict NC structures with a subject n-indefinite and an Obliterated negative marker. As was anticipated in the previous section, if it is assumed that Focus is involved in the derivation of NI constructions, the fact that the negative marker is always overt in NI constructions in AAE can be accounted for.
4.6.4.1  *Ain’t* in Distributed Morphology: Parrott (2007)

Parrott (2007) proposes the Vocabulary Items for *ain’t* in AAE in (91). They read as follows: present tense *be* and *have*, as well as present and past tense *do* level to *ain’t* when they are specified as negative. As Parrott states, *ain’t* levelling is variable in AAE.

(91)  *Vocabulary Items for ain’t in AAE*

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{[be, Past: -, Neg]} & \leftrightarrow /\text{e\textsc{nt}/} \\
\text{[have, Past: -, Neg]} & \leftrightarrow /\text{e\textsc{nt}/} \\
\text{[do, Neg]} & \leftrightarrow /\text{e\textsc{nt}/}
\end{array}
\]

(Parrott 2007: 229)

The feature characterisation of *ain’t* in (91) allows us to make a prediction: if *ain’t* is inserted when *be*, *have*, or *do* have raised from *v_Aux* to *T*, and *Neg* has head-adjoined to *T*, the application of Obliteration to the complex formed by *T* (*be*, *have*, *do*) and *Neg* should result in the lexical insertion of the form corresponding to *T* (*be*, *have*).

Take, for instance, the pair (92).

(92)  a.  Nothin’ ain’t happenin’.
    b.  Nothin’ be happenin’.

The insertion of *be*\(^{99}\) is actually expected if, once the derivation has been sent to Transfer, the negative syntactic terminal is Obliterated. The Vocabulary Item that wins the competition for insertion is (93).

(93)  [be, Past: -]  \(\leftrightarrow /\text{bt}/\)

The next section shows that the result of Obliteration of the negative syntactic terminal is not possible when the *T*-Neg complex is in Focus. Obliterating the negative marker always results either in an ungrammatical sentence or, by contrast,  

\(^{98}\) In the present dissertation, *do*-support has been assumed to follow from Fission of the [uv] feature of *T*, which requires to be Adjacent to the head of its complement. If *Neg* is Obliterated from the complex head it forms with *T*, it is predicted that *do* does not surface, as Adjacency between *T* and *v* will obtain. When *ain’t* is equivalent to *dolo\texttt{dt} + Neg*, thus, we would expect no auxiliary to surface after Obliteration.

\(^{99}\) It is assumed that this is an instance of aspectual *be*, which always occurs in the bare form and can usually precede a verb in the *-ing* form (Green 2002: 48). The meaning of (92b) would be something as ‘Nothing usually happens’.
in a syntactic structure which corresponds to a non-negative semantic interpretation\(^{100}\).

### 4.6.4.2 Focus-blocking of Obliteration

It was already mentioned in section 4.6.4 that Obliteration of the negative syntactic terminal (which forms a complex head with T\(^{°}\), which occupies Foc\(^{°}\) in NI constructions) in an example like (84a), here repeated as (94), results in ungrammaticality, as shown in (95).

\[(94)\] Ain’t nobody worried for Peter.

\[(95)\] *Be nobody worried for Peter.

Something similar happens with auxiliaries other than ain’t. Take, for instance, the example in (79c), repeated here as (96).

\[(96)\] Can’t nobody do me like Jesus.

Obliteration would result in (97). This example would probably be interpreted as a (negative) question, and not as a negative construction.

\[(97)\] Can nobody do me like Jesus.

Since the final phonological realisation of (97) would correspond to the syntax of a question, I assume Obliteration in NI constructions to be blocked on semantic grounds\(^{101}\).

\(^{100}\) It is assumed here, in line with Chomsky (2005) that the CP phase is Transferred in full when it is a root clause.

\(^{101}\) Notice that in the case of the exclamatives presented in (85) and (86), SAI is complemented with the use of interjections such as 'wow', 'boy' or 'man', which unmistakably prepare the listener to interpret the utterance as an exclamative and not a question. McCawley (1973) includes the possibility of using interjections with exclamatives in the list of characteristics which distinguish Yes/No questions from exclamatives with SAI. Other properties of exclamatives that are excluded for questions are, among others: (i) the falling intonation, (ii) the possibility of using delicious, as in 'Boy, can you make delicious coffee!' (McCawley 1973: 371), (iii) the possibility of using emotive adjectives such as appalling and outrageous and (iv) the fact that exclamatives allow appositives. By contrast, unlike exclamatives, Yes/No questions allow the free use of intensifiers such as very and quite, and can be conjoined.
4.7 Summary and conclusions

The present chapter has addressed the issue of NC in a number of Non-Standard varieties of English. Spontaneous data have been used whenever possible, though examples from a variety of other sources (literature on NC, fiction books, movie scripts and lyrics) have been considered as well. For Non-Standard varieties of British English, the data have been taken from the FRED corpus and, to a lesser extent, the BNC-SpS. For AAE, by contrast, published data have been used.

The dialectal data from the FRED corpus, mainly, and the BNC-SpS, to a lesser extent, show that some Non-Standard varieties of English display Strict NC, while some others implement Non-Strict NC. In the case of AAE, by contrast, it was concluded from the data, which were gathered from various sources, that it mostly displays Strict NC, though there is evidence that, for a number of speakers, it implements Non-Strict NC.

The main purpose of this chapter was to show that the phenomenon of NC in Non-Standard varieties of English can be accounted for by extending the analysis that was proposed in chapter 3. That is, as argued for Standard English in the previous chapter, the absence of the sentential negative marker in Non-Strict NC constructions involving pre-verbal n-indefinites follows from the application of Obliteration, a PF operation that is triggered by a language-particular constraint that bans the accidental co-occurrence of negative features in Spell-Out domains.

It was observed that, unlike in Standard English, the polarity feature of Polº is not endowed with the EPP-property, which allows post-verbal n-indefinites to remain VP-internal and value the [iPol: ] feature of Polº at the distance via Agree. This is why post-verbal n-indefinites can co-occur with an overt negative marker both in Strict and in Non-Strict NC varieties of Non-Standard English. In other words, in not raising to Spec, NegP, post-verbal n-indefinites are not in the same Spell-Out domain as the negative marker, thus not violating the Filter that was claimed to disallow the accidental repetition of negative features in the same Spell-Out domain and not triggering Obliteration or Impoverishment as repair operations.

With respect to pre-verbal n-indefinites, on the other hand, they were predicted to co-occur with the negative marker in Strict NC varieties, for these are not constrained by the Filter. This means that a repair operation such as Obliteration is unmotivated and the negative marker always surfaces in the presence of n-indefinites, regardless of their position in the clause.

Pre-verbal n-indefinites were claimed to result in Obliteration of the negative marker in Non-Strict NC. Interestingly, these do not need to raise as far as Spec, TP for the negative marker to be deleted; rather, some data on there-constructions were considered that show that Obliteration is attested even when subject n-indefinites
remain in Spec, v*P—the position where they have been base-generated. This is not unexpected in an account that assumes Spell-Out domains to be the relevant contexts for a haplology rule to be applied. Given that subjects are always in the same Spell-Out domain as the negative marker, they can always possibly give rise to the application of Obliteration in those varieties that implement Non-Strict NC, as is indeed the case.

The case of *never*, which is reported Anderwald’s (2002) study of Non-Standard British English to be more widely used than any other n-indefinite, has also been considered in the present chapter. After confirming that the FRED corpus parallels the trend observed by Anderwald in the BNC-SpS with respect to the highly frequent use of *never*, I have discussed the observation in Strict NC varieties of Non-Standard British English, *never* does not co-occur with the sentential negative marker. This is unexpected if *never* is uniformly analysed as an n-indefinite like *nobody* or *nothing*.

Inspired in a suggestion by Cheshire (1998), it has been claimed that *never* can indeed be analysed as a negator with interpretable negative features in a great number of cases. However, a number of counterexamples have shown that some room must be left for the lexical ambiguity of *never*, which is a true negator in some occasions, and a clear n-indefinite in some others.

In this chapter, I have also argued, contra Labov (1972a, b), that negative statements that contain n-indefinites do not involve incorporation of negation into an *any*-indefinite. Rather, I have assumed that n-indefinites are made up of an abstract polarity morpheme and a Root. The former bears an uninterpretable polarity feature that can enter the derivation already valued as negative.

The assumption that (un)interpretability and the valued / unvalued status of a feature are independent issues is taken from Pesetsky and Torrego (2004): interpretable features can be unvalued, and hence act as Probes, and uninterpretable features can be valued and hence act as Goals. For a feature to be valued, it must Agree with a valued matching feature. For an unintepretable feature to delete, it must have entered in an Agree relation.

Also in this chapter, the existence of *any*-subjects in HE, which seem to challenge the general theory of PI licensing have been re-analysed as containing Free-Choice Items (FCIs), and not n-indefinites, that are licensed in non-episodic contexts containing non-veridical operators. FCIs have in turn been assumed to be indefinites, which makes it possible for them to acquire quantificational force and scope over negation.

Finally, in the second part of the chapter, data from AAE, a North-American variety of Non-Standard English, have been considered. As for Non-Standard British English varieties, it was shown that the analysis that was put forward for Non-
Standard British English varieties could successfully be extended to account for the system of negation in AAE.

Both for Non-Standard British English varieties and in AAE, cases of intra-speaker variability, where a single speaker switched between Strict and Non-Strict NC, were observed in the collected data. While this phenomenon is not widespread, it is indeed attested and, thus, must be accommodated into a theory of NC.

Our account explains potential switches to Standard English and other types of NC (i.e. from Strict to Non-Strict NC or vice versa) in terms of (i) whether Negº carries a polarity feature with or without the EPP-property and (ii) whether a language-constraint prevents too many negative features to be morphophonologically realised in the same Spell-Out domain. While (i) yields the Standard English versus Non-Standard English contrast with respect to the distribution of post-verbal n-indefinites, (ii) results in the Standard English / Non-Strict NC versus Strict NC opposition with respect to the distribution of pre-verbal n-indefinites.

In the last part of the chapter, the phenomenon of NI in AAE has been considered. Following Sells et al. (1995, 1996), it has been proposed that, except for cases of existential clauses (either with or without an overt expletive in Spec, TP), NI constructions were derived by T-to-C movement, where Cº has been identified as Focº (Rizzi 1997). I have argued that it is the case that all speakers of AAE, regardless of whether they usually produce Strict or Non-Strict NC constructions, tolerate the co-occurrence of the negative marker and a pre-verbal n-indefinite because the former is part of a complex Tº head that sits in Focº. Obliterating the negative syntactic terminal when it is in Focº results in ungrammaticality or in loss of the intended negative meaning. This operation is, thus, blocked on semantic grounds.