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University of Novi Sad
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***LANGUAGES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CONTACT: THE
CHALLENGES OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY***

on the 5th of October 2024

at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad

LANGUAGE VARIATIONS EXPRESSED IN ENGLISH NEGATIONS AND

EQUIVALENT TRANSLATIONS INTO MACEDONIAN

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Language Variations in English Negation:

A Comparative Study with Macedonian

This study delves into the intricate world of English negation, examining its variability and equivalent translations into Macedonian, with a specific focus on informal spoken conversations recorded in Glasgow, Tyneside, and Salford. The examples of language variations are taken from Claire Childs-Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics, Newcastle University research investigation explores three key linguistic variables: not-/no-negation and negative concord, non-quantificational never and didn't, and negative tags. By employing a comparative approach, the study aims to unravel the intricacies of regional differentiation in negation and uncover the underlying grammatical and historical principles that govern these variations.



The Linguistic Variables of English Negation

The study focuses on three specific variables of negation in English:

1. Not-/no-negation and negative concord: This variable explores the use of "not" and "no" in negating sentences, including instances of double negation, commonly referred to as negative concord.

Examples include "I don't have any money" vs. "I have no money" and the non-standard "I don't have no money".

2. Non-quantificational never and didn't: This variable examines the usage of "never" and "didn't" in negating actions or events without quantifying them. Examples include "I never saw that program last night" vs. "I didn't see that program last night".

3. Negative tags: This variable investigates the use of negative tags, which function to seek agreement or confirmation. Examples include "It's a nice day, isn't it" vs. "int it" vs. "in nit?".

Not-/No-negation & Concord

This variable explores the use of "not" and "no" in negating sentences and instances of double negation, like "I don't have no money".

Never and Didn't

This variable examines the usage of "never" and "didn't" in negating actions or events without quantifying them. Examples include "I never saw that program last night".

Negative Tags

This variable investigates the use of negative tags, like "It's a nice day, isn't it" vs. "int it" vs. "in nit?".

Regional Differentiation in Negation

The study investigates regional variations in negation, comparing data collected in Glasgow, Tyneside, and Salford. These regions were chosen for their distinct linguistic characteristics, allowing for a nuanced analysis of regional differences in negation patterns. By comparing the relative frequency of variants across these regions, the study aims to pinpoint key geographical influences on the usage of these negation variables. Expression of negation in English focuses on the varieties spoken in three communities in Northern Britain: Glasgow in Scotland, Tyneside in the North East of England, and Salford in the North West of England.

Glasgow

The study found that in Glasgow, "not" was significantly more common than "no", particularly in negating sentences with quantifiers.

Tyneside

Tyneside showed a greater tendency towards using "no" than "not", especially in non-quantificational contexts.

Salford

Salford exhibited a balanced use of "not" and "no", suggesting a more neutral pattern.

The Role of Internal Factors in Negation

The study explores the influence of internal linguistic factors on the variation of negation. Specifically, the researchers examine the impact of verb type and lexical aspect on the use of not-/no-negation, never/didn't, and negative tags. The analysis reveals that internal factors significantly constrain the use of these variables, shaping the overall patterns of negation in English.

Verb Type

1

The study reveals that verb type plays a significant role in the choice of negation marker. For instance, stative verbs (verbs expressing states, such as "know", "believe", and "want") often prefer "no" over "not" in negation, while dynamic verbs (verbs expressing actions, such as "run", "eat", and "jump") are more likely to use "not".

2

Lexical Aspect

The study finds that lexical aspect, which refers to the way an action or event is viewed in time, also impacts negation. Perfective verbs (verbs describing completed actions) tend to be negated with "never" and "didn't" more frequently than imperfective verbs (verbs describing ongoing or habitual actions), which might utilize "not" or "no".

Discourse-Pragmatic Factors in Negation

The study examines the influence of discourse-pragmatic factors on the use of negation, considering politeness, emphasis, and formality. The findings suggest that discourse-pragmatic factors play a crucial role in shaping negation patterns, particularly for not-/no-negation and never/didn't, while negative tags exhibit more variability and are influenced by social and situational factors.

Discourse-Pragmatic Factor	Negation Variable
Politeness	Not-/No-negation
Emphasis	Never/Didn't
Formality	Negative Tags



Translation Equivalents in Macedonian

The study investigates the translation of English negation into Macedonian, analyzing how negation markers and their variations are rendered in the target language. The research reveals that the translation of negation is not a straightforward process, and the choice of equivalent markers is influenced by both the structure of the English sentence and the grammatical rules of Macedonian.

1

Not-/No-negation

In Macedonian, "not" and "no" are often translated using the negative particle "не" (ne), but variations in usage occur depending on the context and the presence of quantifiers. "Any" might be translated as "никаков" (nikakov), while "no" can be rendered as "ништо" (nisto). The study explores how these variations are reflected in the Macedonian translations.

2

Never/Didn't

The translation of "never" and "didn't" in Macedonian is typically rendered using the verb "не" (ne) followed by the past participle of the verb. However, the choice of past participle can be influenced by the specific aspect of the verb in English. The study examines the impact of verb aspect on the translation of these negation markers.

3

Negative Tags

Negative tags in Macedonian are more complex and often require rephrasing or a different grammatical structure compared to English. The study analyzes how the meaning of negative tags is conveyed in Macedonian translations.

Comparative Analysis of Negation Variations

The study employs quantitative analysis to examine the frequency of different negation variants in English and their translations into Macedonian. The analysis focuses on comparing the relative frequency of variants across the three regions and identifying key patterns of variation. Additionally, the researchers investigate the influence of internal factors like verb type and lexical aspect on the frequency of different variants, providing a more nuanced understanding of the linguistic mechanisms at play.



Frequency of Not/No

The study reveals that the frequency of "not" and "no" varies across the three regions, with Tyneside showing a higher use of "no" and Glasgow exhibiting a higher use of "not".



Frequency of Never/Didn't

The analysis shows that "never" is more prevalent than "didn't" in all three regions, but the frequency of each variant varies slightly.



Frequency of Negative Tags

Negative tags display a higher frequency in Salford compared to Glasgow and Tyneside, suggesting regional differences in the use of this grammatical feature.

Theoretical Implications of the Findings

The study's findings have significant theoretical implications for understanding the nature of language variation and the intricate interplay between grammatical constraints and discourse-pragmatic factors. The results provide empirical support for theoretical accounts of the grammatical and historical development of negation in English and shed light on the ways in which linguistic variables are shaped by both internal and external forces.

1 *Grammatical Constraints*

The study's findings provide evidence for the existence of grammatical constraints that govern the use of different negation markers in English. These constraints are evident in the influence of verb type and lexical aspect on the choice of negation markers.

2 *Discourse-Pragmatic Influences*

The study highlights the importance of discourse-pragmatic factors in shaping negation patterns. These factors, including politeness, emphasis, and formality, influence the choice of negation marker, particularly for not-/no-negation and never/didn't.

3 *Regional Variation*

The study reveals the existence of regional variation in the use of negation markers. The variation is not simply random but is influenced by a combination of factors, including geographical location, social networks, and historical influences.



Conclusion

The study concludes that negation in English is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, influenced by a multitude of factors, including regional variation, internal grammatical constraints, and discourse-pragmatic influences. The research highlights the need for further investigation into the intricacies of negation variation in English and its translation into other languages, contributing to a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of language, culture, and communication.