Pronominal Object Shift in Archaic Chinese

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This paper takes up one of the oldest and best-known problems in the field of Chinese historical syntax: fronting of pronominal objects in the context of negation. I challenge previous analyses of the fronting as cliticization or focus movement and instead offer a novel approach in which the movement is analyzed as object shift motivated by the need to value structural case. As primary evidence, I show that only pronouns needing to value structural accusative case underwent fronting, a fact which is not predicted on previous accounts but is accounted for by the case-based analysis. I further show that the loss of pronoun fronting coincides with the loss of morphological case distinctions on pronouns, thereby identifying a morphological trigger for this syntactic change.

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1. Introduction

This paper examines one of the lingering mysteries of Chinese historical syntax, the preverbal positioning of pronominal objects in the context of negation in Late Archaic Chinese (LAC). First, note that basic word order in LAC was SVO, with objects following verbs in unmarked order.

(1) a. 知者使人知己。 (Xunzi 29)

Zhi zhe shi ren zhi ji.

wise Det make other understand self

‘A wise person makes others understand him.’

b. 胡為而食我？ (Lü Shi Chunqiu 12.3)

Hu wei er si wo?

what for Conj feed 1

‘What are feeding me for?’

However, when one of several types of negation preceded the VP, pronominal objects raised from their base positions to appear between the negator and the verb. (2a) shows the clausal negator bu ‘not’, (2b) the quantificational negator mo ‘none’, and (2c) the aspectual negator wei ‘not yet’.
(2) a. 我饑而不我食。 （Lü Shi Chunqiu 12.5）

    Wo ji er bu wo si.

    I starve Conj not 1 feed

‘When I was starving, (they) did not feed me.’

b. 不患莫己知。 （Analects 14）

    Bu huan mo ji zhi.

    not worry none self know

‘Do not worry that no one understands you.’

c. 甲兵之事，未之聞也。 （Zuo zhuan, Ai 11）

    Jia bing zhi shi,
    armor weapon Gen matter

    wei zhi wen ye.
    not.yet 3.Obj hear Nmlz

‘(Regarding) military matters, I have not heard of such things.’

The preverbal positioning of the object in (2) is often assumed to be a vestige of basic OV order in pre-Archaic Chinese (Li & Thompson 1974, Wang 1980, La Polla 1994, Feng 1996, Xu 2006, among many others). Others have challenged the claim that pre-
Archaic Chinese was an OV language and therefore assume OV to be a derived order (Djamouri 2005, Peyraube 1996, Shen 1992, Whitman & Paul 2005, Djamouri & Paul 2009, and others). This paper similarly takes examples like those in (2) to be derived from underlying VO order. The question of the correct derivation, however, has remained elusive. In what follows, I offer a novel approach, proposing a syntactic derivation in which the motivation for the movement was the object’s need to value structural case. I further argue that changes in the morphological case system of Chinese provided the trigger for the subsequent loss of this transformation.

2. Previous Analyses

Within the derivational camp, two basic approaches have been put forth to account for pronoun fronting to negation in Late Archaic Chinese. Feng (1996) takes the position that the movement was prosodically motivated; pronouns underwent cliticization to the c-commanding negator. In (3), the clitic pronoun raises out of VP and right-adoins to the negator dominating VP.
Though accounting for the position of the pronoun with respect to negation when fronting occurred, a prosodic approach offers no principled account of the lack of fronting in a wide variety of environments. For example, fronting generally did not take place in the context of perfective aspect marked by the particle yi, as shown in (4a). The complement of certain verbs likewise did not undergo fronting, as in the case of zai ‘be.in’ in (4b).

(4) a. 出三日，不食之矣。  (Analects 10)

Chu san ri, [bu [shi zhi]] yi.

be.out 3 day not eat 3.Obj Perf

‘If it has been out for three days, don’t eat it anymore.’

b. 制不在我。  (Guoyu, Jin 2)

Zhi bu zai wo.

control not be.in 1

‘The control is not within me.’
Even more damaging perhaps is the fact that reflexive pronouns sometimes underwent fronting, as in (5a), but sometimes did not, as in (5b).

(5)  a. 莫己知也。  (Analects 14)

\[ ej \text{ mo ji} \text{ zhi ye.} \]

none self know Nmlz

‘No one understands me!’

b. 聖人不愛己。  (Xunzi 22)

\[ Shengren_i bu ai ji_i. \]

saint not love self

‘A saint does not love himself.’

These facts make it extremely doubtful that pronoun fronting to negation was prosodic cliticization. Furthermore, the cliticization analysis offers no explanation for why pronouns were attracted specifically to negation and did not front in other contexts.

Addressing the question of why negation triggered object raising, Djamouri (1991) has proposed that pronoun fronting was a type of focus movement. Djamouri (2000) takes this position one step further by arguing that the clausal negator \( bu \) ‘not’ was a negative copula in pre-Archaic Chinese. He offers evidence of this
in the Shang bone inscriptions (甲骨文) of the early archaic period (14th – 11th C. BCE). (6a) shows a copula used in an affirmative clause. The constituent following the copula is focused. Djamouri claims that this is a type of cleft construction. In (6b), the negator bu ‘not’ appears in the position for the copula. (6b) is parallel to (6a) in structure and interpretation, the constituent following bu also being focused.

(6)  
a. 唯父乙咎婦好

Wei  fu  yi  jiu    fu  hao.  
only father Yi overwhelm Lady Hao  
‘It is (the ancestral) father Yi who overwhelms Lady Hao.’  
(Heji 6032 recto; from Djamouri 2000)

b. 不父乙咎婦好

Bu  fu  yi  jiu    fu  hao.  
not father Yi overwhelm Lady Hao  
‘It is not (the ancestral) father Yi who overwhelms Lady Hao.’  
(Heji 6032 recto; from Djamouri 2000)

Djamouri suggests that pronoun fronting to negation originated in this type of focus construction. Specifically, the pronoun appears in the position for the focused constituent. This approach addresses
the question of the involvement of negation in the raising.
However, it remains unclear why pronouns are targeted for
movement to the position following *bu*. Examples like (6b), in
which full NPs follow the negator in a focus construction are
extremely rare. Djamouri admits that (6b) is the only such example
he has found. He therefore suggests that (6b) is a relic of a
historical pattern dating to pre-attested Chinese. But there is no
direct evidence connecting (6b) with pronoun fronting to negation,
which was already productive in this period, as shown in (7).

(7)   a. 父甲害我   (*Heji* 2122; from Djamouri 2000)

        Fu   Jia   hai   wo.

        father   Jia   harm   us

    ‘Father Jia harms us.’

   b. 父甲不我害   (*Heji* 2124; from Djamouri 2000)

        Fu   Jia   bu   wo   hai.

        father   Jia   not   us   harm

    ‘Father Jia does not harm us.’

There is, admittedly, some later evidence from the LAC period
which indirectly suggests a possible connection between pronoun
fronting and focus. Fronting generally did not take place in a
clause containing a *wh*-word. Since the *wh*-word itself is the focused constituent, fronting of the pronoun does not take place.

(8) a. 夫子何不譽我於王？  *(Zhuangzi 2.3)*

    Fuzi  *he*  bu  tan  wo  yu  wang?

    you  why  not  praise  me  to  king

    ‘Why don’t you speak in my favor to the king?’

b. 胡不見我於王？  *(Mozi 50)*

    Hu  bu  jian  wo  yu  wang?

    why  not  present  me  to  king

    ‘Why don’t you present me to the king?’

In the following section, I propose an alternative account which, like Djamouri (1991, 2000), is based on syntactic movement but addresses both the question of why only pronouns underwent fronting, as well as the involvement of negation.

3. Syntactic Movement for Case

In this section, I propose an analysis of pronoun fronting to negation as object shift motivated by the need to value structural accusative case. This proposal draws heavily on similarities with
genitive of negation in Slavic languages like Russian and Polish. In the following Russian examples, an object can (and often does) receive genitive case in the scope of sentential negation, as in (9a). It is also possible for the object to surface with accusative case, as in (9b). The difference in case-marking correlates with a difference in interpretation. The accusative object receives a definite interpretation, while the genitive object is indefinite.

**Russian** (Harves 2002a:97)

(9)  a. Anna *ne* kupila *knig*. (indefinite)
    Anna.Nom Neg bought books.Gen
    ‘Anna did not buy any books.’

  b. Anna *ne* kupil *knigi*. (definite)
    Anna.Nom Neg bought books.Acc
    ‘Anna did not buy the books.’

Many proposals have been made to account for case alternation like that seen in (9). Most are in agreement that it is the Neg head which is the source of genitive case (Pesetsky 1982, Bailyn 1997, Brown 1999, Harves 2002a, Harves 2002b, and Witko 2008). Harves (2002b) implements this idea and accounts for the alternation in (9) in the following way. The Neg head can select a
transitive vP with an accusative case feature on v, or it can select a
defective vP in which accusative case is unavailable. If accusative
case is unavailable within vP, then the object is dependent upon a
higher functional head for case licensing and consequently values
genitive case with Neg\textsuperscript{ii}. The brackets around the DP in [Spec, vP]
indicate the trace position of the subject, which has moved to [Spec, TP].

\begin{align*}
(10) & \quad \text{NegP} \\
& \quad \text{Neg}_{[\text{GEN}]} \quad \text{vP} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{<DP\textsubscript{Subj}>} \quad \text{v'} \quad \text{VP} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{v} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{DP\textsuperscript{[GEN]}}
\end{align*}

If Neg selects a transitive vP, then the object is able to value
accusative case with v.

\begin{align*}
(11) & \quad \text{NegP} \\
& \quad \text{Neg} \quad \text{vP} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \text{<DP\textsubscript{Subj}>} \quad \text{v'} \quad \text{VP} \\
& \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \text{v\textsubscript{[ACC]}} \quad \text{V} \quad \text{DP\textsuperscript{[ACC]}}
\end{align*}
On this approach, both genitive and accusative objects value their case in situ under Agree. In contrast to this, Brown (1999), Kim (2003, 2004), and Basilico (2008) propose that valuing of structural accusative case is the result of movement of the object. Taking Kim (2003, 2004) as an example, when the Neg head is present, it blocks an Agree relation between the in-situ object and the accusative case valuing head Asp, so the object receives genitive case instead.

![Diagram](image)

The object receives accusative case if it moves out of the scope of negation to [Spec, AspP]. This movement also accounts for the definite interpretation of the accusative object in examples like (9b). Assuming Diesing’s (1992) Mapping Hypothesis, movement of an object out of VP allows it to receive a presuppositional interpretation at LF.
There is additional evidence for the correlation between movement of the object and accusative case valuing. Harves (2002b) points out that if the object undergoes wh-movement, it has to have accusative case rather than genitive.

**Russian (Harves:2002b)**

(14)  

a. Kakie fil’my ty ne smotriš ’?

which films-Acc you Neg watch

‘What kind of movies don’t you watch?’

b. *Kakix fil’mov ty nikogda ne smotriš ’?

which films-Gen you never Neg watch

‘What kind of movies don’t you ever watch?’

The LAC data also clearly support a movement approach, since the pronoun surfaces to the left of the verb. However, Kim’s (2003,
2004) proposal cannot be adopted directly, because the fronted
pronoun in LAC follows the negator in surface order.

(15) 我饑而不我食。 （Lü Shi Chunqiu 12.5）

Wo jǐ ér bu wǒ sì.

1 starve Conj not 1 feed

‘When I was starving, (they) did not feed me.’

For LAC, then, I propose that it is Neg which values accusative
case on the fronted object. Similar to Harves, I propose that the
head of NegP in LAC typically selected a complement in which
structural case was unavailable. Specifically, I propose that Neg
selected a nominal complement nP. Since structural case was
unavailable, the object was forced to undergo object shift to the
edge of nP, where it could exceptionally value accusative case with
the head of NegP. I assume that the object could not value
accusative case with Neg in-situ in NP because n is a strong phase
head, making NP an impenetrable domain from outside of the nP
phase.
Due to the unavailability of case in the domain of $n$, all DP objects with an unvalued case feature would have been required to move to [Spec, NP] in order to be licensed. The fact that only pronouns are spelled out in the landing site is accounted for in the following way. First, I follow Pesetsky (2000), Bobaljik (2002), and others in assuming that either the head or tail of a movement chain can be pronounced. Secondly, I assume with Halle and Marantz (1993), Harley and Noyer (1999), Embick and Noyer (2007), and many others that insertion of phonetic material takes place post-syntactically in the Morphological Component. Finally, I propose that the pronunciation of the head or tail of a chain depended on whether pronounceable features were inserted at the landing site.

Case morphology was spelled out on pronouns in LAC but not on nouns, so pronouns were spelled out in the position where they acquired the feature. Nouns, on the other hand, did not display morphological case, so these were spelled out in their base
positions. In section 4, I present evidence for morphological case distinctions on pronouns, as well as for the nominalization of the predicate in negated clauses. In section 7, I offer corroborating evidence for my analysis of chain resolution by showing that the loss of pronoun fronting to negation correlates diachronically with the loss of morphological case on pronouns.

As in Slavic languages, it was also possible for Neg to select a transitive vP in LAC. I argue in section 5 that this happened when independent factors required the presence of a vP layer. One such case is wh-questions, which Djamouri (2000) used as evidence for a connection between pronoun fronting and focus.

(17) 君何不舉之？ (Hanfeizi 32)

Jun he bu ju zhi?

you why not promote 3.Obj

‘Why don’t you promote him?’

The lack of fronting in wh-questions is in fact not a counter example to the analysis put forth in this paper but rather is predicted on this approach. As proposed by Aldridge (2010), LAC had short wh-movement to a focus position in the edge of vP. (18) shows movement of an object wh-word. Note that the landing site is above VP but below the surface position of the subject.
Given that \(wh\)-words had to occupy a specifier position in \(vP\), the presence of a \(wh\)-word entails the presence of a \(vP\) layer and consequently a \(v\) to license a direct object, allowing the object to remain in situ. This accounts for the lack of pronoun fronting in \(wh\)-questions.

In the next three sections, I present evidence for the main components of the analysis just sketched. The direct evidence is discussed in section 4 and comes from the fact that morphological case distinctions were spelled out on pronouns but not on nouns in
LAC. Additional support is offered from evidence that the predicate in fronting contexts is nominalized. Indirect evidence is presented in section 5 and comes from the lack of fronting if independent factors forced Neg to select a vP rather than a nP. Section 6 offers evidence that pronoun fronting is object shift to the phase edge. Finally, I provide additional indirect evidence for the case based approach by showing a correlation between the loss of pronoun fronting and the loss of morphological case distinctions on pronouns.

4. Direct Evidence: Case and nominalization

In this section, I present evidence for the role of case valuing in accounting for LAC pronoun fronting to negation. Specifically, I show that only accusative pronouns underwent fronting, while objects of prepositions and inherently case-marked pronouns did not front. I interpret this as evidence that movement of the pronoun was motivated by the need to value accusative case. I also provide evidence in this section that the predicate was nominalized in fronting contexts.
4.1. Morphological Case

Let me begin by presenting morphological evidence for case distinctions on pronouns in LAC. F. Zhou (1959), Yang and He (1992), and Zhang (2001) have identified some distributional restrictions on personal and demonstrative pronouns in the oracle bone inscriptions (14th – 11th C. BCE). Some pronouns tended to be used more often as possessors, others as subjects, and others as objects. Though the distinctions are no longer completely clear in the language, the tendencies do suggest a historical connection with case. The clearest constraint can be seen in the third person pronoun 之 zhi, which was never used in subject position. This restriction on ZHI continues into the Classical period (5th-3rd centuries BCE). In fact, this pronoun was specifically restricted to accusative case-marked positions in this period. In (20), ZHI functions as a direct object.

(20)  a. 學而時習之  (Analects 1)

Xue er shi [xi zhi]
study Conj time practice 3.Obj
‘To study and periodically practice something....’
b. 天啟之矣。  (Zuo zhuan, Min 1)

    tian  [qi  zhi]  yi.

  Heaven  aid  3.Obj  Perf

  ‘Heaven has aided him.’

Additional evidence that ZHI is an accusative pronoun comes from ECM constructions. Although the subject of a nonfinite clause is not able to value nominative case with embedded T, it can value accusative case ‘exceptionally’ with matrix v. Consequently, this case must analyzed as structural accusative case. Following Woolford (2006), I assume that an inherent case is assigned either by a lexical category to its complement, a functional category to its specifier. Consequently, cases valued with a functional head in an Agree relation via c-command are structural cases, i.e. nominative (with finite T) and accusative (with transitive v).

(21)  a. 上賢使之為三公。  (Xunzi 12)

    Shang xian shi [zhi wei sangong].
    most able make 3.Obj be sangong

    ‘The most capable, make them into sangong (the highest official rank).’
b. 將命者出戶，取瑟而歌，使之聞之。

Jiangmingzhe chu hu,
messenger exit door
qu se er ge,
take zither and sing
shi [zhi wen zhi ].
make 3.Obj hear 3.Obj
‘As the messenger was leaving, (Confucius) took up his zither and sang, making him (the messenger) hear it.’

(Analects 17)

ZHI is also clearly distinguished in this period from the possessive pronoun 其 qi ‘3.Gen’.

(22) a. 欲以其子奚齊代太子申生。  (Hanfeizi 31)

Yu yi qi zi Xiqi
want Appl 3.Gen son Xiqi
dai taizi Shensheng.
replace heir Shensheng
‘(She) wanted to replace the heir Shensheng with her son Xiqi.’
b. 其子焉往?   (Mencius 7)

qi zi yan wang?
3.Gen son where go

‘Where would their sons go?’

Finite embedded clauses are generally not found in LAC. Adjunct, complement, and relative clauses were typically nominalized, and the embedded subject appeared with genitive case. The genitive pronoun QI appears below in subject position of a complement clause in (23a) and a relative clause in (23b).

(23)  a. 周公知其將畔而使之與？ (Mencius 4)

Zhou gong zhi [qi jiang pan]
Zhou duke know 3.Gen will rebel
er shi zhi yu?
Conj send 3.Obj Q

‘Did the duke of Zhou send him, knowing [that he would rebel]?’
The possessive pronoun Qī is never attracted to negation. In (24a), Qī is the subject of an embedded clause. In (24b), Qī is a demonstrative in a DP.

(24)  a. 鵷之背，不知其幾千里也。

Peng zhi bei,

bird Gen back

bu zhi [qi ji qian li ye].

not know 3.Gen how.many 1000 li Nmlz

‘The back of the great bird, (I) do not know how many thousands of li it is long.’ (Zhuangzi 1)

b. 吾聞其語矣，未見其人也。

Wu wen qi yu yi,

1 hear 3.Gen story Perf
I have heard such a story, but I have not seen such a person.’

One obvious explanation for the lack of fronting in (24) is locality, if we assume that argumental DPs and nominalized embedded clauses are islands to extraction. But the lack of fronting here is also expected on the case based analysis. Genitive is an inherent case, so it is not affected by the lack of accusative case in the nominalized predicate.

LAC had another pronoun which was used for internal arguments in certain environments and was clearly distinguished from the accusative pronoun ZHI. This pronoun yan surfaced in complement position of certain verbs, as can be seen in (25a, b). Here, the pronoun YAN is used instead of the accusative ZHI. (25c) shows that a full DP is accompanied by a goal preposition in this environment. It is widely recognized that YAN is functionally equivalent to ZHI following the goal preposition yu (He 1989, Pulleyblank 1995, and others). I analyze it as a dative pronoun.
(25)   a. 先君之廟在焉。   \( (Lü\ Shi\ Chunqiu\ 15.4) \)

Xian \ jun \ zhi \ miao \ zai \ yan.

former lord Gen shrine be.in 3.Dat

‘The former lord’s shrine is there.’

b. 王不禮焉。  \( (Zuozhuan,\ Yin\ 6) \)

Wang \ bu \ li \ yan.

king not respect 3.Dat

‘The king was not respectful toward him.’

c. 夫子禮於賈季。  \( (Zuozhuan,\ Wen\ 6) \)

Fuzi \ li \ yu \ Jia Ji.

master respect to Jia Ji

‘The master is respectful toward Jia Ji.’

What is crucial for the discussion at hand is the difference between ZHI and YAN in terms of fronting in the context of negation. The accusative pronoun ZHI does front in this context.

(26)   a. 吾先君亦莫之行也。   \( (Mencius\ 5) \)

Wu \ xian \ jun \ yi \ mo \ zhi \ xing \ ye.

1 former lord too none 3.Obj do Nmlz

‘None of our former lords did this either.’
b. 軍旅之事，未之學也。 （Analects 15）

Junlǔ zhi shi, wei zhi xue ye.

army Gen matter not.yet 3.Obj study Nmlz

‘Military matters, I have yet to study this.’

In contrast, YAN did not front. On the case-based analysis, this is unsurprising, since dative inherent dative case serves to license the object in the absence of an accusative feature.

(27) a. 終身不養焉。 （Mencius 8）

zhongxhen bu yang yan.

lifelong not care.for 3.Dat

‘(He) was not cared for by them for the rest of his life.’

b. 天下莫強焉。 （Mencius 1）

Tianxia mo qiang yan.

world none strong 3.Dat

‘No one in the world is stronger than them.’

As shown above, 3rd person pronouns show a morphological distinction for accusative and dative case. The distinction is neutralized in the 1st person pronouns. However, the syntactic
asymmetry in the context of negation is still observed. The 1st person pronoun fronts in an accusative environment (28a) but not in a dative environment (28b). This contrast is particularly difficult for Feng’s (1996) cliticization analysis to account for, given that the form of the pronoun is the same.

(28)  a. 我饑而不我食。

\begin{verbatim}
Wo  ji    er   bu    wo    si.
\end{verbatim}

1 starve Conj not 1 feed

‘When I was starving, (they) did not feed me.’

b. 制不在我。

\begin{verbatim}
Zhi   bu    zai   wo.
\end{verbatim}

control not be.in 1

‘The control is not within me.’

The asymmetry discussed above provides strong evidence for the case-based analysis of pronoun fronting, because it is only pronouns that need to value structural case which move, while those licensed in-situ with inherent case do not front.

Further support for the case based approach comes from the fact that the object of a preposition never underwent fronting to
negation. Assuming that the object is licensed internal to the PP, it is not affected by the lack of case on $n$.

(29) a. 不與之爭能。 (Xunzi 12)

\[ Bu \ [yu \ zhi] \ zheng \ neng. \]

not with 3.Obj dispute ability

‘(He) does not dispute ability with them.’

b. 民不為己用，不為己死 (Xunzi 12)

\[ Min \ bu \ [wei \ ji] \ yong \ …. \]

people not by self use

\[ bu \ [wei \ ji] \ si, \]

not for self die

‘If the people cannot be used by you or will not die for you ….’

Note that the lack of fronting from a PP is not due to a locality restriction. Wh-movement and relativization were both possible from PPs.

(30) a. 王誰與為善？ (Mencius 6)

\[ Wang \ shei \ [yu \ e] \ wei \ shan? \]

king who with be good

‘With whom will the king be good?’

28
b. 亂之所自起  

(Mozi 14)

luan  zhi  suo  [zi e ]  qi
unrest  Gen  Rel  from  arise
‘from whence unrest arises’

4.2. Nominalization

In this subsection, I discuss evidence that the complement of the Neg head was a nominal projection. Pronoun fronting is frequently found in the presence of the clause-final particle 也 ye, which I treat as a copula or nominalizer.

(31)  a.  不吾叛也。  (Zuozhuan, Xiang 31)

Bu  wu  pan  ye.
not  I  betray  Nmlz
‘(He) will not betray me.’

b.  不吾廢也。  (Zuozhuan, Xiang 31)

Bu  wu  fei  ye.
not  I  disown  Nmlz
‘(He) will not disown me.’
There is compelling evidence for the analysis of YE as a copula or nominalizer. YE occurs with a nominal predicate in (32a), functioning as a copula. In (32b), YE nominalizes its complement so that it may be selected by the determiner 者 zhe (32b). (32c) shows YE following the predicate in a complement clause selected by a perception verbs. Complements of perception verbs in LAC were generally required to be nominalized.

(32) a. 非吾徒也。 
(Analects 11)
Fei wu tu ye.
not.be 1 student Nmlz
‘(He) is not my student.’

b. 孝弟也者，其為仁之本與！ (Analects 1)
Xiao ti ye zhe, qi wei pious respectful Nmlz Det 3.Gen be ren zhi ben yu!
beneficence 3.Gen origin Excl
‘Filial piety and brotherly respect, these are the foundation of benevolence!’
In pronoun fronting contexts like (31), the presence of YE suggests that the predicate is nominalized, as I have proposed in section 3. In this section, I have presented direct evidence for the case based approach to pronoun fronting in LAC negated clauses introduced in section 3. First, I established the existence of morphological case distinctions on LAC pronouns and showed that it is only accusative pronouns which undergo fronting to negation. This provides evidence for the proposal that fronting is motivated by the need to value structural accusative case, which is unavailable in the $n$P projection selected by clausal negation. In contrast to this, pronouns receiving inherent case like dative or genitive are unaffected by the lack of structural licensing and consequently do not front. The existence of morphological case distinctions on pronouns also provides a mechanism for distinguishing pronouns from full DPs in terms of where they are spelled out. Pronouns are spelled out in the landing site, since this is where the case morphology is introduced during vocabulary insertion. Since no morphology is added to full DPs, these are
spelled out in their base positions. I have further provided evidence that the complement of the Neg head is a nominalized predicate.

5. Indirect Evidence: Availability of structural case obviates fronting

In section 2, I showed how the case based analysis accounts for the lack of pronoun fronting in *wh*-questions. This is because *wh*-questions require the presence of a *vP* structure, which also entails the possibility of accusative case licensing from *v*. This proposal circumvents a potential counter argument posed by Djamouri’s (2000) focus analysis. In this section, I offer additional evidence showing that pronoun fronting is obviated if a *vP* structure is required for independent reasons.

5.1. Aspect and Fronting

It is frequently noted that there is a connection between aspect and the availability of structural object case (Tenny 1987, 1994; Van Voorst 1988; Bittner 1994; Borer 1994; Benua 1995; Kiparsky 1998; Ritter and Rosen 2000; Spreng 2006; Basilico 2008; and others). For example, Kiparsky (1998:6) proposes for Finnish that an object has partitive case if it is governed by an unbounded
verbal predicate or is itself quantitatively indeterminate. In (33), the appearance of accusative case on the object correlates with a bounded interpretation for the event. If a verb is intrisically unbounded, it can only license partitive case on its object.

**Finnish** (Kiparsky 1998:3)

(33) etsi-n karhu-a/#karhu-n

seek-1.Sg bear-Part/bear-Acc

‘I’m looking for the (a) bear.’

Interestingly, LAC pronouns frequently failed to undergo fronting in perfective clauses, as noted by F. Zhou (1959) and G. Zhou (1959).

(34) a. 出三日，不食之矣。 *(Analects 10)*

   Chu san ri, [bu [shi zhi]] yi.

   be.out three day not eat 3.Obj Perf

   ‘If it has been out for three days, don’t eat it anymore.’

b. 夫知吾將用之，必不予我矣。 *(Guoyu, 10)*

   Fu zhi wu jiang yong zhi,

   if know 1 will use 3.Obj
‘If (he) knows that we are going to use him, then (he) won’t give (him) to us anymore.’

The lack of pronoun fronting can be accounted for if we assume that LAC was like Finnish and other languages in making accusative case available in perfect aspect contexts. On the analysis presented in section 3, the perfective aspect head selects a vP whose head can structurally license the object. This obviates movement of the object in order to be licensed.

Note that the failure of pronoun fronting in perfective contexts presents an empirical problem for Feng’s (1996) prosodic analysis of pronoun fronting discussed in section 2, since Feng treats pronoun fronting as a prosodic phenomenon, which should not be subject to semantic distinctions like aspect.

5.2. Complex VPs

There is another structural environment which suggests that Neg was forced to select a verbal complement under certain circumstances. Pronoun fronting did not take place from a VP
containing more than one constituent other than the verb. (35) shows examples of ditransitive VPs.

(35)  a. 今女不求之於本。  (Xunzi 15)
    Jin  ru  bu  [qiu  zhi  yu  ben],
    now 2 not seek 3.Obj in root
    ‘Now, you do not seek it in the root.’

    b. 不畜之於君。  (Hanfeizi 32)
    bu  [chu  zhi  yu  jun].
    not subordinate 3.Obj to lord
    ‘A vassal will not subordinate this to his lord.’

Note first that the lack of fronting in (35) would be very mysterious on Feng’s (1996) prosodic analysis. The case-based account does, however, offer an explanation. The word order in (35) suggests that the verb has raised from its base position to $v$.

On the assumption that incorporation of the verb to $v$ is motivated by the need to categorize the root (in the sense of Marantz 1997), it seems safe to conclude that a verbal $vP$ is required in these cases. Given that a verbal $v$ also can carry an accusative case feature, the pronominal object can be licensed in-situ, thereby accounting for the lack of fronting in (35).
This situation is mirrored in applicative constructions. Aldridge (2012) argues that the LAC functional morpheme *yi* heads a high applicative phrase (in the sense of Pylkkanen 2002) located above VP within vP. The Appl head *yi* moves to *v*, deriving the order *YI*-DP-VP. As in the case of ditransitive VPs just discussed, I assume that a vP layer is required to support movement of the applicative, making accusative case available for the object in VP, which is the pronoun ZHI in the examples in (36).

(36) a. 不以其道得之，不處也。 (*Analects* 4)

\[
\text{Bu} \ [vP \ yi \ [ApplP \ [qi \ dao] \ tyi \ [vP \ de \ zhi]]] \\
\text{not} \ \text{Appl} \ 3.\text{Gen} \ \text{way} \ 3.\text{Obj} \\
\text{bu} \ 3.\text{Obj} \ 3.\text{Obj} \ \text{ye}.
\]

‘If one does not obtain them by the proper means, then they will not remain.’

b. 不以私害之。 (*Xunzi* 3)

\[
\text{Bu} \ [vP \ yi \ [ApplP \ si \ tyi \ [vP \ hai \ zhi]]] \\
\text{not} \ \text{Appl} \ \text{private} \ \text{harm} \ 3.\text{Obj} \\
\text{‘(He) does not damage it with private concerns.’}
\]

Because the applicative construction requires a full vP structure, it is not surprising that the applied object also does not undergo
fronting. The pronoun can be licensed by \( v \) dominating the ApplP and consequently does not need to front.

\[(37)\]
a. 今我得地之道，

\( \text{Jin wo de di zhi dao,} \)

\( \text{now 1 obtain earth Gen way} \)

而不以我為三公。    \((\text{Lù Shi Chunqiu 20.6})\)

\( \text{er bu [vP yi wo wei sangong]} \)

\( \text{Conj not Appl 1 be official} \)

‘I have achieved the way of the earth and yet you do not make me one of the sangong officials.’

b. 夫人知王之不以己為妒也。    \((\text{Hanfeizi 31})\)

\( \text{Furen zhi wang zhi bu [vP yi ji]} \)

\( \text{wife know king Gen not Appl self} \)

\( \text{wei du]} \)

\( \text{be jealous} \)

‘His wife knew the king did not take her to be jealous.’

In this section, I considered environments where pronouns did not front in the context of negation. I have shown that this is not a random occurrence but rather has a principled explanation which is consistent with the case based analysis of fronting. Objects were
required to front when they could not be case licensed in their base positions. But fronting was obviated if a vP structure was projected and the object could be licensed in situ.

6. Evidence for Object Shift

In this subsection, I present one final argument in favor of analyzing pronoun fronting as syntactic movement targeting the edge of nP. The LAC reflexive pronoun 己 ji could be bound by the local subject, as in (38a), or long distance bound, as in (38b).

(38) a. 射者正己而後發。 （Mencius 3）
    She zhe zheng ji er hou fa.
    shoot Det correct self Conj then shoot
    ‘An archer straightens himself and then shoots.’

b. 諸侯惡其害己。 （Mencius 10）
    Zhuhou, wu [qi hai ji].
    feudal.lord dislike they harm self
    ‘The feudal lords dislike it that they inconvenience them.’
As a pronoun, *ji* would undergo object shift in the presence of negation.

(39)  

a. 不患人之不己知。 *(Analects 1)*  

\[e_i \text{ bu huan [ren}_j \text{ zhi bu } j_i \text{ zhi]}\]  

not worry others Gen not self know  

‘Do not worry that others do not understand you.’

b. 莫己知也。 *(Analects 14)*  

\[\text{mo}_i \ j_i \text{ zhi ye.}\]  

none self know Nomlz  

‘No one understands me!’

However, only long distance bound *ji* could front. When *ji* was bound by the local subject, it did not front.

(40)  

a. 順人而不失己。 *(Zhuangzi 3.4)*  

\[e_i \text{ shun ren er } e_i \text{ bu shi } j_i.\]  

accommodate person Conj not lose self  

‘(He) accommodates others and without losing himself.’
b. 聖人不愛己。 (Xunzi 22)

\[\text{Shengren} \_i \quad \text{bu} \quad \text{ai} \quad \text{ji}_i.\]

saint       not    love self

‘A saint does not love himself.’

The asymmetry between (39) and (40) is not predicted by Feng’s (1996) cliticization approach, since prosodic cliticization should not be sensitive to Binding Principles. However, the pattern is accounted for on the present analysis. Since pronoun fronting to negation targets the outer specifier of \( nP \), the pronoun lands in a position which c-commands the local subject. In cases like (40), in which the local subject is the intended antecedent for the anaphor, a Binding Principle C violation will result. Consequently, the pronoun is unable to front when the antecedent is the local subject. The derivation will converge, however, if Neg selects a \( vP \) and the object is licensed in situ.

To summarize the previous three sections, I have argued that pronoun fronting to negation was syntactic object shift to an outer specifier of \( nP \) in order to value structural accusative case. I have shown that only pronouns needing structural accusative case underwent fronting and that this fronting was obviated if case was available for the object in situ.
7. Loss of Pronoun Fronting

Pronoun fronting to negation was no longer a productive process by the end of the Han Dynasty (roughly 200 CE). In this section, I show that this change was concomitant with the loss of case distinctions on pronouns, thus providing a morphological trigger for the change in the syntax.

The loss of morphological case is evidenced in Han period texts by the distribution of pronominal forms which did not correlate with the case these arguments valued in the syntax. A specific example is the breakdown in the complementarity between the accusative pronoun zhi and the genitive pronoun qi. Recall from section 4 that the accusative pronoun ZHI appeared in the position of an exceptionally case-marked embedded subject in the Classical period.

(41) 使之聞之。  (Analects 17)

shi  [zhi  wen  zhi ]
make 3.Obj hear 3.Obj

‘As the messenger was leaving, (Confucius) took up his zither and sang, making him (the messenger) hear it.’
From the Han period, however, we can find examples of the genitive pronoun in this position.

(42) a. 全趙令其止。 (Zhanguoce, Xi Zhou)

Quan Zhao ling [TP qi zhi ]
protect Zhao make 3.Gen stop
‘(You) protect Zhao and make them stop.’

b. 欲使其生於階庭耳。 (Shishuo Xinyu, Yanyu)

Yu shi [qi sheng yu jieting] er.
want make 3.Gen grow in courtyard only
‘(You) only want to make them grow in a courtyard.’

When used in monoclausal contexts, however, the object following these verbs still had to be the accusative pronoun and was never the genitive pronoun.

(43) a. 王乃召相，令之曰： (Zhanguoce, Qin 5)

Wang nai zhao xiang, ling zhi yue:
king then call minister order 3.Obj say
‘The king then summoned his prime minister and issued him an order, saying....’
b. 大王可試使之。 (Zhanguoce, Zhao 4)

Da wang ke shi shi zhi.

great king can try send 3.OBJ

‘Your majesty could try to send him.’

What this asymmetry shows here is that the use of pronominal forms no longer correlates with the abstract cases valued in the syntax, since direct objects and ECM subjects both value accusative case in the syntax. It appears that the difference between accusative and genitive pronouns was reinterpreted in terms of structural position rather than morphological case. In the Han period, there was a tendency to use the genitive pronoun for embedded subjects, regardless of the case which they valued in the syntax. In Middle Chinese Buddhist writings, this generalization was extended to all pronouns occupying specifier positions. Consequently, not only ECM subjects but even the specifier of a ditransitive VP (44a) or the subject of a small clause (44b) is also represented with genitive QI and not accusative ZHI. \(^\text{v}\) The following texts are 5\textsuperscript{th} century translations of Buddhist sutras.
(44) a. 唯願世尊與其長壽。 (Zabao Zangjing 47)

Wei yuan Shizun yu qi changshou.

only wish Buddha give 3.Gen longevity

‘(I) only ask the Buddha to give him long life.’

b. 見其如是，欲往試之。 (Xianyu Jing 1)

Jian qi ru shi,

See 3.Gen like this

yu wang shi zhi.

want go test 3. Obj

‘Seeing him thus, (he) want to go and test him.’

I interpret the appearance of the genitive pronoun in positions historically reserved for the accusative pronoun as evidence that, at least in the spoken language, the morphological distinction between these two pronouns had been lost. I posit the following relationship between the loss of morphological case distinctions and the loss of pronoun fronting to negation. First, the lack of morphological case meant that both pronouns and full DPs came to be spelled out in their base positions, regardless of whether object shift took place in the syntax. The post-verbal position of the pronominal object in the input data subsequently obscured the existence of the
transformation to language learners. This also deprived them of evidence for positing the $nP$ complement of Neg and prompted them instead to acquire the default structure in which Neg consistently selects a $vP$.

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[On the Positions of Negators and Objects in Pre-Qin Texts]. In
I follow Wang (1958) and Zhou (1963) in identifying the Warring States period of the 5th – 3rd centuries BCE as a distinct period in the history of Chinese, which they term Late Archaic Chinese.

At first blush, this Agree relation seems to violate the Phase Impenetrability Condition of Chomsky (2001). Harves proposes, however, that the v lacking a case feature is not a strong phase, allowing the case feature on Neg to probe into the VP.

This restriction applies to PF-interpretable features inserted in the morphological component and not to LF-interpretable features like focus and topic. Focus and topic chains are always resolved by spelling out the head in LAC. Furthermore, unlike modern Chinese varieties, LAC was a wh-movement language, so wh-phrases were likewise spelled out in their landing sites.

Pulleyblank (1994, 1995) analyzes 也 ye as an imperfective aspect marker. However, this claim is based to a large extent on the fact that pronoun fronting to negation takes place in the presence of 也 ye but not with the perfective aspect marker 矣 yi ‘Perf’.

Positive evidence for an aspectual analysis of 也 ye is not compelling.

Note that QI in (44a) cannot be interpreted as a possessor of the direct object. Possessed DPs in pre-modern Chinese were always
definite. But the referent of the direct object in this example is
introduced into the discourse for the first time with this sentence.