

NOMINAL NEGATIVE INVERSION IN ROMANCE

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This talk explores the correlation between word order and polar interpretation displayed by DPs with *algum/alguno* ('some') in European Portuguese and Spanish. The PPI *algum/alguno* ('some') appears to turn into a NPI when it surfaces in post-nominal position. European Portuguese offers strong empirical evidence to support the analysis of the string [N+*algum*] as a NPI unit composed in the syntax (while *algum* by itself is but a PPI). The string [N+*algum*] behaves as a word-like unit in the context of answers to *wh*- and polar questions and may undergo degree modification by the superlative morpheme *-íssima* ('-est'). Diachronically, the emergence of nominal negative inversion with *algum/alguno* results from the reanalysis of a regular DP under the scope of sentential negation as a DP containing a Neg-head (where the noun and *algum/alguno* incorporate). The reanalysis was motivated by the loss of scrambling at the DP level, which would allow 'free inversion' between the noun and the polarity item. Contemporary European Portuguese displays a higher level of grammaticalization of the NPI unit [N+*algum*] than Spanish and extended the availability of nominal negative inversion to the negative indefinite *nenhum* 'none', originating the NPI unit [N+*nenhum*]. Under a broader comparative perspective, the research to be presented suggests that the diachronic development of PPIs into NPIs (e.g. French *aucun* and Italian *alcuno*) may proceed through a stage of NPI syntactic composition before a lexical-NPI stage is reached.