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

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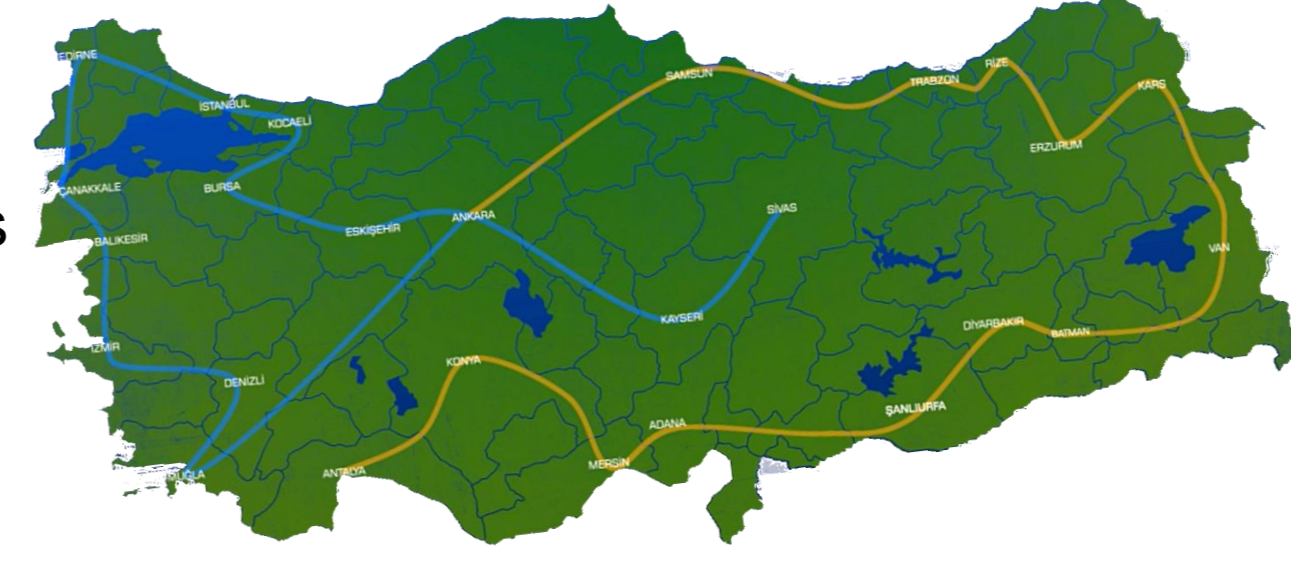
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Introduction

- 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 (TİD) has basic SOV order and the manual negator DEĞİL/NOT occupies a clause-final position (Zeshan, 2006b; Kubuş, 2008; Gökgöz 2011). This negative sign tends to be accompanied by a backward head tilt ('bht').

Method

Corpus
- Naturalistic corpus data from TİD Corpus (Dikyuva, Makaroğlu and Arık, 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
- 520 minutes
- 66199 sign tokens
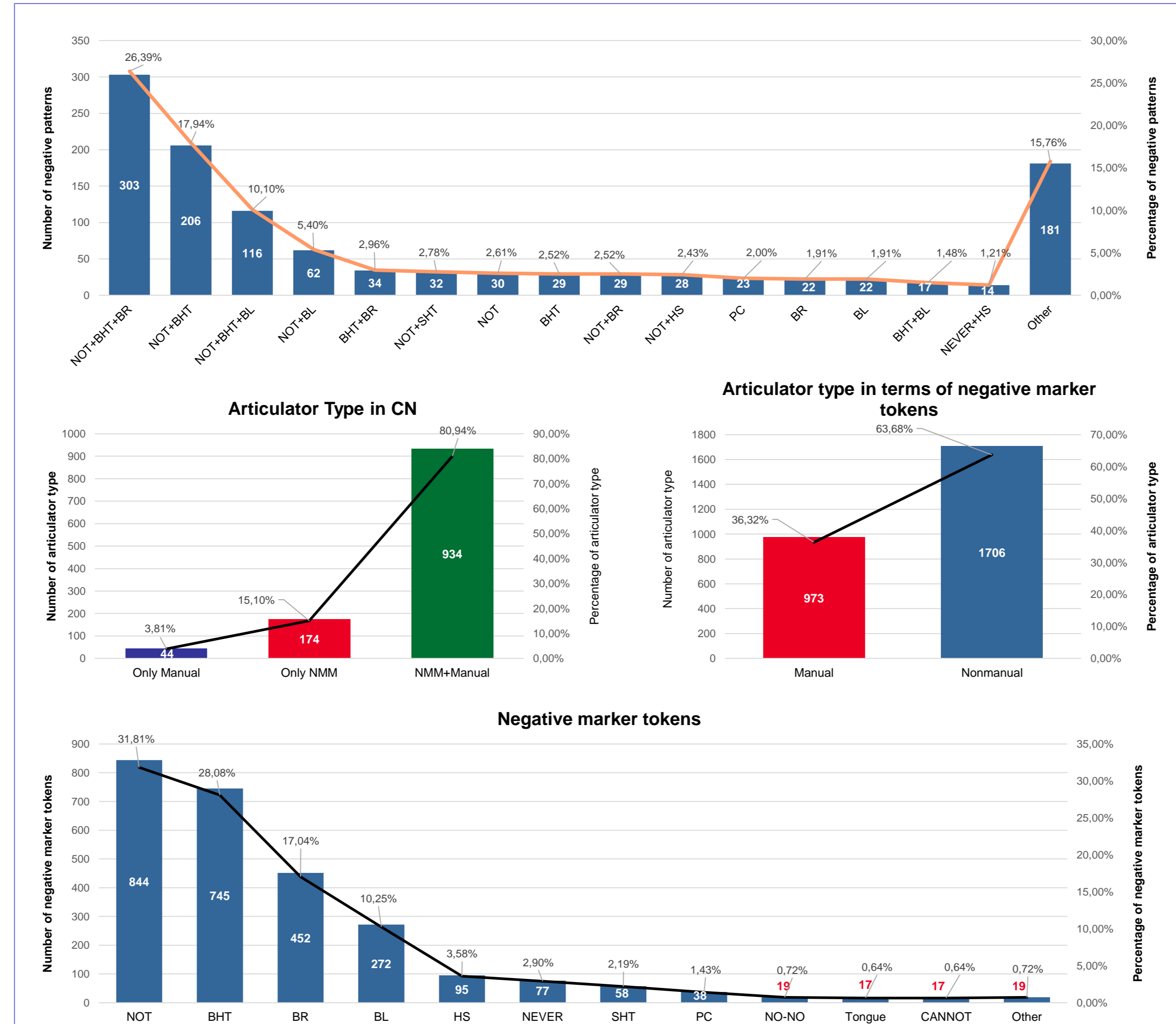- 1249 negative sentences

Goals

(i) Provide a first naturalistic corpus based documentation for the types of negative NMMs in TİD and describe their patterns.

(ii) Describe the combination of two negative lexical elements in sentence-final position in TİD.

(iii) Determine the syntactic position and nonmanual aspects of negative adverbial markers in TİD.

Negation in TİD

- Clause cannot be negated only by means of a NMM in TİD (Zeshan, 2006b; Gökgöz, 2011; Pfau, 2016)

(1)
$$\overline{}\text{bht}$$
*INDEX$_1$ UNDERSTAND
'I don't understand.'

- The clausal negator NOT is lexically specified for a **backward head tilt** (Gökgöz, 2011)

(2)
$$\overline{}\text{bht}$$
INDEX$_1$ BANANA THROW$_\text{front}$ NOT
'I did not throw the banana to the front.'

- All functional heads hosting elements of negation are on the right. Negative adverbials occupy **SpecNegP** (Gökgöz, 2011).

- Two manual negative signs may co-occur in a clause without changing the polarity of the clause (Gökgöz, 2011:53-54)

(3) INDEX$_1$ $_1$LOOK-AT$_3$ NOT NO
'I didn't look at him.'

(4) INDEX$_1$ SIGN KNOW NOT AT-ALL
'I didn't know (how to) sign at all.'

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

BHT and BR role in CN

- BHT is not lexically specified on the clausal negator NOT but rather **combines with NOT in syntax**.

BHT Role in Manual Negation

	Number of BHT in manual negation	Percentage of BHT in manual negation
NOT with BHT	627	74,38%
NOT without BHT	216	25,62%

- Gökgöz (2014) proposed that non-neutral brow position, attested in 71% of all negative sentences, has a **grammatical function** rather than a lexical one.

BR Role in CN

	Number of brow position	Percentage of brow position
Neutral Brow Position	426	37,11%
Non-Neutral Brow Position	722	62,89%

Negative strategies

Negative patterns

Pattern	Number	Percentage
NOT+BHT+BR	303	26,39%
NOT+BHT	206	17,94%
NOT+BHT+BL	116	10,10%
NOT+BL	62	5,40%
BHT+BR	34	2,96%
NOT+SHT	32	2,78%
NOT	30	2,61%
BHT	29	2,52%
NOT+BR	29	2,52%
NOT+HS	28	2,43%
PC	23	2,00%
BR	22	1,91%
BL	22	1,91%
BHT+BL	17	1,48%
NEVER+HS	14	1,21%
Other	181	15,76%

Articulator Type in CN

	Number of articulator type	Percentage of articulator type
Only Manual	44	3,81%
Only NMM	174	15,10%
NMM+Manual	934	80,94%

Articulator type in terms of negative marker tokens

	Number of articulator type	Percentage of articulator type
Manual	973	36,32%
Nonmanual	1706	63,68%

Negative marker tokens

Marker	Number of negative marker tokens	Percentage of negative marker tokens
NOT	844	31,81%
BHT	745	28,08%
BR	452	17,04%
BL	272	10,25%
HS	95	3,58%
NEVER	77	2,90%
SHT	58	2,19%
PC	38	1,43%
NO-NO	19	0,72%
Tongue	17	0,64%
CANNOT	17	0,64%
Other	19	0,72%

Negation in adverbial domain

- The syntactic interpretation of the clause depends on the preverbal or postverbal position of the negative adverbial in TİD.

Preverbal position with or without nonmanual negators

(8) *IX$_1$ İSTANBUL NEVER GO
[Intendent meaning:] 'I never went to İstanbul.'

Postverbal position with or without nonmanual negators
- Containing only the negative adverbial NEVER without any NMMs (9) or with other NMMs (e.g. br) (10) (cf. Zeshan 2006, who claims it to be **lexically specified for a HS**.

NEVER and NMMs interaction

	Number of NEVER and NMMs interaction	Percentage of NEVER and NMMs interaction
Only NEVER	13	16,88%
NEVER with HS	23	29,87%
NEVER with other NMMs	41	53,25%

(9) EUROPE SET-FOOT NEVER
'I never ever set foot on Europe.'
[16:002 S:00:02:35 E:00:02:36]

(10)
$$\overline{}\text{br}$$
SENTENCE READ NEVER
"I never read a sentence (book)."
[55:003 S:00:08:24 E:00:08:25]

Negative nonmanuals

NMM	Number of negative NMMs	Percentage of negative NMMs
BHT+BR	34	19,54%
BHT	29	16,67%
PC	23	13,22%
BR	22	12,64%
BL	22	12,64%
BHT+BL	17	9,77%
HS	6	3,45%
SHT	4	2,30%
HS+BL	4	2,30%
BHT+PC	4	2,30%
PC+BHT+BR	4	2,30%
Other	5	2,87%

- Possible to negate a clause by means of only NMMs: (i) brow raise (br) (5), (ii) negative completive marker – puffed cheeks (pc) (6), (iii) backward head tilt (bht) (7)

- TİD does **not strictly feature a manual dominant negation system** – at least at first sight – (contra Zeshan and Gökgöz), and negative NMMS do not require a negative lexical host.

(5)
$$\overline{}\text{br}$$
TEXT INDEX$_1$ UNDERSTAND [36:003 S:00:09:24 E:00:09:26]
'I didn't understand the text.'

(6)
$$\overline{}\text{pc}$$
BURSA FERRY SEE [55:005 S:00:08:22 E:00:08:24]
'I did not see ferries in Bursa..'

(7)
$$\overline{}\text{bht}$$
STILL GROWN-UP IX$_3$ [65:005 S:00:05:36 E:00:05:38]
'He still hasn't grown up.'

Negative concord

(i) When NOT is combined with a negative nonmanual completive marker, the sentence remains negative (11);
(ii) NOT and the negative modal CANNOT accompanied by sideward head tilt (sht) 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)

(11)
$$\overline{}\text{pc}\quad\overline{}\text{bht}$$
KONYA GO NOT
'I didn't go to Konya.' [17:004 S:00:07:59 E:00:08:01]

(12)
$$\overline{}\text{sh}$$
UNDERSTAND NOT CANNOT [63:010 S:00:01:52 E:00:01:53]
'I couldn't understand it.'

(13)
$$\overline{}\text{pc+}$$
$$\overline{}\text{bht}$$
SHOPPING TAKE [17:007 S:00:00:33 E:00:00:34]
'I didn't buy anything.'

Double negation

(i) The combination of the negative adverbial 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 topicalized elements.

(14)
$$\overline{}\text{bht}$$
$$\overline{}\text{bl}$$
TELEVISION IX$_1$ WATCH NEVER NOT [21:002 S:00:06:17 E:00:06:19]
'Not that I didn't watch television.' (= 'I watched television sometimes.')

Conclusions

(i) TİD 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, bl 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 TİD is not limited to bht, but also encompasses a br, bl, pc and sht.
(v) Negative topicalization strategy can be argued to explain cases of DN readings.

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