3. Negative Campaigning: Communicating Negative Meanings in French Presidential Debates Over Time

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1. Introduction

This chapter digs into new terrain in the well-studied field of French negation, exploring the discourse-pragmatic intersections of the loss and repurposing of *ne* (the original French negative 'not' out of Latin *ne* 'not') and its impact on *pas* (the now-basic French negative 'not,' originally and still, in other contexts, meaning 'step'. Here, we dig into the Roitman corpus of French presidential debates to uncover how negative meanings are conveyed in argumentative discourse, in particular in the televised French presidential debates from 1974, 2012, and 2017.

Given that *ne*-loss in real time is already convincingly documented in French in a variety of European and Canadian Frenches, by over a generation of Spoken French corpus linguists (Ashby 2001, Armstrong & Smith 2002, Hansen & Malderez 2004), presumably *pas* 'not' would carry more negative meaning than it would have half a century ago, now that it has become the basic negation of Spoken French.

Meanwhile though, *ne*—still alive and well in the scripted norm and therefore accessible to members of the speech community—seems to have been acquiring a new role in conversational discourse, reasserting its negative meaning to emphasise the speaker's negative view of the situation (Ashby 1976, Sankoff & Vincent 1980, Fonseca-Greber 2007, 2017, Poplack & St. Amand 2007, van Compernolle 2009, 2010, Donaldson 2017, French & Beaulieu 2020). Congenial conversation has been found to operate according to the social agreement principle (Yaeger-Dror 2002). So if the interlocutors share the same negative view of the matter, all is well, and social agreement is

maintained. Conversation and arguing though are two different matters. Arguing—for example over public policy stands, as is the nature of presidential debating—may operate according to what we could call a social disagreement principle instead. Hence, Roitman's corpus of televised French presidential debates (Roitman 2015, 2017b) now provides fruitful ground for exploring how *ne* is used to communicate negative meanings in candidate interaction in French presidential debates over the years, as well as how it intersects with *pas*.

In this study then, we have two hypotheses

Hypothesis 1—*ne*:

Candidates will produce some *ne* tokens in the debates to reinforce their refutation of their opponent's position.

Hypothesis 2—*pas* 'not':

In these same utterances, where forcefully asserting negative meaning is essential for the discourse-pragmatic impact of the candidate's position, the candidate will produce *pas* 'not' tokens that are prosodically more salient (i.e., focal stress and vowel lengthening).

In other words, united under a single umbrella hypothesis: Will we see a correlation between the co-occurrence of the two unmarked variants in the unmarked, neutral negative utterances (i.e., *c'est pas* 'it isn't') and the co-occurrence of the two marked variants in the marked, refutational negative utterances (i.e., *ce n'est PAS* 'it is not')?

Anticipating the findings presented in our results section, and against the well-known backdrop of and ongoing language change, we do see a correlation between the presence/absence of *ne* and the prosodic qualities of *pas* 'not' in the construction we have chosen to examine—*c'est pas* vs. *ce n'est pas*—given its pragmatic importance in political debate:

• *c'est pas* 'it isn't…'—without *ne* and without prosodic emphasis (tonic stress or lengthening) on *pas*—has become the unmarked form, where it is used in neutral negative utterances, including for face-work in conversation and political debates alike.

• In contrast, *ce n'est PAS* 'it is not…'—with *ne* and with focal stress and prosodic lengthening on *pas*—is emerging as the marked form, where it is used to forcefully refute presuppositions, one's own or other's, in conversation and political debates alike.

The rest of this chapter is organised as follows. In section 2, we review what is already known about French negation relative to our goals for the present study. In section 3, we present the corpus and method we apply

here. In section 4, we present our results. In section 5, we discuss our findings, advancing preliminary conclusions, situating them within the larger context of what is currently known about contemporary French language use, and avenues for future research. Finally, in section 6, we present a brief summary of our chapter.

2. Context and goals of the study

2.1. The pragmatics of negation: negation as an argumentative strategy

In the French enunciation and argumentation theories the negation has been explained as one type of polyphonic phenomena, i.e. an operator that enhances different "voices" in an apparent monological utterance (*énoncé*). These voices are footprints of the enunciation act (*énonciation*) defined as a unique process that produces an utterance, a historical event constituted by the appearance of a statement (Anscombre and Ducrot 1983; Ducrot 1984); this theory therefore rejects the idea of a unitary speaker of individual utterances. The French enunciation theories were inspired by speech act theories (Austin 1962 and Searle 1979) and philosophers of language within pragmatics (Grice 1975 and 1981) who explained meaning as the effective usage of language in different communicative situations. The originality in their approach is the disclosure of argumentation structure (traces of the enunciation act) within the denotative meaning of the linguistic units. Sentence negation – among other polyphonic markers – denotes thus a doubleness that can be exploited on a discursive level. Inspired by Ducrot (1984) and Nølke *et al.*'s (2004) and Nølke's (2017) adaptation and development of the polyphony theory model, the polyphonic structure of negation may be outlined as follows, applied on a translated example from our corpus:

> The working time reduction has not been successful in other countries (Sarkozy debate 02/05/2007)
>
> Point of view 1 'The working time reduction has been successful in other countries'
>
> Point of view 2 'The working time reduction has not been successful in other countries'

Sentence negation *ne…pas* stratifies the utterance in two hierarchically organised points of view, one subjacent and implicit (1) and one explicit (2). These two layers, the activation of two points of views, are instructions[1] in every negative sentence indicating that the default negation is a polemic negation. The descriptive negation is, on the other hand,

considered a derivation of the polemic negation, which means the point of view 1 of a descriptive negation is barely activated. The derivation means the semantic instructions of the negative utterance and of its context do not indicate any opposing items that would favour a polemic reading of it. The polyphony of negation is, however, considered a continuum where different contextual aspects, non-linguistic and linguistic, govern the activation of the subjacent point of view. To fully understand Sarkozy's utterance above in this particular context, the point of view 1 needs to be activated. The interpretation of the inherent polyphonic structure of negation through the activation of the underlying point of view connects to Givón's (1979) discussion of the pragmatic presupposition and also to what in general linguistics is referred to as "common ground" (Stalnaker 1974, 1999) although linguistic polyphony illustrates the making use of linguistic units in order to exploit and create fictive voices used for argumentation. In this specific example, Sarkozy makes this negative statement in order to refute the idea that the working time reduction has been successful elsewhere; the opposite candidate Ségolène Royal had actually just promoted this point of view.

The polemic negation and emphatic negation, or emphatic function, will here refer to the same concept: the reinforcing the negative content and the activation of a pragmatic presupposition. From a polyphony theory point of view, a negation is an instruction to search for a possible subjacent point of view, a "voice", a pragmatic presupposition. We will stick to the two terms (polemic and emphatic) since we work with two methodological and theoretical frameworks in our analyses regarding whether the polemic-emphatic negation correlates with the return of a new *ne* and with a stressed *pas*. That is to say we are interested in whether the polemic-emphatic negation (the *function* not the form) coincide with what must in contemporary spoken French be considered an emphatic marker *ne* (the form) from a Jespersen's cycle (1917) perspective. In other words:

- Does the pragmatic function of reinforcing negative content coincide with and maybe even enhance the return of the *ne* in context where only *pas* is expected?
- Is there any co-occurrence between the emphatic form *ne* and the stressed *pas*?

2.2. French negation over time

Thanks to the depth of the written (and now spoken) record from Latin through to current 21st century French, and to the interest of Jespersen

(1917) and his successors in historical linguistics and grammaticalisation studies in cyclical language change, French negation is one of most thoroughly studied negation systems of the world's languages. So, to briefly summarise this well-trod terrain, French negation has passed through a number of stages over the centuries. Emerging out of Latin, French negation was *ne(n)* 'not', placed before the verb. During the middle ages, a variety of emphatics were optional and placed after the verb to strengthen the pragmatic impact of the speaker's negative intent. Ultimately *pas* 'step' (e.g., I couldn't take a single step more) won out over other contenders (e.g., *mie* 'crumb' and *goutte* 'drop,' as in not being able to eat another crumb or drink another drop more), spreading from verbs of 'going' to all verbs. Not only did *pas* become the preferred post-verbal optional emphatic, but over time, it lost its emphatic quality and became an obligatory second half of French negation.[2] Over more time, *pas* began to become perceived as such an integral part of French negation that the original negator *ne* began falling into disuse. Over even more time, *pas* came to be understood as the real negator, 'not,' while *ne*, the original 'not,' continued to wither away in naturalistically acquired first language French. This brings us to the current state of affairs where fewer than 10% of negative utterances in French conversation today continue to contain *ne* relying instead solely on *pas* to communicate negative intent.

2.3. Emphatic negative evaluation and the reinforcing role of *ne*

But *ne* is not gone completely—not in writing, not in prescribed/presentational speech, not even in everyday conversation. So, since there always seems to be something new to discover about French negation, despite the already vast literature on the Jespersen Cycle and the ensuing pragmatics of negation in French and other langauges (Jespersen 1917, Horn 1989, Schwenter 2006, Larrivée 2010, 2020, Mosegaard Hansen 2011, Mosegaard Hansen & Visconti 2014, Breitbarth 2020), what is the function of *ne* today and how does that interact with the current Spoken French negator *pas*?

   A well-documented body of literature has appeared documenting the emergence of a new, related function of *ne* to convey emphatic negative evaluation (Ashby 1976, Sankoff & Vincent 1980, Fonseca-Greber 2007, 2017, Poplack & St. Amand 2007, van Compernolle 2009, 2010, Donaldson 2017) in a variety of Canadian and European Frenches, in a variety of synchronous contexts (face-to-face conversation, sociolinguistic interviews, and synchronous chat). This would suggest—despite the preponderance of *pas*-only negatives (and the likelihood that a

learner's utterance with *ne* but without *pas* would cause communicative confusion)—that not all negative meaning has been bleached from *ne*, and that it is taking on new life as *ne*. The goal of this chapter then is to explore how *ne* is used, not in everyday conversation but in a new interactional format: the interactive segments of televised French presidential debates—argumentative by nature, and where candidates attempt to refute the position of their opponent in order to win election—and how it intersects with *pas*.

2.4. The 'Norm,' register, genre, and their reciprocal influence on *ne* use

Some scholars argue that France is currently characterised by diglossia (Lodge, 1993, Jakubowicz and Rigaut 1997, Fonseca-Greber 2000, 2011, 2018, Fonseca-Greber and Waugh 2003a, 2003b, Zribi-Hertz, 2011, 2013, 2019; Massot & Rowlett 2013, Palasis 2013, Barra-Jover 2013), or a unified speech community where two languages (or radically different forms of the same language) co-exist, each used according to the functional division of communicative labor between the two within the speech community.[3] In France, this plays out as follows. The mythical French 'Norm' — or rules of 'good usage' for writing (or otherwise presenting[4]) the language — constitute Ferguson's so-called 'High' language, whereas the language acquired naturalistically at mother's knee—pro-drop, prefixally-inflected, Spoken French[5]—would be the so-called 'Low' language, unfortunate labels, but representative of the linguistic prejudices of the speech community, as Ferguson clarifies in adopting the High/Low terminology (Ferguson 1959).

In contrast with the Arabic-speaking world where diglossia is widely acknowledged, in France, where national identity and national unity have traditionally been closely tied to a unifying—and unified—French language (von Wartburg 1946, Walter 1988, Lodge 1993), diglossia is an uncomfortable topic, even among the country's leading linguists (Blanche-Benveniste 2010 and associates), and recognition of a certain diglossia—as predicted by Ferguson's model—has been slow in coming,[6] but see Zribi-Hertz (2019) for recent confirmation of French diglossia.

This is not to deny the role that register and genre play, but as Zribi-Hertz (2019) point out, this is a false debate—one, in fact, predicted by diglossia. In the face of the mounting evidence that we are dealing with two typologically distinct grammatical systems, used for two distinct communicative functions within the speech community (at least by those priviliged enough to have acquired access to both varieties), this is exactly what makes Roitman's corpus of French presidential debates

so intriguing and such a rich corpus of data to study to deepen our understanding of *ne* use in contemporary French. On the one hand, presidential debates are a prototypically 'High' language communicative event (e.g., largely prepared/pre-scripted, public address), in contrast with a prototypically 'Low' language communicative event (e.g., everyday conversational interaction among family and friends). On the other hand, over the years, the debates increasingly contain unscripted, interactional exchanges, similar to conversational give-and-take. Yet in contrast with conversational interaction, where the social agreement principle (Yaeger-Dror 2002) tends to prevail in this phatic function of language (Jakobson 1990), in the interactional segments of the presidential debates, rather than exchanging pleasantries, the candidates argue with each other—at times vehemently—whether defending themselves or their proposed policies or refuting the opposing candidate and his/her proposed policies, as if the candidates were adhering to a social *dis*agreement principle instead.

It is in these segments where, over time, we see a re-emergence of *ne*-use, as if speakers/language-users in a media-age may be being influenced by the *ne* they continue to see and hear in the 'H/presentational' language around them, and—it not being part of their 'L/interpersonal' language—seek to interpret/imbue it with new, contextually plausible meaning, *à la* Andersen's (1973) abductive (or 'just-off') model of language change. In this case, the 'just-off' interpretation that some younger speakers might reach of *ne* is that of an emphatic of negative evaluation. This enlarges the communicative palette of 21st century French speakers, affording them the latitude to distinguish between their 'new' neutral negatives (*pas*, and their newer negative of emphatic rebuttal. We will see how this plays out in the Roitman corpus, in the Results section below.

But first, an overview of the corpus and how it allows us to address our research questions.

3. Corpus and method

3.1. The Roitman Corpus of French presidential debates

The Roitman Corpus of French Presidential Debates is a diachronic corpus of televised French presidential debates presenting over 40 years of the language and culture of France. It contains 180 000 number of words and 17 hours of talk, and spans seven electoral cycles:

> 1974: **Valéry Giscard d'Estaing**[7]/François Mitterrand
> 1981: **François Mitterrand/**Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

1988: **François Mitterrand/**Jacques Chirac
1995: **Jacques Chirac/**Lionel Jospin
2007: **Nicolas Sarkozy/**Ségolène Royal
2012: **François Hollande/**Nicolas Sarkozy
2017: **Emmanuel Macron/**Marine Le Pen

As a collection of televised political debates, the corpus is primarily a speech sample of what the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) categorise as the *presentational* communicative mode (ACTFL 2012): the candidates present pre- or semi-*scripted* position statements *unidirectionally* to the voters viewing from home. Over the years, however, as societal norms evolve, the debates begin acquiring a more interactive quality, as candidates argue, refute, and otherwise *spontaneously negotiate meaning with each other*, in, by contrast, the *interpersonal* communicate mode (ACTFL 2012), embedded within the overarching *presentational* format of presenting one's positions and qualifications to a national (in the internet age, now international) audience of viewers. Other than Armstrong & Smith's (2002) diachronic study of radio French, this hybrid *presentational-cum-interpersonal* mode has been an understudied communicative event, relative to the amount of work previously done on the purely interpersonal mode in French, i.e., private, face-to-face conversation, where intended/unintended meanings and misunderstandings can be negotiated with one's interlocutor(s).

It is these more interactive segments of the presidential debates that are of most interest to us here, especially as the main construction we study, *ce n'est pas* 'it is not,' is also used in conversation, (1), to refute a previously held presupposition.

(1) Rebutting One's Own Presupposition (Fonseca-Greber 2007: 266)
    S13: ah! parce que c'était un coin de buissons…**ce n'est PAS** un coin d'herbe!

    'Oh! because it was meant to be [drought-resistant] bushes…it isn't meant to be lawn!'

    S1: ouais-ouais ouais-ouais…
    'Yeah-yeah. Yeah-yeah…'

In the conversational exchange in (1), the speaker realises his own mistaken presumption and corrects it forcefully, using *ce n'est pas* 'It is not…' whereas, as we will see in the debates, the candidates usually use *ce n'est pas* to refute their opponent or their opponent's policy or proposals.

Forcefully refuting one's interlocutors is not a winning communicative strategy, if one wants to maintain friendly conversational interaction, however, especially if one were the hostess, as in (2), and took to refuting one's guests. Instead, S5, the gracious hostess, gently corrects her guest's presupposition (valid in her home canton, but not that of her hostess) by using the unmarked negation *c'est pas* 'it isn't' and social agreement is maintained in (2).

> (2) Rebutting Another's Presupposition: Social Agreement Maintained in Conversation (Fonseca-Greber 1998)II-A :
>   S4: non, mais chez nous, chez nous à G., quand tu le font au vin cuit..
>   tu mets du vin dedans
>   'No, but for us, for us in G, when you make a cooked-wine pie, you
>   put wine in it'
>   S5: ah, c'est un gateau au vin, non, mais **c'est pas** même chose un
>   gateau au vin. Gateau au vin oui, mais le vin cuit c'est autre chose
>   'Oh, that's a wine pie, no, but it's not the same thing a wine pie.
>   Wine pie, yes, but the cooked wine one is something different.'

When rebutting one's political opponent in televised debate, however, candidates may not seek social agreement or be attentive to the needs of their debate partner's 'face' as they argue policy points. Conversely, if a candidate needs to back-peddle and self-correct (rebut) his/her own erroneous presupposition on (inter)nationally televised political debate, the candidate may not want to draw needless attention to the fact and opt for the attenuated, unmarked *c'est pas* 'it isn't' negation instead, to save face.

3.2. Method

Through transcription of the debates, the presence versus the absence of *ne* is notified and quantified in the three debates we have selected diachronically from the corpus (i.e., the oldest and the two most recent). Other characteristics are also noted, such as the place in the sequence of the negation, the nature of the negative adverb, the nature of the subject, of the negative clause and of the predicate, etc. From these tags we have been able to categorise and list what seems to enhance the *ne*-dropping versus *ne*-retention.

The prosodic and phonetic quality of *pas* has been analysed with the assistance of *Voice Analyst*, and the data has been quantified and categorised. We have analysed the pitch and length of *pas* in relation to each candidate's average pitch from the actual negative sequence. The volume and the frequency of speech differ from one person to another

and in particular between men and women and this has also been taken into account. Some few examples appear in interwoven speech and the prosody can therefore not be fully analysed.

We use the following abbreviations when presenting the examples:

Valérie Giscard d'Estaing = VGE (1974; M48)
Nicolas Sarkozy = NS (2007, 2012; M52,57)
François Hollande = FH (2012; M58)
Marine Le Pen = MLP (2017; F49)
Emmanuel Macron= EM (2017; M40)

Gender presents a methodological confound in the 2007 and the 2017 debates (with the women losing in both years) and therefore might better be explored elsewhere, to avoid skewing the 2007 and/or 2017 results.

Political party may present another methodological confound. Left-leaning, progressive politicians and their families may not automatically adopt the most innovative forms to avoid accusations of laxism and be perceived instead as 'upholding standards.' For example, see Ball (1997: 188–193) for a discussion of the 1989 French spelling reform and the opposition to it by Danielle Mitterrand, wife of Socialist then-president François Mitterrand. This could be a second methodological confound in the 2017 data. In contrast with these two language external method-ological confounds, the next two are language internal.

The third methodological confound in the 2017 data is the most inter-esting, however, from the perspective of language change and language use. Given that numerous variationist sociolinguistic studies have repeat-edly and convincingly shown that *ne*-loss is a case of real-time language change, with age being the decisive factor (younger speakers use it less) overriding gender and socio-educational standing (Ashby 2001), two overlapping changes—the tail-end of *ne*-loss and the leading edge of a pragmatically-conditioned emphatic negative verb, arising in phonetically favourable environment which had been on the leading edge of the first change, *ne*-loss with *c'est pas* 'it isn't' (see VGE 1974)—may account for the apparent up-tick in *ne* use in 2017. Methodologically, therefore, it is important to keep these two *ne* changes distinct from each other to avoid blurring the results by lumping *ne* use/deletion rates together, and prosod-ically neutral or prominent *pas* 'not' may be helpful in teasing this apart.

A fourth and final methodological confound in the 2017 data also relates to what constitutes a token (vs. a type) and how it is counted. Now, however, it is not old *ne* vs. emphatic *ne*, but rather the mor-phosyntactic difference between the free morpheme *ça* 'that' and its corresponding bound inflectional prefix *ce-/c-*. Given that types and

tokens often display different distributional behaviour and that it is therefore typically recommended in corpus linguistics to count tokens separately from types (McCarthy et. al 2010), we probably do not want to skew our results by conflating (3):

(3) Tout **ça n'est pas** (EM)
'All that is not'

with (4):

(4) **ce n'est pas**
'it is not'

especially because the speaker could have uttered (5) in place of (3):

(5) Tout **ça, ce n'est pas**
'All that is not'

Here, we will consider (3), produced under prescriptive pressure of the nationally televised presidential debate, to be an inflectionless variant of (5), and therefore a variant of *ce n'est pas*.

4. Results

4.1. Change 1—a new unmarked negation: loss of old ne '(old) not' + replacement by pas '(new) not'

Change 1—or the establishment of a new basic or neutral negation in French as a result of the ongoing loss of *ne* in real-time language change, documented repeatedly over the last 50 years in corpora of French conversation, sociolinguistic interviews, and broadcast radio-journalism—is also apparent in the Roitman corpus of televised French Presidential debates.

Table 3.1 presents the global diachronic decrease in *ne* use in the French presidential debates from the last quarter of the 20th century to the first quarter of the 21st century—specifically, from the first televised debate in 1974 (between Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing) to the decade of the 2010s (between Sarkozy and Hollande in 2012 and between Le Pen and Macron in 2017). While the uptick between 2012 and 2017 could be due to individual candidate differences and/or interactional differences between the debating pairs,[8] it could also be due to an emergent reanalysis of a new form-meaning pairing for emphatic or refutative negation: *ne*-full negation + prosodically salient *pas* (PAS) (Section 4.2). Table 3.2 situates the televised presidential debate data relative to their respective sources of comparable chronological data.

Table 3.1. Diachronic decrease in *ne* use in the French presidential debates.

Debate	Total number *ne...pas*	*ne*-retention *(ne...pas)*	*ne*-drop *(pas)*	*ne*-drop %	*ne*-use %
1974	238	233	5	1%	99%
2012	604	475	129	21%	79%
2017	546	504	42	11%	89%

Table 3.2. This table situates the televised presidential debate data relative to their respective sources of comparable chronological data.

Study	*ne* in Presentational: Broadcast Journalism		Years	*ne* in Interpersonal: Sociling Interviews & Conversation	
	Corpus	%		%	Corpus
Armstrong & Smith 2002: ↓ p. <0.001	Ågren-Radio Interviews	92.6%	1960–61		
Ashby 1976			1967–68	55.8%	Malécot SI: Paris
This study ↓	Roitman-Televised French Presidential Debates	99%	1974		
Hansen-Malderez 2004: ↓ p. <0.001			1972–74	Total: 15.8% Older: 33.8%	Péretz-Juillard SI: Paris
Ashby 1981			1976	Total: 37% Older: 52%	Ashby SI: Tours
Coveney 1996			Mid-1980s	18.8%	Coveney SI: Picardy
Hansen-Malderez 2004: ↓ p. <0.001			1989–1993	Total: 8.2% Older: 17.8%	Hansen-Malderez SI: Paris

(Continued)

Table 3.2. *(Continued).*

Study	*ne* in Presentational: Broadcast Journalism		Years	*ne* in Interpersonal: Socioling Interviews & Conversation	
	Corpus	%		%	Corpus
Ashby 2001			1995	Total: 18% Older: 25%	Ashby SI: Tours
Armstrong & Smith 2002: ↓ p. <0.001	Smith-Radio: *Le Téléphone sonne*	72.5%	1997		
Fonseca-Greber (2007, 2017)			1998	Total: 2.5%	Fonseca-G C: Suisse romande (French-speaking Switzerland)
Pooley (1996):			1983–95	Children and adolescents: 1.1%	Roubaix Rouge-Barre,
van Compernolle (2009)			2005–06	5.7% Y	SI: Tours
This Study ↓	Roitman-Televised French Presidential Debates	84% 79% 89%	2010s 2012 2017		

Many of the examples of change 1 may be described as "chunks" i.e. frequent collocations where there is an apparent tendency to drop the *ne* according to our general observations above: *je veux pas* 'I don't want'/*je parle pas* 'I don't speak'/*je sais pas* 'I don't know'/*il y a pas* 'there isn't't/there aren't':

> (6) FH: **Je veux pas** citer les noms, vous les connaissez, ce sont vos proches. Donc, il y a eu des chèques du Trésor public qui ont été adressés aux plus grandes fortunes de notre pays.
> 'I don't want to mention names, you know them, they're people you're close to. So, there were checks from the public treasury written to the richest people in our country.'

NS: Quels proches, monsieur Hollande ? (2012)
'Who do you have in mind, Mr. Hollande?'

(7) NS : **Je parle pas** des 75%, vous avez dit…
'I'm not talking about the 75%, you said…'

(8) MLP: **On ne sait pas** trop ce qu'il y a dedans. Je suppose qu'il y aura la disparition, **je sais pas**, du CDI.
'Not much is known about what's in it. I suppose things will be lost, I don't know, unlimited contracts'

Other factors that seem to correlate with the *ne* dropping in the debates – first person pronoun, negatives appearing early in the turn-taking, interactive conversational-like sequences – coincide with factors described in earlier studies although these, with their main focus on ne-dropping, present more precise data and a larger range of decisive factors.

Against the backdrop of on-going language change, *ne* loss in this corpus follows the collection of constraints well-documented in other corpora of journalistic and conversational language use. It still shows drop in Roitman corpora but not as strikingly and blurs Macron as an outlier and therefore change 2 is a more interesting explanation.

4.2. Change 2—a new marked negation: emergence of new emphatic *ne* + prosodically salient *pas* (PAS)

Change 2—or the emergence of a new marked or emphatic negation in French as a result of the ongoing loss and repurposing of old *ne* into new, emphatic *ne*, through abduction via its ongoing presence in the 'High' ('presentational') language—is also apparent in the Roitman corpus of televised French Presidential debates, where it is used to refute the presuppositions of one's opponent in highly charged political debate.

Table 3.3 presents how there is a correlation and maybe even a cause – effect relation between the *ne*-retention and the presumably new emphatic *ne* used to refute the pragmatic presupposition of the opponent. The polemic function of negation in these debates has been analysed in Roitman (2015, 2017b) but is here related to the presence versus non-presence of new, emphatic *ne*. Whether the *ne*-retention is really evidence or not for the new *ne* remains although at this stage of the study a hypothesis. Since the *ne*-dropping is very low in general in the corpus as a whole and since there are many factors, which seemingly influence the retention and the dropping of *ne* (genre, style, lexicon. etc.) here and in earlier studies (see above), studying the negatives in

this corpus as a whole is not sufficient to confirm this relation. Looking at table 3.2 it is easy to draw the conclusion that genre and style are the paramount decisive factors even though table 3.3 tempts us to interpret the *ne*-retention in favour of our hypothesis. This is also how we – with reserve – interpret our findings in this section of the study, before taking on the second step of the analyses. Still at this stage we need to accept that the various layers do not permit us to affirm anything.

Table 3.3. The *ne*-dropping and *ne*-retention in relation to non-emphatic versus emphatic function.

Debate	Total number negatives (sentence negation)	*ne*-retention negatives (ne…pas) –*Emphatic (polemic)* –*Non-emphatic (descriptive)*	*ne*-drop negatives (*pas*) –*Emphatic (polemic)* –*No-emphatic (descriptive)*	*ne*-drop %
1974	238	233 (202–31)	5 (2–3)	1%
2012	604	475 (438–37)	129 (51–78)	21%
2017	546	504 (423–81)	42 (22–20)	11%

Table 3.4 below presents that there is also a correlation between the old *ne* becoming the new emphatic *ne* combined with the stressed high pitch *pas* in negatives used refute the pragmatic presupposition of the opponent. The high-pitch and elongated *pas* appears in the majority of the negatives in the debates that emphasise the negative content and might thus in general count as criteria for this kind function. The stressed *pas* is, *per se*, an emphatic element and therefore somewhat reinforces our hypothesis of the new emphatic *ne* and the emphatic function of negation. However, as has already been mentioned, this *ne*-retention may also be due to other factors such as style, presentative mode, etc. These factors make it difficult to draw any strong conclusion whether this is a "return" of the *ne* in order to reinforce the negative meaning. First, the two processes of *ne*-dropping and *ne*-retention are interwoven and second, what motivates the use of *ne* in the case where the negative sentence present a high pitch *pas* is uncertain although we might assume the correlation reveal a cause-effect relation.

Table 3.4. High and low pitch *pas* in *ne*-retention and *ne*-dropping negatives.

Debate	Total number of negatives (sentence negation)	ne...pas (ne-retention) with elongated, high-pitch PAS	ne...pas (ne-retention) with neutral pas	...pas (ne-drop) with elongated, high-pitch PAS	...pas (ne-drop) with neutral pas	un-analysed examples
1974	238	180/233 77.25%	48/233 20.60%	0/0 0.0%	5/5 100%	5
2012	604	405/475 85.26%	60/475 12.63%	12/129 9.30%	117/129 90.70%	10
2017	546	417/504 82.74%	72/504 14.29%	5/42 11.90%	37/42 88.10%	15

These tables thus show on the one hand the distribution of emphatic *ne* (polemic) vs. non- emphatic negation and its correlation with the *ne*-dropping and the *ne*-retention (table 3.3), and on the other the matching between the *ne*-retention and the high pitch *pas* (*PAS*).

The correlation between emphatic negations and the *ne*-retention in the debates is clear, although quite a few of the *ne*-dropping negatives are also emphatic-polemic (39% of the *ne*-dropping in 2012 are emphatic). What we cannot be sure of at this stage is the cause of the *ne*-retention. In other words, are these *ne* in emphatic-polemic negative sentences the new emphatic *ne*?

Since the starting point for our calculations is the concrete *ne*-dropping and *ne*-retention, the matching between the *ne*-retention, the emphatic-polemic negation and high pitch *pas* has been calculated by an equation resulting in a 70% matching between these categories. Does this mean the new *ne* negatives and the high pitch *pas* are predominant in the pragmatic reinforcement of negative meaning in these around 400 examples? At least we can see that the *ne*-dropping negatives correlate to a certain degree to the low-pitch *pas* and that these negatives are interpreted as non-emphatic (descriptive). Although these examples are quite few. Due to the many factors that might be involved in *ne*-retention mentioned above: style (presentative mode), degre of interactivity, type of pronoun, text type etc. we are unable to draw any sharp and general conclusions about the *ne*-retention in the debates. There are however tendencies that reinforce our hypothesis and that will be illustrated below.

4.2.1. Examples of change 2: new ne (ne *retention with emphasis*) + *stressed* pas (PAS)

The following examples performed by NS, EM and FH expose what is presumably a new emphatic *ne* appearing with a high pitch *pas*. The pragmatic presupposition – the underlying point of view – is refuted, these sentences (9–11) are clear examples of emphatic-polemic negations. What makes us draw the conclusion that the *ne*-retention here is an example of new-*ne* is the nature of the negatives sentences where various factors normally, from what was mentioned earlier, enhance *ne*-dropping: first person pronoun, highly interactive dialogic sequences and common verbs that appear in chunks, lexicalised sentences, such as: *je parle pas* "I don't speak".

(9)   NS: Juste un mot sur le rassemblement. Le rassemblement, c'est un très beau mot, une très belle idée, mais il faut y mettre des faits. Le rassemblement c'est quand on parle au peuple de France, à tous les Français.

Je ne suis pas l'homme d'un parti, **je ne parle pas** à la gauche. Hier, je me suis adressé à tous les Français. (2012)
'Just a note about the assembly. Assembly—it's a lovely word, a lovely idea, but we need to add a few facts. It's when we talk to the French people, about bringing all French men and women together. **I'm not** a party man. **I'm not speaking** to the Left. Yesterday, I spoke to *all* French.'

(10) EM : Non, moi j'ai pas envie d'essayer du tout. Et je crois que les Français non plus. Pas du tout envie d'essayer avec vous.
'No, I'm not interested in trying at all. And I think the French aren't either. Not at all interested in trying with you.'
MLP : Pour faire en sorte que les Français... ne parlez pas à leur place.
'So that the French...don't go speaking for them.'
EM : Non, **je ne parle pas** à leur place, mais **ils n'ont pas** envie. (2017)
'No, **I'm not speaking** for them, but **they don't want** to.'

(11) EM: Non, Madame Le Pen, **je ne vous laisserai pas** dire ça. Je les ai vus, les uns et les autres et qui ont fait cette guerre d'Algérie et qui aujourd'hui divisent notre pays. Moi, je veux passer à une autre étape justement. **Je ne veux pas** rester dans cette guerre des mémoires [...]
'No, Madame Le Pen, **I won't let you** say that. I've seen them. One and another, the ones who fought in the Algerian war and who are now dividing our country. I want to move beyond that. **I don't want** to remain stuck in that war of memories...'

Negatives (9)–(11) may be contrasted with examples of non-emphatic-descriptive negation where – in a majority of the cases – the old *ne* (*ne*-dropping) appears with un-stressed *pas*. (There are however also non-emphatic-descriptive negations where the *ne* is retained.) In the following examples there are no indications of an underlying opposing point of view and the *ne*-dropping may probably be enhanced by the above-mentioned factor (lexicalised negatives, first person pronoun, interactive sequences).

(12) FH: **Je veux pas** citer les noms, vous les connaissez, ce sont vos proches. Donc, il y a eu des chèques du Trésor public qui ont été adressés aux plus grandes fortunes de notre pays.
'**I don't want** to mention names, you know them, they're people you're close to. So, there were checks from the public treasury written to the richest people in our country.'

(13) NS: Quels proches, monsieur Hollande ? (2012)
'Who do you have in mind, Mr. Hollande?'

NS : **Je parle pas** des 75%, vous avez dit..
'I'm not talking about the 75%, you said...'
MLP: **On ne sait pas** trop ce qu'il y a dedans. Je suppose qu'il y aura la disparition, **je sais pas**, du CDI.
'**Not much is known** about what's in it. I suppose things will be lost, **I don't know**, unlimited contracts'

4.3. A case study in refutation and presuppositions: c'est pas '(it) isn't' / ce n'est pas '(it) is not': preliminary comments

Before systematically looking at the results for the *ce + être + negation* examples we will problematise some examples illustrating the complexity of interpreting the *ne*-retention and the *ne*-dropping. In the following three examples (14–16) there are two consecutive negations, an obvious repetition on the same content and of which the first negation comes without *ne* and the second comes with *ne*. The *ne*-dropping of the first negation may be explained by one or several of the criteria described earlier: this negation may have a corrective function as it appears early in the phrase; the "*c'est pas*" has furthermore become a formulaic nearly lexicalised expression, etc. which may be what primarily induces the ne-dropping. The *ne*-retention in the second clause may either be analysed as a mere grammatical correction of the non-normative construction "*c'est pas*" that was just performed, or otherwise as a reinforced negation, where the negative content is emphasised through repetition in order to counter argue the underlying statement. Since we don't see "grammatical corrections" elsewhere in the corpus, besides these *ne*-dropping cases, we are inclined to believe this is a reinforced negation. According to our pitch-analysis, we notice that the first *pas* is unstressed while the second comes with high pitch and is elongated in all three cases (*PAS*), which also backup our interpretation of the *ne*–retention as being a new, emphatic, *ne*:

(14) FH: **C'est pas** vrai ! **Ce n'est pas** vrai.
'That isn't true ! That is not true.'

(15) EM: Mais Madame Le Pen, Madame Le Pen, Madame Le Pen, la Grande Bretagne, elle n'a jamais été dans l'Euro, Madame Le Pen.
'But Madame Le Pen, Madame Le Pen, Madame Le Pen, Great Britain was never in the Euro, Madame Le Pen'
MLP: **C'est pas** le sujet, **ça n'est pas** le sujet.[9] Le sujet est toujours le même.
'**That's not** the topic. **That is not** the topic. The topic is still the same.'

(16) MLP: c'est la raison pour laquelle d'ailleurs vous voulez supprimer en réalité limiter l'indemnisation du chômage en expliquant que eh bien on leur fera deux offres. **On sait pas** où. **On ne sait pas** de quoi. Si ça se trouve à 200 kilomètres ou à 300 kilomètres...

'That's the reason why you want to eliminate, well, limit, unemployment insurance besides, explaining all's well, they'll make'm two job offers. Who knows where. Who knows what. And if it's 200 or 300 kilometers away...'

4.3.1. Old ne versus new ne

Choosing to closer study the *ce + être + negation* is due to the relative high frequency of this sequence in the debates and to its high rate of *ne*-dropping compared to other structures. It pairs with other formulaic sequences in the debates and as such it is susceptible for *ne*-drop. These conditions make the *ce + être + negation* cases more solid to study when it comes to *ne*-retention. The questions we asked are in a more elaborate version the following:

1. May the non-salience of the negative content be observed in the *ne*-dropping *c'est pas* phrases, besides a prosodic unmarked *pas*? In other words, is there a correlation between the non-emphatic, descriptive negation (non-salience of the negative content), i.e., *ne*-deletion and the prosodic unmarked *pas*?

2. May the salience of the negative content be observed in the *ne*-retention *ce n'est pas* phrases, besides a prosodic marked *pas*? In other words, is there a correlation between the emphatic, polemic negation (salience of the negative content), i.e., *ne*-retention and the prosodic marked *pas* (PAS)?

The results show differences between *c'est pas* and *ce n'est pas* that confirm to a great extent our hypothesis, although it will be important to develop the qualitative analyses.

The *ne*-dropping cases *c'est pas* are generally used in the contexts that do not emphasise the negative content, i.e. where nothing indicates a pragmatic presupposition of the contrary. This was first observed when we looked at all *ne*-dropping in general in the debates (see above). Using the Ducrot dichotomy descriptive versus polemic negation, we tend to qualify them as descriptive negations in many senses. There are of course many elements involved in the interpretation but the level of argumentative reinforcement is definitely low for the *ne*-dropping in the *ce + être + negation* cases.

Table 3.5. All *ce +être* + negation sentences.

Debate	Total number *ce + être + negation*	*ne*-retention *ce n'est pas* *–Emphatic (polemic)* *–Non-emphatic (descriptive)*	*ne*-drop *c'est pas* *–Emphatic (polemic)* *–Non-emphatic (descriptive)*	*ne*-drop *c'est pas* %
1974	21	20 (16–4)	1 (1)	1%
2012	84	36 (33–3)	48 (12–36)	57%
2017	76	42 (39–3)	34 (19–15)	45%

The *ne*-retention *ce n'est pas* are generally used in the contexts that emphasise the negative content, i.e., where there are indications for a pragmatic presupposition of the contrary; this opposing view is at the same time refuted. Using the Ducrot dichotomy, we tend to qualify them as polemic negations in many senses. There are of course many elements involved in the interpretation of the *ne*-retention but the level of emphasising the negative content in these sequences seems to be quite an important parameter. There are in a majority of cases contrastive elements in the context – semantic instructions – that reinforce the emphatic negation and thus refutative function of these negatives.

4.3.2. The ce + être + negation *sentences and pitch and quality of pas*

Regarding the stressed *pas* we have found the following, which is also exposed in table 3.6.

–   In the majority of the *c'est pas* examples – the *pas* are un-stressed.
–   In the majority of the *ce n'est pas* the *pas* are stressed (*PAS*).

We will show how the *ne*-retention is a stronger marker for reinforced negation than the stressed *pas* but that there is also an important correlation and supposedly a cause-effect relation between the emphatic *ne* negatives and the stressed *pas* when it comes to the *ce + être + negation sentences*.

Table 3.6. The pitch and length of the *pas* for the two types of negatives.

Debate	Total number of CE + ÊTRE + NEGATION	ce n'est pas (ne-retention) with elongated, high-pitch pas (PAS)	ce n'est pas (ne-retention) without elongated, high-pitch pas	c'est pas (ne-drop) with elongated, high-pitch pas (PAS)	c'est pas(ne-drop) without elongated, high-pitch pas	Not analysed
1974	21	18/20 90%	2/20 10%	0/1 0.0%	1/1 100%	0
2012	84	25/36 69.44%	9/36 25%	0/48 0.0%	42/48 87.5%	8
2017	76	33/42 78.57%	9/42 21.43%	8/34 23.53%	20/34 58.82%	6

4.3.3. Old ne *non-emphatic negation + unstressed pas « c'est pas »*

First, we present some examples of the old *ne* + unstressed *pas* « *c'est pas* » for comparison. These negatives are mainly corrective and non-emphatic, that is they are not used for refuting the pragmatic presupposition but to dismiss a comment or an earlier statement that has no importance for the argumentation. They do, as a matter of fact, mostly appear in strongly interactive sequences which supports our hypotheses on different factors increasing the *ne*-dropping in the introductive chapter:

(17) FH: Mais pas du tout. Vous n'êtes pas là pour nous dire ce que je sais ou ce que je ne sais pas. **C'est pas** vous qui posez les questions et **c'est pas** vous qui donnez les notes dans cette émission.[10]
'But not at all. You are not there to tell us what I know or don't know. **You aren't** the one asking questions and **you aren't** the one giving grades in this broadcast.'

(18) NS: **C'est pas** le concours de... Monsieur Hollande, **c'est pas** le concours de la petite blague.
'**This isn't** a competition for… Mister Hollande, **this isn't** a competition for the best little joke.'

(19) EM : Madame Le Pen ne veut pas faire un débat sur le fond. **C'est pas** grave, elle veut parler du passé.
'Madame Le Pen does not want to engage in substantive debate. No big deal. She just wants to talk about the past.'

(20) MLP: Vous êtes jeune, jeune à l'extérieur mais vieux à l'intérieur, parce que vos arguments ont le double de votre âge, mais enfin ça **c'est pas** très grave, en l'occurrence moi, je protège tous les Français
'You're young, young on the outside, but old on the inside, because you're arguments are twice your age. But never mind, it's no big deal. Instead, *I* protect *all* French.'

(21) MLP: Non mais d'accord c'est quand même assez inquiétant.
'No, but it's still pretty troubling, right.'
EM: Parce que c'est la vérité non **c'est pas** inquiétant c'est la vraie vie c'est la vraie vie.
'Because it's the truth, no, **it's not** troubling, it's real life, it's real life.'

Still there are cases of *ne*-dropping negatives that are emphatic, and there are *ne*-retention negatives that are non-emphatic as it is exposed in table 3.6. Here, we follow the criteria characterising emphatic *ne* presented in Fonseca-Greber (2007), statistically confirmed by Donaldson (2017). Intersecting with this is Yaeger-Dror's Social Agreement

Principle (2002). To integrate emphatic *ne* and the Social Agreement Principle, we propose a typology of face in Table 3.7. Fine-tuning our typology to account for how issues of language, gender, power and powerlessness play out may help account for the difference between (21) and (25), but a full investigation of this issue is beyond the scope of the present chapter. Here, suffice it to say, that Marine Le Pen, in (25), may have to assert herself more forcefully to be taken seriously than Emmanuel Macron in (21), while at the same time opening herself up to the gendered criticism of being 'outspoken' instead of 'demure.'

4.3.4. New ne *emphatic negation + stressed pas « ce n'est PAS »*

These negatives including the *ne* and an elongated *pas* are used to refute the pragmatic presupposition emphasising the negative content. It is often a question of an argument they want to "bring up in order to knock down". In the specific context of these negative sentences there are often contrastive elements such as *On a le droit de le dire* 'A person's allowed to say it' in (22), indicating and vitalising the underlying pragmatic presupposition – of the negative sentence "*ce n'est pas un insulte extraordinaire*" – that reinforces the refutation of the same. In (23), FH is explicitly ironic and echoes NS refusing to take responsibility for the shortcomings under his presidency. The underlying presupposition is associated to FH and the irony consists of the meaning of these negatives being opposite to what FH really intends to say. In (24), the syntactic emphasis on *eux* 'they' works as a contrastive element indicating and evoking the subjacent point of view: *il s'agit des Français et Françaises qui ont voté pour Marine Le Pen* 'the French men and women who voted for you,' a point of view which is at the same time refuted. The contrastive element in (25) is *particulièrement* 'particularly,' an element that reinforces the irony in Le Pen's utterance while referring to her previous *vous essayez de jouer avec moi à l'élève et au professeur* 'you're trying to play student-teacher with me.' This is one of several examples of them using the straw man device as a rhetorical strategy through negation and that has been studied in these debates earlier (Roitman 2017b). Using the strawman figure means here that the candidates exploit the polyphonic structure of negation to put words and expressions into their opponents' mouths, ideas that they have never expressed or that are distorted or strongly exaggerated versions of their opinions, in order to discredit them.

> (22) NS : Dire que vos propositions ne sont pas bonnes **ce n'est PAS** une insulte extraordinaire. On a le droit de le dire.

'Saying your suggestions aren't the best **is *not*** particularly insulting. Let's acknowledge it.'

(23) FH: On parlera de tout cela. On est sur le thème du pouvoir d'achat. Avec vous, c'est très simple, ce n'est jamais de votre faute. Vous avez toujours un bouc émissaire. Là, vous dites « **ce n'est PAS** moi, ce sont les régions, la formation, je n'y peux rien ». Sur l'Allemagne, " qu'est-ce que vous voulez, j'ai mis cinq ans avant de comprendre quel était le modèle allemand. Avant, j'avais le modèle anglo-saxon à l'esprit ". Ce n'est jamais de votre faute. Vous aviez dit 5% de chômage, c'est 10% de taux de chômage. **Ce n'est PAS** de votre faute
'We'll talk about all that. For now, we're talking about buying power. With you, it's very easy, it's never your fault. You always have a scapegoat. You say, "**It's not** me, it's the regions, the training, I can't do anything about it." About Germany, it's "What do you expect? It took five years to figure out the German model. Before that, I had the Anglo-Saxon model in mind." It's never your fault. You said 5% unemployment, it's 10% unemployment. **It's not** your fault.'

(24) EM : Madame Le Pen, les Françaises et les Français qui ont voté pour vous, comme pour Monsieur Dupont Aignan, je les ai toujours respectés. Je n'ai jamais fait de leçon de morale, mais je les connais aussi. Dans ma région…
'Madame Le Pen, the French men and women who voted for you, like Mr. Dupont Aignan, I've always respected them. I never gave them a lesson on morals, but I know them too. In my region…'
MLP : **Ce n'est PAS** eux que vous visiez quand vous disiez…
'*They* were not the ones you were pointing the finger at when you said…'

(25) EM : Ça avait été créé … ne importe quoi … C'est un fond souverain.
'It had been created…whatever…it'a a sovereign fund.'
MLP : M. Macron, ne jouez pas avec moi… Je vois que vous essayez de jouer avec moi à l'élève et au professeur. **Ce n'est PAS** particulièrement mon truc…
'Mr. Macron, don't toy with me. …I see you're trying to play student-teacher with me. **That's not** exactly my cup of tea…'

4.4. The meaning and function of c'est pas and of ce n'est pas

The *c'est pas* negatives come generally as the numbers show with an unstressed *pas*. Other characteristics also follow these negatives. As noticed, most of these negations come early in the shift of turn-taking,

these negations correct the counter candidate and do not appear in phrases with heavy argumentative impact. They have the character of "rowdy-negations" appearing in highly interactive sequences. Although some appear in monologues and carry some of the features of *ne*-retention sentences with an essential difference: they almost never reinforce the negative content of the sentence used for refuting the other candidate. Here is however an example of two of these exceptions, from the 2017 debate:

(26) MLP: La France que vous défendez, **c'est pas** la France. C'est une salle de marché dans lequel, encore une fois, c'est la guerre de tous contre tous, dans lequel les salariés devront se battre pour préserver leurs emplois, face aux travailleurs détachés ; dans lequel les entreprises entre elles, dans la même branche, devront se battre pour avoir les salaires les plus bas ou la durée de travail la plus longue pour essayer de conserver les marchés entre elles. **C'est absolument pas** la vision qui est la mienne. Moi, je crois encore une fois, à la solidarité.

'The France you're defending **isn't** France. It's a marketplace where, once again, it's a free-for-all—salaried workers against free-lancers to protect their jobs, businesses in the same field against each other for the lowest salaries or longest hours to protect their profit margins. **That's absolutely not** my vision. Once again, I believe in solidarity.'

In this context, there are indications of pragmatic presuppositions and emphatic meanings even though there is a *ne*-drop. The hyperbolic phrases *salle de marché* 'marketplace,' *la guerre de tous contre tous* 'a free-for-all,' *se battre pour préserver leurs emplois* 'to protect their jobs' that the Le Pen associates with Macron, the opposite candidate, presuppose her having the exact opposite visions of *la France* 'France.' These (26) are examples of the straw man device, which means associating an exaggerated, distorted and even false statement to your opponent, an "argument" then may then argue against and refute. As we also just saw (examples 22–24), straw man arguments involved with negatives do effectively vitalise the opposing pragmatic presupposition of the negation, and thus emphatic negation.

The *ne*-retaining phrases *ce + être + negation* come, in the majority of cases, with a stressed *pas* (*PAS*). As noticed, these negations often appear in a longer argumentative sequence, or at least not at the beginning of the turn takings. These utterances (*ne*-retention, *ce + être + negation + stressed PAS*) appear in phrases with heavier argumentative

impact refuting an idea of the opposite side. (ex. 22–25) reinforcing the negative content. This is to say that there is a clear correlation between the *ne*-retention – the reinforced function (emphatic negation) and the elongated *pas* (*PAS*). In the cases of emphatic negation where the *ne* is retained but the *pas* is not stressed there is often another item in the predication that is elongated. In the example below, it is the word "euro" that is focalised and stressed:

> (27) EM : Mais on a besoin de l'Europe dans la mondialisation
> 'But we need Europe to be part of globalisation'
> MLP : Monsieur Macron, ça fait 25 ans que vous promettez l'Europe sociale, vous et vos amis socialistes. 25 ans !
> 'Mr. Macron, you and your socialist friends have been promising social reforms for Europe for 25 years!'
> EM : Madame Le Pen, ça fait pas 25 ans que je suis dans la politique..
> 'Madame Le Pen, I haven't even been in politics 25 years...'
> MLP : La désindustrialisation massive ! Nous avons subi l'effondrement de nos emplois et les délocalisations massives. Et aujourd'hui, Monsieur Macron, l'épargne des Français
> 'A massive shift away from an industrial economy! We've undergone the collapse of our job market and massive outsourcing. And now, Mr. Macron, the French people are faced with the loss of their savings accounts.'
> EM : **Ce n'est pas** l'euro cela. Les Français le savent...
> 'That's not because of the Euro...and the French people know that...'

This focalisation enhance however the emphasising of the negative content and the pragmatic function of negation: the opposite candidate is clearly refuted.

5. Discussion

The results presented in this study have shed light on ever-evolving ways in which negative meanings are successfully communicated when refuting presuppositions in the argumentative discourse of televised French presidential debates over the decades. While individual speaker idiosyncracies remain:

- Macron rarely drops *ne* in this type of utterance and is the candidate who obeys the norm most closely

- François Hollande, Marine Le Pen, and Nicolas Sarkozy are, as a group, more informal than Emmanuel Macron, and they also drop *ne* in a wider range of utterances than Macron does, who drops *ne* mostly in semi-lexicalised forms like *c'est pas* 'it isn't'

The Roitman corpus of French presidential debates presents additional diachronic documentation of *ne*-loss between the last quarter of the 20th century to the second decade of the 21st century, in tandem with an emergent new use of *ne* for negative emphasis, in this case, refutation of a political opponent's presupposition.

As mentioned early in this study, it is difficult to prove anything on the debates as a whole regarding the return of the *ne* – the new *ne* – as a result of the emphasised-polemic negation, due to the general limited *ne*-drop in the actual political debates, a rather normative, elevated type of presentational discourse close to the written form. Whereas the *ne* is dropped in 80%–95% of the cases in conversational mode the *ne* drops in the two last debates only add up to 16%. Even though most negations are emphatic-polemic in these corpora, and the majority of the *pas* are stressed (*PAS*) there is no evidence to say the type *ne* (re) appears for pragmatic reasons to reinforce the negative content of the sentence, but may solely expose the elevated language style of this particular mediatised political event. Our general impressions will however be summarised here.

Regarding the criteria for *ne*-dropping, *ne* drops, to begin with, more with certain forms and contexts than with others: when the clitic pronoun is *ce* 'it,' *je* 'I,' and when it has scope over frequent verbs like *savoir* 'to know,' *vouloir* 'to want,' and *parler* 'to speak.' We have seen that *ne* drops in formulaic expressions (or chunks) such as *je sais pas* 'I don't know' and *je parle pas* 'I don't speak' and to a rather high extent in *c'est pas* 'it isn't' that we have studied more closely in this chapter. *Ne*-dropping also occurs more frequently when the negatives are involved in highly interactive sequences, when they have a corrective function. Furthermore *ne* is more often maintained when the negative content is emphasised, which is obtained through indications in the context such as semantic and syntactic contrastive element, irony, hyperbolic expressions, argumentative connectors, among others. This leads us to the idea that the emphasised function, the polemic negation seems to bring back the *ne*, which is a result that correlates with those of Fonseca-Greber (2007, 2017) among others (Ashby 1976, Sankoff and Vincent, 1980, van Compernolle, 2009, 2010, Donaldson 2017,

French and Beaulieu, 2020). The *ne*-retention thus becomes—through its correlation with the stressed and elongated *pas* (*PAS*)—the pragmatically salient feature of negation emphasising the negative content through indications of the pragmatic presupposition. This reinforcing of the negative content works rhetorically in the political debates, refuting the visions and the political ideas of the adversary as it has been shown in Roitman (2015). Accompanied by the stressed *pas* (*PAS*) these negatives become thus a marker of argumentation discourse. Our results also coincide with the analyses on negations' refutative function carried out in Roitman (2017b). The differences found between the *ne*-dropping and the *ne*-retention examples led us early in the study to the pairing of the first with the descriptive negation and the second with the polemic negation. We have seen that the reinforced negation and its refutative function of polemic negation – the idea of a subjacent counterpart that is refuted – of these *ne*-retention examples are enhanced by other semantic and syntactic contrasting elements when closely examined in context.

Regarding the *ce + être +* negation that has been studied more in detail the tendency is that the *ne*-retention sentences *ce n'est pas* and the stressed, elongated *PAS* do influence and show a correlation with the emphasising of the negative content and the refutation of the other candidate's arguments, real or false (straw man arguments). In these sentences, *ne*-retention *per se* though is more decisive for this function than is the stressed *PAS*; in fact, sometimes other predicative items in the negative sentence are also stressed, as first observed by Ashby (1976). So, emphatic-polemic negation + stressed *PAS* seem to enhance *ne*-retention, the new emphatic *ne*. This may indicate what has been shown in earlier studies, i.e., that the evolution of French negation seems not merely be a result of the phonetic evolution suggested by Jespersen but may be reinforced through communicative pragmatic needs. The new *ne* would be a result of such a communicative pragmatic need.

In the *ne*-dropping examples of the *ce + être +* negation – *pas* sentences *c'est pas*, the *pas* is never stressed even though some of them are emphatic as we have seen in some examples. Our impression is that the sentences' speech rate is slower than normal in this specific discourse where *ne* is maintained although that has not been measured, and remains thus a hypothesis. Indeed, slowed speech rate is one of the correlates of emphatic *ne* (Ashby, 1976, Fonseca-Greber, 2007, Donaldson, 2017).

5.1. Conversational discourse versus argumentative discourse

Compared to what has been found in conversational discourse (Fonseca Greber 2007 and 2017) the *ne*-dropping is as it has been mentioned very reduced in the presidential debates. The differences between the retention and deletion of *ne* are enormous between the two very different types of discourses—one vernacular, conversational, agreeable and friendly, and the other formal, confrontational, disagreeable, and bellicose. Here then, we have broadened the scope of inquiry from conversational-interpersonal discourse to argumentative-presentational discourse. While similarities emerge between the two, differences also emerge, perhaps specifically with regards to interlocutor 'face' and the pragmatics of politeness. While the emphatic negations *ce + être +* negation *ce n'est pas* in the debates refute the presupposition, the point of view belonging to the other candidate and enhance thus a face threatening act, the emphatic negations *ce + être +* negation *ce n'est pas* in the Fonseca Greber conversational corpus are self-directed and do not constitute a face threatening act, other than towards the speaker himself:

> (28) S13: Ah! parce que c'était un coin de buissons…**ce n'est PAS** un coin d'herbe!
> Oh! 'because it was meant to be [drought-resistant] bushes…it isn't meant to be lawn!'
> S1: ouais-ouais ouais-ouais…
> 'Yeah-yeah. Yeah-yeah…'

Conversely the non-emphatic negations in the debates are often not directly towards the opposite candidate but are used as general corrections of erroneous ideas without sender, and non-emphatic negations in the daily conversation are directed towards the interlocutor, attenuating mistakes of the other participant:

> (29) S4: non, mais chez nous, chez nous à G., quand tu le font au vin cuit.. tu mets du vin dedans
> 'No, but for us, for us in G, when you make a cooked-wine pie, you put wine in it'
> S5: ah, c'est un gâteau au vin, non, mais **c'est pas** même chose un gâteau au vin. Gâteau au vin oui, mais le vin cuit c'est autre chose.
> 'Oh, that's a wine pie, no, but it's not the same thing a wine pie. Wine pie, yes, but the cooked wine one is something different.'

Thus, a contrastive typology of self- vs. other-directed rebuttal/correction of presuppositions, based on face, do exist between conversational and argumentative discourse, as outlined in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7. Typology of Face.

Refuting Presuppositions	Conversational Discourse	Argumentative Discourse
Self-Directed	*ce n'est PAS* 'it is not' (1), repeated as (28)	*c'est pas* 'it isn't' (?)
Other-Directed	*c'est pas* 'it isn't' (2), repeated as (29)	*ce n'est PAS* 'it is not'(MLP) (24)

6. Concluding remarks

The overall purpose of this study relies on its interest for the pragmatics of negation, how negation is used and for what purpose. We have tried to problematise the question of *ne*-retention and *ne*-dropping in French negatives by focusing more specifically on the conditions regulating the emphasising of negative content. In these political debates most of the sentence negations do have a refutative function; the negative content of the phrase is emphasised in the sense that the pragmatic underlying presupposition or point of view is refuted. We have been able to show that these emphatic negatives in one clause-type (*ce* + *être* + negation + *pas*) correlate with the retention of *ne* and to a certain extent also to the stressed *pas* (*PAS*). Thus, a certain need for reinforcement of the negative content do seem to enhance the return of *ne*. What we see is a pragmatic use of negation where an old form is used in order to create specific meanings, i.e. the emphatic negation. This has been shown in earlier studies on grammaticalisation in general and in particular studies on the evolution of French negation. Speaking of return and of a new *ne* must of course be problematised in more than one way. First, as mentioned earlier, this particular corpus with low rate of *ne*-dropping compared to conversational discourse types cannot disclose the pull and push factors behind the appearance of *ne* in the corpus as a whole, although supposedly on specific clause-types. Furthermore, there are apparently many cycles of negation going on simultaneously depending on all aspects of the communicative situation, as Mosegaard Hansen (2009, 2011, 2014 *et al.*) among others also have shown. However, analyzing specific negatives in a specific context and comparing them to earlier studies with other corpora still show the tendency to re-use older forms in new ways in order to satisfy pragmatic needs and communicate specific meanings.

Endnotes

1. Within this framework, the concept of meaning (French: *signification*) "contains above all, according to our view, *instructions* given to those who will have to interpret an utterance of the sentence, inciting them to look in the communicative context for such or such type of information and to use it in such or such a way in order to reconstruct the meaning intended by the speaker " (Ducrot 1980a, 12 Own translation). Analyzing language units such as refutation-statements thus implies not the description of the meaning but the search for indications of the argumentative status (and therefore the argumentative function) of the utterance via the marks of the utterance process (French: *énonciation*) such as pronouns indicating interlocuteurs: connectors, negation, certains tense-forms, scalar words. These units, traces of the énonciation expose different and often opposing "voices" in the utterance, which has been described as polyphony. The presence of sentence negation in a statement indicates, for example, an instruction that the speaker must look for contradictory arguments in the context. This contains the core of argumentation theory in language (Anscombre and Ducrot 1983).

2. This '*ne* Verb *pas*' of Classical French remains in use in the written language today, because the French writing system was codified during this same time period.

3. Outside of France and writing earlier—both as predicted by Ferguson's (1959) model of diglossia—for earlier proponents of French diglossia, see also Lodge (1993), Fonseca-Greber (2000), and Fonseca-Greber & Waugh (2003).

4. For example, prepared speeches, telescripted radio and television reporting, and the like.

5. Ashby (1977), Miller (1991), Pierce (1992), Roberge (1986, 1990), Jakubowicz & Rigaut (1997), Fonseca-Greber (2000, 2009, 2018), Fonseca-Greber & Waugh, 2003a,b), Füß (2005), van Gelderen (2011), Zribi-Hertz (2011), Bahtchevanova & van Gelderen (2016).

6. And even slower in reaching (let alone gaining traction) among the language teaching establishment—whether French-as-a-foreign language overseas (Walz 1986, Joseph 1988, Waugh & Fonseca-Greber 2002, Durán & McCool 2003, Fonseca-Greber 2013, Grangier & O'Connor DiVito 2018) or even French-as-a-second-language within the French-speaking world itself (Giroud & Surcouf 2016).

7. The name of the winning candidate appears in bold.

8. The 2017 data includes a lot of 'noise': *gender* (the only M-F, not M-M, debate); *age* (a 'young' candidate who may have acquired or speech-accommodate the grammar of his elders' generation and/or who may be

on the front lines of a new change through abductive reanalysis (Anderson 1973)); *political party* (the first time a far-right Le Pen-family political party has reached the presidential run-off). Despite this, taken as a whole, the 2010-decade shows a distinct drop from forty years earlier.

9. An anonymous reviewer inquires if the shift from *ce* to *ça* plays a role. Although this is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that *ça* itself is the so-called stressed pronoun, and therefore, emphatic.

10. An anonymous reviewer inquires if the cleft structure plays a role. Although this is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that clefting serves to focalise the noun, and is therefore a form of emphasis itself.

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