

## Emphatic Polarity from Latin to Romance<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

This paper offers an analysis of some emphatic polarity constructions in Spanish and Catalan from a diachronic and comparative perspective. We focus on the syntactic processes involved in the verbalization of this polarity, in both its positive and negative expression. Our main proposal is that the markers used in Spanish and Catalan (as well as other Romance languages) to reinforce polarity have acquired their status as the consequence of a focalization process. It will be argued that these elements have undergone leftward movement from their base-generated hierarchically low position to a prominent position in the left periphery of the sentence (see Rizzi 1997) and subsequently experienced a progressive bleaching of their original value (which is related to a verbal denotation) to end up being reanalyzed / grammaticalized as polarity markers. The examples in (1) and (2) illustrate the different behaviour of *poc* and *bien* when used either as adverbial modifiers – in (1a) and (2a) – or as polarity markers – in (1b) and (2b).

- (1) a. e pensà-se que *poc* li profitaria la sua probretat. [*Vides de Sants Rosselloneses*: 301]  
“and he thought that his poverty would benefit him *little*”  
b. *Poc* hi ha estat la Júlia a Barcelona  
‘Little has been Julia in Barcelona’  
“Julia has not been in Barcelona.”
- (2) a. *Bien* lo sabemos que el algo gaño [*Çid*, v.:2576]  
‘Well <sub>CL.ACC</sub> know<sub>1ST.PL</sub> that he something won’  
“Well we know that he won something.”  
b. *Bien* viene a verme cuando me necesita [M. Moliner (1975), s.v. *bien*]  
‘Well (she) comes to see me when she needs me’  
“She indeed comes to see me when she needs me.”

The unmarked distribution of Catalan *poc* and Spanish *bien* corresponds to a low hierarchical position (see Cinque 1999). In examples (1a) and (2a), these elements preserve their basic meaning as modifiers of the predicate which they accompany (i.e. *li profitaria poc* and *lo sabemos bien*, respectively), in spite of occupying a preverbal position and conveying an emphatic value. In contrast, the examples in (1b) and (2b) do not display the same meaning, because both *poc* and *bien* have scope over the entire sentence and reinforce its negative or positive polarity.

The core of this paper is the fact that the situation typified by *poc* in (1b) and *bien* in (2b) has substantial parallels with and constitute the particular expression of a phenomenon with wider scope and a much clearer definition when seen from the point of view of a comparative treatment of polarity. The theoretical framework that supports this research is the *Theory of*

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*Left Periphery* developed by Rizzi (1997) and the approach to grammaticalization stated in Roberts & Roussou (2003) and Roberts (2007).

The structure of this work is as follows. First, in section 2, we review the notions of emphatic polarity and contrastive focus along the lines discussed in Holmberg (2001). Section 3 is devoted to a historical overview of the strategies used to express affirmation and negation from Latin to Spanish and Catalan. This provides evidence for the fact that the process of grammaticalization which leads to Romance polarity markers (i.e. *sí* < *sic* ‘*así*’ “in this way, thus”) is the result of a focalization process that has affected elements which are not intrinsically polar in origin. In view of this, in section 4 we examine some Spanish and Catalan polarity markers from a comparative perspective and also from both diachronic and synchronic standpoints. The study of two prototypical cases of emphatic polarity in Spanish and Catalan (the adverbs *bien* / *bé* for positive polarity and the quantifiers *poco* / *poc* for negative polarity) embodies the central part of our work. On the one hand, we show that the creation of emphatic polarity markers follows regular patterns which are recurrent through history. On the other, the evolution of these polarity markers up to their current use reveals an interesting asymmetry between *poco* and the other three elements (*bien* / *bé* and *poc*) under analysis. Such unexpected asymmetry between Spanish *poco* and Catalan *poc* is nevertheless consistent with our analysis, because it can be attributed to the different grammaticalization stages attained respectively by these elements. All this provides strong support for the notion that the creation of both positive and negative polarity markers follows a single pattern (i.e. the same grammaticalization path) and constitutes a grammaticalization cycle. Since movement of the Spanish and Catalan polarity markers under study to the *Focus* domain significantly parallels the behaviour of *sic* in Latin, we argue that leftward movement to *Focus Phrase* is a necessary precondition for the process of grammaticalization. In section 5 we account for our line of reasoning within Roberts & Roussou’s (2003) and Roberts’s (2007) approach to grammaticalization and reanalysis. Finally, section 6 offers our conclusions.

## 2. Polarity and focalization

### 2.1. Emphatic polarity and unmarked polarity

Prior to describing the data, it is worth reviewing the notion of emphatic polarity. As is well-known, this notion has received specific attention in modern linguistics ever since Laka (1990), who proposed a functional category  $\Sigma P$  to accommodate three interwoven phenomena that have a direct effect on the truth value of the sentence: negation, affirmation and emphasis (Laka 1990:103).

Concerning the connection between negation and affirmation, the first thing to take into account is the fact that they are the polarity values that a sentence can convey, as illustrated in the Spanish examples in (3):

- (3) a. Hoy **no** ha llovido  
‘Today not has rained’  
‘Today it has not rained.’
- b. Hoy ha llovido                      UNMARKED AFFIRMATION/ASSERTION  
‘Today has rained’  
‘Today it has rained.’

The sentences in (3) exemplify the typical asymmetry between negation and affirmation, whereby the unmarked character of the latter (3b) –which lacks a specific formal expression– contrasts with the former (3a), in which the presence of the adverb *no* is compulsory. Note,



“Today it *has* rained.”

Apart from the contrasts in meaning mentioned above, unmarked affirmation and emphatic affirmation exhibit different syntactic properties. First of all, the positive mark *sí* is usually restricted to main clauses. Notice, above all, that it cannot be used in non-finite subordinate clauses, whether nominal (6) or adverbial (7)<sup>4</sup>:

- (6) a. Es difícil (\**sí*) cantar la *Traviata*  
‘Is difficult (\*yes) sing the Traviata’  
‘It is difficult (\*yes) to sing the Traviata’
- b. Pepe lamenta (\**sí*) tener que madrugar  
‘Pepe regrets (\*yes) have to get up early’  
‘Pepe regrets (\*yes) having to get up early’
- (7) a. (\**Sí*) diciendo las verdades, pierdes las amistades  
‘(\*Yes) saying the truths, you lose friendships’  
‘(\*Yes) being completely frank may cost you friendships.’
- b. La policía detuvo al ladrón por (\**sí*) conducir borracho  
‘The police arrested the thief for (\*yes) drive drunk’  
‘The police arrested the thief because (\*yes) he/she was drink-driving’

Secondly, the two types of constructions display an antithetic behaviour with respect to the processes that involve *wh*-movement. The contrasts shown below illustrate that *sí* is incompatible both with interrogative (8)<sup>5</sup> and with exclamative (9) sentences:

- (8) a. ¿Por qué (\**sí*) ha llovido?  
‘Why (\*yes) has rained?’  
‘Why has it (\*yes) rained?’
- b. ¿Qué (\**sí*) ha comido Julia?  
‘What (\*yes) has eaten Julia?’  
‘What has Julia (\*yes) eaten?’
- (9) a. ¡Qué bien que (\**sí*) cantaba la Callas!  
‘How well that (\*yes) sang the Callas!’  
‘How well Callas (\*yes) sang!’
- b. ¡Qué plato de lentejas (\**sí*) se ha comido Pepito!  
‘What dish of lentils (\*yes) PRON. has eaten Pepito!’  
‘What a lentil dish Pepito (\*yes) has eaten!’

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that the negative polarity marker *no* can be used in the examples given in (6)-(7) without restriction. This amounts to conclusive empirical evidence in favour of the existence of a syntactic asymmetry between unmarked polarity and emphatic polarity:

- (i) a. Pepe lamenta *no* tener que madrugar  
b. *No* diciendo las verdades, pierdes las amistades

<sup>5</sup> The examples in (8) would be (marginally) grammatical with echo interpretation, i.e., if their illocutive value corresponded to a demand, not for information, but for confirmation. The exceptional behaviour of echo statements with respect to (negative) polarity markers has already been commented on by Bosque (1980) and González (2006), among other authors.

The data analyzed here focus on the existence of interesting semantic and syntactic asymmetries between unmarked (affirmative and negative) polarity and emphatic polarity. Therefore, it is worth evaluating whether such differences originate in the syntactic representation that corresponds to these types of polarity. The following section will examine this question.

## 2.2. *Emphatic polarity and focalization.*

As mentioned above, the positive polarity adverb *sí* provides a sentence like (4) with a contrastive value, which is clearly absent in its unmarked equivalent (3b). Hence it is perfectly plausible to assume the existence of a connection between emphatic polarity –either positive or negative– and the processes of focalization, the essential characteristic of which is to emphasize that a particular constituent needs to be understood as new information

- (10) a. PEPITO bebe cerveza (y no Julia)  
'PEPITO drinks beer (and not Julia)'  
"Pepito drinks beer."  
b. CERVEZA bebe Pepito (y no vino tinto)  
BEER drinks Pepito (and not red wine)'  
"Pepito drinks *beer*."

Following Holmberg (2001:154), we believe that the phenomena related to contrastive focus (10) and emphatic polarity (4) can be submitted to a similar syntactic and semantic analysis. Concerning the semantic aspects, in both cases it could be argued that we have an operator that takes two arguments, a presupposition and an assertion. This is illustrated in (11) with respect to (10b) and in (12) with respect to (4):

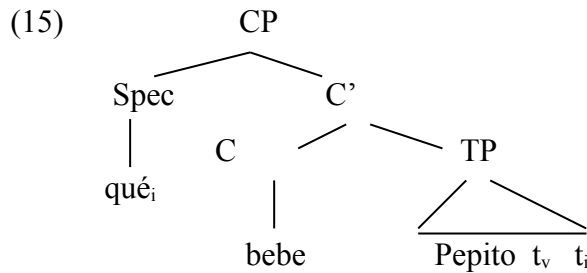
- (11) a. **Presupposition:** Pepito bebe x  
'Pepito drinks x'  
b. **Assertion:** x es cerveza, no vino tinto  
'x is beer, not red wine'  
(12) a. **Presupposition:** Hoy Pol<sub>x</sub> ha llovido  
'Today Pol<sub>x</sub> it has rained'  
b. **Assertion:** x es afirmativo, no negativo  
'x is affirmative, not negative'

From a syntactic standpoint, the significant characteristic in both processes is "explicit movement to the CP domain" (Holmberg 2001:154). This is clearly the case for contrastive focus of the NP *cerveza* in (10b), which has been moved from its DO postverbal position to a prominent site in the left periphery of the sentence. This process entails at the same time the movement of the verb to the head C of the CP, which is made visible by means of subject-verb inversion. Compare (10b) to the ungrammatical sequence of (13), where there has not been inversion:

- (13) \*CERVEZA Pepito bebe  
'\*BEER Pepito drinks'

Interrogative and exclamative constructions display a similar behaviour, since V to C is induced by movement of a *wh*-element. The schematic representation of the above-mentioned process that takes place in (14a) is illustrated in (15):

- (14) a. ¿Qué bebe Pepito?  
 ‘What drinks Pepito?’  
 ‘What does Pepito drink?’
- b. \*¿Qué Pepito bebe?  
 ‘What Pepito drinks?’  
 ‘\*What Pepito does drink?’



Concerning emphatic polarity, the contrast between (16a) and (16b) clearly shows that the presence of the affirmative mark *sí* brings about subject-verb inversion –as happens with movement of a *wh*-element:

- (16) a. Sí ha comido María  
 ‘yes has eaten María’  
 ‘María *has* eaten.’
- b. \*Sí María ha comido  
 ‘\*yes María has eaten’

After having revisited the bases for the characterization of the notion of *emphatic polarity*, we can compare the syntactic analysis that corresponds to this type of polarity with that of unmarked polarity. Along with the proposals that subsume negation and affirmation into the same functional category *PolP* or  $\Sigma P$  (see Laka 1990, Zanuttini 1991 and following, among other authors), we assume that this projection, which c-commands the sentence (*TP/IP*), hosts polarity marks (either the negative adverb *no* or the phonetically null features of unmarked affirmation). This is illustrated in (17):

- (17) [CP ... [PolP [Pol' [Pol° [IP ...]]]]]

The representation in (17) accounts for the examples of unmarked polarity like those in (3). However, as has been stated above, emphatic polarity –similarly to what happens with contrastive focus– implies movement to the CP domain. According to Rizzi (1997), this domain can be split up into a minimum of two projections (*ForceP*) and (*FinP*), which express the illocutive force and the (non-)finite nature of a sentence, respectively. Additionally, there can be two additional projections between them that refer to the informative structure of the sentence: *TopicP* and *FocusP*. Hence, this gives as a result the hierarchy illustrated in (18) that corresponds to the so-called sentence periphery:

- (18) Force > Topic > Focus > Fin ...

Within the structural space depicted in (18), *FocusP* is the *locus* that accommodates (among others) the elements that encode emphatic features (see Rizzi 1997). Therefore, this projection is the target of movement for emphatic polarity, which is sketched in (19) (see Holmberg 2001):

$$(19) \quad [\text{CP} \dots [\text{FocusP} \text{ PolP} \dots [\text{t}_{\text{PolP}} [\text{IP} \dots]]]]$$

According to what has been described above, the adverb *sí* that occurs in (4) and other similar sentences is a positive polarity marker that would be licensed in *PolP*, from which it would move to *FocusP* so as to check the emphatic feature it encodes. This would result in the representation given in (20):

$$(20) \quad [\text{CP} \dots [\text{FocusP} \text{ sí}_i \dots [\text{PolP} \text{ t}_i [\text{IP} \dots]]]]$$

This analysis makes several interesting predictions in relation to the distribution of topicalized elements in affirmative emphatic constructions. First, they should necessarily precede the affirmative mark *sí*, because *Focus* is structurally lower than *Topic* in the structural hierarchy of (18). The contrast between (21a) and (21b) provides direct evidence for this:

- (21) a. Las lentejas *sí* se las come Pepito  
 ‘the lentils YES PRON. them eats Pepito’  
 ‘Pepito *does* eat lentils.’
- b. \**Sí* las lentejas se las come Pepito  
 ‘\*Yes the lentils PRON. them eats Pepito’

Similarly, the incompatibility described in § 2.1 between *wh*-movement constructions and the affirmative mark *sí* –see (8)-(9)– is an expected result of the fact that the category which attracts interrogative and exclamative elements within the CP domain is *FocusP* (see Rizzi 1997). Metaphorically speaking, the ungrammatical versions of (8) and (9) can be explained as the effect of a crash between two constituents competing for the same structural position (*FocusP*)<sup>6</sup>. As for (8b), this is illustrated in (22):

$$(22) \quad [\text{CP} \dots [\text{FocusP} * \{\text{qué}_i / \text{sí}_j\} [\text{Focus}^\circ \text{ ha comido}] [\text{PolP} \text{ t}_j [\text{IP} \text{ Julia t}_v \text{ t}_i \dots]]]]$$

To sum up, the discussion provided in this section has enabled us to highlight the existence of a direct connection between emphatic polarity and focalization. This connection is precisely the point of departure for the basic hypothesis we are going to postulate in this paper, i.e., focalization processes are an important source for the creation of emphatic polarity markers – both positive and negative– in Spanish, Catalan and other Romance languages, as a consequence of a process of grammaticalization. Before examining this question in more detail in section § 4, we would like to refer to the uninterrupted use of the Latin expressions that conveyed affirmative and negative polarity, as well as to their evolution in Spanish and Catalan.

<sup>6</sup> Things are a bit more complex in the case of examples like (6)-(7), the ungrammaticality of which can be attributed to the fact that subordinate sentences, in general, exhibit an *impoverished* left periphery, which lacks some of the projections that occur in matrix sentences (see Haegeman 2002, 2003). If this is correct, the absence of *FocusP* would be what would prevent these cases from having enough structural space to host emphatic polarity marks and this would therefore bring about the ungrammaticality of the resulting sequence. See Hernanz (2006) for a detailed analysis of this question.

### 3. The asymmetry between affirmation and negation: from Latin to Romance

#### 3.1. Latin

In contrast with Spanish, Catalan and other Romance languages, Latin lacked a specific element to mark positive polarity in a sentence. Affirmative answers to questions were usually expressed in this language by repeating the word that was being questioned, but they could also be answered by means of such adverbs as *sane*, *omnino*, *certe*, *etiam*, *ita*, *vero*, *sic*, etc. This is illustrated in (23) and (24), respectively:

- (23) heus tu, Rufio ... cave sis mentiaris: Clodius insidias *fecit* Miloni? :: *fecit*  
“Look here, Rufio ... mind you don’t tell lies! Did Clodius plot against Milo?” “He did.”  
[Cic. Mil.: 60; Pinkster (1990: 191, ex. 4)]
- (24) a. uenit? *Certe*  
‘comes? Certainly’  
“Is he coming?” “Yes.”  
[Ter. *Hau.*: 431. *OLD*]
- b. numquid uis? – *etiam*: ut actutum aduenias  
‘By any chance anything want? –also: that immediately come’  
“By any chance, do you want anything?” “Yes, I want you to come immediately”  
[Pl. *Am.*: 544. *OLD*]
- c. – illa maneat? – *sic*  
‘– she stays? –Thus’  
“Is she staying?” “Yes”  
[Ter. *Ph.*: 813. *OLD*]

These adverbs contributed to the expression of the speaker’s judgement with respect to the meaning of the statement and as a result were frequently used in combination with epistemic modality markers<sup>7</sup> to express confirmation (*sane* ‘certainly’, *vero* ‘truly’), doubt (*fortasse* ‘perhaps’), reinforcement or emphasis (*profecto* ‘really’, *certe* ‘certainly’, *sicilicet* ‘evidently’).

Negative answers, in contrast with positive polarity, generally used the negative marker *non* (sometimes also with the adverbs *vero* or *ita*)<sup>8</sup> –see Bassols de Climent (1992: 292-293):

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<sup>7</sup> See Freitas Barros (2006), among other authors, in relation to this question. The following example of *certe* clearly illustrates the status of these adverbs as truth operators:

- (i) *certe* patrem tuum non occidisti?  
“You certainly did not kill your father, did you?”  
[Suet. *Aug.*: 33.1. Pinkster (1990: 205, ex. 71)]

<sup>8</sup> As for the chronology corresponding to the consolidation of *non* in answers, it is worth noting the following quotation from Coromines:

“El lat. *nōn* era compuesto del arcaico *ne oīnom*, propiamente ‘no uno’; junto a él siguió empleándose en la antigüedad el simple *ne*, que desapareció antes de la época romance. En latín clásico solía emplearse siempre en compañía del verbo, pero en vulgar ya aparece usado absolutamente («Propheta es tu? Et respondit: non») en la Vulgata, Ev. De S. Juan I, 21)» [Corominas and Pascual, *DCECH* (1980-1991), vol. IV (ME-RE): 231-232].

“In Latin, *nōn* was a compound form of the archaic *ne oīnom*, literally meaning ‘not one’; this form coexisted in ancient times with *ne*, which had disappeared by the Romance period. In Classical Latin it tended to always co-occur with the verb, but in Vulgar Latin it was used alone («Propheta es tu? Et respondit: non») in the Vulgate, Ev. De S. Juan I, 21)”.



- (25) a. non ego illi argentum redderem? :: *non* redderes  
 ‘not I them money give-back? Not give-back’  
 ‘“Wouldn’t I give them the money back?” “Don’t give it back”’  
 [Pl. Bassols de Climent (1992: 292)]
- b. exheredavitne? :: *non*  
 ‘Was he disinherited, by any chance?’ “No.”  
 [Cic. Bassols de Climent (1992: 292)]

On the other hand, it is worth noting that Latin questions could also be answered with quantitative adverbs such as *minime*, *minime vero*:

- (26) a. num quid nam accusat uirum? – *minime*  
 ‘By any chance, is there any proof that the man is to blame?’ “Very little.”  
 [Ter. *Hec.*: 267. *OLD*]
- b. reprehendo igitur? *minime uero*  
 ‘Consequently, do I subject it?’ “Absolutely not.”  
 [Cic. *Lig.*: 20. *OLD*]
- c. placet ... eos dimmitti? *minime*  
 ‘Are you satisfied by sending them?’ “Very little”  
 [Sal. *Cat.*:51.43. *OLD*]

As is well-known, these sorts of answers occur in Romance languages as well. In section § 4.2, when examining the behaviour of *poco* in Spanish and *poc* in certain dialectal varieties of Catalan, we will refer to this question again.

### 3.1 Romance: Old Spanish and Old Catalan

3.2.1. Some Old Romance languages inherited from Latin the possibility of answering affirmative questions with bare verbs. One of these languages is Old Spanish, as can be seen in (27):

- (27) SEM.: Pues, ¿quién está arriba? CEL.: ¿Quiéreslo saber? SEM.: *Quiero*. [Celestina: 106]  
 ‘SEM.: So, who is upstairs? CEL.: want<sub>2ND.SG-CLACC</sub> know? SEM.: want<sub>1ST.SG</sub>’  
 ‘SEM.: ‘So, who is upstairs?’ CEL.: ‘Do you want to know?’ SEM.: ‘Yes, I do.’”

However, from early on, Spanish has shown a clear asymmetry between negative and affirmative answers, due to the fact that Latin, as mentioned above, lacked a precise affirmative mark that could contrast with the negative one, *non*.<sup>9</sup> The systematic presence of the negative marker *non* in negative answers contrasts with the range of adverbs used in affirmative ones. The adverb *sí* documented in early texts diverges from the negative adverb *non* in that it is not yet grammaticalized as affirmative marker, despite having the possibility of conveying affirmative polarity meaning. Coromines supplies clear circumstantial evidence for the chronology of the grammaticalization of this adverb, which retains its etymological manner meaning in its initial uses:

“La forma primitiva *sí* [< SĪC] del adverbio de modo es todavía corriente, en muchos de sus usos en autores arcaicos y aun alguna vez en el s. XIV “*sí* dixo la comadre quando el

<sup>9</sup> For further discussion concerning this question, see Coromines (1980), s.v. *ho*.

cirugiano / el coraçon quería sacarle con su mano” J. Ruiz 1411a; “peor es amar fazer pecado / que fazerlo .../ E *sí* algunos son que non tan solamente / dexan de fazer el bien, mas aun a su aciente / quieren mal a los que bien obran buenamente” *Rim. de Palacio*, 1287c; especialmente cuando la idea de ‘así’ coincide con la de ‘también’: “recibiólo el rey assaz a grant amor, / *sí* fizieron los principes quel sedién derredor” Berceo, *Mil.* 735d” [Corominas and Pascual, *DCECH* (1980-1991, vol. I (A-CA): 376)]

“The primitive form *sí* [<SĪC ] of the manner adverb is still common in many of the uses of archaic authors and even sometimes in the 14<sup>th</sup> century “*sí* dixo la comadre quando el cirugiano / el coraçon quería sacarle con su mano” J. Ruiz 1411a; [‘so said the woman when the surgeon / her heart wanted to take out with his hand’] “peor es amar fazer pecado / que fazerlo .../ E *sí* algunos son que non tan solamente / dexan de fazer el bien, mas aun a su aciente / quieren mal a los que bien obran buenamente” *Rim. de Palacio*, 1287c [‘it is worse to love sinning than to do it...And thus there are some who not only stop doing good, particularly to those who do good, but also wish evil to those who do good’]; especially when the idea of ‘so’ coincides with that of ‘also’: “recibiólo el rey assaz a grant amor, / *sí* fizieron los principes quel sedién derredor” [‘the king received him with rather great love, so did the princes that sat around him’] Berceo, *Mil.* 735d”

In addition, it can occur in desiderative statements, which will lead to its lexicalization as a discourse connective with this value:<sup>10</sup>

“en frases desiderativas: “fijo, yo vos bendigo, *sí* faga el Criador: / él vos dé sobre Dario victoria con honor” *Alex.* 172a, de donde llegó *sí* a emplearse como adverbio desiderativo, con carácter autónomo: “yo te ruego, *sí* veas paraíso, / pon sobre mí tus manos...” Berceo, *S. Lor.* 59c, construcción frecuentísima en la Edad Media (*Cid* 1342, etc., *Sta M. Egipc.* 297, J. Ruiz 984, 1578, etc.)” [Corominas and Pascual, *DCECH* (1980-1991, vol. I (A-CA): 376)]

“...[I]n desiderative sentences: “fijo, yo vos bendigo, *sí* faga el Criador: / él vos dé sobre Dario victoria con honor” *Alex.* 172a [‘son, I bless you, may our Lord do likewise: (may) He lead you to an honourable victory over Dario’], from which sense *sí* came to be used autonomously as a desiderative adverb: “yo te ruego, *sí* veas paraíso, / pon sobre mí tus manos...” Berceo, *S. Lor.* 59c [‘I beg you, may you see heaven, place your hands on me ...’], which saw very widespread use in the Middle Ages (*Cid* 1342, etc., *Sta M. Egipc.* 297, J. Ruiz 984, 1578, etc.)”

Likewise, the adverb *sí* is attested in other constructions that Coromines calls “affirmative periphrases”, which are used as question answers:<sup>11</sup>

“Por otra parte, partiendo del valor de ‘así’, nuestro adverbio se empleó acompañando a un verbo, como perífrasis afirmativa: *sí* fago (*Cid* 3042, etc.), *sí* quiero y análogos que todavía son usuales en el Siglo de Oro: “¿atreveráste a bajar / por ese balcón? D. JUAN *Sí* atrevo, / que alas en tu favor llevo”, Tirso, *Burlador.* I, 106; “Beltrán, /vete fuera. BELTRÁN. Si es preciso obedecerte / *sí* aré” Rojas Zorrilla, *Cada cual lo que le toca*, v. 309” [Corominas and Pascual, *DCECH* (1980-1991, vol. I (A-CA): 376)]

“In addition, on the basis of its meaning of ‘so, thus’, this adverb was used with a verb as an affirmative periphrasis as in “*sí* fago” [‘thus do I’] (*Cid* 3042, etc.), “*sí* quiero” [‘thus want I’] and comparable

<sup>10</sup> The desiderative value of *así* still exists today:

- (i)            ¡*Así* llegue a tiempo! / ¡*Así* pierdan el partido!  
                 ‘So arrive on time! / So lose the match!’  
                 “May he arrive on time!” / “May they lose the match!”  
                 [María Moliner, *Diccionario de uso del español*: sv. *así*]

<sup>11</sup> Some authors, like Martins (2005:178-181), regard these examples as VP-ellipsis. Concerning this point, it is worth remarking that in Old Spanish answers such as “*sí* fago” [‘thus do I’] (or in the equivalent expressions of Old French, Old Catalan and Old Occitan), even when the gloss of the examples given by Martins (2005: 179-180) is “*AFF do*”, which she translates as “yes, I do”, one cannot assert categorically that *sí* is the same affirmative marker we use nowadays.

structures that were still usual in the Golden Age: “¿atreveráste a bajar / por ese balcón?” [‘Will you dare come down by this balcony?’] D. JUAN: “Sí atrevo, / que alas en tu favor llevo” [‘Yes, I dare, [that] I bring wings in your favour’], Tirso, *Burlador*. I, 106; “Beltrán, /vete fuera.” [‘Beltrán, leave’] BELTRÁN: “Si es preciso obedecerte / *si aré*” [‘If I must obey you, thus will I do’] Rojas Zorrilla, *Cada cual lo que le toca*, v. 309”

From this meaning, *sí* became grammaticalized as an affirmative marker:

“En castellano [...] pronto se desarrolló la construcción elíptica que partiendo de *sí hago* y análogos empleó solamente *sí*: “estos otros non veen como estáo muerto, et vos, *sí*” *Conde Luc.* ed. Knust 290.4; y ya *dezir de sí o de no*, *Cid* 3594, *dezir sí* J. Ruiz 444c, *dezir que sí Conde Luc.* 79.11; naciendo así el nuevo adverbio afirmativo *sí*. [...] creado igualmente por el it. y el port., por el cat. (ya junto a *oc*, en lo antiguo: *Jaume I*, 266.4; Eiximenis, *Doctr. Com.* 63)” [Corominas and Pascual, *DCECH* (1980-1991, vol. I (A-CA): 377)]

“In Spanish [...] the elliptic construction with *sí* alone was soon developed from such structures as *sí hago* [‘thus do I’] and similar uses: “estos otros non veen como estáo muerto, et vos, *sí*” [‘these others do not see that I am dead, and you do’] *Conde Luc.* ed. Knust 290.4; and already *dezir de sí* or *de no* [‘say yes or no’] *Cid* 3594, *dezir sí* [‘say yes’] J. Ruiz 444c, *dezir que sí* [‘say [that] yes’] *Conde Luc.* 79.11. Thus was born the new affirmative adverb *sí*. [...], created in like fashion by Italian, Portuguese and Catalan (side by side with *oc*, in the Middle Ages: *Jaume I*, 266.4; Eiximenis, *Doctr. Com.* 63)”

From the data supplied by Coromines, it is plausible to assume that the grammaticalization process of the manner adverb *sí* [< SIC] has a clear syntactic exponent in its being placed in front of the verb. This can be seen in the examples in (28), where *sí* (“so, thus”) is focalized and can express affirmative polarity, even though it is still part of the verbal predication:

- (28) a. ¿Es así por uertad? *Sí*, rei, por caridad. [...] ¿I traedes uostros escritos? / Rei, *Si traemos* / los meiores que nos auemos. [*Auto de los Reyes Magos*: vv. 86-86 y 128-130; *Crestomatía*. I: pp. 71-76]

‘Is thus for truth? Thus, King, for charity [...] And bring<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> your writings? King, so bring<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> the best that we have’

“It is so, forsooth?” “Thus, King, for pity’s sake.” [...] “Do you bring your writings?” “King, yes/ thus we do bring the best we have.”

- b. “Omillom auos &alconde do Remond / E al conde don Arrich & a quantos que y son; / Dios salue a nuestros amigos & auos mas, señor! / Mi mugier dona Ximena, dueña es de pro, / Besa uos las manos, & mis fijas amas ados, / Desto que nos abino que uos pese, señor.” / Respondio el Rey: “*si fago, sin salue Dios!*” [Çid: vv. 3036–3042]<sup>12</sup>

“I humble myself before you and Count Remond and Count Arrich and before all those who are here; God save our friends and especially you, Sire! My wife, Lady Ximena, is an upstanding maiden, she kisses your hands and so do my daughters, I hope you lament what happened to us.” The king answered: “Thus/Yes I do regret it, may God save me!”

Furthermore, in Old Spanish and Old Catalan there are several other adverbs that can reinforce the assertive value of statements and have an effect on their polarity. One of these adverbs is *çertas/certes* (and corresponding variant spellings), as shown in (29):

<sup>12</sup> In this example (extracted from the palaeographic transcription made by Menéndez Pidal), the modal adverb *si* is used both in an affirmative periphrasis and in a desiderative statement. As noted by Coromines, “*si fago*” is indeed a verb of support used to express ‘*así me pesa*’ “I do regret it”, whereas “*sin salue Dios*” means ‘¿Así Dios me guarde!’ “May God save me”. See the transcription and the comments in the edition made by Ian Michael [*Poema de Mio Cid*, edited by Ian Michael, 1987, Madrid, Castalia, p. 274].

- (29) a. El otro fijuelo perdido lo auia [...] e nunca podieron fallar recabdo del, saluo ende vna muger que les dixo: “*Çertas*, anoche despues de bisperas, paso por aqui dando bozes, llamando a su madre” [*Zifar*: p. 87; ed. Wagner]  
 ‘The other little-son lost him had [...] and never could find notice of-him, except for a woman that them said: “Certainly, yesterday-night after vespers, passed by here giving cries, calling to his mother’  
 ‘They had lost their other little son [...] and they never managed to hear of him again, except for a woman who said to them, ‘Certainly, yesterday night, after vespers, he passed by my door calling for his mother.’”
- b. “Commo [...] por salir de vn regno e yrnos a otro, cuydades fuyr del poder de Dios? *Çertas* non puede ser, ca el es señor de los çielos e de la tierra e de la mar” [*Zifar*: p. 88; ed. Wagner]  
 ‘How [...] to go-out of a kingdom and go-<sub>PRON.</sub> to another, think<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> escape from-the power of God? Certainly not can be, because He is Lord of the heavens and of the earth and of the sea’  
 ‘Do you think you can escape our Lord’s power simply by leaving one kingdom to go to another? Certainly, it cannot be this way, because He is the Lord of heaven, earth and sea.’”

We have also attested cases in which *cierto/çertas* is followed by *sí*, as in (30), the description of which is a bit more complex.

- (30) a. E commo yva bien encavalgado, fuése muy toste e andó toda la noche, asý que llegó a Roma otro día por la mañana, quando el ssol rayava. Entonce le preguntaron cómo sse tornara, e ssy venía el enperador tan bien commo dezían. – *Çertas, sí* – dixo Millon –, ora lo saberedes luego. [*CORDE*: c.1300–1325. Anónimo, *Cuento muy fermoso de Otas de Roma*; ed. Herbert L. Baird, Jr., Real Academia Española (Madrid), 1976. Ms. h-I-13 in the Escorial Library]  
 ‘And as went well on-the-horse, went very ready and walked all the night, as that arrived in Rome another day by the morning, when the sun shone. Then him asked how <sub>PRON.</sub> went-back, and if came the emperor as well as said. – Certainly, yes/thus – said Millon -, now it know<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> immediately.’  
 ‘And because he was on horseback, he went quickly and travelled all night long, so he arrived in Rome early the following day, when the sun was about to shine. Then they asked him how he would get back and whether the emperor had also come, as people were saying. – ‘Certainly, yes,’ said Millon, ‘you are about to find out.’”
- b. Amjgos aquella naue que se va es la que va al rreyno de orbin / *çierto ssy* dixieron los otros [*Zifar*: fol. 34v. Palaeographic transcription of Ms. P, Esp. 36. Facsimile published by M. Moleiro Ed. S.A.]  
 ‘Friends that ship that <sub>PRON.</sub> leave is the that goes to-the kingdom of Orbin? Certainly yes said the others’  
 ‘“Dear friends, is that ship that’s leaving the one that goes to the kingdom of Orbin?” ‘Certainly, yes/thus,’ said the others.’”
- c. E desde fue desarmado, tomó la donzella por la mano e díxole: – Rey, veis aquí mi demanda bien acabada. – *Cierto, sí* – dixo el Rey –, e Dios aya gracias. [*CORDE*: c 1400 – 1498, Anonymous, *El baladro del sabio Merlín con sus profecías*, ed. Isabel Hernández González, CILUS (Salamanca), 1999. Incunable: Biblioteca de la Universidad de Oviedo, signatura R. 33215]  
 ‘And since was disarmed, take the maiden by the hand and said-him: – King , see here my demand well finished. – Certainly, yes/thus – said the king – and God have grace.’  
 ‘And when he had disarmed, he took the maiden by the hand and said to him, ‘King, you see here that my demand is fulfilled.’ ‘Certainly, yes/ thus,’ said the king, “and the Lord have mercy (on you)!”’

As for the exact meaning of the examples in (30), it is difficult to elucidate whether the adverb *cierto/çertas* is freely combined with *sí* and they thus together constitute an independent unit with respect to the verb – as can be inferred from (30a) and (30c) – or, on the other hand, whether *sí* forms a cluster with the verb and not with *cierto/çertas*. Given the characteristics of the texts – a manuscript in (30a), an incunabulum in (30c)<sup>13</sup> and a palaeographic transcription in (30b) – it can be assumed that the punctuation of the former (“– *Çertas, sí – dixo Millon –*” and “– *Cierto, sí – dixo el Rey –*”) corresponds to the option chosen by the editor.<sup>14</sup> It is plausible to suppose, though, that the correct reading corresponds to another meaning which can also be inferred from (30b), i.e., “–*Çertas, sí dixo Millon*” and “–*Cierto, sí dixo el Rey*”, where *sí* would be linked to the denotation of the verb and would have the value of ‘*así*’ (‘so, thus’).<sup>15</sup>

To sum up, in accordance with what we have seen, it is safe to claim that the existence of a Latin pattern, which consisted of the reinforcement of polarity by means of certain manner and quantitative adverbs that convey the affirmative or negative value of statements, smoothed the way for the grammaticalization of *sí* as an affirmative marker in several Romance languages. Romance languages continued the process initiated by Latin, and the gradual transformation of the manner adverb *sic* into an affirmative marker points the way to the grammaticalization path<sup>16</sup> followed in these languages in the sphere of emphatic polarity.

<sup>13</sup> We would like to thank Rafael Ramos for the information about the location of these texts.

<sup>14</sup> The original texts did not have hyphens, because manuscripts did not have punctuation and incunabula largely followed the patterns used in manuscripts in this respect. According to Bleca (1984: 122), “La puntuación medieval en toda Europa arranca de los gramáticos de los siglos IV-VII, Donato, Sergio, Diomedes, Casiodoro, San Isidoro, etc., que recogen el sistema clásico, cuya puntuación procuraba indicar la pausa y a veces hasta la inflexión de voz”. [‘Medieval punctuation in Europe inherits the uses of 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century grammarians like Donatus, Sergius, Diomedes, Cassiodorus, Saint Isidore, etc., who continued the Classical system, the punctuation of which was intended to mark pauses and sometimes voice inflection’]. See the table given by Sebastián Mediavilla (2000: 78-79 and 2002: 37-38) where there is a correlation of different systems of punctuation advocated by several Classical and Medieval authors, and more precisely by the authors of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>15</sup> Notice, however, that the literary tradition has tended to assume that, in manuscripts, Spanish *çertas ssy / cierto ssy* and Catalan *çertes hoc / cert hoc* are affirmative emphatic expressions. Par, for example, (1923: 233) states the following: “Metge aplega ‘hoc’ a ‘encara’ y ‘cert’ per a donar molta més força a aquests darrers adverbis [...] ‘Quet par daquesta mia sposa, es assats bella e honesta? – *Cert hoc*, dix Griselda (V. 555).” “Metge combines *hoc* ‘yes/this’ with *encara* ‘still’ and *cert* ‘certain(ly)’ to reinforce the latter adverbs [...] ‘Quet par daquesta mia sposa, es assats bella e honesta? – *Cert hoc*, dix Griselda [“What do you think about my wife, is she really beautiful and honest?” “Certainly yes/this,” said Griselda.]”

It should be pointed out that in these examples these elements are always followed by *decir* ‘to say’, which would favour an interpretation such as *así dijo* ‘so [he] said’, *esto dijo* ‘this [he] said’. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that there are combinations of *certes* and *hoc* in syntactic configurations in which the pronoun cannot go together with the verb:

- (i) “Dix lo frare als ciutadans –Par-vos que fer obres de caritat sia obra sancta? ... Respongueren los ciutadans –*certes hoc*” [Coromines (1980), s.v. *ho*].  
“The friar said to the citizens, ‘Do you think that doing charitable deeds is a holy deed?’ ... The citizens answered, ‘Certainly yes/this.’”

Whatever the solution might be, it does not represent a problem for our analysis, because both stages (an element linked to verbal predication, on the one hand, and a combination with an adverb to reinforce emphatic affirmation, on the other) are part of the grammaticalization path that consolidated the descendants of *sic* and *hoc* as affirmative markers.

<sup>16</sup> As stated by Roberts & Roussou (2003: 235), “Once an element enters the functional system, it will tend to be reanalyzed successfully upwards in the structure, and this creates grammaticalization paths”. In accordance with these authors, “[...] pathways of grammaticalization are defined by the functional hierarchy through which grammaticalized material can travel by means of successive upward reanalyses. Thus grammaticalization

This process is sketched out in (31)<sup>17</sup>. Over a certain period, this adverb functions as a modifier expressing manner. Little by little, its uses in affirmative periphrastic constructions with verbs of support and also in desiderative structures generalize. Finally, it is grammaticalized as an affirmative marker:<sup>18</sup>

- (31) a. [CP .... [FocusP ... [PoIP ... [TP ... [VP fago **así**]]]]]  
 b. [CP .... [FocusP ... [PoIP ... [TP **así/sí**<sub>i</sub> [VP fago t<sub>i</sub>]]]]]  
 c. [CP .... [FocusP **así/sí**<sub>i</sub> ... [PoIP t<sub>i</sub> [TP t<sub>i</sub> [VP fago t<sub>i</sub>]]]]]  
 d. [CP .... [FocusP [PoIP **sí** [TP [VP]]]]]

We will return to this issue in section § 4, when examining the syntactic and semantic behaviour of *bien/bé* ‘well ~ affirmative emphatic polarity marker’ and *poco/poc* ‘little ~ negative emphatic polarity marker’ in Romance.

3.2.2. Positive polarity is expressed in Old Catalan by means of two different forms, the manner adverb *sí* and the demonstrative *oc/hoc* (<HOC). Coromines comments on the fact that there is strong evidence of the vitality of the latter throughout the medieval period:<sup>19</sup>

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pathways can be deduced from the functional hierarchy (and possibly vice versa), once upward reanalysis is taken as a basic mechanism of syntactic change.” (Roberts & Roussou (2003: 209)).

<sup>17</sup> The process by which some items that are not inherently affirmative turn into assertive markers to express positive polarity is still fully productive nowadays. In general, the elements that undergo it are modal adverbs, pronouns or epistemic adverbs, etc., that can be used as affirmative answers to questions: *bien* ‘well’, *así* ‘so, thus’, *esto* ‘this’, *eso mismo* ‘exactly that’, *claro* ‘clear’, *seguro* ‘sure’, *cierto* ‘certain(ly)’, *absolutamente* ‘absolutely’, *por supuesto* ‘of course’, *desde luego* ‘of course’, *naturalmente* ‘naturally’, *evidentemente* ‘obviously’, etc. See Martín Zorraquino (1994), Hernanz (1999, 2006) and Freites Barros (2006), among other authors. It is worth taking into account that the fronting of these elements in relation to the verb is similar to the grammaticalization path sketched in (31). Notice the contrast between the examples in (i), which have a clearly positive value, and those in (ii), that do not convey such a meaning:

- (i) a. *Así es*  
 ‘Thus is’  
 “That’s right.”  
 b. *Esto / eso es*  
 ‘This/that is’  
 “That’s right.”
- (ii) a. *Es así*  
 ‘Is so’  
 “That’s the way it is.”  
 b. *Es esto / eso*  
 ‘Is this’  
 “It’s this.’

We leave a more detailed analysis of this contrast for further research.

<sup>18</sup> In the sequence in (31), the preliminary assumption is that, before being fronted to *FocusP* –as illustrated in (31c)– the adverb is moved to an intermediate focal position, situated between *TP* and the *VP* (see Belletti 2004), as represented in (31b). This analysis is based on the fact that the process of grammaticalization of *sí* –like that of the other polarity markers analyzed in this work– implies a first stage characterized by the existence of a movement operation which clearly diverges from canonical focalization. Since this question is not essential for the present work, we henceforth will obviate this stage in the syntactic representation of the emphatic polarity markers under study, so as to explain it more clearly.

<sup>19</sup> Concerning this question, it should be remarked that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Bernat Metge was still using *hoc* as the most common answer to questions:

- (i) a. En partida, dix ell, *hoc* e en partida no [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1303; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘In part, said he, yes and in part no’

- (32) a. Has riquea? Respòs que *hoc*, amor. Has pobrea? *Hoc*, amor [s. XIII. Llull, *Amic e amat*: met. 201; Alcover-Moll, *DCVB*: sv. Hoc]  
 ‘have<sub>2ND.SG</sub> wealth? Said that yes/this, love. Have<sub>2ND.SG</sub> poverty? Yes/this, love’  
 “Do you have any wealth?” “Yes,” he said, “(I have) love.” “Do you have poverty?” “Yes, (I have) love.”
- b. Per la Mare de Déu li demanà si volia estar ab aqueles enfantes e ésser al seu servey, a la qual cosa l’ imfanta respòs que *oc*, volentera; e ela li manà d’ equí avant no fasés neguna leugeria ne infantia, ne jugàs ne riés, cor per cert al ·XXX\_èn· jorn seria ab aqueles verges al seu servey. [*CICA*: Segle XIIIb, *Diàlegs de Sant Gregori*]  
 “For the Virgin Mary’s sake, she asked her if she would like to be with those princesses and serve them, to which she answered, “Yes, willingly”; and she told her that thenceforth she must neither act frivolously nor be childish, neither play nor laugh, because within thirty days she would indeed be serving those virgins.”
- c. Conex tu aquestes letres? –. El macip li respòs: – *Oc*. séyer, que eu les escrisquí–. [*CICA*: Segle XIIIb, *Clams i crims a la València medieval*.1]  
 ‘know<sub>2ND.SG</sub> you these letters? –. The servant him answered: –Yes. Sir, that I them wrote–.’  
 “Do you recognize these letters?–. The servant answered him, ‘Yes, sir, because I wrote them.’”
- d. Tu ab mi vols haver qüestió?”. E lo dit Miquel dix: “*Oc*, per lo cul d’aytal!”  
 jurant de Déu. [*CICA*: Segle XVa. *Processos de Crims del segle XV a Lleida*.2]  
 ‘You with me want<sub>2ND.SG</sub> have problem?’. And the mentioned Michel said: “Yes, for the bottom of such!, swearer of God.’

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“He partly said yes and partly said no.”

- b. Mon pensament era que faent bones obres hi entras hom. *Hoc*, mas qui fa bones obres...[Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1293; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘My thought was that doing good deeds there entered one. Yes, but who does good deeds...’  
 “I thought that everybody could enter (heaven) by doing good deeds.” “Yes, but who does good deeds ...”
- c. ¿Sots ne cert? *Hoc*, dix ell, mes ... [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1305; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘are PRON. certain? Yes, said he, but ...’  
 “Are you sure?” “Yes, he said, but...”
- d. *Hoc* digui jo ... [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 2196; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘Yes, said I.’

Likewise, Bernat Metge also uses *sí*, which always forms a cluster with the verb; according to Par (1923: 232), “it is as if it could not get rid of the usual manner adverb construction”:

- (ii) a. *Si atorch*, mas no que visca sens cors [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 361; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘Yes/thus agree, but not that one lives without body’  
 “Yes, I agree, but one cannot live without a body.”
- b. placiet recordar apres quem vols dir. *Si fare* [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1899; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘liked remember then what want<sub>2ND.SG</sub> say. Yes/thus do<sub>FUTURE</sub>’  
 “Then try to remember what you wanted to tell me.” “Yes, I will.”
- c. altres dien que si feu [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 774; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘others say<sub>3RD.PL</sub> that yes/thus do<sub>2ND.PL</sub>’  
 “Others say that you do (so).”

“Do you want to have problems with me?” And the aforementioned Michael said, ‘Yes, you bet your arse!’, swearing in God’s name.”

As for *sí*, in our view, the medieval data seem to indicate that the process of grammaticalization starts in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Notice that in the examples given in (33a) and (33c) *sí* exhibits the manner reading of ‘así’ “in this way, thus”, whereas in (33d) it has a desiderative value, and in (33e) it already functions as an affirmative marker:

- (33) a. La duquessa, sa mare, sobrada de dolor, plorà molt agrament, e *sí* feren moltes altres nobles dones qui en sa companyia eren vengudes, e no menys la emperadriu, qui sa cosina germana era. [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 71; ed. Aramon]  
‘the duchess, his mother, overwhelmed by sorrow, cried very extremely, and so did many other noble women who in her company were come, and not less the empress, who his first cousin was’  
“The duchess, his mother, overwhelmed by sorrow, cried desperately, and so did many other noble women who had come to keep her company, and so did the empress, who was his first cousin.”
- b. E tantost que ell viu sant March en figura de leó, *sí*s recordà de la Güelfa [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 102; ed. Aramon]  
‘As soon as he saw Saint March in form of lion, this way PRON. remembered of Güelfa’  
“As soon as he saw Saint March in the form of lion, he remembered Güelfa thus.”
- c. E jatsia ella sabés molt, no sabé tant, emperò, que pogués cobrir l’amor que portava a Curial; en tant, que l’abadessa conegué que gran afecció li havia. E *sí* dix: -Senyora, yo-us prech per aquell Déu que-us pot trametre bon novell de les coses que més amats en aquest món, que-m digats veritat [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 131; ed. Aramon]  
‘And even she knew a-lot, not knew so-much, but, that could cover the love that brought to Curial: in while, that the abbess knew that great care her had. And thus said: - Lady, I you beg that that God that you can transmit good news of the things that more love<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> in this world, that me say<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> truth’  
“And although she knew a lot, she did not know enough, though, to be able to hide her love for Curial: So, the abbess knew that she cared a lot for him. And she told her thus, ‘Lady, I beg you, in the name of that God who brings you good tidings of the things of this world you love most, that you tell me the truth.’”
- d. Respòs Jacob: -¿Quina cura havem dels fets d’altri? Hajam cura dels nostres e farem prou. Dix Curial: -*Sí* Déus me dó honor; volenterosament me entrevendria en aquest fet, per veure si hi poria fer algún bé, en manera que a aquest prohóm desapoderat la sua vellesa no-l faça malmirent. [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 57; ed. Aramon]  
‘Answered Jacob: - What care have<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> of the acts of others? Have care of the ours and do enough. Said Curial: - (I hope) this way God give me honour, willingly PRON. intercede in this action, to see if here could do some good, in manner that to that man stripped the his old-age not him do unworthy’  
“Jacob answered, ‘How much do we really care about what others do? Let us worry about our own actions and it will be enough.’ Curial said, ‘May God give me honour! Willingly would I arbitrate in this action, to see whether I could help prevent this helpless old man from being considered unworthy because of his old age!’”
- e. -Curial, havets ben dormit esta nit?-. Curial respòs que sí. [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 110; ed. Aramon]  
‘- Curial, have<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> well slept this night?-. Curial answers that yes’  
“Curial, did you sleep well last night?’ =Curial answered that he had.”



Par (1923: 231) links the use of *oc* and *sí* in affirmative answers to the Latin tradition (intended to avoid repetition), which resorted to the following alternative expressions: *hoc facio*, *sic facio*, *sic est*.<sup>20</sup> Thus, both *HOC* and *SIC* were inherited by neo-Latin languages and, as they became general, they developed independent uses, finally becoming grammaticalized as affirmative markers.

In addition to the previously mentioned elements, in Catalan affirmative polarity can be reinforced by means of several other adverbs such as *bé* ‘well’, *certes* ‘certain’, *prou* ‘enough’, etc., and negative polarity by using the quantifier *poc* ‘little’. So, for instance, analogously to what has been described above for Spanish –(see (29))–, in Old Catalan *çert/certes* is attested with assertive meaning, as illustrated in (34):<sup>21</sup>

- (34) a. La piyor cosa que en lo morir entreve es la pahor de la mort. – *Cert* tu dius gran veritat [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1251; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘the worst thing that in the die<sub>INF</sub> come is the fear for the death. – certain you say great truth’  
 affect  
 “‘The worst thing that happens to you when you die is that you are afraid of death.’ – Certainly, you speak a great truth.”
- b. L’emperador devallà en una de les scales de la sua loja, e, acostant-se Curial, lo féu cavaller. E com se’n fonch tornat dix als prínceps e senyors qui de prop li staven: –*Certes* yo crech que he fet cavaller lo pus bell gentil home que yo jamés veés, e si ell és axí prous com és bell, no voldria yo ésser lo un dels acusadors [Curial e Güelfa: p. 73; ed. Aramon]  
 ‘The emperor came-down one of the stairs of his site, and, coming-near Curial, him ordered knight. And as PRON. had gone-back said to the princes and lords that near him were: - Certain I believe that I have ordered knight the most handsome gentle man that I ever saw, and if he is so profitable as he is handsome, not would I be the one of the accusers.’  
 “‘The emperor descended the stairs and, Curial having approached, he made him a knight. And when he went back, he told the princes and lords that were near him, ‘Certainly, I believe that I

<sup>20</sup> The consolidation of these constructions as a productive pattern in affirmative answers offers an explanation for the fact that in Old Spanish and Old Catalan we still see answers with VP-ellipsis –see footnote 11– which are not possible, on the other hand, in Modern Spanish and Modern Catalan:

- (i) a. ¿Atreveráste a bajar / por ese balcón? D. JUAN *Sí atrevo*, / que alas en tu favor llevo”, Tirso, *Burlador*. I, 106 [Corominas y Pascual, *DCECH* (A-CA): 376]  
 “‘Will you dare come down by this balcony?’ D. JUAN: “‘Yes, I dare, (that) I bring wings in your favour.’”
- b. “Mas vos, senyor, noy havets res guanyat. Si he, dix ell, molt [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1222; Par (1923: 232)]  
 ‘But you, sir, not-CL<sub>LOC</sub> have<sub>2ND.PL</sub> nothing won. Yes, I have, said he, a-lot’  
 “‘But, you, sir, haven’t you won anything?’ ‘Yes, I have,’ he said. ‘I have won a lot.’”

We can only understand examples like (i) within the syntactic viewpoint of object omission. Vincent (1988: 59) comments on the fact that in Latin the *pro-drop* parameter applied not only in the case of subjects, but also with objects: “*Pompeius interfecit* ‘Pompey killed him’, *nego* ‘I deny it’ [...] a single Latin verb form can thus constitute a complete sentence (even when the verb in question is transitive), with the inflection marking the subject and the object omitted. Several Romance languages [...] retain the ability to omit subjects [...] but omission of the object pronoun is only possible in Portuguese.” See also Vincent (1997).

<sup>21</sup> Par (1923: 233) remarks that *cert* is used by Bernat Metge in the same contexts where we would employ *sí* nowadays. However, he doubts that it would be completely equivalent to the affirmative adverb. Actually, his words imply that it can be used to reinforce the assertive value of a statement, despite not being grammaticalized as an affirmative polarity marker. Moreover, synchronic evidence shows that this process is not yet fully completed today, in either Spanish or Catalan. We leave this question open for further exploration in other work.

have knighted the most handsome and noblest man that I have ever seen, and if he is as helpful as he is handsome, I would not want to be one of his accusers.”

Among the elements that can convey affirmative polarity in Old Catalan, it is also worth mentioning *ver* (< VERUM) “true”, mainly in the construction *ver es* (< VERUM EST) “It’s true”.<sup>22</sup>

- (35) a. Moltes coses creu hom que no pot veure. – *Ver es* [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 121; Par (1923: 233)]  
 ‘many things believes man that not can see. – True is’  
 “‘Many things are considered to be beyond man’s visual perception.’ ‘That’s right.’”
- b. ¿tu creus ço que no has vist? – *Ver es* [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 145, 189, 371, 511, 528, 666, 692, 890; Par (1923: 233)]  
 ‘You believe<sub>2ND.SG</sub> this that not have<sub>2ND.SG</sub> seen? – True is’  
 “‘Do you believe what you have not seen?’ ‘That’s right.’”
- c. ¿Nom havets dit que cert sots de salvació haver? – *Ver es*, dix ell, mas no se quant [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1359; Par (1923: 233)]  
 ‘Not-CL<sub>DATIVE</sub> have<sub>2ND.PL</sub> said that sure are<sub>2ND.PL</sub> of salvation have? – True is, said he, but not know<sub>1st.SG</sub> when.’  
 “‘Haven’t you told me that you are certain of your salvation?’ ‘That’s right,’ he said, ‘but I do not know when.’”

With reference to *prou* (< lt. vlg. PRODE ‘profit’ ‘benefit’, ‘beneficial’), which acquired the meaning of ‘enough’ illustrated by the examples in (36a) and (36b), things are even clearer. It has undergone an obvious change towards the sphere of positive emphatic polarity, as shown in (36c) and (36d):

- (36) a. Curial los requirí si havien mester diners que ho diguessen, que’ll los en donaria *prou*. [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 164; ed. Aramon]  
 ‘Curial them required if had necessity money that it said, that he them CL<sub>PARTITIVE.ACC</sub> give enough.’  
 “Curial told them to tell him if they needed money, because he would give them enough.”
- b. *Prou* paraules hauets despès [*Tirant*, c. 73; *DCVB*. sv.: *prou*]  
 ‘Enough words have<sub>2ND.PL</sub> spend’  
 “You have spoken enough words.”
- c. *Prou* se fa tost, ço que bé’s fa [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*, I; *DCVB*. sv.: *prou*]  
 ‘Indeed PRON do soon, this that well PRON do’  
 “What’s well done is quickly done indeed.”
- d. *Prou* li ho vaig explicar, i no em va entendre [*DCVB*. sv.: *prou*]  
 ‘Indeed him it PERFECT.AUX tell, and not me PERFECT.AUX understand’  
 “I did tell him indeed, and he did not understand me.”

To sum up, in this section we have examined a series of expressions associated with the verbalization of polarity both in Latin, and in Old Spanish and Old Catalan. The conclusions that can be drawn are the following. First of all, the absence of a specific marker to express assertion –as opposed to what happens with negation– accounts for the fact that Romance languages have taken a broad and diverse group of expressions to convey positive polarity. Secondly, the process of grammaticalization undergone by the Latin modal adverb *sic* on the

<sup>22</sup> We draw attention to the existence of examples like (35) where there is a movement of the adjective *ver* “true” to preverbal position. Likewise, *prou* “enough” in (36c) and (36d) undergoes the same movement. Consider the parallelism between these constructions and the ones we have examined in footnote 17.

way to its current use as the positive polarity marker *sí* in Spanish and Catalan conforms to definite semantic and syntactic patterns which can be recurrently attested throughout the history of Romance languages. By the same token, we have described parallel grammaticalization processes for other elements that were not inherently polar in origin either. Thirdly, although the degree of grammaticalization can differ significantly, the completion of the process is usually associated with the existence of focalization, as a result of which these items are moved to the left periphery of the sentence.

In the following section, we will focus on the analysis of two prototypical cases of grammaticalization concerning the expression of polarity. As will be seen, the parallel with the evolution of *sic* from Latin to Romance is clearly identifiable: section § 4.1 is devoted to the study of the emphatic polarity markers *bien* and *bé* in Spanish and Catalan, respectively, and section § 4.2 offers a comparative analysis of Spanish *poco* and Catalan *poc* as negative polarity markers.

#### 4. From adverbial modification to polarity: a brief diachronic and comparative study

##### 4.1. *Bien* in Spanish and *bé* in Catalan

In Spanish the adverb *bien* ‘well’ functions as a manner modifier linked to verbal denotation – as has been mentioned in the introduction – and so does Catalan *bé* ‘well’. The path followed by these elements from their adverbial value to their use as affirmative polarity markers exhibits remarkable similarities in the two languages, as will be seen in the next sections.

4.1.1. In Modern and Old Spanish, *bien* usually occurs in postverbal position, as it corresponds to an adverb that occupies a hierarchically low structural position.<sup>23</sup>

- (37) a. Et yo sabía *bien* tu malvestad et tu loçanía [*Calila*: 169]  
“And I knew well the wickedness of your exuberance.”
- b. Oy una gallina e antier un gallo: yo veo *bien* mi duelo, aunque me lo callo.  
[CORDE, 1438. Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, *Arcipreste de Talavera (Corbacho)*, ed. de Marcella Ciceri, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1990]  
“Today a chicken and the day before yesterday a rooster: I am well aware of my distress, though I am silent.”
- c. Tú dices bien, Sancho. [CE, Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*]  
‘You say well, Sancho’  
“You are right, Sancho.”

Just as *sí* in (28) like nominal constituents in general –see (10)–, *bien* can appear in preverbal position with an emphatic value:

- (38) a. *Bien* lo sabedes que yo non puedo mas [*Çid*, v.:3311]  
‘well it know<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> that I not can more’  
“Well/Indeed you know that I can do no more.”
- b. El *Çid* que *bien* nos quiere nada non perdera [*Çid*, v.:1389]

<sup>23</sup> According to Cinque (1999: 4ff.), *bien* ‘well’, *mal* ‘badly’ and manner adverbs in general occupy a position which is immediately superior to the VP. In their surface unmarked order, they appear before verbal objects, as exemplified in the contrast between (37a) and (37b):

- (i) a. El corredor midió {*bien* / *mal*} sus esfuerzos  
‘The runner paced {well/badly} his efforts’  
b. \*El corredor midió sus esfuerzos {*bien* / *mal*}

‘The Çid that well us love nothing not lose<sub>FUTURE.3RD.SG</sub>’  
 “The Çid, who loves us well, will not lose anything.”

- c. Si del campo *bien* salides, grand ondra auredes vos [*Çid*, v.: 3565]  
 ‘If from the field well go-out<sub>2ND.PL.</sub>, great honour will-have you’  
 “If you leave the battlefield whole, great honour will be yours.”
- d. Pues, *bien* puede e deue ser notada la locura de cada uno... [CORDE, 1438.  
 Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, Arcipreste de Talavera (Corbacho), Marcella Ciceri, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1990: p. 57]  
 ‘Then, well can and must be noted the madness of everyone’  
 “Thus, everybody’s madness can and must indeed be identified.”

The fronting of *bien* in these and other examples is not due to simple stylistic reordering, but to a process of focalization. Hence the position of the subject (which tends to occur in postverbal position as the result of V to C movement) shows evidence of it –see § 2.2. Regarding this phenomenon, notice the parallel between the examples in (39) and those in (10b) and (16a):

- (39) a. *Bien* sepa el abbat que buen galardon dello pendra [*Çid*, v.:386]  
 ‘well know the abbot who good award of-it take<sub>FUTURE.3RD.SG</sub>’  
 “The abbot must know very well that he will be well rewarded for it.”
- b. Si Dios quisiere que desta *bien* salgamos nos [*Çid*, v.:3461]  
 ‘If God wanted that of-it well get-out we’  
 “God willing, we shall indeed come out of this.”
- c. Pues bien sé yo, señor, que Tú eres tan misericordioso... [CORDE, 1438.  
 Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, Arcipreste de Talavera (Corbacho), ed. Marcella Ciceri, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1990]  
 ‘Then well know I, Lord, that You are so merciful’  
 “Then well I know, my Lord, that you are so merciful ...”

If this is the right approach to the data, the analysis to apply to *bien* in (38) and (39) should not differ significantly from the one put forward in the case of the positive marker *sí* in (20). In other words, *bien* would have undergone movement to *FocusP* from its basic position in *TP/IP*, as illustrated in (40):

(40) [CP .... [FocusP **bien**<sub>i</sub> ... [PoIP t<sub>i</sub> [IP ... t<sub>i</sub> ...]]]]

The representation offered in (40) aptly captures the syntactic and semantic differences between the statements in (37) and those in (38)-(39): in the former case, *bien* occurs in postverbal position and behaves as a manner adverbial linked to the verbal denotation, whereas in the latter this basic behaviour acquires an emphatic value, which is syntactically visible as a consequence of movement of the adverb to the sentence periphery.

The process of focalization of *bien* gives way to the gradual lessening of the previous bond between the verb and the adverb, and the subsequent achievement of an intensive value by the latter, the scope of which ends up being the whole sentence. With this new meaning, instead of expressing *manner* in which the verbal event comes about, *bien* indicates that this event has really taken place.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it emphasizes the positive polarity of the statement. Notice that

<sup>24</sup> The phenomenon under study is part of a more general process that must be related to the different meanings of manner adverbs. These elements – as stated by Bosque (1999: 220)– “are implicitly degree items”, i.e., they

this process exhibits substantial similarities with the one undergone by the adverb *si* in Old Spanish and Old Catalan.

The fronting of *bien* to preverbal position brings about frequent fluctuations between the adverbial and polar readings. However, there are several grammatical aspects, apart from the contextual ones, that favour the appropriate interpretation in each case. Thus, in the following examples, the manner adverbial reading is unequivocally favoured (over the polar one), because of the use of the subjunctive in (41a), the subordinating conjunction *si* in (41b)<sup>25</sup> and the degree marker *muy* “very” in (41c):

- (41) a. *Bien sepa* el abbat que buen galardon dello pendra = (39a)  
 ‘well know the abbot who good award of-it take<sub>FUTURE,3RD.SG</sub>’  
 ‘The abbot must know very well that he will be well rewarded for it.’
- b. *Si del campo bien salides, grand ondra aures vos* = (38c)  
 ‘If from the field well go-out<sub>2ND.PL.</sub>, great honour will-have you’  
 ‘If you leave the battlefield whole, great honour will be yours.’
- c. *E muy bien sabes tu que ...* [CE. *General Estoria* IV]  
 ‘And very well know<sub>2ND.SG</sub> you that ...’  
 ‘And you know very well that...’

In contrast, the examples in (42) display a weaker manner value. Here, topicalization (made visible by the presence of the pronoun) can be regarded as a cue for polar interpretation:

- (42) a. *Bien lo sabedes que yo non puedo mas* [*Çid*, v.:3311] = (38a)  
 ‘well it know<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> that I not can more’  
 ‘Well/Indeed you know that I can do no more.’
- b. *Bien lo sabemos que el algo gaño* [*Çid*, v.:2576]  
 ‘Well it know<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> that he something won’  
 ‘Well/Indeed we know that he won something.’
- c. *Nos bien la sabemos aquesta Razon* [*Çid*, v.:3229]  
 ‘we well it know<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> this reason’  
 ‘We are indeed aware of this explanation’

Finally, examples like (43) clearly convey emphatic polarity because their predicates are unable to co-occur with manner modifiers:

- (43) a. *Con tantas lágrimas acompañaba la enamorada pastora las palabras que decía, que bien tuviera corazón de acero quien de ellas no se doliera.* [Cerv. *Gal.*, Cuervo (1886), s.v. *bien*]  
 ‘With so many tears accompanied the in-love shepherd<sub>FEM.</sub> the words that said, that well had heart of steel who of them not PRON. distressed’

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tend to quantify properties denoted by predicates. Thus, for instance, when we say “*María es tremendamente feliz*” “Mary is tremendously happy” we are not referring to a particular manner of being happy, but to the fact that happiness can be experienced in the highest degree (see Bosque 1999: 220). Regarding this example, see also Rodríguez-Ramalle (2005:517).

<sup>25</sup> As stated in section § 2.1 concerning *sí*, emphatic polarity is normally limited to specific syntactic configurations, especially declarative matrix sentences, which is not the case of (41a)-(41b). This question would require further explanation, which we cannot include here. See Hernanz (2006) for further analysis of the syntactic properties associated with *bien* as a polarity marker.

‘The words spoken by the enamoured shepherdess were accompanied by so many tears that anyone who did not feel distress on hearing them would be hard-hearted indeed.’

- b. *Bien* viene a verme cuando me necesita [M. Moliner (1975), s.v. *bien*]  
 ‘well comes to see-me when me needs’  
 ‘‘He really comes to see me when he needs me.’’
- c. Éste fue su atento regalo al terminar ingeniería. Nada más justo. Esto bien me lo debía en pago de la educación y de los buenos principios que yo le inculqué, como quien dice, a pie de cuna. [CREA. Francisco Nieva, La señora tártara. Junta de Castilla-La Mancha, Toledo, 1991]  
 ‘This was his kind gift upon finishing engineering. Nothing fairer. This well me it owed in payment of the education and of the good principles that I him instilled, as who says, at foot of cradle’  
 ‘‘This was his kind present when he completed his engineering degree. Exactly what I deserved. He owed it to me in exchange for the education and good principles I had been instilling in him, as they say, since the cradle.’’

The data in (43) demonstrate that the semantic relationship between *bien* and the verbal predicate has been severed and as a result this adverb functions as an emphatic polarity marker. It is clear, in fact, that *bien* cannot have been fronted from a basic *VP* position to *FocusP* –cf. (40)– otherwise the examples shown below in (44) would have to be grammatical:

- (44) a. \*Tiene *bien* corazón de acero  
 ‘(he) has well heart of steel’  
 ‘‘\*(He) is well hard-hearted’’
- b. \*Viene *bien* a verme cuando me necesita  
 ‘comes well to see-me when me needs’  
 ‘‘\*He comes to see me well when he needs me’’
- c. \*Esto me lo debía *bien*  
 ‘this me it owed well’  
 ‘‘\*(He) owes this to me well’’

At this point we can conclude that the representation that accurately describes the result of the grammaticalization process undergone by Spanish *bien* is not (40), but (45), which essentially coincides with the analysis we put forward for *sí* in (20):

- (45) [CP .... [FocusP **bien**<sub>i</sub> ... [PolP t<sub>i</sub> [IP...]]]]

4.1.2. As stated above for its Spanish equivalent, Catalan manner adverb *bé* functions as a verbal modifier which normally occurs in postverbal position:

- (46) a. bona terra demostra lo cor del bon christià, qí retén *bé* la paraula de Déu e la met en obra [CICA: Segle XIIIa *Homilies d'Organyà*]  
 ‘Good land demonstrates the heart of-the good Christian, who keeps well the word of God and it put in work’  
 ‘‘Good land is the sign of a good Christian heart, a person who keeps the word of God well and applies it in his actions.’’
- b. studie lo *be* e diligent ment [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 873; Par (1923: 225)]

“Study it well and in a diligent manner.”

- c. si tu sabesses *be* la sua definicio [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 1025; Par (1923: 225)]  
 ‘if you knew well the its definition’  
 “If you knew its definition well.”

Likewise, as described for *bien* at the beginning of this section, *bé* is also documented in preverbal position, which cannot be attributed to simple stylistic reordering, because it has an emphatic value that involves focalization. This is illustrated by examples (47a) and (47b), which display subject-verb inversion:

- (47) a. lo mon li daria si·s gitave a tera als seus pedes e l' adorave [...], *bé* ere fol lo Diable, qe aizò qe seu no ere ... [CICA: *Homilies d'Organyà*.XIIIa]  
 ‘the world him would-give if himself throw to ground to his feet and him worship [...], well was mad the devil, that this that his was not’  
 “He would give him the whole world if he fell at his feet and worshipped him [...], The Devil was mad indeed, because that was not his ...”
- b. Pasca de Nostre Seyor—. E Sent Beneset li respòs: *Bé* sey eu que vuy és Pasca, ... [CICA: *Vides de Sants Rosselloneses* XIIIb]  
 ‘Easter of Our Lord –. And Saint Beneset him answered: well know I that today is Easter,...’  
 “Our Lord’s Easter. And Saint Beneset answered him, ‘Well/Indeed I know that today is Easter...’”
- c. Fferrando de Galliga és bevedor en tavernes e dix que *bé* à vist ·I·na· vegada solament ... [CICA: *Clams i crims a la València medieval*\_1.XIIIb]  
 ‘Fernando de Galliga is drinker in taverns and said that well have seen (him) one time only...’  
 “Fernando de Galliga is a frequent drinker in taverns and he says indeed that he had seen him only once.’”

The focalization of *bé*, just like that of *bien* (among other adverbs), involves movement to a hierarchically higher position in the left periphery of the sentence. Therefore, *bé* gets sentential scope and gradually loses its manner adverbial value associated with verbal denotation to end up achieving an intensive value over *PolP*, which is within its domain. However, as with *bien*, this interpretation can fluctuate. Accordingly, you can get an adverbial or polar reading depending on the context, as in (48), or a clearly polar meaning, as in (49):

- (48) a. Do[n]cs *bé* podem saber qe negú om no escaparà qe ·l Diable no·l exag [CICA: *Homilies d'Organyà* XIIIa]  
 ‘so well can<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> know that noone man not escape<sub>FUTURE.3RD.SG.</sub> that the devil not him tried’  
 “So we can know well/indeed that no one will escape without having been tested by the devil.”
- b. e *Bé* conexen e confessen que han errat contra vós [CICA: *Llibre de Sancta Maria* XIVb]  
 ‘and well know<sub>3RD.PL.</sub> and confess<sub>3RD.PL.</sub> that have been-mistaken against you’  
 “and they know well/indeed and confess to having been mistaken with respect to you.”
- (49) a. ...de Gerona conegueren *bé* que lo rey era allí, car *bé* ·s penssaven que null hom del món no gosaria passar [CICA: *Desclot Crònica*\_V XIIIb]  
 ‘...from Girona knew<sub>3RD.PL.</sub> well that the king was there, because really PRON. thought that no man in the world not would-dare pass.’  
 “They knew from Girona that the king was there indeed, because they truly thought that nobody in the world would dare go by.”

- b. E ells dixeren: “*Bé* y haurà qui ho farà ab vós” [*CICA: Llibre dels fets del rei en Jaume* XIVa]  
 ‘and they said: “well there have who it will-do with you’  
 “And they said, ‘There will indeed be someone who will do it with you.’”
- c. – *Be n he raho*, diguí jo [Bernat Metge, *Lo Somni*: 2860; Par (1923: 233)]  
 ‘well PRON. have reason, said I’  
 “‘I indeed have an explanation,’ I said.”
- d. E d’aquí avant vos responch que yo no sé què és amor, ne may no-l viu, que-m recort, ne sé qui és; *bé* he oyt dir que amor és alguna cosa, emperò yo no veig que sia res, sinó furor encesa e passió agradable. [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 132; ed. Aramon. XV]  
 ‘And from here onwards you answer that I not know what is love, not never not it saw that me remember, not know who is; well have heard say that love is some thing, but I not see that be nothing, but fiery zeal and pleasant passion.’  
 “And from now on I answer that I do not know what love is, neither have I seen it, nor do I know who he is; I have indeed heard it said that love is something, but I do not see it to be anything, but fiery zeal and pleasant passion.”
- e. E la Güelfa replicà: -Sposada és ab Curial?-. Melchior respòs que no, emperò que *bé* era veritat que son pare la·y havia proferta, mas Curial nulls temps havia deliberat acceptar-la [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 139; ed. Aramon. XV]  
 ‘And Güelfa answered: - Married is with Curial? – Melchior said that not, but that well was true that her father her him have offered, but Curial no time have doubted to accept-her’  
 “And Güelfa answered, ‘Is she married with Curial?’ Melchior said that she wasn’t, but it was true indeed that her father had offered her to him. However, Curial had not hesitated an instant in accepting her.”

As described in § 4.1.1, the nature of the verbal predicate determines whether it is possible to interpret a distant instance of *bé* as a manner adverb or as an emphatic positive polarity marker. In (48), the first option is not absolutely ruled out, given the semantic nature of *saber* ‘know’ and *conèixer* ‘know, acknowledge’ and to some extent also of *confessar* ‘confess’<sup>26</sup>, whereas in (49) this option gives way to the polar reading due to the incompatibility of the predicates *y haurà* ‘there will be’, *he raho* ‘I am right, have an explanation’, *era veritat* ‘it was true’, etc. and the manner adverb –a similar situation to the Spanish examples in (43).

To sum up, we can conclude that the proper analysis for *bé* ‘well’, after it has been grammaticalized as an emphatic polarity marker, is that given in (50), which substantially corresponds to the representation we offered for *bien* ‘well’ in (45):<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> They are precisely the predicates which are compatible with manner adverbs and thus the ones that make way for the process of grammaticalization. Compare “conegueren *bé*” in (49a) with “*bé* conxen” in (48b).

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noticing that Old Catalan *bé* can even adopt a concessive value when it is followed by *que*, which is a step further down the grammaticalization path:

- (i) E *bé que* la abadessa li consellàs que no·s captengués tan cruament vers Curial, tota via deya ella: - Certes, abans faré pijor, car lo dia que Boca de Far vindrà a cort, yo exiré i li faré festa; e lo jorn que lo desconexent hi vendrà, no exiré ne·n faré menció, e yo faré a ell tant enuig de Boca de Far, com ell ha fet a mi de Laquesis. [*Curial e Güelfa*: p. 160; ed. Aramon]  
 “And although the abbess told her not to be so merciless with Curial, she still said, ‘Yes, I will be worse, because when Boca de Far comes to the court, I will go and entertain him; and the day when the stranger comes, I will neither go out nor address him, and I will exasperate him because of Boca de Far, as he has infuriated me because of Laquesis.’”

We leave this question open for further research.



(50) [CP .... [FocusP **bé**<sub>i</sub> ... [PolP t<sub>i</sub> [IP ... ]]]]

#### 4.2. The (a)symmetry between Spanish *poco* and Catalan *poc*

The process of grammaticalization that led to the creation of Romance polarity markers from a series of elements which originally did not encode this value is quite productive for affirmative polarity, given the well-known absence in Latin –(see § 3.1.)– of an affirmative counterpart to the negative particle *non*. In this section we will examine an interesting correlate in the sphere of negative polarity involving the adverbs *poco* ‘little’ and *poc* ‘little’ in Spanish and Catalan, respectively.

4.2.1. The quantifier *poco* –like *mucho* ‘a lot’, *demasiado* ‘too much’, etc.– usually functions as a modifier linked to verbal denotation (see Bosque & Masullo 1998). These quantifiers are generated in the lower part of the adverbial hierarchy, possibly in the same position as the manner adverb *bien* (Cinque 1999: 11)<sup>28</sup>. The use of *poco* and *mucho* with quantitative value is attested historically both in postverbal and in preverbal position, as illustrated in (51a) and (51b), respectively:

- (51) a. Et sé que el que bive *poco* et seguro vale más que el que bive *mucho* et con miedo et en lazeria. [*Calila*: 308]  
 ‘And know that he who lives little and safely is-worth more than he who lives a-lot and with fear and in poverty’  
 “And I know that he who lives little and safely is worth more than he who lives long in fear and poverty.”
- b. PARMENO: Pues yo con ellos no bivaría contento y tengo por honesta cosa la pobreza alegre. Y aún más te digo, que no los que *poco* tienen son pobres, mas los que *mucho* desean. [*Celestina*: 123]  
 ‘Then I with them not would-live happy and have for honest thing the poverty happy. And still more I say, that not the who little have are poor, but the who a-lot desire’  
 “Then I would not live happily with them and I consider joyful poverty an honest thing. And furthermore I will tell you: those who have little are not poorer than those who hunger for a lot.”

The fronting of *poco* and *mucho* illustrated in (51b), however, corresponds not to stylistic reordering, but to an important syntactic restriction: the compulsory adjacency between the verb and the element that has been moved. This is shown in (51b) as well as in the examples in (52):

- (52) a. Que oy los yfantes ami por amo non abran; // Curielos qui quier, ca dellos *poco* min ca. [*Çid*: vv.: 2356-2357]  
 ‘That today the infants to-me for lord not will-have; // Care-for-them who wants, because of-them little to-me-PRON. need’

<sup>28</sup> The existing distributional similarities – according to Cinque (1999: 4ff.)– between the two types of adverbs become evident in the following contrast (see also footnote 22):

- (i) a. Hablaba {*poco* / *mucho* / *bien*} de sus padres  
 ‘spoke {little / a lot / well} of his parents’  
 “He spoke {little / a lot / well} about his parents”
- b. \*Hablaba de sus padres {*poco* / *mucho* / *bien*}

Thus one would expect one or the other type of element to be involved in similar syntactic processes. See Cinque (1999: 13ff.) for a more detailed analysis of the peculiarities that affect the distribution of the above-mentioned adverbs.

“That the infants are not going to have me as their protector; // Whoever wants to can take care of them, because I need little of what they can offer me”

- b. Pues, la buena nuestra dicha madre vejota *poco curó* de guardar matrimonio, salvo tomar consejo del monico por aver mala vejés. E ¿sabes por qué non se llama patrimonio salvo matrimonio? Por los grandes cargos, penas e dolores que la muger soporta ante del parto encargoso, en el parto doloroso, después del parto, en criarle, enojoso. Por ende, se llama, de parte de la madre, matrimonio, lo qual *poco pensó* la vieja curtida. ¡Aya, pues, mala vida y esto deste mundo por depedida! [CORDE, 1438. Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, *Arcipreste de Talavera (Corbacho)*, ed. de Marcella Ciceri, Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1990: p. 258]

‘Then, the good our mentioned mother old little cared to keep marriage, except take piece-of-advice of-the squirt for have bad old-age. And, know why not PRON. call patrimony not marriage? By the great charges, sorrows and pains that the woman supports before the charging labor, in the painful labor, after the labor, in breeding-him, annoying. So that, PRON. call, of part of the mother, marriage, the which little thought the elder hardened. Have, then, bad life and this of-this world for farewell!’

“Then our good old mother cared little for being married, except for seeking advice from the little fool because her old age was bad. And do you know why it isn’t called patrimony instead of matrimony? Because of the distress and pain women have to endure in and after labor, and when bringing up the child. Hence, because of the term mother it is called matrimony, [of] which little thought the wizened crone. May she have a nasty life and the things of this world for farewell!”

- c. A los huessos de la racheta *poco acaesce* quebrantamiento: por quanto ellos son muy duros. Mas acaesceles apartamiento. [CORDE: 1493. Anonymous. *Traducción del Tratado de cirugía de Guido de Cauliaco*. Madrid, BN 1196]

‘To the bones of the carpus little happens breaking-off: for what they are very hard’

“One rarely break the wrist bones because they are very hard.”

- d. CALISTO: *Poco sabes* de firmeza. [Fernando de Rojas, *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, Fadrique Alemán de Basilea, Burgos, 1499, fol. 4r.]

‘CALISTO: little know<sub>2ND.SG</sub> of strength’

“CALISTO: ‘Little you know about strength’”

The existence of the above-mentioned restriction, which does not apply when a constituent is topicalized,<sup>29</sup> can be regarded as unequivocal evidence of the fact that fronting of *poco*, *mucho*, etc. is a case of focalization, in both modern (see Kovacci 1999:733) and Old Spanish.

<sup>29</sup> Note that in fact the topicalization of *a María* in (i) is not incompatible with the presence of a constituent –like *la semana pasada* in (ib)– that interferes between the PP *a María* and the verb, whereas in the case of *poco* in (iib) the sentence is ungrammatical:

- (i) a. La semana pasada *a María* la vimos preocupada  
‘Last week to Mary her saw worried’  
“We thought Mary seemed worried last week.”

- b. *A María la semana pasada* la vimos preocupada  
‘To Mary last week her saw worried’  
“We thought Mary seemed worried last week.”

- (ii) a. La semana pasada *poco* comiste  
‘Last week little ate’  
‘Last week you did not eat much.’

- b. \**Poco la semana pasada* comiste

The position of the subject with reference to the verb provides us with additional support for this assumption, as was explained in section § 2.2. –see (10b) and (16a)– and also in section § 4.1. –see (39) and (47a)-(47b)–. The subject is always postverbal, as illustrated in all the following examples:

- (53) a. *Mucho* has madrugado tú hoy  
 ‘Many have got-up-early you today’  
 ‘‘Very early have you got up today.’’
- b. \**Mucho* tú has madrugado hoy  
 [(53a), *apud* Kovacci (1999:734)]
- (54) a. *Poco* se imagina María lo sucedido  
 ‘little PRON. imagined Mary the happened’  
 ‘‘Little did Mary imagine what had happened.’’
- b. \**Poco* María se imagina lo sucedido

- (55) En una de las últimas entrevistas que me hicieron en Francia, el periodista, encantado con esta España nuestra tan moderna en la que los gays se casan y el Gobierno es paritario (*poco* sabía él que a una pareja de gays la apalearon en una piscina de la Elipa [...]), me comentó [...] [Lucía Etxebarria, *Ser puta (o puto)*, *La Vanguardia, Magazine*, 13/08/06]<sup>30</sup>  
 ‘In one of the latest interviews that me did in France, the reporter, delighted with this Spain of ours so modern in the that the gays PRON. marry and the government shows equality (little knew he that to a couple of gays them beat in a swimming pool of the Elipa [...]) me commented [...].’  
 ‘‘In one of the latest interviews I gave in France, the reporter, delighted with this incredibly modern Spain of ours, where gays can get married and the Cabinet is gender-equal (little did he know that a gay couple were beaten up in a swimming pool in la Elipa [...]), she told me [...].’’

Examples (53)-(55) can be complemented with those in (56), where we can see that subject-verb inversion also applied in Old Spanish:

- (56) a. CELESTINA: Señora, este es otro y segundo punto, [el qual] si tú con tu mal sofrimiento no consientes, *poco* aprovechará mi venida, y si como prometiste lo sufres, tú quedarás sana y sin deubda, y Calisto sin quexa y pagado. [*Celestina*: 243]  
 ‘CELESTINA: Madam, this is another and second point, [the which] if you with your bad suffering not consent, little benefit my arrival, and if as promised it suffer, you remain<sub>FUTURE-2ND.SG</sub> healthy and without debt, and Calisto without complaint and paid.’  
 ‘‘CELESTINA: ‘Madam, this is another point, a second one: if you do not consent to your terrible suffering, little will my coming serve you, and if you suffer from it as you promised, you will be left healthy and without debt, and Calisto without complaint and satisfied.’’’
- b. [...] dizen aduerbial mente granditer: mas *poco* esta en vso este tal aduerbio.  
 [CORDE: 1490. Alfonso de Palencia, Universal vocabulario en latín y en romance: fol. 184v]  
 ‘say<sub>3RD.PL</sub> adverbially granditer: but little this in use this such adverb’’  
 ‘‘As an adverb it is ‘granditer’, but such an adverb is rarely used’’

In these and other examples, the meaning of *poco* acquires subtle differences which range from a focalized value where the meaning of the quantitative element still persists –in connection with the meaning of the verb– to a subtle negative value, which is favoured by its

<sup>30</sup> We are grateful to Gemma Rigau for drawing our attention to this example.

inherent minimizer<sup>31</sup> adverbial meaning triggered by scope. To be precise, movement of *poco* to *FocusP* brings about –as shown for *bien* / *bé* in § 4.1.– a progressive reduction of its original relationship with the verb in its basic position within *TP/IP*<sup>32</sup>, which favours the interpretation of *poco* as an emphatic negative operator that reinforces the meaning expressed by the projection under its domain, i.e., *PolP*:

(57) [CP .... [FocusP **poco**<sub>i</sub> ... [PolP t<sub>i</sub> [IP ... t<sub>i</sub> ... ]]]]

The negative meaning of *poco* in Spanish is documented –as shown in Llorens (1929: 83)– in examples where the adverb licenses the presence of a negative polarity item, just as *no* does (see Bosque 1994). This is illustrated with *ninguno*<sup>33</sup> and *nada* in (58a) and (58b), respectively.

- (58) a. La carne syn el anima a ninguno poco aprouecha et non es ninguna cosa  
[*Filiberto* 56,16. (Wagenaar 1930:38), quoted in Llorens (1929:83) and Camus (2006: 43a)]  
‘the flesh without the soul to nobody little enjoy and not is no thing’  
“Without the soul, the flesh is of little use to anyone and is meaningless”
- b. Poco vos cumple a vos saber de mi fidalguía nada. [PCG. (Wagenaar 1930:53), citado en Llorens (1923:83) y en Camus (2006: 43c)]  
‘little PRON. serves to you know of my gentlemanliness nothing’  
“It serves you little to know nothing about my nobility.”

As for the use of *poco* as a negative polarity item licenser, it is frequently attested in Modern Spanish, as illustrated by the range of examples in (59):<sup>34</sup>

- (59) a. *Poco* le importa a nadie mi vida privada  
‘Little CL-DAT minds to-nobody my life private’  
“Nobody cares much at all about my private life” [EMPHATIC NEGATION]
- b. *No* le importa a nadie mi vida privada  
‘Not CL-DAT minds to-nobody my life private’  
“Nobody cares about my private life” [UNMARKED NEGATION]
- c. \*Le importa a nadie mi vida privada

To sum up, the above-mentioned arguments suggest that *poco* may have undergone a process of grammaticalization with an ensuing bleaching of its quantifier value associated with verbal denotation and a further reanalysis as emphatic marker with a slightly negative value. However, as we will show later on, this process has not reached completion in Spanish,<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> By using this terminology, we want to express the idea that *poco* means –in the words of Sánchez López (1999: § 40.4.4)– “un cierto grado dentro de una escala de cantidad cercano a su extremo inferior” [a certain degree close to the lowest values on a scale of quantity]. In her opinion –see Sánchez López (1999: § 16.5.3)–, “*Poco* puede ser considerado un cuantificador ‘por defecto’ que indica, por así decirlo, una cantidad deficitaria; en otras palabras, *poco* parece indicar que la magnitud del elemento cuantificado no ha llegado al mínimo esperado. De este significado de ‘insuficiencia’ se deduce que *poco* pueda tener cierto valor negativo [...]”. [*Poco* can be regarded by default as a quantifier that conveys the notion of ‘deficient amount’; *Poco* seems to indicate that the magnitude of the quantified element has not achieved the minimum expected. It is from this meaning of ‘insufficiency’ that *poco* can be given a negative value]. For a detailed analysis of minimizers in Catalan and Spanish, see Vallduví (1994).

<sup>32</sup> This change in its semantic value can be attributed to a process which is similar to the one undergone by the adverbs *bien* and *bé* in the sphere of positive polarity. For a diachronic analysis of the evolution of French polarity markers, see Martineau & Vinet (2005), among other authors.

<sup>33</sup> See Martins (2000) concerning preverbal double negation in Spanish and in Romance in general.

<sup>34</sup> In relation to this, see also Sánchez López (1999: § 40.4.4).

which accounts for its restrictive productivity. Notice that the grammaticality of the examples in (59) contrasts with the ungrammaticality of those in (60):<sup>36</sup>

- (60) a. \**Poco* sabe nada de mí  
 ‘Little know<sub>3RD.SG</sub> nothing of me’
- b. \**Poco* he visto a nadie en la biblioteca  
 ‘Little have<sub>1ST.SG</sub> seen to-nobody in the library’

The following section shows that Catalan *poc* is remarkably different in this respect from Modern Spanish *poco* (which still exhibits a quantitative value).

4.2.2. The focalization of *poc* is well attested in Old Catalan, where examples such as those in (61) are quite common. It is worth noticing that the adjacency of the quantifier to the verb is equivalent to that of *poco* in Old Spanish –see (52):

- (61) a. Mas *poc* profitara si érem enseyatz e no érem reemutz, on per assò demanam per El ésser resemutz quant cridam cantan la segona antifena diens: “O Adonay, e duc, so és guisador, de la casa d’Israel, veni a reebre-nos ab lo bras estès!”. [*Vides de Sants Rosselloneses*: p. 14]  
 ‘but little will-benefit if were<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> taught and not were<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> redeemed, where by this ask<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> by Him be redeemed when shout<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> singing the second antiphon saying: O Adonay, and Duke, this is guide, of the House of Israel, come to meet-us with the arm extended!’  
 “However, we would have little benefit if we were taught and not redeemed. Therefore, we ask Him to redeem us when we sing out the second antiphon, saying, ‘O Adonay, and Duke, guide of the House of Israel, come to welcome us with open arms.’”
- b. Per la qual causa se plorà mot fortment, e pensà-se que *poc* li profitaria la sua probretat volenterossa si ab Sen Gregori recebia gasardó, qui era tan ric-hom en lo món. [*Vides de Sants Rosselloneses*: p. 301]  
 ‘By which PRON. cried very strongly and thought-PRON. that little him would benefit the his poverty voluntary if with Saint Gregory received gift, who was so rich-man in the world’

<sup>35</sup> Note that even though grammaticalization does not apply in the case of *poco*, it is well attested in the case of *tampoco*, which has acquired an unmistakably negative value. See Llorens (1929: 83), whose examples we reproduce:

- (i) La y griega *tan poco* io no veo de que sirve. [Nebrija, 1,5]  
 ‘The Y neither I not see of what serve’  
 “Nor do I understand what useful purpose the letter Y serves.”

<sup>36</sup> Apart from the evidence provided by the examples in (60), there is another argument to prove that *poco* has not grammaticalized completely in Spanish: it cannot occur with verbs that do not admit a quantitative modifier –in contrast with what we said for *bien* and *bé* concerning positive polarity. This is illustrated in the examples in (i), which are ungrammatical because these verbs cannot be modified by a quantitative adverb, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (iia) and (iib).

- (i) a. \**Poco* ganó la carrera Juan  
 ‘little won the race John’  
 b. \**Poco* está embarazada María  
 ‘little is pregnant Mary’
- (ii) a. \*Juan ganó *poco* la carrera  
 ‘John won little the race’  
 b. \*María está *poco* embarazada  
 ‘Mary is little pregnant’

This also contrasts with the behaviour of *poc* in Catalan, as will be seen in § 4.2.2.

“Therefore, he wept greatly, and thought that his voluntary poverty would serve him little if the rich of the world were rewarded by Saint Gregory.”

- c. La segona rasó és per so car la Glesa dejuna e ora: per so que poc aya de la carn, e per so que la carn sia amagrida, [Vides de Sants Rosselloneses: p. 471]  
 ‘The second reason is because the Church fasts and prays: so as to little have<sub>SUBJ.3RD.SG</sub> of the meat, and so as to the flesh be<sub>SUBJ.3RD.SG</sub> lean’  
 “The second reason is because the Church fasts and prays: so that there may be little meat and the flesh may be lean”.

The inherent quantitative value of *poc* (linked to the meaning of the whole predicate) in examples like (61) contrasts with its negative interpretation in (62), which results from the fact that this quantifier no longer conveys any verbal denotation.

- (62) a. Los manestrals *poch* tenian feyna, molts dias se morian gent de miseria [Cròn. Guerra Indep. Penedès]  
 ‘The artisans little had work, many days PRON. died people of scarcity’  
 “The artisans did NOT have work, and people often died of want”
- b. E nós dixem a la regina: "Avets esguardat què han feit aquests sarraïns, con són entrats alegrement denant nós e no-s són esquivats del nostre mal, sinó que s'o han passat leugerament?" E ela dix: "No m'i havia pensat, mas bé entén que ver deÿts que poca cura n'an, e poch dixeren que us en venjarien ne us pregaren que us en venjàssets". [Jaume I, Crònica: p. 362.16-21]<sup>37</sup>  
 ‘And we say<sub>1ST.PL.</sub> to the queen: “have<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> look what have<sub>3RD.PL.</sub> done these Saracens, when are entered happily in-front-of us and not PRON. are escaped of-the our hurting, but that PRON. it have<sub>3RD.PL.</sub> passed slightly?” And she said: “Not me here have thought, but well understand that true say<sub>2ND.PL.</sub> that little care of-it have, and little said that to-you of-it avenged neither to-you pray that (you) yourself of-it avenged’  
 “And we said to the queen: ‘Have you seen what these Saracens did when they came happily before us and could not escape the ill we did to them, yet they have taken it lightly?’ And she said: ‘No, had not thought of it, but well I understand that you are right to say they cared little, and that they did NOT say that they were going to avenge themselves, nor did they ask you to avenge them either.’”

In contrast with Spanish *poco*, Catalan *poc* is completely grammaticalized in some dialects (the Catalan spoken in Girona, for instance), in which it has an emphatic negative value (see Rossich 1996). It can therefore license negative polarity items<sup>38</sup> in the same way as the negative marker *no*, as shown in (63):<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> We are grateful to Jordi Bruguera, the editor of this text, for drawing our attention to this Old Catalan example.

<sup>38</sup> From these and other similarities, it must not be inferred that *poc* and *no* are syntactically and semantically equivalent. In fact, according to Rossich (1996:110), *poc* exhibits a subtle presuppositional value. This phenomenon (concerning negative polarity in Romance languages) –which has been widely examined by Zanuttini (1997) and Cinque (1999), among other authors– has a straightforward counterpart in the Spanish and Catalan emphatic affirmative items *bien* and *bé* (see Hernanz 2006). Furthermore, *poc* must satisfy various syntactic restrictions in the same way as the previously mentioned affirmative items. See Rossich (1996) and Espinal (2002), § 24.2.1 for more information.

<sup>39</sup> The behaviour of *poc* in the constructions under study is similar to certain uses of the focal quantifier *pla* in Catalan, which can also occur with negative polarity items:

- (i) a. En Pere *pla* que sap res  
 ‘The Peter plain that know nothing’  
 “(I am sure that) Peter does not know anything.”

- (63) a. *Poc* hi he estat mai a Barcelona  
 ‘little there have been never in Barcelona’  
 ‘I have never been in Barcelona.’
- b. *Poc* he vist ningú a la biblioteca de la facultat  
 ‘little have seen nobody in the library of the faculty’  
 ‘I haven’t seen anybody in the faculty library.’
- c. *Poc* ha fet res avui  
 ‘little has done nothing today’  
 ‘He hasn’t done anything today.’

As shown by the literal translations of the examples in (63), *poc* does not have any relation with the verb. It is not a verbal modifier, but rather an operator that reinforces the negative polarity of the statement. Hence, it cannot be given an analysis along the lines of that postulated for *poco* in (52) and *poc* in (61), which had been moved to *FocusP* from their original position within *TP/IP* –see (57). If such an analysis applied, we would predict that (64) would be grammatical, which is not the case:

- (64) a. \**Hi* he estat *poc* mai a Barcelona  
 ‘There have been little never in Barcelona’
- b. \**He* vist *poc* ningú a la biblioteca de la facultat  
 ‘have seen little nobody in the library of the faculty’  
 etc.

Similarly, postulating a process of focalization to account for the constructions in (63) would lead to the wrong prediction that (a) and (b) in (65)-(66) have the same meaning, which is not true:

- (65) a. *Poc* he vist la Maria aquest estiu (65a) ≠ (65b)  
 ‘Not have seen Mary this summer’  
 ‘I have not seen Mary this summer.’
- b. *He* vist *poc* la Maria aquest estiu  
 ‘have seen little Mary this summer’  
 ‘I have not seen Mary much this summer.’
- (66) a. *Poc* he treballat avui (66a) ≠ (66b)  
 ‘little have work today’  
 ‘I have not worked today.’
- b. *He* treballat *poc* avui  
 ‘have worked little today’  
 ‘I have worked little today.’

If we accept that in (63) *poc* is not generated as a *VP* modifier within the *IP/TP* domain, we can conclude that the representation postulated to account for *poco* in (57) does not explain the Catalan varieties under study, because, in them, the quantifier has been completely

- b. A Mart *pla* que hi ha estat mai ningú  
 ‘In Mars plain that there have been never nobody’  
 ‘(I am sure that) Nobody has ever been to Mars.’  
 [examples from Rigau (2004)]

For a detailed analysis of these constructions with *pla*, see Rigau (2004).

grammaticalized. The negative emphatic value of *poc* would be correctly described by a representation like (67), where this element merges into *PolP* (following the analysis attributed to emphatic polarity in § 2.2. –see (19)– and encodes emphatic<sup>40</sup> polarity features, which trigger its movement to *FocusP* so as to check them:

$$(67) \quad [CP \dots [FocusP \mathbf{poc}_i \dots [PolP t_i [IP\dots]]]]$$

To sum up, the comparison between *poco* and *poc* reveals the existence of an interesting asymmetry between Spanish and (some dialectal varieties of) Catalan concerning negative polarity. This asymmetry can be attributed, as has been explained above, to the different degree of grammaticalization displayed by these elements. If we are right, the marked character that is usually assigned to Catalan *poc* whenever it has a negative emphatic reading<sup>41</sup> cannot be regarded as an idiosyncratic phenomenon and would correspond to a regular pattern, analogous to the grammaticalization of *bien* and *bé* (which originate in their basic manner adverbial value and end up in their interpretation as emphatic positive polarity markers).

### 5. From focalization to emphatic polarity: the grammaticalization path

In this section we are going to examine the mechanisms involved in the creation of emphatic polarity markers from a previous process of focalization. As has been accounted for in the preceding sections, *bien/bé* and *poc* undergo a grammaticalization process and are reanalyzed as emphatic positive and negative polarity markers, respectively. These elements follow the same grammaticalization path as the Classical Latin modal adverb *sic*, which became the affirmative marker *sí* at the end of the Middle Ages, in both Spanish and Catalan.

Generative Grammar, consistent with its biological conception of language, postulates a straightforward parallelism between linguistic change and language acquisition, because both phenomena are envisaged as the result of setting parameter values in a specific way.<sup>42</sup> From

<sup>40</sup> Obviously, the asymmetric behaviour of Spanish *poco* and Catalan *poc* should be examined in much more detail, which we cannot do here. One possible way out would be to attribute this asymmetry to a micro-parametric difference in these languages. More precisely, it could be suggested –as done by Gallego (2007)– that Spanish has a weak focalization pattern, whereas Catalan does not. This would explain –according to this author– the existence of such contrasts as those shown by his examples (ia)-(ib) and (iia)-(iib), among other phenomena:

- (i)
  - a. *En tus manos está*  
'In your hands (it) is'
  - b. *Poco dinero es ese, creo yo*  
'Little money is this, I think'
  - c. *Trabajo tendrán para aprobar las matemáticas*  
'Work (they) will-have to pass Maths'
- (ii)
  - a. *\*A les teves mans és*  
'In the your hands (it) is'
  - b. *\*Pocs diners són aquests, trobo jo*  
'Little money is this, I think'
  - c. *\*Feina tindran per aprovar les matemàtiques*  
'Work (they) will-have to pass Maths'

A possible account for the grammaticality of (i) is to postulate that Spanish has a position lower than *FocusP*, in the periphery of VP –see Belletti (2004)– to accommodate the elements that have been submitted to weak focalization. See footnote 18.

<sup>41</sup> See Rossich (1996).

<sup>42</sup> See Lightfoot (1991), (1999), Kroch (2000) and Roberts (2007), among other authors.



this standpoint, linguistic change is directly related to parametric change and thus to a different way of setting the parameters established by UG (Universal Grammar). As is well-known in Generative Grammar,<sup>43</sup> UG determines a series of general principles the variation in which, across languages and within specific languages, is formally expressed under the notion of *parameter*. Comparative linguistics –and also (micro)parametric analyses– becomes one of the most effective methods to capture important generalizations that go beyond specific languages.<sup>44</sup>

In accordance with Roberts & Roussou (2003) and Roberts (2007), grammaticalization has a lexical trigger and can be described as an *upward reanalysis* within the structural hierarchy, which is, in fact, a modification of the value assigned to a particular parameter. Taking up again the evolution of the polarity markers under study, we believe that this evolution can be regarded as a *grammaticalization cycle*<sup>45</sup> that follows a definite grammaticalization path. According to Roberts & Roussou (2003: 209), these paths can be defined in terms of the functional hierarchy through which the grammaticalized items successively move so as to occupy hierarchically higher positions, where they will become generated because of reanalysis. It is thus reasonable to assume that the elements that share lexical characteristics, as well as the same hierarchical distribution, are grammaticalized in a similar way. Along with what has been explained above, the process of grammaticalization of *bien/bé* and *poc* can be described in the same manner: it involves **loss of the movement –either of the adverb or of the quantifier– from the VP internal basic position to the PolP position**, and subsequent *merge* in *PolP*. Following Roberts & Roussou (2003), this grammaticalization process can be expressed as in (68):

(68) Bien ~ Bé / poc

STRUCTURAL CHANGE:

$$\begin{aligned} & [_{CP} \dots [_{FocusP} \mathbf{bien}_i \sim \mathbf{bé}_i / \mathbf{poc}_i \dots [_{PolP} t_i [_{IP} \dots t_i \dots ]]]] > \\ & > [_{CP} \dots [_{FocusP} \mathbf{bien}_i \sim \mathbf{bé}_i / \mathbf{poc}_i \dots [_{PolP} t_i [_{IP} \dots ]]]] \end{aligned}$$

PARAMETRIC CHANGE:

Pol\*<sub>Move</sub> > Pol\*<sub>Merge</sub>

MOTIVATION:

Loss of {manner –*bien* and *bé*– / quantitative –*poc*– } meaning, reanalysis as {positive / negative} polarity markers.

The emphatic feature encoded by *bien/bé* and *poc* triggers further movement to *FocusP* for them to check this particular feature. As it is a movement from *Pol* to *Focus*, it brings about the emphatic polarity reading –see (12).

In contrast, in the case of *poco* (the grammaticalization of which as a Spanish emphatic negative polarity marker is still incomplete –see § 4.2.1.), it is a less economic process

<sup>43</sup> Beginning in the 1980s in particular, following the development of the *Principles and Parameters* model (see Chomsky 1981).

<sup>44</sup> As for the different types of syntactic change (reanalysis, grammaticalization, etc.) and the relation between acquisition and syntactic change, see Roberts (2007: chapters 2 and 3).

<sup>45</sup> According to Roberts (2007: 448), grammaticalization cycles are “cases where different lexical elements have become grammaticalized in a given function at successive periods, with one consistently in a less grammaticalized stage than the other”.

because it involves movement to *FocusP* –through *PolP*<sup>46</sup>– of an element that is generated as an inner predicate quantifier, without regard for the more economic operation of *merge*.<sup>47</sup>

(69) Poco

[<sub>CP</sub> .... [<sub>FocusP</sub> poco<sub>i</sub> ... [<sub>PolP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> [<sub>IP</sub> ... t<sub>i</sub> ...]]]]

They are apparently similar processes, because in both cases the items under study undergo movement to *FocusP*. However, in the case of *poco*, the basic departure site is not *PolP*, but a *VP* internal position (within *TP/IP*). Therefore, the emphasis will reinforce not polarity but the value of the fronted element—see (11), which offers an explanation for the fact that the interpretation of Spanish *poco* constructions crucially diverges from the interpretations of Spanish *bien* and Catalan *bé* and *poc*.

## 6. Conclusions

In this paper we have examined the creation of Romance emphatic polarity markers. We have focused on the behaviour of *bien* / *bé*, *poco* / *poc* in Spanish and Catalan from a diachronic and comparative standpoint. First of all, we have shown that the evolution of these elements involves a focalization process which is essentially the same as that undergone by the Latin adverb *sic* from its initial function as a manner adverb to its use as a positive polarity marker in Romance. Secondly, we have provided evidence (concerning the syntactic behaviour of emphatic polarity markers) to prove the existence of a clear parallel between positive and negative polarity. Finally, taking into account Roberts & Roussou's (2003) approach to grammaticalization, we have argued that the unexpected asymmetry between *poc* and *poco* must be attributed to the fact that they have achieved different stages of grammaticalization. The analysis we have put forward also accounts for the variant behaviour of *poc* in some dialects of Catalan, and shows that it exhibits an equivalent behaviour to that of the emphatic affirmative markers *bé* and *bien* in Catalan and Spanish, respectively. Moreover, it is worth noticing that the microparametric perspective taken in this work can systematically explain phenomena which would be confined to the inventory of idiosyncratic peculiarities of a particular language.

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<sup>46</sup> Remember that, whenever the adverb *poco* is fronted to *FocusP*, it moves through an intermediate landing site, *PolP*, which provides it with the ability to license a negative polarity item. See the examples in (58)-(59).

<sup>47</sup> Concerning this issue, see Roberts & Roussou (2003: chap. 5) and Batllori, Hernanz, Picallo & Roca (2005: 17-18).

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