

Negative indefinites in the history of Portuguese: the case of *nemigalha*

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Indefinidos negativos na diacronia do português: o caso de *nemigalha*

Abstract

This paper focuses on negative indefinites in Portuguese, paying particular attention to *nemigalha*, a negative indefinite that disappeared from the language around the 16th century. We claim that *nemigalha* originates from the reanalysis of the negative particle *nem* and the minimizer *migalha* in an early stage of the language, starting as a weak negative polarity item and then becoming a strong negative polarity item, in the sense of Martins (1997, 2000). It is well known that minimizers can grammaticalize into intrinsically negative items, being good candidates to undergo the Jespersen Cycle (Jespersen 1917). Although that was not the case of *nemigalha*, it completed all the grammaticalization stages proposed by Garzonio & Poletto (2008, 2009), losing all the properties of a common noun and being able to stand alone as the only negative marker in preverbal position. The comparison between *nemigalha* and the negative indefinite *nada* shows that both items exhibited similar behaviour and occurred in identical contexts, probably acting as competing items until *nemigalha*'s disappearance. Furthermore, a few examples from the 16th century suggest that *nemigalha* might have become a more functional item, participating as a negation marker in presuppositional contexts (cf. Larrivé 2010 and Hansen 2013).

Keywords

Old Portuguese, negation, negative concord, polarity items, n-words, minimizers

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Resumo

O presente artigo céntrase nos indefinidos negativos do português antigo. Presta especial atención a *nemigalha*, un indefinido negativo que desapareceu da lingua por volta do século XVI. Mostraremos que *nemigalha* resulta da reanálise da partícula negativa *nem* e do minimizador *migalha* nun estadio moi inicial da lingua. *Nemigalha* comeza sendo un elemento de polaridade negativa fraco que se torna en elemento de polaridade negativa forte, de acordo coa proposta avanzada por Martins (1997, 2000). Como se sabe, os minimizadores poden tornarse elementos intrinsecamente negativos, e son bos candidatos a completar o ciclo de Jespersen (Jespersen 1917). Aínda que *nemigalha* non completase este ciclo, parece que si completou as fases de gramaticalización propostas por Garzonio & Poletto (2008, 2009), pois perdeu as súas propiedades de nome común e pasou a poder aparecer só, en posición preverbal, como único marcador negativo. A comparación entre *nemigalha* e o indefinido negativo *nada* mostra que ambas as palabras se comportaban de forma idéntica, pois aparecían no mesmo tipo de contextos. Isto apunta á posibilidade de que fosen unidades en competición ata a desaparición de *nemigalha*. Finalmente, algúns exemplos do século XVI suxiren que *nemigalha* puido tornarse un elemento máis funcional, xurdindo como marcador negativo en contextos presuposicionais (cf. Larrivé 2010 e Hansen 2013).

Palabras chave

Portugués antigo, negación, concordancia negativa, ítems de polaridade, palabras-n, minimizadores

Sumario

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1. NEGATION IN OLD PORTUGUESE

Unlike Classical Latin, which is described as a double negation language, Old Portuguese displayed negative concord (cf. Zanuttini 1997, among others), meaning that the presence of two negative elements in a sentence did not result in an affirmative interpretation. On the contrary, the two negative elements established a concord relation, conveying together a negative interpretation. Items such as *nada*, *ninguém* or *nenhum*, usually called negative indefinites or n-words (in the sense of Laka 1990), triggered negative concord while in the scope of negation and required the presence of a preverbal negation marker, as illustrated in (1).

- (1) Como o homem velho disse que nenhũu nom levasse
 How the man old said that no.one NEG take
 consigo amiga na demanda.
 with.him friend in.the quest
 'How the old man said that no one should take a girl-friend with himself in the quest.'

(DSG, cap. XXXIV)

In Contemporary Portuguese, examples such as (1) are no longer possible¹: when in preverbal position, negative indefinites can now subside on their own, and the presence of the regular negation marker *não/nom* (*not*) turns the sentence ungrammatical.

In this paper, we will adopt the feature system proposed by Martins (1997, 2000) to explain the evolution of negative words in Romance. Having as a starting point a feature system inspired in Rooryck (1994), Martins (1997, 2000) proposes a classification that is applicable to all polarity items and that is based on three different polarity features: affirmative, modal and negative. According to Martins, each one of these features exhibits a value and that value can be specified or underspecified. A specified value will be marked as [+] while an underspecified value can be variable, being marked as [α], or invariable, in which case it is marked as [0]. The notions of strong and weak polarity items, which can be negative, modal or affirmative, derive from the combination of features and values. For instance, a polarity item that cannot occur in negative and affirmative contexts, occurring only in modal contexts² would be classified as a strong modal polarity item, displaying invariable underspecified values for the negative and the affirmative features, while displaying a specified value for the modal feature ([0 aff], [+mod], [0 neg]). To sum up, we could say that strong polarity items must have a specified value for one of the polarity features, and they cannot have any α-underspecified feature. On the other hand, weak polarity items have, at least, one α-underspecified feature, but no specified feature.

According to Martins (1997, 2000), in Old Portuguese, negative indefinites were weak negative polarity items, being α-underspecified for the negative and modal features, but being 0-underspecified for the affirmative feature. This means that negative indefinites could occur in modal and negative contexts, but they were ruled out from affirmative contexts. However, they evolved towards the specification of former underspecified features, becoming strong negative polarity items (NPIs). The negative feature becomes specified ([+neg]), while the affirmative maintains its 0-underspecified value ([0 aff]) and the modal feature becomes 0-underspecified too ([0 mod]). Since they are now strong negative polarity items (in the sense of Martins 1997, 2000), negative indefinites are ruled out from affirmative and modal contexts, and are only possible in negative contexts. They are considered intrinsically negative.

This feature system is born from the comparison between Romance languages done by Martins (1997, 2000). In fact, the author claims that, in a first stage of evolution, negative indefinites in Old Romance languages were weak negative polarity items, but they followed different paths. In the set of Old Romance languages analysed by Martins (1997, 2000), Portuguese is the most

¹ An anonymous reviewer called my attention to the fact that examples such as (1) are documented in Brazilian Portuguese, in the Sergipe region, as being marginal and dialectal uses. See Cardoso (1979).

² By modal contexts we consider the contexts whose truth value cannot be assessed. These are the cases of some subordinate clauses, sentences with modal verbs, sentences with subjunctive mode, interrogative or imperative clauses, among others.

innovative, being the only one in which negative indefinites became unambiguously strong negative polarity items.

As we have mentioned before, negative indefinites triggered negative concord, but they were not the only items to do so. Apart from negative indefinites, Old Portuguese also displayed another set of items capable of triggering negative concord: the minimizers.

2. MINIMIZERS: FROM COMMON NOUNS TO POLARITY ITEMS AND BEYOND

In a very broad sense, minimizers can be defined as items with scalar properties, which denote scalar endpoints. Just as noticed by Hoeksema (2001), minimizers usually refer to “minimal endpoints for scales of size as well as scales of value”, therefore becoming a frequent strategy to reinforce a negative idea. In Horn’s own words (1989:452), minimizers are “those partially stereotyped equivalents of ‘any’, which “occur within the scope of a negation as a way of reinforcing that negation”. Items such as *a straw (uma palha)* or *a red cent (um tostão)* are considered minimizers which are licensed under the scope of negation or in modal contexts. In the system proposed by Martins (1997, 2000), they are considered weak negative polarity items, since they are not intrinsically negative and require the presence of a licenser.

Minimizers usually originate from common nouns with the above mentioned properties, but they can grammaticalize into (negative) polarity items, sometimes even becoming independent negation markers. For that reason, they are intimately related to the widespread phenomena known as the Jespersen Cycle. As it is well known, the Jespersen Cycle predicts that, in a first stage, negation would be reinforced by a postverbal particle that, in a second stage, would become obligatory in the sentence, later becoming the only marker of negation, replacing the preverbal marker. This is the case of the French *pas*, once a common noun (meaning *step*) that evolved into a minimizer and is now considered the legitimate negation marker. Other examples are found crosslinguistically.

However, not all minimizers become independent negation markers, capable of replacing the preverbal negation marker, since the grammaticalization process can be interrupted at any stage.

3. MINIMIZERS IN OLD PORTUGUESE

3.1. A few words about the corpus

In order to evaluate the presence and behaviour of minimizers in Old Portuguese, it is necessary to collect as much data as possible. However, that is not always an easy task, since building a diachronic corpus poses several problems. First of all, we deal with the lack of data, since the testimonies of old stages of Portuguese are scarce and they may not always contain adequate data for our research. Secondly, we face the imbalance in the typology of texts available for the different centuries. And thirdly, the texts that survived until nowadays are frequently latter copies of earlier manuscripts. This poses the question of deciding whether they should be considered representative of the century in which the original manuscript was written or the century the copy was made or if it can depend on the linguistic phenomenon we are studying and the texts themselves³. In some cases, we also deal with Portuguese translations of an original text written in other languages, especially French and Spanish. Although this debate cannot be addressed here, we are aware of the fragilities a diachronic corpus can face.

³ Although the great majority of the texts do not pose problems regarding their dating, at least two of them are considered problematic. We refer to the two texts that integrate the post-Vulgate Cycle: *José de Arimateia* (JAR) and *Demanda do Santo Graal* (DSG). The first text is transmitted by a 16th century copy, while the second one is transmitted by a 15th century copy. The works by Castro (1993), Toledo Neto (2012) and Martins (2013) show that the copies which survived until nowadays (especially that of *José de Arimateia*) may display some properties that make them closer to 13th century Portuguese, but also other properties that reflect 15th or 16th century Portuguese. Although we cannot elaborate on this here for reasons of space, for this particular case, the study of negation and minimizers, we decided to consider DSG as an example of 13th century Portuguese and JAR as an example of 16th language, even though they may not reflect one same stage of the language at all times.

Examples presented in this paper are extracted from a larger corpus which aims at gathering contexts of occurrence of items considered to be minimizers in Old Portuguese (such as *rem* 'thing', *gota* 'drop') and negative indefinites (as *nada* 'nothing' or *ninguém* 'nobody') with data comprehended mainly between the 13th and the 16th century⁴. At the moment the database reunites 4458 entries distributed mainly by four centuries (1782 examples from the 13th century; 715 from the 14th century; 682 from the 15th century; 1250 from the 16th century and 29 examples placed between the 17th and the 20th centuries. Each entry is composed by the relevant context of occurrence but also by linguistic and extra-linguistic information, which is encoded using database software.

In order to build this database, we searched through several corpora available online, as well as on individual editions. Bellow we list the main sources that were used for systematic searches in each century, not excluding, however, some relevant examples from other sources.

Corpora

- *Corpus Informatizado do Português Medieval*⁵ (CIPM) (Xavier, Coord.)
- *Titus Old Portuguese Corpus*⁶ (on the basis of various editions electronically prepared by Ferraresi, Rinke & Goldbach 2005);
- *Tesouro Medieval Informatizado da Língua Galega* (TMILG) (Varela Barreiro, dir.)
- *Corpus Tycho Brahe*⁷ (Galves, Coord.)
- *Corpus Post Scriptum, Arquivo Digital da Escrita Quotidiana em Portugal e Espanha na Época Moderna* (P.S.) (Marquilha, Coord.)
- *Corpus de Textos Antigos*⁸ (CTA) (Sobral, Coord.)
- *Cet-e-quinientos: Teatro de autores portugueses do séc. XVI* (Camões, Coord.)
- *Corpus do Português* (Davies & Ferreira, Coord.)

Full texts not included in corpora⁹

- Documentos Notariais (CHEL 13 e DOURO 13A e 13B) (edited by Martins, made available by the author in a digitalized edition);
- *José de Arimateia* (JAR) (digitalized version of the edition by Castro 1984);
- *Demanda do Santo Graal* (DSG) (digitalized version of the edition by Piel & Nunes 1988);
- Legal texts¹⁰ available online at <https://sites.google.com/site/foraisextensos/>, edited by António Matos Reis.
- *Crónica Geral de Espanha* (CGE) (digitalized editions prepared by Pedrosa 2012 and Miranda 2013 as part of their *Master thesis*);
- *Crónica de Dom Fernando* (CDF) (the edition consulted was that of Macchi 1975, in a digitalized version);

⁴ This database is an ongoing task as it is being compiled as part of my PhD thesis.

⁵ Among others, we consulted the following texts: *Dos Costumes de Santarém* (Alentejo/Oriola); *Vidas de Santos de um Manuscrito Alcobacense* (Vida de Tarsis, Visão de Túndalo, Vida de Eufrosina, Vida de Santa Maria Egípcíaca); *Orto do Esposo*.

⁶ The texts consulted in this corpus were: *Auto de partilhas entre Rodrigo Sanches e seus irmãos Vasco, Mendo e Elvira; Elvira Sanches deixa o seu corpo e todos os seus bens ao mosteiro de Vairão* (c. Vila do Conde); *Notícia das malfetorias feitas a Lourenço Fernandes da Cunha por D. Sancho I e por Vasco Mendes, por ordem do mesmo rei; Notícia das malfetorias de que foi injustamente vítima Lourenço Fernandes da Cunha; Testamento de D. Afonso II*. (Braga) and *Catedral de Toledo*.

⁷ The texts consulted in this corpus were: *Crónica del-Rei Dom Diniz; Crónica del-Rei Dom Afonso Henriques; Crónica del-Rei Dom João I; Cartas de D. João III; Peregrinação and Vida de Bartolameu dos Mártires*.

⁸ *Vida do Cativo Monge Confesso; Trasladação de S. Nicolau; Vida do honrado Infante Josafat, filho d'el Rei Avénir; Vida de Santa Eufrosina; Vida e milagres de Santa Senhorinha de Basto*.

⁹ Some of the texts listed here are also available in some of the corpora we consulted. In these cases, our decision to consult one source or another varied from text to text. In some cases, we chose the source which made systematic searches easier. In other cases, we opted for the edition which we believed to be more accurate or which was available at the moment. For instance, in the case of *Demanda do Santo Graal*, we used the digitalized edition (a Word document) by Piel & Nunes (1988) since it was easier to search than through CIPM. At the present, there is also an online edition of DSG (using an edition by Toledo Neto 2015) with POS and syntactic annotation, made available online by the project WochWel (Martins, coord.), which was not fully available yet at the time the corpus started being compiled.

¹⁰ The texts consulted were: *Foros da Guarda; Foros de Beja; Foros de Évora - Alcçovas; Foros de Santarém - Alvito; Foros de Santarém - Oriola; Foros de Santarém - Torres Novas*.

- *Crónica de Dom Pedro de Meneses* (CDPM) (we consulted the digitalized edition by Brocardo 1997);
- *Cancioneiro Geral de Garcia de Resende* (CGGR) (printed copy of the edition made by Dias 1999).

3.2. Partitive/evaluative and indefinite minimizers

Contrary to contemporary data, minimizers were very frequent in Old Portuguese. According to Pinto (2015), minimizers could be divided into two main groups: partitive/evaluative and indefinite minimizers.

The first group comprehended minimizers which originated from common nouns with a partitive reading, such as *gota* (*drop*) in (2) or an evaluative reading, such as *palha* (*straw*) in (3), while indefinite minimizers included items that originated from generic nouns with low referentiality (cf. Giannakidou 2011), such as *rem* (*thing*) in (4).

(2)	por	agua	foi;	mais	ela	lle	fugiu/	dũa	fonte,	que
	for	water	went;	but	she	3pl _{DAT}	ran.away/	from.a	fountain,	that
	sol	gota	non	pude	dela		fillar.			
	only	drop	NEG	could	from.her		take.			

'He went for water but it ran away from a fountain and he couldn't take a drop.'

(*Cantigas Santa Maria*, TMILG, 13th c.)

(3)	Por	quanto	Boorz	dizia,	nom	dava	Lionel	ũa	<i>palha</i> .
	For	how.much	Boorz	said	NEG	gave	Lionel	one	straw.

'Lionel didn't give a straw for whatever Boorz said.'

(DSG, cap. CLXXVII, 13th c.)

(4)	Senhor,	diss'el,	nom	vi	rem.
	Sir,	said he,	NEG	saw	thing.

'Sir, he said, I didn't see a thing.'

(DSG, cap. DCLXXXV, 13th c.)

This difference in meaning was accompanied by a difference in the polarity values. While partitive/evaluative minimizers were weak negative polarity items, indefinite minimizers were, at first, bipolar items, in their way to becoming weak negative polarity items.

Pinto (2015) claims that the indefinite minimizers disappeared from the language around the 16th century, while the partitive/evaluative minimizers survived until nowadays, remaining weak negative polarity items. Contrary to what is verified in other Romance languages, the Jespersen Cycle does not seem to have succeeded in Portuguese, since there are no examples described in the literature of a Portuguese minimizer evolving into an independent negation marker¹¹. However, some minimizers challenge that assumption. That is the case of the minimizer *nemigalha*.

4. THE CASE OF *NEMIGALHA*

The item *nemigalha* (literally *not even a crumb*) is the result of a grammaticalization process involving the emphatic particle *nem* (*not even*) and the partitive minimizer *migalha* (*crumb*) in a very early stage of the language. We believe that, just like any other minimizer, *migalha* started as a common noun. Its scalar properties allowed for it to become a partitive minimizer, but, unlike the rest of the elements in this group, *nemigalha* suffers a different evolution. We assume that the frequent reinforcement of *migalha* by the negative particle *nem* led to the reanalysis of

¹¹ For further discussion see Cavalcante (2012). The author claims that the indefinite *nada* completed the Jespersen Cycle and is now an independent negation marker in Brazilian Portuguese.

the form *nemigalha* as an independent item, which inherited the negative feature of *nem* and became a strong negative polarity item.

The first occurrences of *nemigalha* are found in texts from the 13th century, probably motivated by the fact that the Latin form *mica* could already work as a negation reinforcer in some Latin texts around the time of Plautus, as Schwegler (1990) points out, following the work of Väänänen (1982)¹².

Texts written in a more colloquial style suggest that already around the time of Plautus (c. 254-184 B.C.), spoken Latin occasionally reinforce “non” through nominal elements expressing minimal value or insignificant quantity.

Non Micam mentis sanae habere.
Not a crumb of mind healthy have.
'To be entirely out of one's mind.'

Schwegler (1990: 152)

Even though we can find a few examples of the form *migalha* written separately from the emphatic marker *nem*, just as illustrated in (5)¹³, we cannot find cases of *migalha* alone occurring as a minimizer in our corpus¹⁴.

(5) Et mando que neuun destes moesteyro de suso ditos non
And order that none of.these monastery of above said NEG
tomen desto *nen migalla* que lles leixo.
take of.this not.even.crumb that 3PL.DAT leave.
'And I order that none of the above mentioned monasteries takes not even a thing of what I leave them.'
(Prosa notarial, TMLIG, 13th c.)

Reinforcing minimizers by means of the negative particle *nem* (in Italian *né*) was, according to Parry (2013), a frequent strategy in medieval Romance languages. Referring to Italian, the author suggests that the value of *mica* could be emphasized by means of a negative particle *né* in a similar process to what had previously happened with earlier formations like *niente* and *negota*. Parry (2013) gives examples of *né miga* as early as the 12th century for some Italian dialects. However, forms such as the Venetian *né miga* did not lexicalize with the meaning ‘nothing’. What Parry (2013) describes as being a “univerbation that did not ensue” in the Italian dialects was actually a case of grammaticalization in Old Portuguese, as we will see throughout the next section.

4.1. From minimizer to strong NPI

The results and assumptions presented henceforth are based on a sample of the previously mentioned corpus. We gathered 112 contexts of occurrence of the item *nemigalha* in texts from

¹² It seems that *mica* was already used as a minimizer in Latin and Portuguese *migalha* inherited that same value, which was then emphasized by the negative particle *nem*.

¹³ In the majority of the cases in which *nemigalha* is written separately, the emphatic marker assumes the form *ne* or *ni*, with vowel denasalization, as in (i):

(i) El fez tanto por ti e tu por el *ni migalha*.
He did so.much for you and you for him not.even crumb.
'He did so much for you, and you didn't do a thing for him.'

(DSG, cap. DLXIII, 13th c.)

¹⁴ We find, however, examples such as (ii), which refer to small quantities but are different from a minimizer reading:

(ii) [...] e sabe Deus se esta noite pude descansar alguma migalha de tempo.
And know God if this night could rest some crumb of time
'And God knows if I was able to rest a little bit this night.'

(Post Scriptum, PSCR0503; 18th c.)

the 13th to the 17th century, with the following distribution: 33 occurrences in the 13th century, 18 in the 14th century, 22 in the 15th century, 37 in the 16th century and 2 in the 17th century. The comparison with the negative indefinite *nada* is done based on 326 contexts of occurrence, from the 13th to the 15th century with the following distribution: 59 in the 13th century, 72 from the 14th century, 63 from the 15th century and 132 from the 16th century. This sample includes legal texts, religious and historical prose, epistolary texts, chivalric romance (the post-Vulgata cycle), medieval Galician-Portuguese songs and theatre plays from the 16th century.

According to Garzonio & Poletto (2008, 2009), common nouns can grammaticalize into minimizers, but the process may go further with minimizers acquiring a more functional status and becoming independent markers of negation. If an item reaches the last stage of the grammaticalization process, it might eventually compete with the regular negation marker and fully undergo the Jespersen Cycle (as the French *pas* mentioned earlier). However, according to Willis, Breitbarth & Lucas (2013), it is common for the process to stop at an earlier stage, “leaving the new item as a marker of emphatic negation but nothing more”.

In order to verify the level of grammaticalization of *nemigalha*, we will follow the proposal of Garzonio & Poletto (2008, 2009) for what they call standard minimizers¹⁵. The authors consider that the transition from common noun to standard minimizer and, sometimes, to negative marker corresponds to three different stages in which the following properties are verified: a) nominal head of a Determiner Phrase (DP); b) obligatory complement; c) modification; d) referential meaning; e) phi-features; f) semantic specialization of verbs; g) occurrence in positive contexts; h) sole negative item in preverbal position. In a first stage of the process, an item can be the head noun of a DP, has an obligatory prepositional complement and admits a modifier. It also maintains its referential meaning and phi-features, occurring only with certain verbs and being allowed in positive contexts. However, it is never the sole negation marker in pre-verbal position. As it evolves to the second stage, an item can no longer be a head noun of a DP, have a prepositional complement or admit a modifier. It also loses its referential meaning, its phi-features and its occurrence with verbs from a different semantic field is less strict. Although it rarely occurs in positive contexts, it is still ruled out from preverbal position as the sole negation marker in a sentence. Finally, when an item reaches the third stage, it means it is fully grammaticalized. It doesn't allow a prepositional complement anymore and it is completely ruled out from positive contexts. It can now appear as the only negative element in a sentence, in preverbal position.

The first step into grammaticalization is the loss of phi-features, as pointed out by Garzonio (2008). Only when an item no longer shows inflection marks, can it receive a negative feature. There are no records of *nemigalha* with inflection marks, which suggests that it had already lost inflection by the 13th century. As they reach the second stage, minimizers stop being the nominal head inside a DP. From all the occurrences of *nemigalha*, there are no examples of it being preceded by a determiner, which indicates that it was no longer the nominal head in a complex DP. Furthermore, *nemigalha* has lost its partitive complement. There are, however, a few examples in which it still allows a Prepositional Phrase (PP) complement, as in (6). In this particular case, *nom sabem nemigalha d'armas* means that the quantity of knowledge they have of *arms* (*d'armas*) is none. We can say that *nemigalha* has a quantificational function over the noun inside the PP¹⁶.

- (6) e eles som minguados e covardos, e nom sabem
 and they are diminished and cowards, and NEG know
 nemigalha d'armas
 not.even.crumb of.arms
 'And they are diminished and cowards and know nothing of arms'

(VFJC, 15th c.)

¹⁵ Garzonio & Poletto (2008) distinguish between standard minimizers and vulgar minimizers. The first group concerns items with scalar properties, while the second one includes what they call “tabooized nouns”.

¹⁶ An anonymous reviewer highlighted the fact that the expression *nemigalha d'armas* could also be interpreted as a PP complement of the verb *saber* ‘to know’. In this case, *nemigalha* would be interpreted as an intensifier.

Another important step towards grammaticalization is the loss of referential meaning. *Nemigalha* cannot be interpreted as a common noun meaning the smallest piece of bread one can get. This means it can occur with verbs of different semantic fields, without any relation to the primary lexical field of the noun *migalha*. The freer the verb choice, the more grammaticalized the item is. Example (7) shows that *nemigalha* could be used with verbs unrelated to its original meaning, such as weather verbs, which is the case of *chover* (to rain).

- (7) tam grande foy a chea, pero que nō chovera
 so big was the flood but that NEG had.rained
nemigalha.
 not.even.crumb
 'The flood was so big, but it didn't rain a drop'

(CGE, 2, cap. CCXXX, 14th c.)

As expected, *nemigalha* does not occur in positive or non-negative modal contexts.

The last parameter suggested by Garzonio & Poletto (2008, 2009) concerns the possibility of a minimizer being the only negation marker in a sentence, in preverbal position¹⁷. This is considered the final step of the grammaticalization process. Although we can find a couple of examples prior to the 15th century, it is from this date on that *nemigalha* starts occurring more frequently as the only negative item in the sentence.

- (8) de quanto me contaram *ne migalha* lhes ouvy.
 of how.much 1SG told not.even.crumb 3PL.DAT heard.
 'I didn't hear a thing of what they told me.'

(CGGR, 155, Tomo I, 16th c.)

The example (8) above shows us that *nemigalha* could occur alone in preverbal position without the presence of the preverbal standard negation marker (or any other negative particle). This means *nemigalha* no longer behaved as a minimizer, but had become a strong negative polarity item like other negative indefinites, especially *nada*, as we will show in the next section.

4.2. *Nemigalha* and the negative indefinite *nada*:

In the previous section we concluded that, by the time it disappeared from the language, *nemigalha* was a strong NPI (like *nada*, *ninguém* or *nenhum*) instead of a simple minimizer (like *gota* or *palha*). It was the only partitive/evaluative minimizer to acquire a specified negative feature [+], but, for some reason, it became obsolete.

The similarities between *nemigalha* and the negative indefinite *nada* suggest they could have been competing items. Despite originating from different morphological classes (*nemigalha* comes from a noun, while *nada* has its origin in the participle form *nata* in the expression *res nata*), as negative polarity items they displayed [- human, - animacy] features. Both items started as weak NPIs and became strong NPIs, therefore being able to occur alone in preverbal position as the only negative element¹⁸. However, they seem to occur in other negative structures as well,

¹⁷ The authors consider that, when occurring as the unique negative element, only standard minimizers can occupy a preverbal position. Vulgar minimizers are said to remain in postverbal position.

¹⁸ Cases of *nemigalha* and *nada* in postverbal position can also be found in the corpus, although they are quite scarce. (i) and (ii) illustrate both items as the sole negation elements in a sentence:

- (i) Briatriz: Eu lavar e esfergar/ varrer e esfolinhar/ e por dai-me cá
 Biatriz: I wash and scrub/ sweep and clean/ and for give-1SG.DAT here
 aquela palha.
 that straw.
 'Biatriz: I wash and scrub/ sweep and clean/ and for no reason.'

exhibiting a similar behaviour. Throughout this section we will see that both items could function as free standing n-words in the same contexts, they filled argument positions with quantificational reading/import in standard negative sentences, but they also participated in emphatic negation structures, as emphatic negation markers. Finally, we will observe examples in which both items seem to convey a type of negation different from regular negation.

Apart from the preverbal position, these two items also appear alone, without any preverbal negation marker, as free standing n-words in similar contexts as the ones identified by Fitzgibbons (2010) for Russian n-words¹⁹. Examples from (9) to (12) show that both items could appear as free standing n-words with predicative verbs ((9) and (10)) and as complements of a PP ((11) and (12)).

- (9) O bem nunca se consome,/ pecados são *nemigalha*,/
 The good never REFL consume,/ sins are not.even.crumb/
 quem com vícios presume/ faz alicerces de palha.
 who with vicious presumes/ makes foundations of straw.
 'Good is never consumed/sins are nothing/ who judges with vicious/builds
 weak foundations.'

(CGGR, 98, Tomo I, 16th c.)

- (10) Eu disse que as riquezas eram *nada* en conparaçõ da
 I said that the riches were nothing in comparison of.the
 sabedoria.
 wisdom.
 'I said richness was nothing compared to wisdom.'

(OE, 3, cap. 8, 24v, 15th c.)

- (11) Ai Deos, como oje é abaixada e tornada a
 Oh God, how today is low and turned into
nemigalha a cavallaria!
 not.even. crumb the cavalry!
 'Oh God, how the cavalry is now reduced and turned into nothing.'

(DSG, cap. CCXXX, 13th c.)

- (12) tu as mandas desfazer e tornar em *nada*!
 you 3PL order destroy and turn into nothing!
 'You order to destroy them and turn them into nothing!'

(CGE,1, cap. CLXXXVI, 14th c.)

The fact that both items can appear as free standing n-words is an argument in favour of their strong NPI status, since they can convey negative meaning on their own. As argued by Tovena (2012), "the free-standing meaning can be viewed as the core meaning of an item".

Velha:	E tu fazes	<i>nemigalha</i> /	senão	comer	e folgar/	e	palrares como
Old woman:	And you do	not.even.crumb/	but	eat	and rest/	and	chatter like
gralha.							
rook.							
	'Old woman: And you do nothing/ but eat and rest /and chatter like a rook.'						

(TQ, *Auto das Regateiras*, 16th c.)

- (ii) Por que saiba o mundo, amiga,/ que contra ti pode *nada*.
 For that know the world, friend,/ that against you can nothing.
 'So that the world knows, friend,/ that it can do nothing against you.'

(TQ, *Auto da Ressurreição*, 16th c.)

¹⁹ Fitzgibbons (2010) claims that Russian n-words can appear as the single negative element in two contexts: small clauses and complements of a PP. She proposes that both small clauses and PP's may display their own Polarity Phrase and that free standing n-words are licensed by a \emptyset NEG head which c-commands them.

Nemigalha and *nada* appear as arguments of a transitive verb in negative sentences with a preverbal standard negation marker. They have a quantifier-like reading and they contribute to reinforce negation due to their intrinsic scalar value²⁰ (they always refer to zero quantity). That is the case of (13) and (14) where they are direct objects of the transitive verbs *fazer* (*to do*) and *dizer* (*to say*), accordingly.

- (13) E ella nō quis fazer por elle *nemigalha*
 And she NEG wanted do for 3SG not.even.crumb
 'And she didn't want to do a thing for him.'

(CGE, 1, cap. CCXXX, 14th c.)

- (14) e disserom que rei Hion nom dissera *nada* e
 and said that king Hion NEG had.said nothing and
 que o dizia com covardice.
 that it said with cowardice.
 'And they said king Hion didn't say a thing and that he said it cowardly.'

(DSG, cap. DCLV, 13th c.)

In both sentences, the items are arguments of the verb, with a quantificational reading, belonging to the Verb Phrase (VP) field. However, in other cases, both *nemigalha* and *nada* occur with optionally transitive verbs, as in (15) and (16).

- (15) E esta dona Marinha nom falava *nemigalha*.
 And this madam Marinha NEG talked not.crumb.
 a) 'And this madam Marinha didn't talk at all!'
 b) 'And this madam Marinha didn't say a thing.'

(NLL, 14th c.)

- (16) E elle nom respondeo *nada*.
 And he NEG answered nothing.
 a) 'And he didn't answer at all!'
 b) 'And he didn't answer a thing.'

(DSG, cap. LXIV, 13th c.)

Some authors (Willis 2010, 2012; Parry 2013) consider this type of contexts as the trigger for reanalysing NPIs (strong or weak) as more functional items (negation reinforcers or independent negation markers). The occurrence with optionally transitive verbs allowed for a certain ambiguity between, on the one hand, a reading in which the NPI is interpreted as a direct object and, on the other hand, a reading equivalent to reinforced negation of the event. This is shown by the possibility of having two different translations for the same utterance (*a* and *b*). Willis (2010, 2012) supports the idea that this type of contexts allowed for the reanalysis of the Welsh *dim* as a functional item.

4.3. Presupposition and negation

As we have seen in the previous section, ambiguous contexts between an argument and an emphatic reading are said to be the basis of the reanalysis of minimizers into independent negation markers. The existence of cases in which the argument reading is not available brings further support to Willis' (2010) proposal. Although infrequent as far as *nemigalha* is concerned, we found in our corpus examples such as (17):

²⁰ Some authors, such as Israel (2011), consider that, even when minimizers (or similar items) are not associated with scales of size, and even when that is not obvious, there is always a scalar semantics associated to them.

- (17) Ca non á verdade *nemigalha/* em sonho,
 Because NEG there.is truth not.even.crumb/ in dream,
 nen sol non é bem nen mal;
 not.even only NEG be good nor evil
 a) 'Because there isn't truth at all in dream, not even good or evil.'
 b) '*Because there isn't truth a thing in dream not even good or evil.'

(Lírica profana, TMLG, 13th c.)

In (17), the direct object position is filled by the DP *verdade* (*truth*), which means that *nemigalha* cannot occupy an argument position here. In fact, considering that *nemigalha* is an optional item in the sentence, an utterance such as '*Ca non á verdade*' would still be grammatical and display the same truth value. The presence of *nemigalha* reinforces the negation, acting as an emphatic marker that could be paraphrased by the expression *de todo* (*at all*). The ungrammaticality of the translation in b) shows that, in both these cases, only the *at all* interpretation is available.

This type of construction, with an emphatic value, has also been described for other Old Romance languages. For instance, in Old Lombard (and also in other Italian dialects), we can find sentences such as (18), taken from Parry (2013: 81), where a counterpart of *nemigalha* (*miga*) doesn't occupy an object position, but acts as an emphatic negation marker.

- (18) Cotal menestra'l patre no aspegiava miga
 such soup. do the father NEG expected mica'
 His father did not expect such a dish at all! (quite the contrary)'

(Bonvesin, *Vulgare de elymosinis*, p. 269, l. 868, 13th c.)

According to Hansen (2013), among others, bipartite structures of the type *non...mica* are subject to discourse-functional constraints and connected to presupposed information. This means they are used with discourse-old information and cannot be used out of the blue. The same is described by Zanuttini (1997) for the Italian *mica*, which is said to only be able to occur in contexts such as (20), where the relevant information has been previously activated, but is ruled out in (19).

- (19) A. Chi viene a prenderti?
 B. Non so. Ma Gianni non a (*mica) la macchina.

- (20) A. Chi viene a prenderti – Gianni?
 B. Non so. Ma Gianni non a mica la macchina.

Zanuttini (1997: 61)

Interestingly, if we expand the context of the example given in (17) for the bipartite structure *non...nemigalha* we realize that the relevant proposition had already been presented earlier in the poem as we partially illustrate in (21) (the relevant information is in *italic*):

- (21) Ora vej'eu que *non ha verdade/* em sonho, amiga,
 Now see.I that NEG there.is truth/ in dream, friend,
 se Deus me perdón;
 is God 1SG forgive
 'Now I see there is not truth / in dreams, friend, if God forgives me.'
 (...)
 Ca non á verdade *nemigalha /* em sonho,
 Because NEG there.is truth not.even.crumb/ in dream,
 nen sol non é ben nen mal;
 not.even only NEG be good nor evil
 a) 'Because there isn't truth at all in dream, not even good or evil.'

The idea that there is a strong relation between new markers of negation and presuppositional contexts²¹ has gained supporters in the last decade (cf. Larrivée 2010 and Hansen 2013) but is not new at all. Authors such as Schwegler (1988) had already noticed that the French negative marker *pas* was first restricted to presupposed information, before becoming the standard negation marker, in replacement of preverbal *ne*.

A few examples from the 16th century, extracted from theatre plays, suggest that *nemigalha* might have participated in another type of negative structures, before it disappeared from the language. By observing the example (22) we understand that *nemigalha* is the only negative item in the sentence but it doesn't fill an argument position nor does it function as negative reinforcement in a bipartite structure, since the preverbal negation marker is absent.

- (22) Nam vem a Meijengra a conto/ que é descuidada
 NEG come the Meijengra to tale/ because is sloppy
 perdida/ traz a saia descosida e nam lhe dará
 lost bring the skirt disjointed and NEG 3SG.DAT will.give
 um ponto./ Oh quantas lendens vi nela/ e pentear
 one stitch Oh how.many nits saw in.her/ and comb
nemigalha e por dá-me aquela palha/ é maior
 not.even.crumb and for give-1SG.DAT that straw/ is bigger
 o riso qu' ela
 the laughter than her
 'Let's not talk about Meijengra/ who is a lost sloppy/ She brings her skirt disjointed
 and doesn't even stitch it/ Oh, how many nits have I seen in her and nothing of
 combing / and for the smallest thing/ she laughs unmeasuredly.'

(TQ, *Tragicomédia da Serra da Estrela*, 16th c.)

At first sight, the example in (22) seems to illustrate a case in which *nemigalha* is an independent negation marker, fully replacing the standard preverbal negation marker *não/nom*²² (NEG). However, an utterance as *pentear nemigalha* is not equivalent to an utterance with the regular negation marker (NEG) (*não pentear*) and it is also different from an utterance with both elements (*não pentear nemigalha*). This means that *nemigalha* is not replacing the preverbal negation marker (NEG) as it is claimed to happen with the French *pas* in sentences such as '*je mange pas*', where the preverbal negation marker *ne* is no longer needed ('*je mange pas*' and '*je ne mange pas*' are interpreted the same way).

In (22), *nemigalha* seems to be used to express the speaker's disapproval towards someone's attitude (in this case, the fact that Meijengra didn't comb her hair, although she should, because she is full of nits). In a very simplified way, we can say that the verb *pentear* is functioning as a topic and *nemigalha* is the comment to that topic, which conveys disapproval (the speaker's attitude) of presupposed information, belonging to a discursive common ground (it is presupposed that people who have nits should comb their hair). *Nemigalha* acts here as a negative marker but of a particular type of negation, which is different from standard negation conveyed by the preverbal negation marker *não/nom* (NEG).

These non-standard contexts can also be found with *nada* in theatre plays. In the case of (23), we find *nada* as the only negative item in a context that seems to express objection towards a previous utterance. In this case, the information is not presupposed but previously stated. Even so, there seems to be a strong relation between the use of the item *nada* and the speaker's disagreement²³.

²¹ We use the term *presupposition* in the sense of 'given or known information'.

²² The preverbal negation marker *não* can appear with different spelling in Old Portuguese texts. In this particular example it is spelled as *nam*.

²³ Similar contexts involving *nada* are found in Contemporary Portuguese (cf. Pinto 2010).

(23) Mendo: Pois que vai?
 Mendo: So what goes?

Mestre: Que vai nada/ enfadou-se d'esperar/ deixou-me,
 Master: What goes nothing/ indispose-REFL of wait/ left:1sg,
 foi-se deitar.
 went-REFL lay.down
 'Mendo: How is it going? / Master: How is it going, my butt / got tired of waiting/ left
 me and went to bed.'

(TQ, *Auto de Rodrigo e Mendo*, 16th c.)

The examples (22) and (23) suggest that both *nemigalha* and *nada* could convey a particular type of negation. These examples share a common property with the examples presented to illustrate emphatic negation: both seem to have some sort of relation with presuppositional contexts, being unlikely to occur out of the blue. However, they differ regarding the presence of the standard negation marker, which only appears in emphatic negation. On the other hand, these examples are not instances of standard negation in which *nemigalha* would replace the standard negation marker *não/nom* since they translate the speakers disagreeing attitude towards presupposed or stated information.

5. CONCLUSION

Although only the negative indefinites *nada*, *nenhum* and *ninguém* are still productive in Contemporary Portuguese, Old Portuguese displayed other similar items, which underwent a change from weak to strong negative polarity items, as argued by Martins (1997, 2000). In this paper we showed that one of those items was *nemigalha*. It originated from a partitive minimizer and became a strong NPI before disappearing from the language by the end of the 16th century. Throughout its evolution, *nemigalha* exhibits a very similar behaviour to the negative indefinite *nada*. In their evolution pathway from weak to strong NPI's, both items could occur as the only negative items in preverbal position and as free standing n-words. They also appeared with regular negation, in postverbal position, as arguments of a transitive verb and, sometimes, as objects of optionally transitive verbs. This last context allowed an ambiguous interpretation that is considered responsible for interpreting these items as emphatic negation markers.

The data presented here seem to confirm assumptions made for other languages that bipartite structures conveying emphatic negation could be discourse-functional and restricted to previously known/presupposed information. This is, however, a discussion that needs further data and research.

Finally, some contexts extracted from theatre plays suggest the participation of *nemigalha* and *nada* in non-standard negation contexts, involving known/presupposed information and expressing disapproval towards it. *Nemigalha* might have been used to reject known or presupposed information, but, unlike *nada*, it disappeared from the language before going any further. This particular issue still lacks a more detailed analysis and, in the future, it would be interesting to compare Portuguese data with data from other Romance languages.

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