A corpus-based approach to clausal negation in Turkish Sign Language

Bahtiyar MAKRAGOGLU & Josep QUER
Ankara University, ICREA-Universitat Pompeu Fabra
makaro@anankara.edu.tr, joserp.quer@upf.edu

Introduction

• The syntactic phenomenon of clausal negation (CN) has received considerable attention in the sign language (SL) literature (cf. Zeshan 2006a, Pfau & Quer, 2007; Quer, 2012; Pfau, 2016).
• Despite the typological similarities in basic CN, there is cross-linguistic variation in the domain of negation – particularly in nonmanual morphemes. It has been reported for various SLs that the use of the manual negator is obligatory (e.g., Italian SL), while in others, clauses are commonly negated by means of a nonmanual marker (NMM) only as in German SL (Pfau, 2016).
• Turkish Sign Language (TID) has basic SOV order and the manual negator (not) occupies a clause-final position (Zeshan, 2006b; Kubys, 2008; Gökçöz 2011). This negative sign tends to be accompanied by a backward head tilt (bht).

Corpus

• Naturalistic corpus data from TID Corpus (Dikiyeva, Makaroğlu and Ark, 2015)
• 116 deaf signers in dialogue setting
• 26 cities in Turkey
• 6240 minutes, partially annotated (230,000 sign tokens)
• Dialogues, narratives, elicitation tasks

Sample

• 104 deaf signers from 26 different cities
• 66199 sign tokens
• 1249 negative sentences

Goals

(i) Provide a first naturalistic corpus based documentation for the types of negative NMMs in TID and describe their patterns.
(ii) Describe the combination of two negative lexical elements in sentence-final position in TID.
(iii) Determine the syntactic position and nonmanual aspects of negative adversarial markers in TID.

Negation in TID

• Clause cannot be negated only by means of a NMM in TID (Zeshan, 2006b; Gökçöz, 2011; Pfau, 2016)

1. INDEX: 1. UNDERSTAND

2. INDEX: BANANA, THROW, NOT

3. INDEX: LOOK, AT, NOT AT ALL

4. INDEX: SIGN KNOW, NOT AT ALL

Following Zeijlstra’s featural approach to CN (2004, 2008), Pfau (2016) proposed that TID is a Non-strict Negative Concord (NC) language and also allows for NC between the NOT and an n-word.

Negation in adversarial domain

Preverbal position with or without nonmanual negators

(i) If the sign of negation is moved to the preverbal position, it is interpreted in the same way in preverbal position with or without NMMs. (ii) If the sign of negation is moved to the preverbal position, it is never interpreted in the same way in preverbal position with or without NMMs.

BHT and BR role in CN

(i) BHT is not lexically specified on the clausual negator not but rather combines with not in syntax.
(ii) Gökçöz (2014) proposed that non-neutral brow position, attested in 71% of all negative sentences, has a grammatical function rather than a lexical one.

Negative strategies

• The syntactic interpretation of the clause depends on the preverbal or postverbal position of the negative adversarial in TID.

Preverbal position with or without nonmanual negators

(i) If the sign of negation is moved to the preverbal position, it is interpreted in the same way in preverbal position with or without NMMs. (ii) If the sign of negation is moved to the preverbal position, it is never interpreted in the same way in preverbal position with or without NMMs.

Positive concord

(i) When NOT is combined with a negative nonmanual complexive marker, the sentence remains negative (11);
(ii) not and the negative modal cannot accompanied by sideward head tilt (shht) co-occur in a sentence, without changing the negative interpretation of the sentence (12);
(iii) NC reading is available despite the use of two simultaneous negative NMM morphemes (e.g. ‘pc’ accompanied by ‘bht’) in (13)

Conclusions

(i) TID does not strictly feature a manual dominant negation system, since a clause can be negated by means of NMMs only – be it a bht, pc, br, or hs.
(ii) A typological split (manual vs. nonmanual dominant SLs) is too simplistic.
(iii) NC between the NMM and the negative manual sign, between a manual negation sign and another negative sign, or between a nonmanual component and other NMMs can be seen within a clause.
(iv) Negative NMM of TID is not limited to bht, but also encompasses a br, bl, pc and sh.
(v) Negative topicalization strategy can be argued to explain cases of DN readings.

Double negation

(i) The combination of the negative adversarial NEVER and not in sentence-final position yields a double negation (DN) reading (14).
(ii) Multiple negatives yield DN readings through a negative topicalization strategy and the NMM spreads over the entire prosodic element.

References