

**NON-VERBAL AND EXISTENTIAL NEGATORS:
A CROSS-LINGUISTIC AND A HISTORICAL-COMPARATIVE STUDY**

Category Either oral or poster

Most typological studies of negation focus on **Standard negation** (hereafter SN), a term to used to refer to the negation of simple indicative sentences with an overt verb predicate as in (iii) *Mary does not sing* (cf. for instance (Dahl, 1979, Miestamo, 2003/2005). The terms **non-verbal** and **existential negators** are used to refer to the negation markers in sentences such as (i) *Mary is not a nurse* (a **non-verbal sentence**) and (ii) *There are no wild cats* (an **existential sentence**). These sentences are excluded from the domain of SN. The first goal of this paper is to refine the typology of non-verbal and existential negators suggested by Veselinova (2007). The second goal is to propose a motivation for the use of special strategies to negate statements such as (i) and (ii), with a special focus on negative existentials.

Both synchronic variation and diachronic evolution were considered. For the synchronic part of the study, a balanced sample of 100 languages was used. For the diachronic part, the investigation was done on 15 major Slavonic languages and a sample of 18 Oceanic languages. Data sources have been grammars, elicitation as well as detailed corpus searches on the Russian and Slovak National Corpora and a text collection of transcribed spoken Bulgarian.

The data from the balanced sample suggest that languages may use up to three different strategies to carve up the domain of negation e.g. using separate strategies for negating verbs, non-verbal, and finally locative-existential sentences (cf. (1) Barasano, 20% of languages in the balanced sample). Languages with one and the same strategy for all of these domains as in (2) French, cover about 27% of sample. For 53% of the languages in the balanced sample, illustrated by (3) Thai, (4) Maricopa and (5) Lele, we observe two strategies of negation. These strategies may combine the three domains identified above in different ways. Besides, as shown by (5), there may be more than one strategy used to negate a single domain. The choice of strategy is often contingent on tense-aspect-mood category (TAM), focus or specificity of the predicated entity; however, free variation is observed as well. Areal tendencies to be noted are the abundance of non-verbal negators in the languages of Southeast Asia and the absence of these special negators in the standard languages of Western Europe (however, such negators, especially existential ones, are observed in a number of non-standard varieties). Formally, non-verbal negators tend to be either pre- or post-predicate particles or special lexical items; the existential negators are overwhelmingly classified as special lexical items. As regards use, additional functions of negative existentials tend to be uses such as general words for 'no', emphatic negators and SN in marked TAM categories (cf also Croft (1991)). While non-verbal negators may be used in similar functions as well, generally, they interact with SN more seldom than existential negators.

The comparative data from the Slavonic genus show that special negators may result from the fusion of the standard negator with a form of the verbs 'be' (for non-verbal negators) and 'have' (for negative existentials) (cf (McGregor, Work in Progress) for a similar evolution of the negated possessive construction into a negative existential). In the Slavonic languages, special negative existentials are used primarily to express absolute absence; they cannot be used in constructions of contrastive negation, cf. (6b.). This fact along with cross-linguistic evidence on usage and on lexical sources for negative existentials is considered important when suggesting a motivation for them being so commonly set apart from SN. Specifically, it is argued that negative existentials form a functional domain of their own. They are used to predicate absence rather than to negate a presupposed presence/existence. This sets them apart from other domains of negation and is thus proposed as an explanation for the fact that they are so frequently expressed by a special strategy.

EXAMPLES

(1) Barasano (Tucanoan), (Jones and Jones, 1991: 7, 83) Three different strategies: suffix for SN, particle for non-verbal negation, negative verb for locative-existential negation

a. *Wa-be-a-ha* *y#* b. *Yeba bās-a bēhe yā-a-bā* *īdā*
 move-NEG-PRES-NON3 1SG Yeba human-PL NEG be-PRES-3PL:ANIM 3PL
 'I am not going' 'They are not Yeba's people'

c. *Bās-a* *bādi-ka-h#* *ti*
 human-PL not be-FAR PAST-3 3INAM
 'No one was there' / 'there were no people there'

(2) French (Indo-European, Romance) (Hugues Tarall, p.c.): Once and the same strategy for all three domains

a. *Marie ne dort pas* b. *Je ne suis pas français*
 Marie NEG sleep.3.SG.PRES NEG I NEG am NEG French
 'Marie is not asleep' 'I am not French'

c. *Il n' y a pas de fumée sans feu*
 3SG NEG' LOC have.3.SG NEG PART smoke without fire
 'There is no smoke without fire'

(3) Thai (Tai-Kadai), (Miestamo, 2003: 355) (Tu Zlatev, p.c.): SN and existential negation: a negative particle precedes the predicate; non-verbal negation: the negative particle replaces the copula (3d.) or a different verb is used with the copula (3e.)

a. *Khāw may3 àan nāysīi dīwnīi* b. *May3 mii0 sin3to0 sii4 khao4*
 he NEG read book Now NEG Exist lion color white
 'He is not reading a book' 'There are no white lions/White lions do not exist'

c. *Chay1 pen1 khruul* d. *Chay1 may3 chay3 khruul* e. *Chay1 may3day3 pen1 khruul*
 Chay Be teacher Chay NEG Chay Teacher Chay not the case be teacher
 'Chay is a teacher' 'Chay is not a teacher' 'Chay is not a teacher'

(4) Maricopa (Yuman), (Gordon, 1986: 26, 144): SN and non-verbal expressed by a circumfix vs. locative-existential negation expressed by a special verb

a. *Waly-puy-ma-k* b. *'iipa-sh waly- 'do-ma-k* c. *Mash-sh kuvar-k*
 NEG-die-NEG-real man-SUBJ NEG-1-be-NEG-REAL Food-SUBJ be none-REAL
 'He didn't die' 'I am not a man' 'There is no food'

(5) Lele (Afro-Asiatic, East Chadic)(Frajzyngier, 2001: 200, 213): SN and non-verbal expressed by a postverbal particle vs. locative-existential negation that can be expressed either by SN or by a special verb

a. *Ē dí dē* b. *Nò go lele dē* c. *Kùmnó mání dē* d. *Kùmnó wílég*
 Go 3M NEG COP REF Lele NEG God there NEG God not exist
 'he did not go' / 'He is not a Lele man' 'There is no God' 'There is no God'

(6) Bulgarian (Indo-European, South Slavic) (Maria Avgustinova, p.c.)

a. *Todor go njama (v kashti)* b. *Todor ne e v kashti, a na rabota*
 Todor 3.SG.ACC not.have.3.SG.PRES (in home) Todor NEG is at home, but at work
 'Todor is not here (at home)' 'Todor is not at home, he's at work'

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