

ON THE NATURE AND LICENSING CONDITIONS  
OF *N*-PHRASES IN PORTUGUESE\*  
(Sobre a Natureza e as Condições de Licenciamento  
de Sintagmas-*N* em Português)

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*ABSTRACT: The present paper focuses on the syntactic and semantic nature of the expressions identified in the literature as n-words (preferably, n-phrases), and on their licensing conditions. Concerning their status, arguments will be given in favor of Ladusaw's 1992 thesis that these are existential (and non-specific, it is claimed) indefinites. In a brief excursus, it will be shown that other constructs engage in the process known as "negative concord". In the final part, an attempt will be made to offer a systematic picture of the intra- and cross-sentential licensing conditions of classical n-phrases. In this regard, the paramount importance of contextual decreasing monotonicity becomes apparent.*

*KEY WORDS: N-Words, Negative Concord, Indefinites, Decreasing Monotonicity*

*RESUMO: O presente artigo centra-se na questão do estatuto sintático e semântico das expressões que têm sido identificadas na literatura como n-words (preferivelmente, n-phrases, sintagmas-n) e nas condições do seu licenciamento. Sobre o seu estatuto, argumenta-se em favor da tese de Ladusaw 1992 de que se trata de expressões com valor indefinido existencial (e não-específico, acrescenta-se). Num breve excursus, mostra-se que outras estruturas além de sintagmas deste tipo se envolvem no processo conhecido como "concordância negativa". Na parte final, tenta-se sistematizar as condições de licenciamento intrafrásico e transfrásico dos sintagmas-n clássicos, ressaltando a importância das propriedades de monotonia decrescente dos contextos relevantes.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Palavras-N, Concordância Negativa, Indefinidos, Monotonia Decrescente*

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### Basic features of “*n*-words / *n*-phrases”

The label ***n*-word**, coined by Laka 1990, identifies a class of expressions found in many languages and basically equivalent to Portuguese nominal and adverbial phrases like *ninguém* (*nobody*), *nenhuma pessoa* (*no person*), *nada* (*nothing*), *nenhuma coisa* (*no thing*), and *nunca* (*never*). In a brief picture, the more commonly acknowledged distinctive features of these expressions in a subgroup of languages that includes Italian, Portuguese and Spanish are revealed by the following data and representations (where, for the sake of perspicuity, restricted quantification is used, with “T” and “M” standing for the predicative restrictors “Turista/Tourist” and “Museu/Museum”, respectively).

- (1) a. Nenhum turista (\*não) protestou.  
       ‘no tourist (\*not) protested’  
       b. No tourist protested.  
       c.  $\neg\exists x_T$  [protest- (x)]
- (2) a. O Pedro \*(não) visitou nenhum museu.  
       ‘the Pedro \*(not) visited no museum’  
       b. Pedro visited no museum / didn’t visit any museum.  
       c.  $\neg\exists x_M$  [visit- (p, x)]
- (3) a. Nenhum turista (\*não) visitou nenhum museu.  
       ‘no tourist (\*not) visited no museum’  
       b. No tourist visited any museum.  
       c.  $\neg\exists x_T \exists y_M$  [visit- (x,y)]

The relevant facts in (1)-(3) and its congruent expansions can be summarized in the following terms: (i) when in pre-verbal position, an *n*-word cannot, on one side, co-occur with an overt (say, propositional) negation operator, and, on the other side, does induce *per se* a negative value (to be specified later) in the sentence, as is clearly visible in formulas (1c) and (3c); (ii) when in post-verbal position, an *n*-word requires the presence of an overt negation operator acting as a licenser, which consequently suggests that post-verbal *n*-words are negative polarity items (somehow misleadingly, since, as is well-known, *n*-words can be licensed in other kinds of contexts); (iii) as shown in (3a), the negative licenser of a post-verbal *n*-word can be a pre-verbal *n*-word, whose

presence precludes the emergence of an overt propositional negation. It should be noticed that the property in (ii) is nothing but the process of **negative concord**, as characterized in Labov 1972. Indeed, what is at issue there is the fact that an expression that in a pre-verbal position has the capacity to convey a negative value can also appear in a configuration where its negative force can be dispensed with, given the presence of the propositional negation operator. This peculiar arrangement raises the idea of “concord”: with some similarity with gender and number concord, where just one marker is vital, the others being mere redundant replicas, in the sequences with a negation operator licensing an *n*-word only one negation value is needed, and, much more importantly, only one can be computed.

In general, the domain of *n*-words is extended in the literature to languages like French, Greek, Hungarian or the Slavic languages, where the pre-verbal occurrences of the expressions at stake require, just like the post-verbal ones, the presence of an overt negation operator (which amounts to, *grosso modo*, saying that, in the structures corresponding to (1a) above, the asterisk would lie outside the parentheses). Obviously, the pertinence of such an extension crucially depends on a clear definition of *n*-word. Furthermore, it can also be argued – e.g. in Acquaviva 1993 (according to Giannakidou 1997) and in Peres 1995/1997 – that a unified cross-linguistic account of the relevant expressions can be formulated, which encompasses the standard English sort of languages.

In the next section, I will try to sketch a hopefully convincing concept of *n*-phrase. Before engaging in that, let me settle a minor, but not negligible, terminological matter: henceforth, I will use the label *n*-phrase instead of *n*-word, considering that the former seems much more in accordance than the latter with the internal composition of the expressions under scrutiny.

## 1. On the syntactic and semantic nature of *n*-phrases

### 1.1. The indefinite theory of *n*-phrases

The exact semantic and syntactic nature of *n*-phrases has been the object of considerable and divergent discussion in the literature. If we restrict ourselves only to the languages of the predominant Romance

type, the different theories on the categorial status of *n*-phrases can be divided in three groups. In a first cluster of theories (including, among others, those sketched in Rizzi 1982, Longobardi 1987 and Dowty 1994), *n*-words are treated as NQ's or indefinites, depending on syntactic properties in the first two authors and on a computation of semantic values of monotonicity in the latter. In a second group (see, e.g. Laka 1990, Ladusaw 1992, Zanuttini 1994, Suñer 1995, and Peres 1995/1997), *n*-words are systematically treated as indefinites, or, from another point of view, as existentially quantified expressions. Finally, in a third group (see e.g. Zanuttini 1991 or Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991), *n*-words are always treated as NQ's whose negative value can be canceled. In the present section, focusing on Portuguese data, I will aim at showing that the indefinite theory of *n*-phrases, besides offering a general and economic account of the constructions at stake, explains a larger number of facts than other theories.

Ladusaw's basic idea of an indefinite theory of *n*-phrases, which I will subsequently argue for, can be summarized in the following terms: "in a NC language in which only one of these expressions [- negative terms -] can express negation in a particular clause, the way is open for proposing that the negative phrases in fact never express negation. In fact, we could propose that they are univocally interpreted as NPI indefinites and that it is not necessary that any visible formative of S-structure actually express negation" (Ladusaw 1992: 251). The answer to the question "how does the negation get expressed and how are these polarity items licensed" is phrased as follows: "The answer (...) must be (...): a negation operator, preferably (anti-morphic) negation. (...) It need not be part of lexical meaning: it may be constructional, in the sense that it is associated with some structural feature not necessarily visible in the clause" (cf. *ib.*: 251-2). In Peres 1995/1997, I proposed an extension of this view of *n*-phrases to languages which, like standard English, only obey the first of the above mentioned two properties, that is, which lack negative concord.

### *1.2. Arguments in favor of the indefinite theory of n-phrases*

In this subsection, I will bring together several arguments in favor of treatments of *n*-phrases that are basically equivalent to the indefinite theory. Some of these arguments appear in Klima 1964, some in Peres

1995/1977, Peres 1977 and Peres 1978, and a few others are, to my knowledge, now presented for the first time. As for the arguments contra an indefinite theory – or, for that matter, in favor of the (total or partial) negative quantifier approach –, having, I believe, shown the immateriality of the most important of them in my 1995/1997 paper, I should now only pay attention to the *absolutely* argument. However, for absolute time and space constraints, I will not address this issue, just suggesting the idea that a treatment of that sort of expressions as discourse operators on propositions – not on noun phrases – can lead to showing that also this argument fails to prove that *n*-phrases are not indefinites.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.2.1. The paradigms of indefinite *n*-phrases

The paradigmatic relations of *n*-phrases constitute a vantage point for understanding their nature, which, in my view, strongly favors the indefinite analysis, and which, to my knowledge, has not been paid noticeable attention. As we shall promptly see, the relevant paradigms are particularly rich and revealing in a language like Portuguese. To start with, let us observe a basic instance of an *n*-phrase involved in negative concord:

- (4) a. O Paulo não leu nenhum livro.  
       'the Paulo not read<sub>PAST</sub> no book'  
       Paulo [read no book] / [didn't read any book].  
       b.  $\neg\exists x[\textit{book}(x) \wedge \textit{read}(p, x)]$

For the sake of simplicity, I am ignoring the possible so-called (non-specific) “generic” (preferably, “kind”) interpretation of a sequence like (4a), where a natural kind is involved more directly than common individuals. Such reading is more easily available if certain factors are present, like a generic aspectual value or a contrastive context:

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<sup>1</sup> The same sort of approach may well be able to overcome difficulties raised by the test with *virtually* that Jack Hoeksema proposed during the Salford conference on negation, in November 1998. I thank him for having subsequently given me further details on this test, that I will not be able to discuss here.

- (5) O Paulo não lê nenhum livro.  
 ‘the Paulo not reads no book’  
 Paulo doesn’t read [a book] / [books].
- (6) O Paulo não leu nenhum livro, só (leu) revistas.  
 ‘the Paulo not read no book, only (read) magazines’  
 Paulo didn’t read any book, just magazines.

If we skip this interpretation and stick to the existential one – which is entailed by the former –, we can say that the sentence in (7a) below, also in its existential interpretation (specific – in the sense of “somehow known to the speaker” – or not, it is now irrelevant), is the contradictory of the existential reading of (4a):

- (7) a. O Paulo leu um livro.  
 ‘the Paulo read<sub>PAST</sub> a book’  
 Paulo read a book.
- b.  $\exists x [book(x) \wedge read(p, x)]$

The interesting fact to be noticed at this point is that (4a) is only one of a bunch of (*grosso modo*) free variants that express – by intrasentential means, not by some logically legitimate expansion of formulas – the contradictory of (7a). In Portuguese, one of these variants is obtained by assigning the relevant constituent (in the case under scrutiny, an object NP) a prosodic focus, as symbolized by the capital letters in (8):

- (8) O Paulo não leu UM livro (que fosse).  
 ‘the Paulo not read a book (that be<sub>SUBJ</sub>)’  
 Paulo didn’t read any book (whatsoever).

As for the prosodically more neutral form, represented in (9) below, it only has a wide scope (that is, specific, in another sense) reading for the quantifier, and therefore isn’t a variant of either (4a) or (8):

- (9) a. O Paulo não leu um livro.  
 b.  $\exists x [book(x) \wedge \neg read(p, x)]$

An alternative version of (8), which preserves the indefinite determiner is

- (10) O Paulo não leu um só / único livro (que fosse).  
Paulo didn't read a single book.

At this point, it becomes evident that *n*-phrases are (possibly among other things) one of the means for expressing the contradiction of existence, in combination with a sentential negation operator. This is what clearly shows the following paradigm of free variants:

- (11) a. O Paulo não leu [UM livro] (que fosse).  
b. O Paulo não leu [um só / único livro] (que fosse).  
c. O Paulo não leu [nem um (só / único) livro] (que fosse).  
'the Paulo not read<sub>PAST</sub> [neither a (single) book]'  
d. O Paulo não leu [nenhum livro] (que fosse).  
'the Paulo not read<sub>PAST</sub> [no book]'  
e. O Paulo não leu [livro nenhum].  
'the Paulo not read<sub>PAST</sub> [book no]'

Interestingly – not to say surprisingly – enough, the paradigm in (11) is still incomplete. In fact, the formula in (4b) can be expressed by all the sentences below (possibly with some discourse, not semantic proper, subtleties involved), where the subjunctive appendix is now ignored, for the sake of simplicity:

- (12) a. O Paulo não leu [UM livro].  
b. O Paulo não leu [um só / único livro].  
c. O Paulo não leu [nem um (só / único) livro].  
d. O Paulo não leu [nenhum livro].  
e. O Paulo não leu [livro nenhum].  
f. O Paulo não leu [livro algum].  
'the Paulo not read<sub>PAST</sub> book some'  
g. O Paulo não leu [qualquer livro].  
'the Paulo not read<sub>PAST</sub> any book'

If we take into account the crucial correspondence between, on one side, sentence (7a) and its meaning translation in formula (7b),

$\exists x [book(x) \wedge read(p, x)]$ , and, on the other side, all the sentences in (12) and their meaning translation in formula (4b),  $\neg \exists x [book(x) \wedge read(p, x)]$ , the contradictory of (7b), the conclusion can be drawn that, in a language like Portuguese and at least in the syntactic context at issue (namely, under the scope of sentential negation), **non-specific existential indefinites** (NSEIs, for short) must be subject to a particular (prosodic or morpho-syntactic) formatting – which results in the distinguished forms (12a-f) – and are in free variation with a *qualquer(any)-type* NP, as shown in (12g). In this perspective, and if only the context presented above is considered, the *n*-phrases under discussion can be taken as just one of the forms that non-specific existential indefinites can assume in such context.

The behavior of existential indefinites I have been describing in connection with a post-verbal object position under the (syntactic and semantic) scope of negation *grosso modo* generalizes to every post-verbal position. In other words, in languages like Portuguese, paradigms like the one given in (12) above are in general valid for any post-verbal argument or adverbial position within a given syntactic domain (and, under certain conditions, not to be specified now, even across sentential boundaries). Nevertheless, in some cases there may arise some blocking effects that prevent all the expressions at stake to be free variants of one another, even in the negative configurations we have been considering. For the sake of simplicity, I will ignore here such possible effects. As for pre-verbal positions, the relevant facts are disclosed by the following pattern, where the asterisks mark either ungrammaticality or the unavailability of the intended meaning of negation of existence:

- (13) a. \*[UM estudante] não respondeu à pergunta.  
           ‘a student not answered the question’  
 b. \*[Um só / único estudante] não respondeu à pergunta.  
 c. [Nem um (só) estudante] (?não) respondeu à pergunta.  
 d. [Nenhum estudante] (\*não) respondeu à pergunta.  
 e. [Estudante nenhum] (\*não) respondeu à pergunta.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> My initial reaction to this sentence was not very favorable. However, I came to recognize that it is acceptable, although undoubtedly much more so if some discourse factors intervene, for example in a rather emphatic statement like

- (i) Estudante nenhum responderia a essa pergunta!  
 No student would (ever be able / want to) answer that question!

- f. [Estudante algum] (\*não) respondeu à pergunta.
- g. \*[Qualquer estudante] não respondeu à pergunta.

The operative paradigm is hence now reduced to four possibilities:

- (14) a. Nem um estudante respondeu à pergunta.
- b. Nenhum estudante respondeu à pergunta.
- c. Estudante nenhum respondeu à pergunta.
- d. Estudante algum respondeu à pergunta.

Regardless of the idiosyncratic wealth of variants that (14) reveals, the general syntactic pattern, namely as exhibited in (14b), is a well-known one, which consists of a typical form of *n*-phrase occurring pre-verbally. It is common to the traditionally called “negative concord languages”, but also to languages like standard English, usually classified as “double negation languages”. We will return to this distinction in section 2.3 below.

In my view, this is the right ambiance for an initial approach to the *n*-phrases we are now dealing with, insofar as the observed paradigms constitute strong evidence that such expressions belong in the class of non-specific existential indefinites. In the next subsection, further evidence in this direction will be adduced.

### 1.2.2. Klima’s (1964) tests

The first battery of tests that suggests itself as a tool for evaluating the negative character of sentences with pre-verbal *n*-phrases is devised in Klima (1964). All such tests involve subtypes of elliptic constructions that seem to require the presence, in the first member of the dyadic structure, of some sort of negative operator. Putting things in these terms, I am implying not only the old and trivial claim that different sorts of negation are available in a language, but also that, as should be expected, the differences in attachment and scope of negative operators bear upon the viability of certain constructions. However, contrary to my previous contentions on this matter (cf. Peres 1995/1997), I now believe that, while Klima’s tests indicate that some kind of negative value (possibly just decreasing monotonicity in one or more cases) is at work in the

structure, it is not yet clear which. I will not further elaborate on this point, merely suggesting for now, with data presented in (15)-(17), that different levels of negative values may license the constructions at stake:

- (15) a. Os estudantes leram o livro, \*(não) leram?  
The students read the book, did\*(n't) they?
- b. Os estudantes não leram o livro, (\*não) leram / pois não<sub>(EUR. PORT.)</sub>?  
The students didn't read the book, did(\*n't) they?
- c. Nenhum estudante leu o livro, (\*não) leu / pois não<sub>(EUR. PORT.)</sub>?  
No student read the book, did(\*n't) they?
- d. Não poucos estudantes leram o livro, (\*não) leram /  
pois não<sub>(EUR. PORT.)</sub>?  
'not few students read the book, did they?'
- (16) a. Os estudantes leram o livro, \*nem mesmo o Rui.  
The students read the book, \*not even Rui.
- b. Os estudantes não leram o livro, *nem mesmo* o Rui.  
The students didn't read the book, not even Rui.
- c. *Nenhum estudante* leu o livro, *nem mesmo* o Rui.  
No student read the book, not even Rui.
- d. Poucos estudantes leram o livro, *nem mesmo* o Rui ?(leu).  
Few students read the book, not even Rui ?(did).
- (17) a. A Vera leu o livro e o Rui também \*(não).  
'the Vera read the book and the Rui also (\*not)'  
Vera read the book, and so did(\*n't) Rui.
- b. A Vera não leu o livro e o Rui também \*(não).  
'the Vera not read the book and the Rui also \*(not)'  
Vera didn't read the book, neither did Rui.  
Vera didn't read the book, and Rui didn't either.
- c. *Nenhum estudante* leu o livro e o Rui também \*(não).  
'no student read the book and the Rui also \*(not)'  
No student read the book, neither did Rui / and Rui didn't either.
- d. Poucos estudantes leram o livro e o professor também não ?(leu).  
Few students read the book, and the teacher didn't ?(read it) either.

### 1.2.3. Arguments in favor of the indefinite Further theory of *n*-phrases

The arguments in favor of the indefinite theory of *n*-phrases that will now be put forward can be divided into two groups: those that

strengthen the idea that a constructional (arguably, contradictory) negation is available in the relevant structures, which are grouped below under (i)-(iii), and those that confirm the (existential) indefinite character of *n*-phrases, which constitute the group (iv)-(vi). I will keep on skipping the indispensable syntactic characterization of the relevant negation operator that is at issue in the present discussion, which, in very vague terms, I conceive of as lying between constituent negation and a fully external propositional negation: “a mode of predication, a recipe for combining subject (...) and predicate (...) to form a proposition or sentence (...), rather than an operation on a fully formed proposition or sentence” (cf. Horn 1989: 469).

(i) Other cases of sensitivity to negation

The constructions given in (18)-(20) point in a more distinct direction than Klima’s tests. Since they will not be described in detail, suffice it to say that they all can be considered as composites of negative propositional components.

- (18) a. Durante este depoimento, os fotógrafos *NÃO* poderão ficar na sala NEM as câmaras de televisão poderão filmar.  
During this deposition, the photographers will be allowed to remain in the room nor will the TV cameras be allowed to shoot.
- b. Durante este depoimento, *NENHUM* fotógrafo poderá ficar na sala NEM as câmaras de televisão poderão filmar.  
[cf. Peres 1995/1997: 292]  
During this deposition, no photographer will be allowed to remain in the room nor will the TV cameras be allowed to shoot.
- (19) a. Espero que você *NÃO* se sinta aqui mal, mas *SIM* como na sua própria casa.  
‘(I) hope that you not yourself feel here badly, but yes as in-the your own home’  
I hope you won’t feel uncomfortable here, but instead as if you were at home.
- b. Espero que *NINGUÉM* se sinta aqui mal, mas *SIM* como na sua própria casa.  
‘(I) hope that nobody not himself feel here badly, but yes as in-the his own home’  
I hope nobody feels uncomfortable here, but instead as if being at home.

- (20) a. Eu NÃO disse que estava a chover, (mas) APENAS que podia chover.  
 ‘(I) not said that was at rain, (but) just that could rain’  
 I didn’t say that it was raining, just that it could rain.
- b. NINGUÉM disse que estava a chover, (mas) APENAS que podia chover.  
 ‘nobody said that was at rain, (but) just that could rain’  
 Nobody said that it was raining, just that it could rain.

(ii) Anaphoric *do the same* constructions

The third source of evidence in favor of the postulation of a negative operator concerns the anaphoric *do the same* construction (cf. Peres 1995/1997: 292), whose interpretation in the relevant cases must include a negation operator.

- (21) Nenhum dos meus colegas aceitou o convite e eu vou *fazer o mesmo*.  
 ‘none-of-the my colleagues accepted the invitation and I go do the same’  
 None of my colleagues has accepted the invitation, and I will do the same.

(iii) Structures with pre-verbal *n*-phrases licensed by an overt negation operator

The next piece of evidence (again, extracted from Peres 1995/1997) concerns the occurrence of *n*-phrases in pre-verbal position even when immediately preceded by an overt sentential negation operator (*sem / without*) – cf. (22a) below –, which also licenses post-verbal realizations of the same items – cf. (22b). Furthermore, it is shown that when such an operator is neutralized by genuine (adjacent) double negation, yielding a positive context, the licensing is blocked – cf. (23b).

- (22) a. A Ana saiu SEM NINGUÉM a ver.  
 ‘Ana left without nobody her see’  
 Ana left without anyone seeing her.
- b. A Ana saiu SEM falar COM NINGUÉM.  
 ‘Ana left without talk with nobody’  
 Ana left without talking to anyone.

- (23) a. A Ana saiu, NÃO SEM falar com o Pedro.  
 ‘Ana left not without talk with the Pedro’  
 Ana left, not without talking to Pedro.
- b. \*Ana saiu, NÃO SEM falar com NINGUÉM.  
 ‘Ana left not without talk with nobody’

We now move to the evidence in favor of the analysis of *n*-phrases as indefinites.

(iv) Anaphoras of *n*-phrases

The data in this item show that empty constituents or even pronouns whose interpretation is dependent on *n*-phrases can only receive an existential reading (cf. Peres 1997: 2).

- (24) Nenhuma lei proíbe o que estamos a fazer e se [*ec*] proibisse [*ec*] devia ser revogada.  
 ‘no law forbids the-what [we] are at do and if [*ec*] did [*ec*] should be revoked’  
 No law forbids what we are doing, and if (?it/one) did it should be revoked.
- (25) Não te peço nenhum livro emprestado, porque não sei quando to poderia devolver.  
 ‘[I] not you ask no book borrowed, because [I] not know when you-it could return’  
 I won’t borrow any book from you, because I don’t know when I would be able to return it.

(v) *Else*-constructions

The present construction (with, e.g., English *else*, French *plus*, or Portuguese *mais*) is preferably or even exclusively – possibly varying across languages – used with non-universal noun phrases (cf. Peres 1995/1997: 292):

- (26) a. Mais ninguém falou.  
 “more nobody spoke”
- b. Plus personne n’a parlé.  
 “more nobody not has spoken”
- c. No one else spoke.

(vi) *in particular*-constructions

This construction has *grosso modo* the same restrictions as the previous one (cf. Peres 1997: 2). In fact, the adjunct *in particular* can only be computed in combination with an expression conveying an existential value.

(27) They chat about nothing in particular.

(28) Are you looking for someone in particular? No, I am looking for no one in particular.

From all these facts together, the reasonable conclusion to be drawn seems to be that, in languages like Portuguese, both pre- and post-verbal *n*-phrases are, at least in the kind of contexts examined so far, nothing but NSEIs under the scope of (not necessarily visible) negation. When pre-verbal, they are negation inducers which, in an abstract syntax, may be considered to have undergone a process of agreement with a negative head towards which they act as specifiers (cf., e.g., Zanuttini 1991). When post-verbal, they enter a negative concord process with a visible negation operator, which amounts to saying that they keep the same form as when they are negation inducers, but in reality do not perform such role, but only that of NSEIs.

I believe that it was abundantly evidenced that only under the categorial assignment and constructional postulation just discussed can the right semantics be obtained in all the relevant cases, namely in the distinguished structures that were presented above as a diagnostic for the existentiality and indefiniteness of *n*-phrases. In its general features, this is a view that was proposed in Ladusaw 1992 for so-called negative concord languages and generalized to so-called double negation languages, like standard English, in Peres 1995/1997.

### 1.3. A concept of *n*-phrase and some typological matters

From the evidence presented so far, the notion of *n*-phrase, as applying to the Portuguese expressions we have been considering, can be associated with the following features: (i) the marked expression of non-specific existential indefiniteness in special contexts, namely in those

that can be characterized as involving the “mode of predication” sort of negation; (ii) the capacity these marked NSEIs have, when located in at least one distinguished syntactic position (in the language under consideration, a pre-verbal position) and in the absence of any visible sentential negation operator, to make their clausal domain exhibit certain properties that are exclusive of the subtype of negative constructions mentioned in the previous item; (iii) the restraint to the mere role of NSEIs – without any conveyance of a negation value –, when in the appropriate dependency vis-à-vis another appropriate conveyor of negation (in short, the engagement in what Labov termed “negative concord”).

Now, it is just a terminological matter to decide whether or not for an expression to be classified as an *n*-phrase all the above features are required. My position is that the notion will gain in generality and expressive power if only the first two properties are summoned into its definition. In fact, given such a comprehensive outlining, not only languages like Italian, Portuguese and Spanish but also languages like English are endowed with *n*-phrases, a claim that allows a unified treatment of the pre-verbal behavior of the relevant expressions. Clearly, this was (*avant la lettre* in what concerns the labels *n*-word/*n*-phrase and related concepts) the view adopted in Klima 1964, where such expressions were derived in English by means of a rule of “incorporation” of (an abstract) negation (constituent) – “*neg*-incorporation”. Sticking to Klima’s terminology, all the languages in the wider group just mentioned are ***neg-incorporation languages***. Without further speculation, it must be stressed that, under the definition of *n*-phrases that I have just adopted, languages like Greek, Hungarian and the Slavic languages – and even European French, although somehow more arguably, given that the omnipresent negation operator is a weak form (as opposed to *pas*) – appear not to be *neg*-incorporation languages. The obvious entailment is that the latter are not negative concord languages either. In fact, if the expression “negative concord” is to be taken at its face value, as it should, then an expression can be involved in negative concord if and only if it can also be by itself a conveyor of negation, which, in the cases under analysis, requires that it undergoes a process of the *neg*-incorporation type. From the above enumerated *neg*-incorporation languages, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish are genuine



domain of indefinites. Subsequently, I will briefly list what I think to be the types of Portuguese structures that involve such processes, without attempting to establish a rigorous characterization of the material. Pending further research, suffice it to say for the moment that the data below may contain cases of *n*-phrases of the type we have been considering so far – that is, supporting both negative incorporation and negative concord –, but also cases where, the “mode of predication” negation not being involved, negative incorporation has a different morpho-syntactic and semantic architecture, although negative concord may survive as the semantically void concord process we know from the foregoing. Besides Portuguese (PT), occasionally examples are given for some other Romance languages.

### 2.1. *Simple phrases other than indefinites*

- (30) a. NEM vinte estudantes foram à festa. [PT]  
 ‘not-even twenty students went to-the party’  
 a’. NÃO foram à festa (NEM) vinte estudantes. [ambiguous without  
*nem*]  
 ‘not went to-the party not-even twenty students’  
 b. Not even twenty students attended the party.

When definites are involved, the same facts occur, with an additional implicature value:

- (31) a. NEM ao Domingo descanso. [PT]  
 ‘not-even at-the Sunday (I) rest’  
 a’. NÃO descanso NEM ao Domingo. [PT]  
 ‘not [I] rest not-even at-the Sunday’  
 b. NEANCHE la domenica mi riposo. [IT]  
 ‘not-even the Sunday me rest’  
 b’. NON mi riposo NEANCHE la domenica.  
 ‘not me rest not-even the Sunday’  
 c. I can’t rest, even on Sundays.

2.2. *Coordinate structures (NP, AP, VP, AdvP, ...)*

## 2.2.1. (Arguably) NP coordination

- (32) a. NEM o Pedro NEM a Ana (\*NÃO) foram à reunião. [PT]  
 ‘neither the Pedro nor the Ana (\*not) went to-the meeting’  
 a’. \*(NÃO) foram à reunião (NEM) o Pedro NEM a Ana.  
 ‘\*(not) went to-the meeting (neither) the Pedro NOR the Ana’  
 b. Neither Pedro nor Ana attended the meeting.
- (33) a. O Paulo \*(NÃO) viu (NEM) o Pedro NEM a Ana. [PT]  
 ‘the Paulo \*(not) see (neither) the Pedro nor the Ana’  
 b. Paulo didn’t see either Pedro or Ana. / Paulo saw neither Pedro nor Ana.
- (34) a. NO CONOZCO (NI) Paris NI Londres. [SP]  
 ‘not [I] know (neither) Paris nor Londres’  
 b. I don’t know either Paris or London. / I know neither Paris nor London.
- (35) a. Vi-me SEM bagagem NEM dinheiro. [PT]  
 ‘[I] saw-myself without baggage nor money’  
 b. I found myself without baggage or money.

## 2.2.2. (Arguably) VP coordination

- (36) a. NON lo approvo NÉ lo disapprovo. [IT]  
 a’. Né lo approvo né lo disapprovo.  
 ‘not it [I] approve nor disapprove’  
 b. I don’t approve or disapprove it.

2.3. *A subtype of conditionals*

- (37) a. NEM que me matem eu conto tudo o que sei.  
 [PT; ambiguous: a’ vs. a’']  
 ‘neither that kill me I tell all the what [I] know’  
 a’. Eu conto tudo o que sei, NEM que me matem.  
 I will tell everything I know, even if they kill me.

- a". Eu NÃO conto tudo o que sei, NEM que me matem.  
I won't tell everything I know, even if they kill me.
- b. Ni aunque me maten contaré todo lo que se. [SP; same ambiguity]
- c. Neanche se mi ammazzano io racconterò tutto ciò che so.  
[IT; idem]

### 3. Back to *n*-indefinites and their licensing conditions

In many languages that have *n*-phrases, these, namely in the indefinite variety, can occur in contexts where a negation value can only be obtained via indirect computations (for instance, interrogatives, comparatives or the antecedent of conditionals). As I tried to show in Peres (1998), Portuguese, contrary to other Romance languages, is in this respect a very restrictive language, which almost exclusively allows indefinite *n*-phrases in contexts where a basic negation operator is appropriately available. In the present section, I will only take into account this kind of licensing, both in single sentential domains and cross-sententially.

#### 3.1. *Intra-sentential anti-veridical licensing*

All the occurrences of *n*-phrases discussed so far took place in a context where overt or covert sentential negation was present (in the second case, once the indefinite theory of *n*-phrases is assumed). Using the terms of Giannakidou (1997), this amounts to saying that up to now we have only considered the licensing of *n*-phrases in “averidical contexts” (or in the author’s 1998 revised terminology, “anti-veridical”), according to the following definition:

- (38) Let *OP* be a monadic sentential operator. The following statements hold:
- (i) *OP* is veridical just in case  $OP(p) \rightarrow p$  is logically valid. Otherwise, *OP* is nonveridical.
  - (ii) A nonveridical operator *OP* is anti-veridical just in case  $OP(p) \rightarrow \neg p$  is logically valid. [cf. Giannakidou 1998: 106]

Besides the common sentential negation operator, another operator that can be considered anti-veridical is *sem* (and its equivalents in other languages, like English *without*). Accordingly, such operator licenses *n*-phrases (that is, it gives rise to negative concord), as shown by the following data<sup>4</sup>:

- (39) a. O prisioneiro fugiu SEM [que [NEM UM polícia] o conseguisse deter].  
 ‘the prisoner escaped without that neither a policeman him could detain’  
 The prisoner escaped without any policeman begin able to detain him.
- b. O prisioneiro fugiu SEM [que [NENHUM polícia] o conseguisse deter].
- c. O prisioneiro fugiu SEM [que [polícia NENHUM] o conseguisse deter].
- d. O prisioneiro fugiu SEM [que [polícia ALGUM] o conseguisse deter].

As shown by Zwarts (1995) and Giannakidou (1997), in some languages the anti-veridical version of operators like temporal *before* license *n*-phrases and other items that are sensitive to anti-veridicality. French and Spanish examples are:

- (40) Partez avant que personne vous voie. [Grevisse-Goosse 1993: 1461]  
 ‘leave before that nobody you see’  
 Leave, before anyone sees you.
- (41) Antes de decir nada más, piensáelo dos veces.<sup>5</sup>  
 ‘before of say nothing else, think-it two times’  
 Before saying anything else, think twice.

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<sup>4</sup> In certain contexts, the sequences with *nem* are less easily accepted. This is presumably a syntactic fact, due to the somehow hybrid nature of *nem*, which, having not been collapsed with the determiner (as it is the case in *nenhum* and other forms), may have preserved some of its original character as a sentential operator and, as a consequence, be hardly combinable with *sem*. It is also possible that the reversed order as exhibited in (39c) is not always interchangeable with the other forms in *sem* contexts. I will skip these predominantly syntactic issues.

<sup>5</sup> I owe this sentence to León Acosta.

In Portuguese, this possibility is much less assured:

- (42) O avô morreu antes de conhecer ??*nenhum* / \**algum* / *qualquer* neto.  
 ‘the grandfather died before of know ??no / \*some / any grandchild’  
 The grandfather died before knowing any grandchild.
- (43) Sai, antes que ??*ninguém* / *alguém* / *qualquer pessoa* te veja.  
 ‘leave, before that ??nobody / someone / any person you see’  
 Leave, before anyone sees you.
- (44) Antes de dizeres \*(*mais nada* / *algo mais* / *mais alguma coisa* /  
*qualquer coisa*, pensa duas vezes.  
 ‘before of say \*(else) nothing / something else / more some thing / any  
 thing, think two times’  
 Before saying anything else, think twice.

### 3.2. Cross-sentential licensing

Developing the trend open by Ladusaw 1979, where decreasing monotone contexts are the crucial factor in the licensing of negative polarity items, Dowty 1994 propositions the idea that, in so-called negative concord languages, these items, including *n*-phrases, can only occur in positions that are subject to that sort of inferences, which they are aimed at marking. He re-elaborates the logic of monotonicity defined in Valencia (1991) as a tool for calculating monotonicity, and, as mentioned before, adopting an ambiguity (between NPI’s and NQ’s) treatment of *n*-phrases, he evaluated his theory in the domain of simple sentences. In Peres 1994 and 1995/1997, I tried to reach the following two goals with respect to the licensing of *n*-words: (i) showing that, in a language like Portuguese, Dowty’s monotonicity effects were preserved across clause boundaries, that is, in cases where NPI’s, *n*-words included, are located within an embedded clause, the licenser being in the matrix; (ii) proving that the indefinite categorization of *n*-words and the invisible negation approach I was adopting, while being strictly opposed to Dowty’s ambiguity treatment of *n*-words, was fully compatible with his basic intuition concerning the role of monotonicity not only of negation in the licensing of *n*-words. In face of the limited amount of data I analyzed at the time, the results seemed to confirm Dowty’s hypothesis rather straightforwardly. Crucial cases were sentences like

- (45) a. NÃO me surpreende que NINGUÉM tenha telefonado à Maria.  
 ‘not me surprises that nobody has called the Maria’  
 ≠ It doesn’t surprise me that someone has called Maria.
- b. ??Não me surpreende que a Maria tenha telefonado a nenhum dos colegas.  
 ‘not me surprises that the Maria has called to none of-the colleagues’  
 It doesn’t surprise me that Maria has called any of her colleagues.
- (46) a. O ministro NÃO exigiu que NINGUÉM fosse preso.  
 “the minister not required that nobody be arrested”  
 The minister did not require that nobody / anybody be arrested.
- b. O ministro NÃO exigiu que a Polícia prendesse NINGUÉM.  
 “the minister not required that the Police arrested nobody”  
 The minister did not require that the Police arrested anyone.

Laterally, it must be pointed out that the classification of a verb like *surpreender* (*surprise*) as downward entailing, which appears recurrently in the literature, is not accurate, at least if the verb is taken to be veridical (or, more strongly, factive). In fact, as Zwarts (1995) has proven, an operator cannot be both veridical and downward entailing with respect to the same argument position. At any rate, the more accurate characterization of the verb as nonmonotone with respect to its sentential argument does not preclude the final value obtained under negation to be increasing monotonicity, for which reason no ambiguity arises with the pre-verbal instance. Concerning (46), where the inference is decreasing – as a result of the neutralization of the increasing value of the verb by the decreasing value of negation –, such ambiguity surfaces. However, this neutralization does not take place in every case, namely when factivity is present, leading to the conclusion that the negation of an increasing monotone predicate of force does not preserve the direction of the inference, but does not necessarily reverse it. This is the case with the next example, which contains a higher verb that (arguably, leaving apart the vexing controversy on the closure of the complements of positive epistemic predicates under logical consequence) is increasing monotone regarding its complement, and where nonmonotonicity is obtained after the application of negation. In such context, *n*-phrases are not licensed cross-sententially.

- (47) a. Eu NÃO SABIA que aqui NINGUÉM fala chinês.  
 ‘I not knew that here nobody speaks Chinese’  
 ≠ I didn’t know that somebody here speaks Chinese.
- b. \*NÃO SABIA que vocês falavam NENHUMA língua asiática.  
 ‘not (I) knew that you spoke no Asian language’

The hypothesis I raised at the time in order to account for the kind of discrepancies I then noticed was that at least one modal feature of verbs – EPISTEMIC – plays a crucial role in the reading selection. The general picture is given in Table 1 (from Peres 1994).

PROPERTIES OF THE PREDICATES	MON↓	MON↑ [– EPISTEMIC]	MON↑ [+ EPISTEMIC]	¬ MON
LICENSING OF N-PHRASES	no	yes	restricted	varying (w/ a tendency for blocking)

*Table 1. Cross-sentential licensing of n-phrases in Peres 1994*

In defiance of the apparent regularity of this general picture, some problems remained unsolved, namely cases, which I then overlooked, with MON↓ predicates, trivially yielding upward entailment under negation [(–, –) / +], but (at least to some degree) licensing *n*-phrases:

- (48) a. Eu NUNCA EVITO que ninguém me critique.  
 ‘I never avoid that nobody me criticizes’  
 ≡ I don’t want to prevent anyone from criticizing me.
- b. A Ana NÃO EVITA que os colegas leiam NENHUM dos seus poemas.  
 ‘Ana not avoids that the colleagues read<sub>SUBJ</sub> none of her poems’  
 ≡ Ana does not prevent her colleagues from reading any of her poems.
- (49) O Pedro NÃO EVITA falar com NINGUÉM.  
 ‘the Pedro not avoids talk with nobody’  
 Pedro doesn’t avoid talking with anyone.

- (50) a. O presidente da sessão NÃO IMPEDIRÁ que NINGUÉM se pronuncie.  
 ‘the chairman of-the session not prevent<sub>FUT</sub> that nobody himself intervene’  
 ?≡ The chairman of the session will not prevent anyone from intervening.
- b. ?O presidente da sessão NÃO IMPEDIRÁ que se fale sobre NENHUM assunto.  
 ‘the chairman of-the session not prevent<sub>FUT</sub> that one talk about no subject’  
 ?≡ The chairman will not prevent any subject from being addressed.

Bearing in mind the fact that Giannakidou 1997 found a correspondence between nonveridicality and the licensing of (what she considers to be) *n*-phrases in Greek, the attempt to compute this value instead of decreasing monotonicity seems to be a reasonable trend of research. The *prima facie* evidence is that all the above cases are now solved in a simpler way (assuming a non-standard computation of monotonicity that I will not elaborate on):

in (45), the context is $\text{MON}\uparrow [(-, \emptyset)/+]$ and VERIDICAL	NO LICENSING
in (50), the context is $\text{MON}\uparrow [(-, -)/+]$ and NONVERIDICAL	LICENSING
in (46), the context is $\text{MON}\downarrow [(-, +)/-]$ and NONVERIDICAL	LICENSING
in (47), the context is $\neg\text{MON} [(-, [+ \text{FACTIVITY}])/\emptyset]$ and VERIDICAL	NO LICENSING

However, a minute scrutiny of further data suggests that the domain resists simple solutions, more factors being involved than those considered both in Table 1 and in Giannakidou’s approach. In fact, not only it cannot be said that embedded nonveridical contexts constitute a sufficient condition for the licensing of *n*-phrases, but also the veridical ones are not regular in respect to the expected anti-licensing effect. The first relation, between nonveridicality and licensing, can be abundantly illustrated. The following data portray embedded nonveridical contexts which are also decreasing monotone due to combinations of negation and upward entailing predicates in the relevant argument. It should be noticed that henceforth no mention will be made of the availability of the reading in which (within a framework that incorporates the indefinite approach) the pre-verbal *n*-phrases are being licensed in the lowest clausal domain, since it is irrelevant for the purpose of the argument.

- (51) a. O pianista NÃO gosta que NINGUÉM ocupe as filas da frente.  
 ‘the pianist not likes that nobody occupies the front rows’  
 ≡ The pianist doesn’t like that anybody occupies the front rows.
- b. O pianista NÃO gosta que lhe digam NADA antes dos recitais.<sup>6</sup>  
 ‘the pianist not likes that him say nothing before of-the recitals’  
 ≡ The pianist doesn’t like to be told anything before the recitals.
- (52) a. O Pedro NÃO pediu que NINGUÉM o ajudasse.  
 Pedro not asked that nobody him helped.  
 ≡ Pedro didn’t ask that anybody helped him.
- b. O Pedro NÃO PEDIU que a Ana ajudasse NINGUÉM.  
 Pedro not asked that the Ana helped nobody’  
 ≡ Pedro didn’t ask Ana to help anyone.
- (53) a. NÃO ACREDITO que NINGUÉM tenha dito isso.  
 ‘(I) not believe that nobody has said that’  
 ≡ I don’t believe that anybody has said that.
- b. NÃO ACREDITO que ele tenha dito isso a NENHUM colega.  
 ‘(I) not believe that he has said that to no colleague’  
 ≡ I don’t believe that he has said that to any of his colleagues.
- (54) a. NÃO ME LEMBRO de NINGUÉM me ter dito isso.  
 ‘not me remember of nobody me have said that’  
 ≡ I don’t remember anyone having said that to me.
- b. NÃO ME LEMBRO de ter escrito NADA sobre esse assunto.  
 ‘not me remember of have written nothing about that subject’  
 ≡ I don’t remember having written anything about that subject.

A clear weakening of the likelihood of licensing originates when nonveridicality combines with the nonmonotonicity of declarative verbs and their kin (for instance, *prove* or *demonstrate*) regarding their complement:

<sup>6</sup> Without further evolvment, let me just note that (non)veridicality cannot be computed only from predicates and negation. In fact, values like modality, tense and aspect can also play a crucial role. For instance, if in (51), with the erotetic verb *gostar* (*like*), the tense/aspect value is changed to ‘past tense’ (*grosso modo*, the Portuguese ‘pretérito perfeito simples’), the cross-sentential licensing effect is blocked:

O pianista NÃO gostou que NINGUÉM ocupasse as filas da frente.  
 ‘the pianist not liked that nobody occupied<sub>SUBJ</sub> the front rows’  
 ≠ The pianist didn’t like that (??)anybody occupied the front rows.  
 The pianist didn’t like that nobody occupied the front rows.

- (55) a. A Maria NÃO VAI DIZER que NINGUÉM a ajudou.  
 ‘the Maria not goes say that nobody her helped’  
 ??≡ Maria is not going to say that someone helped her.
- b. ??A Maria NÃO VAI DIZER que ajudou NINGUÉM.  
 ‘the Maria not goes say that (she) helped nobody’  
 ??≡ Maria is not going to say that she helped someone.

The same, even more dramatically, is the case when nonveridicality is associated with increasing monotonicity, as was the case in (48) and (50), and, in addition, the higher verb can be considered epistemic (even though with some alethic flavor to it):

- (56) a. NÃO É IMPOSSÍVEL que NINGUÉM fale sobre a questão.  
 ‘not is impossible that nobody speaks about the issue’  
 ≠ It is not impossible that anyone speaks about the issue.
- b. \*NÃO É IMPOSSÍVEL que a Ana fale com NINGUÉM.  
 ‘not is impossible that the Ana speak<sub>SUBJ</sub> with nobody’
- (57) a. NÃO É IMPOSSÍVEL NINGUÉM falar sobre a questão.  
 ‘not is impossible nobody speak about the issue’  
 ≠ It is not impossible that anyone speaks about the issue.
- b. \*NÃO É IMPOSSÍVEL a Ana falar com NINGUÉM.  
 ‘not is impossible the Ana speak with nobody’

By the way, notice that in metalinguistic realizations of negative sentences, the licensing of *n*-phrases is almost invariably admitted. For instance, sentence (55a) above is perfectly sound with cross-sentential licensing – that is, with the meaning corresponding to the English translation in (55) – if it is used metalinguistically, as in the following dialogue:

- (58) Sp<sub>1</sub> A Ana vai dizer que alguém a ajudou.  
 ‘the Ana goes say that someone her helped’  
 Ana is going to say that someone helped her.
- Sp<sub>2</sub> A Ana NÃO dirá que NINGUÉM a ajudou: é demasiado orgulhosa para isso.  
 ‘Ana not say<sub>FUT</sub> that nobody her helped: (she) is too proud for that’  
 Ana will not say that someone helped her: she is too proud to do that.

The same goes for post-verbal positions:

- (59) Sp<sub>1</sub> A Ana disse que tinha escrito um artigo.  
 ‘Ana said that (she) had written an article’
- Sp<sub>2</sub>. A Ana NÃO disse que tinha escrito NENHUM artigo, apenas disse que pensava escrever.  
 ‘Ana not said that (she) had written no article, just (she) said that (she) intended write’  
 Ana didn’t say she had written any article, she just said she intended to.

What apparently we have here is a direct negative echo of the initial statement, the negative concord effect serving to stress the relation of contradiction. Given this circumstance, I have so far systematically ignored the licensing effects that depend on metalinguistic use, and will continue to do so.

If we now move to the domain of veridicality, where of necessity decreasing mono-tonicity cannot obtain (again, cf. Zwarts 1995), things are somewhat more subtle. My basic hypothesis is that nonveridicality, besides not being a sufficient condition for licensing, is not a necessary one either. In fact, as we will promptly see, the data permit the conclusion that the licensing can take place if the lack of a strong semantic condition as nonveridicality is, as it were, compensated by strong syntactic conditions, in particular the nonfiniteness of the embedded clause and the post-verbal position of the relevant indefinite. Additionally, again some accessory role may be played by further semantic properties of the matrix verb, namely the epistemic value.

The first cases of veridicality to be considered are of the kind of (47) concerning monotonicity, but now with a non-epistemic predicate:

- (60) a. NÃO FOI FÁCIL NINGUÉM aceitar o convite.  
 ‘not was easy nobody accept the invitation’  
 ≠ It wasn’t easy for anyone to accept the invitation.
- b. NÃO FOI FÁCIL subir a NENHUMA daquelas montanhas.  
 ‘not was easy climb at none of-those mountains’  
 ≡ It wasn’t easy to climb any of those mountains.

In (61)-(62), we have an epistemic and a declarative predicate that can be considered decreasing monotone in its internal argument:

- (61) a. NÃO DUVIDO de que NINGUÉM votará a favor da proposta A.  
 ‘not (I) doubt of that nobody will-vote to favor of-the proposal A’  
 ≠ I don’t doubt that someone will vote for proposal A.
- b. \*NÃO DUVIDO de que o Pedro contou NENHUM dos seus problemas à Ana.  
 ‘not (I) doubt of that the Pedro told none of-the his problems to-the Ana’
- (62) a. Ele NÃO NEGOU que NINGUÉM o tinha autorizado a entrar.  
 ‘he not denied that nobody him had authorized a get-in’  
 ≠ He didn’t deny that someone had authorized him to get in.
- b. \*Ele NÃO NEGOU que tinha autorizado NINGUÉM a entrar.  
 ‘he not denied that had authorized nobody to get-in’  
 ≠ He didn’t deny that he had authorized someone to get in.

The next data exemplifying veridicality, in (63)-(64), involve a verb that arguably is nonmonotone regarding its complement:

- (63) a. Ele NÃO SE ESQUECEU de que NINGUÉM o convidou.  
 ‘he not himself forgot of that nobody him invited’  
 ≠ He didn’t forget that someone invited him.
- b. \*Ele NÃO SE ESQUECEU de que tinha de convidar NINGUÉM.  
 ‘he not himself forgot of that (he) had of invite nobody’
- (64) Ele NÃO SE ESQUECEU de convidar NINGUÉM.  
 ‘he not himself forgot of invite nobody’  
 ≡ He didn’t forget to invite anyone.

	VERID.	MON.	EPIST. OR DECL.	NON- FINITE	POST- VERBAL	LICENSING	
						YES	NO
46a	-	↓	-	-	-	x	
46b	-	↓	-	-	+	x	
51a	-	↓	-	-	-	x	
51b	-	↓	-	-	+	x	
52a	-	↓	-	-	-	x	
52b	-	↓	-	-	+	x	
53a	-	↓	+	-	-	x	
53b	-	↓	+	-	+	x	
54a	-	↓	+	+	-	x	
54b	-	↓	+	+	+	x	
48a	-	↑	-	-	-	x	
48b	-	↑	-	-	+	x	
49	-	↑	-	+	+	x	
50a	-	↑	-	-	-	?	
50b	-	↑	-	-	+	?	
55a	-	NULL	+	-	-		??
55b	-	NULL	+	-	+		??
56a	-	↑	+	-	-		x
56b	-	↑	+	+	+		x
57a	-	↑	+	+	-		x
57b	-	↑	+	+	+		x
47a	+	NULL	+	-	-		x
47b	+	NULL	+	-	+		x
60a	+	NULL	-	+	-		x
60b	+	NULL	-	+	+	x	
45a	+	↑	+	-	-		x
45b	+	↑	+	-	+		x
61a	+	↑	+	-	-		x
61b	+	↑	+	-	+		x
62a	+	↑	+	-	-		x
62b	+	↑	+	-	+		x
63a	+	↑	+	-	-		x
63b	+	↑	+	-	+		x
64	+	↑	+	+	+	x	
65a	+	↑	-	-	-		x
65b	+	↑	-	-	+	?	
66	+	↑	-	+	+	x	

*Table 2. Semantic and syntactic relevant values of the data*

Finally, in (65)-(66), the predicate that matters – *lamentar* (*regret*) – is nonepistemic and nondeclarative. As for monotonicity, the situation is the same as with *surpreender* (*surprise*; cf. (45) above): the verb is nonmonotone in its complement, the inferential output under negation being increasing monotonicity:

- (65) a. A Maria NÃO LAMENTOU que NINGUÉM a tivesse ultrapassado.  
 ‘the Maria not regretted that nobody her had passed’  
 ≠ Maria didn’t regret that someone had passed her.
- b. A Maria NÃO LAMENTA que o Pedro tenha escrito NENHUM destes artigos.  
 ‘the Maria not regrets that the Pedro has written none of-these articles’  
 ?≡ Maria doesn’t regret that Pedro has written any of these articles.
- (66) A Maria NÃO LAMENTA ter escrito NENHUM destes artigos.  
 ‘the Maria not regrets have written none of-these articles’  
 ≡ Maria doesn’t regret having written any of these articles.

The whole array of features and values considered in the observed examples is given in Table 2, where the monotonicity values are the result of combining the downward monotonicity of the negation operator with the value the predicate exhibits and, additionally, considering factivity. The reading of Table 2 is quite linear, with three facts about Portuguese imposing themselves: (i) only decreasing monotonicity of the embedding position under negation is a sufficient (but not necessary) condition for the cross-sentential licensing of *n*-phrases; (ii) nonveridicality is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition to that effect; (iii) *n*-phrases are not anti-licensed by veridicality; (iv) under increasing monotonicity, the licensing factors consist of rather restrained combinations of values in semantic and syntactic features (namely, in the latter domain, nonfiniteness of the embedded clause and the post-verbal position of the affected indefinite).

Table 3 constitutes one of several possible compressed views of the information contained in Table 2. The shaded areas express the apparent insignificance of the values at stake. It should be noticed that the cluster of values “OK/?” can easily be split, as Table 2 clearly shows.

	VERID.	MON.	EPIST.	NON-FINITE	POST-VERBAL	LICENSING
<b>46, 51, 52, 53, 54</b>		↓				<b>OK</b>
<b>48, 49, 50</b>	-		-			<b>OK/?</b>
<b>60b, 65b, 66</b>	+		-		+	<b>OK/?</b>
<b>64</b>	+		+	+	+	<b>?</b>

*Table 3. A condensed view of the semantic and syntactic relevant conditions for the licensing of *n*-phrases according to the examined data*

Let me try a brief and informal account of the findings we have been discussing in this section. In the first place, it seems to be the case that, in consonance with a basic idea found in Dowty 1994, which was later explored in my 1994 and 1995/1997 papers, in a language like Portuguese the computation of monotonicity values plays a prominent role in the cross-sentential licensing of *n*-phrases, for which decreasing monotonicity is a sufficient condition. In the second place, it seems that such kind of language is crucially sensitive to the modal character of the higher predicate, namely to whether it has an epistemic or declarative component. In a manner that demands explanation well beyond the limits of this study, these modal values tend to block the licensing (or, in other words, the concord) process. Interestingly, as Marques 1995 revealed, the same modal values appear to be anti-licensors of the subjunctive mood in languages like French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, contrary to what happens in languages like Greek, Hungarian and Rumanian, where the same mood value allegedly is anti-licensed by veridicality.

In merely intuitive terms, what appears to be the case in the licensing of *n*-phrases in languages like Portuguese is that, in the absence of a value of decreasing monotonicity in the embedding context, with which the indefinite would be prepared to engage in a process of (negative) concord (of downward monotonicities) – which ultimately is what the licensing at stake amounts to –, it is nonveridicality that, by inducing a virtual negative value in the lower sentence (say, to the extent that no assurance is given about its truth), as it were supplies a (semantic) concordant element for the negative concord process. However, this

operation can only take place given certain modal properties of the matrix predicate. On the other side, the matrix negation can by itself, even in the absence of nonveridicality in the complement clause, be responsible for the licensing effect, provided that the syntactic conditions already discussed above apply.

A second point that must be stressed is that the above dependencies reinforce another of Dowty's basic intuitions, namely that *n*-phrases are markers of downward entailing positions. Indeed, in all the data under scrutiny that involve *n*-phrase licensing, the position of the indefinite is invariably a downward entailing position. The crucial licensing examples to be checked are those where the monotonicity computation à la Dowty yields a positive value, which is the case in (48)-(50). I will exemplify this verification with one of the relevant predicates:

- (67) O Pedro não evita falar com nenhum colega.  
 'the Pedro not avoids talk with no colleague'  
 Pedro doesn't avoid talking with any colleague.  
 → O Pedro não evita falar com nenhum colega mais novo.  
 'the Pedro not avoids talk with no colleague more young'  
 Pedro doesn't avoid talking with any younger colleague.

What, in my view, this entailment reveals is that, regardless of the computation of mono-tonicity in terms of Valencia-Dowty's calculus, down to the position of clause embedding (resulting from combining the values of the negative operator and that of the higher predicate), the increasing monotonicity of the indefinite can be reversed by the matrix clause negation operator, if the (preferably post-verbal) position of the indefinite becomes transparent to that operator, by a sort of clause-union. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the possibility exists that a post-verbal indefinite in a finite clause be accessible to the negation in the matrix. Regarding this latter case, although one can intuitively perceive that it makes all sense that such access is allowed only under a non-epistemic verb in the matrix, as is the case in (65b), the reasons why this might be so will have to be the object of more extended and sophisticated investigation.

#### 4. Conclusion

The main focus of this paper was the nature of *n*-phrases and their licensing conditions in Portuguese. In the first two sections, I tried to reach a clear definition of this class of expressions and of the related notions of “incorporation of negation” and “negative concord”. The general purpose was to show that a theory like Ladusaw’s indefinite theory of *n*-phrases fits the facts about these expressions, namely in Portuguese, better than concurrent theories. Working in this direction, I discussed several tests for indefiniteness. Moreover, close attention was paid to the paradigmatic relations of *n*-phrases, which were taken as a major source of evidence for a categorial settlement. In section 3, data were presented that clearly show that the characteristics of *n*-phrases that have to do with negation are manifest in several constructions of Portuguese and other languages which cannot be considered as simple noun or adverbial phrases with indefinite value. In the final part of the paper, I aimed at showing that the cross-sentential licensing of *n*-phrases in Portuguese – and presumably in several other languages – is subject to a rather well-defined network of semantic and syntactic properties, where, in partial confirmation of Dowty’s 1994 hypothesis, the role of decreasing monotonicity is of paramount importance.

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