

The marking of nominal participants under negation

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Negatives that show structural differences with respect to their affirmative counterparts in addition to the marker(s) of negation are called asymmetric by Miestamo (2005). The marking of NP participants is explicitly excluded from the scope of his study, and no systematic typological knowledge is thus available on the asymmetry between affirmatives and negatives as regards the marking of nominal participants. The aim of this study is to fill this gap. The effects of negation on the marking of nominal participants are surveyed in an areally and genealogically balanced sample of 240 languages.

Relevant effects of negation are found in case marking, in the use of articles and other determiners, in the use of class markers, and in focus marking. A comprehensive picture of the asymmetries found in the marking of nominal participants is presented in the paper. The types of asymmetry are cross-linguistically rather uncommon, being limited to specific areas and families.

It is well-known that negation can affect case marking. In Finnish affirmatives, the object may be, on the one hand, in the genitive or nominative depending on the morphosyntactic environment, or, on the other hand, in the partitive, but in negatives only the partitive is possible. Similar case asymmetry is found in a number of European languages (Finnic, Baltic, Slavic, Basque): NPs in the scope of negation are marked with a case that has a partitive-marking function (partitive or genitive), either obligatorily or as a matter of preference. Such case alternations are however not found outside Europe in my sample.

Negation is found to affect the use of articles and other determiners, e.g., in French and in some Oceanic languages, such as Araki. In Araki (Alex François, pc.), realis affirmatives have bare NP objects and the verb bears a referential object marker and person-number cross-reference. The object may be further specified as indefinite by the specific-indefinite marker *mo-hese*. In the negative, there is no cross-reference on the verb and the object is marked by the non-specific (partitive) indefinite marker *re*. Referential marking and cross-reference are possible on the verb in negatives, too, but then the reading is definite, and *re* does not occur. The specific indefinite marker *mo-hese* is impossible in negatives and the non-specific indefinite *re* is impossible in realis affirmatives.

Class markers are affected by negation, e.g., in some Bantu languages. In Xhosa (Taraldsen 2010), noun class prefixes have a full form in affirmatives. In negatives, a shorter form of the class prefix can be used and the NP then gets an indefinite non-specific reading. The full form can be found in negatives if the object prefix also appears on the verb, i.e. when the object is definite (or, more rarely, specific indefinite).

Effects of negation on focus marking are found, e.g., in a number of African languages, in which negatives are treated as inherently focused. In Aghem (Larry Hyman, pc.), this results in marking the NP in the scope of negation as oblique.

The types of asymmetries between affirmation and negation found, e.g., in Araki and Xhosa are connected to the referentiality of the NPs, and can be explained by the discourse properties of negation (cf. Givón 1978). I propose that the partitive of negation is also connected to referentiality and motivated in the same way. The functional motivations for the asymmetry affecting focus marking will also be addressed in the paper.

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