

## **A study on data compilation methods in Catalan syntax variation**

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As all living languages, Catalan shows dialectal variation. Nevertheless, unlike lexical, morphological and phonological variation, Catalan syntactic variation has not been much studied in the bibliography. Conceptual and methodological difficulties in identifying syntactic variables and in building corpus of syntactic data have always been the major obstacle. The aim of this paper is to present data compilation methods for a corpus aiming at the analysis of a syntactic Catalan construction: the expression of emphatic negation.

My work will focus on:

a) Considering linguistic and social conditions that have to be taken into account for this kind of data collection:

a. We are dealing with a variable that has traditionally been considered not syntactic but lexical.

b. Syntactic features do not generally appear abundantly in free speech. Nonetheless, emphatic negation might be recurrent in expressive contexts.

c. Emphatic negation has a standard version in Catalan. Consequently, in some dialects the construction may have undertaken a dedialectalization process or may be interfered by standard use.

b) Describing and analyzing approaches used for data compilation:

a. Exhaustive revision of Catalan dialect monographs, books, articles, etc.

b. Scan reading of literature written by "dialect aware" authors (cf. Long & Preston, 1999).

c. Recorded speech conversation.

d. Nonparticipant observation in speakers' daily routine.

e. Questionnaires.

f. Grammatical judgments.

c) Presenting preliminary results obtained for Pyrenean Catalan after using the methodology designed and proposing further approaches and inquiry tools to be applied in a future research on ways of expressing affirmative and negative polarity in Catalan dialects.

In sum, the aim of this paper is to underline the importance of planning and designing data collection strategies: by means of gathering all real samples of variation it become possible to apprehend firmly and objectively the whole picture of a certain phenomenon to be studied.