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Afrikaans Brace Negation within Negative Concord Hypotheses

This presentation explores the possibility of analyzing Afrikaans negative indefinites as semantically non-negative lexical items (cf. Ladusaw, 1992) and clause-final nie as the phonological form of the Standard Afrikaans negative operator. One of the most well-studied yet controversial features of Afrikaans is its system of negation which has been argued to be typologically unique (Biberauer & Zeijlstra, 2012) or very rare (Biberauer, 2009; van der Auwera, 2010). Previous analyses of negation in Standard Afrikaans (den Besten, 1986; Robbers, 1992; Roberge, 2000; Biberauer, 2009) have proved difficult and inconclusive as they rely on the standard assumption that non-clause-final nie is the phonological form for the Afrikaans morph whose lexical entry is the negative operator (Zanuttini, 2008) and that negative indefinites are negative quantifiers (Haegeman, 1995; Zanuttini, 1996). I suggest viewing non-clause-final nie and clause-final nie as two separate lexical items allows for a novel analysis. Syntactically, Standard Afrikaans exhibits negative concord in most instances of sentential negation, when a negative indefinite is present, between the negative indefinite and a clause-final n-word nie, “not” (Donaldson, 1993); as is common in the majority of the world’s languages (Zeijlstra, 2007), but uncommon in Germanic dialects (Bernini & Ramat, 1996). Additionally, Standard Afrikaans also shows negative concord between non-clause-final n-word nie and an obligatory clause-final nie. However, Standard Afrikaans cannot be strictly considered a negative concord language (Zeijlstra, 2004) because any combination of negative indefinites results in a double negation reading. I suggest that the Afrikaans clause-final nie is an overt manifestation of the covert negative operator which derives sentential negation which Penka (2011) argues to be present in typologically similar Germanic languages.

References


