

Clausal and Non-clausal Negation in the Gilaki Language (Lahijani Variety) in Typological Perspective

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Abstract

Negation is represented in all natural languages (Miestamo, 2017). In Gilaki, this phenomenon is not dealt with thoroughly. The present study attempts to provide a comprehensive description of negation in Gilaki (Lahijani variety) according to the questionnaire proposed by Miestamo (2016). For this purpose, the negation strategies used in clausal and non-clausal negation have been described. Additionally, negative structures and paradigms have been examined regarding symmetry. The data has been gathered from the everyday language spoken by the native speakers in the city of Lahijan. Negation strategies used in standard negation differ from those of other clauses in many languages, whereas it is not the case in Lahijani. The findings suggest that negation can be expressed symmetrically or asymmetrically in constructions containing different types of verbs (simple, prefixal, and compound) with respect to tense and mood. Moreover, there are some cases that the only distinction between the positive construction and its negative correspondence is not merely due to the addition of the negative element but other changes would occur, such as the replacement of the negative marker with another morpheme or some phonological changes, resulting in structural asymmetry. In non-clausal negation, negative reply, negative indefinites, and negative derivation are explored.

Keywords: negation, standard negation, clausal negation, non-clausal negation, symmetry

1. Introduction

Negation is a phenomenon that is expressed in every natural language. Standard negation is defined as the basic strategies to negate declarative verbal main

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clauses. Typologically, in some environments such as non-declarative clauses and existential predicates, negation is expressed by other means rather than standard negation. This study aims to describe negation strategies in different clauses and non-clausal environments according to Miestamo (2016).

2. Theoretical framework

According to the questionnaire proposed by Miestamo (2016), negation is primarily classified into clausal and non-clausal. Moreover, negation is described regarding structural and paradigmatic symmetry. In symmetrical structure, the only distinction between the positive and its negative counterpart is the presence of negative element. Asymmetry in structure refers to other change(s) in addition to the presence of negative maker. A paradigm, on the other hand, is symmetric if there is a one-to-one correspondence between the positive and negative members, otherwise it is asymmetric.

3. Methodology

This descriptive study is conducted within the framework of the questionnaire proposed by Miestamo (2016). The data has been collected from everyday language spoken by native speakers of Gilaki (Lahijani variety) in the city of Lahijan, in addition to the fact that the authors are native in the language. Negation strategies are formally described in different clauses including declarative verbal main clauses, non-declaratives, non-verbal, and non-main clauses. Also, non-clausal negation such as negative replies, negative indefinites, and negative derivation is examined. Besides, negative structures and paradigms are described regarding symmetry.

4. Results & Discussion

In Gilaki (Lahijani variety), standard negation (negation in declarative verbal main clauses) is expressed by attaching the negative marker to the verb of the clause. Verbs, in this language, are classified into 3 categories: simple, prefixal, and compound. In Lahijani variety, the negative affix /nə/ or its allomorphs /ni/ and /nu/, based on the vowel in the first syllable of the stem, attaches to the beginning of the verb and the verbal component in simple and compound verbs, respectively. In prefixal verbs, the affix /n/ is realized after the verbal prefix. Other clauses such as non-declaratives (imperatives and questions), non-verbal clauses and dependent clauses are negated in the same way as the standard negation. On the other hand, since symmetry in negative structures and paradigms depends on tense and mood, clauses are examined with respect to each one. In present subjunctives, simple past constructions and imperatives, simple and some compound verbs take the morpheme /bV/ and, when negated, the prefix is replaced by the negative marker. Therefore, the negative structures are asymmetric. Whereas, in prefixal and some other compound verbs, the

morpheme /bV/ is not realized and, being negated, the negative prefix is simply added to the verb. Hence, the structure is symmetric. In present progressive, contrary to the past, attaching negative affix to the verb results in some phonological changes, accounting for the structural asymmetry. Regarding paradigms, clausal negation is considered symmetric excluding the constructions containing simple and some compound verbs in simple past and past progressive tenses with the exception of stems ending in a vowel in third-person singular form. Some sentences do not have negative correspondence. To illustrate, negating some wh-questions leads to ungrammatical constructions. Note that these sentences are well-formed as echo questions. However, negative polar questions are considered grammatical. In non-verbal clauses, negative structures and paradigms were represented symmetrically and asymmetrically. In compound sentences, negative marker can be added to the subordinate and/or main clause although the presence of some verbs in the main clause entails changes in the modality of the subordinate clause. The findings regarding non-clausal negation are as follows. In negative reply, although using the negative particle /nə/ (no) in response to negative polar questions is grammatical, the positive one /ahə/ (yes) seems to be ambiguous. Therefore, as an alternative, the positive correspondence of the verb which is expressed in the question or the word /tʃərə/ (why) with a falling intonation is used. Furthermore, functions of negative indefinites, according to the semantic map proposed by Haspelmath (1997) include direct negation, indirect negation, and the question function. In negative derivation, a certain category can take different prefixes and one prefix, such as "na-", can attach to various stems.

5. Conclusions & Suggestions

This study has provided a typological description of clausal and non-clausal negation in Gilaki (Lahijani variety). Standard negation is expressed by the negative marker attaching to the verb of a construction. It is represented symmetrically or asymmetrically, which depends on three factors: a) type of the verb in the construction, b) tense, and c) mood. Other clauses are also negated using the same strategy. However certain clauses, such as some wh-questions, do not have any negative correspondences. In compound sentences, the modality of the subordinate clause is necessarily changed when the negation element is added to certain verbs in the main clause. Regarding non-clausal negation, negative reply, negative indefinites, and negative derivation was described. According to what has been mentioned earlier, the verbs whose negation in the main clause entails changes in the modality of the subordinate clause could be semantically studied in future research.

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