

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
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# **Negation in English Language**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

((قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ قُلْ إِنَّمَا  
يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ))

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمَ

I

## Dedication

To those who tied up everything they own for free and wait for the favor to be returned... To those who shared with me my moments of success and happiness, and they patted me on my shoulders when I stumbled

..... I came today to return some favors to your generous person And I raise your name high by completing my scientific career, which I aspire to, thanks to you, who are in the heart of my mother and father.....

And to the one who had the great credit for achieving what I am now...

The one who was built during my journey, wonderful, wonderful, beautiful, beautiful and stature, my spiritual father. Thank you for your trust in me and your belief in my superiority and success always. My esteemed doctor, Amjad Jabbar

## **Acknowledgement**

First thanks to God for the Helping in Ending My Research paper  
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for helping.

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## Section One

### **1. Introduction**

Negation is a language universal, found in all known languages, and unique to human languages (Lindstad 2007:3). A further uniform characteristic is that sentential negation (including what could be termed „clausal negation“) always involves “the *addition* of an overt morpheme to an affirmative clause” (Lindstad 2007:24). The function of negation is fairly straightforward: it negates parts of or the entire sentence or clause. The formal realisation, however, is more complex and varies across languages, across speakers, and even in the same speaker across contexts. Variation across languages is mostly beyond the scope of this thesis, as the focus here is on negation in English. (Alego, J. & T. Pyles. 2004. 25)

### **1.2 Types of Negation in English:**

1. Auxiliary Negation

2 Noun Phrase Negation

3 Adverb Negation

4 Morphological Negation

(Barwise & Cooper, 1998,45), (Horn, 1989, 52)

## Section Two

### 2.1 Introduction:

Negation is a subject of variation across languages. Every Language has its own syntactic, semantic and morphological. Devices expressing negation.

Negation is a universal linguistic notion. Indeed, it is one of the most basic elements in human mind that makes it an indispensable part of natural languages which are the tools for human thoughts. Every language has negative particles or expressions; statements that involve negative particles are called negative statements. As it is known, negation is the opposite of affirmation; (positive and negative) one sentence or statement can be the negation or denial of another. Thus, negation is the process of making a sentence negative usually by adding negative particles within the structure. All languages have their own rules to change the statement from affirmative to negative.

According to Gleason (2001), this allows us to discuss what is not happening, or what we do not want. Bloom (1970) suggests that when children are learning a language, it is likely that they learn to produce and distinguish between two basic types of sentences: the affirmative and the negative. **(Bloom 1970,66)**

#### **2.1.1 Types of Negation in English**

##### **2.1.1.1 Auxiliary Negation**

There is a negation rule in English: If we want to state that something is not true, we can form a negative sentence by adding the word “not” after the first auxiliary verb in the affirmative

sentence. If there is no auxiliary verb in the affirmative sentence, as in the Present Simple and Past Simple tenses, we will add one with the word “not” after it. When an auxiliary verb is added like that, the main verb must be in the infinitive form (no ‘-s’ or ‘-ed’

ending).

Nowadays, when looking at a negative sentence, we usually see the auxiliary verbs with ‘not’ in contracted forms, not in full forms. Full forms are used in very formal cases or when we want to emphasize. Contractions of negated auxiliary verbs in English are formed by reducing the negative particle ‘not’ to n't, a clitic or suffix which is fused to the root verb form. For example:

How would you parse "He isn't right"? "He is clever but not right"? In this case, and I think in most cases of similar form, 'not-right' is a much more nebulous abstract concept than 'is-not', semantically, and so would not be the first candidate for a good interpretation by the listener. Also, is-not is the common lex for that concept, where not-right has a more common competitor (wrong) (Henry, Mar 12 2014,70)

Grammatical	Ungrammatical
1. Not <b>every</b> company expects to report increased earnings.	4. Not <b>each</b> citizen files a tax return.
2. Not <b>many</b> people came to the meeting last week.	5. Not <b>several</b> people came to the meeting last week.
3. Not <b>most</b> of the team showed up last Friday.	

## 2. 1.2 Noun Phrase Negation

I began this project with the hope that there might be some generalization to be made that

would distinguish between grammatical and ungrammatical instances of negating noun phrases. I

have surmised that a generalization can be made concerning the fact that the quantifiers in the grammatical sentences exhibit the same underlying property that allows them to be legally negated by not. To form an initial statement of this generalization, let's take a closer look at the cases of negating some and every.

NOT EVERY vs \*NOT SOME

Consider again the following pairs of sentences from Table 1:

#1 Not every company expects to report increased earnings.

#11 \*Not some pesos are offered.

In the case of example #1, there was an expectation or a belief present in the discourse (whether it be on the part of the addressee or some unnamed 'cultural entity') that every company expects to report increased earnings. The speaker is conveying to the addressee that the set of companies that expect to report increased earnings is not the total set of companies. One could say that the size of the set that expects to report increased earnings is less than the size of the entire set of companies.

If we let the size of the entire set of companies under consideration in the discourse be  $N$ , then the size of the set that expects to report increased earnings is some value less than  $N$ , namely:

$$(15) 0 < |\{\text{companies that expect to report increased earnings}\}| < N$$

When we consider example #11 in this light, the situation is not so transparent. What exactly does \*not some denote? When considering

Horn's analysis, I observed that although the most readily apparent interpretation of not some is no, it is also possible that not some can mean every. Given the context of the bare not some construction<sup>3</sup>, it is difficult to distinguish whether the size of the set of pesos that are offered is less than or greater than the size of some pesos (the size of some pesos is the amount of pesos anticipated to be offered by the person who is the source of the original discourse expectation). If we let the total amount of pesos in this portion of the universe be  $M$ , then (16) is the analogous representation of the size of not some.

$$(16) |\{\text{pesos to be offered}\}| = 0 \text{ or } M$$

This ambiguity is precisely the reason why we cannot negate noun phrases that contain the determiner some.

The distinction between the grammaticality of not every and the ungrammaticality of not some leads us to make the following proposition.

(Proposition 1). A quantifier  $Q$  can be grammatically negated by not if and only if there exists a continuous set of possible values for the size of the negated quantified set.

We can then see that every  $x$  can be negated since the size of the denotation of not every  $x$  is

$[0, N-1]$ , while the size of not some  $x$  is  $0$  or  $N$ , and so some  $x$  cannot be negated (where  $N$

signifies the cardinality of the entire set of  $x$  s under consideration).

Another way of changing an affirmative sentence into a

Negative sentence is to place a negative determiner or a

Restrictive quantifier before a noun, which is called noun phrase Negation. Determiner 'not. In English, there are several instances Where 'not' can grammatically negate the subject of a sentence. Ex: "Not everyone can do this task." "Not one thing was left untouched by the wrath of the Tornado."

In English, there are several instances where not can grammatically negate the subject of a sentence. For example, the following sentences are grammatical:

- (1) a. Not everyone can afford a fifty dollar haircut.
- b. Not many discus throwers can claim to have accomplished such a feat.
- c. Not one thing was left untouched by the wrath of the tornado.

The question one might be prone to ask is, can all noun phrases be negated with not ? Negation of the subject of a sentence with not is not syntactically valid if the subject does not contain a quantified noun phrase<sup>1</sup> . Thus, a sentence such as \*Not Salome came to the party is ungrammatical, whereas we have seen in (1) above that several sentences with quantified noun phrases are in fact grammatical. However, not all sentences containing not modifying a quantified noun phrase subject are grammatical. Consider the following examples:

- \*Not some people came to my party last week.
- b. \*Not several events are planned for that weekend.
- c. \*Not each company is expected to present a quarterly report. However, it doesn't mean that all noun phrases can be Negated by 'not'.( **Grice, H.P. 1975.72**)

Semantics, vol. 3. Reprinted in A.P. Martinich, ed., The Philosophy of Language

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) and in Grice (1989).)

For example, we can't say, "Not Lan went to School yesterday." Based on various analyses of quantifier negation by 'not' is only Allowed when the denotation of the negated noun phrase has a Readily definable interpretation; more specifically. (**Stavi, 1986,72; Tottie, 1991,75**)

### **2.1.3. Adverb Negation**

In English, there are some negative adverbs which create Negative sentences, without adding no/not/any negative Expression. So, when using negative adverb, we don't need the 'no' part of a negative sentence.

For example, if we want to say 'I almost don't know him', When using negative adverb it will be 'I barely know him'. As We can see, the negative expression (don't) is erased from the

Sentence. That's the reason why many people make mistakes When using this negative adverb. It is already negative, so there Is no use of negative expression (no/ not/ neither/ nor/ etc).

Therefore, we have a new formation for a negation: Subject + negative adverb + positive verb

Subject + to be + negative adverb. Ex: "She never apologizes for her wrong behaviour."

"John is rarely late for school."

An adverb is a word which is used to modify any part of speech except a noun or pronoun.

It modifies the meaning of a verb, adjective, adverb or a sentence.

Examples :

An adverb modifies a verb.

He sang sweetly.

An adverb modifies an adjective.

She is usually intelligent.

An adverb modifies another adverb.

Hany ran very quickly.

An adverb modifies the whole sentence.

Fortunately, I met him by chance.:

- *There's no chance they're going to win tonight. Especially not since they lost their start player.*

- *She has never been to Las Vegas, so I'm certain she hasn't gotten married behind his back.*
- *I don't see any way this project could hope to be profitable.*

The word which declare that something is true or some equivalent expression or negative statement, judgment, or doctrine; especially : a logical proposition is called Adverbs of affirmation and negation. They are : no longer, hardly, very, never, surely, certainly, definitely etc.

Ex": He is certainly right. ( adverb of affirmation )

He is certainly wrong. ( adverb of negation )

I shall probably come tomorrow. ( adverb of affirmation )

I shall not probably come tomorrow. ( adverb of negation )

She is not coming. ( adverb of negation )

I am surely mistaken . ( adverb of negation )

I am surely making the payment on time. ( adverb of affirmation )

He is a fool indeed. ( adverb of negation )

He is a genius indeed. ( adverb of affirmation )

She shall never pass. ( adverb of negation )

Seldom talk to me. ( adverb of negation )

He can hardly succeed in life. ( adverb of negation )

It is no longer useful . ( adverb of negation )

He is very intelligent. ( adverb of affirmation )

He is very dull. ( adverb of negation )

#### **2.1.4 Morphological Negation**

This type of negation is also called affixal negation and is marked by the presence of negative affixes: a-, non-, dis-, un-, in-(including the variants im-, il-, ir-), the suffix -less and the suffix -out.

Ex: atypical = not typical;

non-stop = without any stop;

dislike = not like;

unnecessary = not necessary;

ineffective = not effective;

impossible = not possible;

illogical = not sensible;

irresponsible = not responsible;

useless = not fulfilling the intended purpose

without = not having

Morphological and sentential negation may appear as synonymous and semantically equivalent. Superficially at least, there seems little, if any, semantic distinction between the different types of negation.

Compare:

Example:

„A bachelor is a man who is not married“ with „A bachelor is man who is unmarried“, whereby (not)married and unmarried make up a pair of non-gradable adjectives, and there is little, if any, difference between the two semantically. **(Bertrand Russell, 1948:520, cited in Horn, 2001:50)**

### Section three

#### **3.1 Conclusion:**

Negation is more common in spoken language than in writing text because we can use face to face negative form to make what to say less direct.

In English, there are some negative adverbs which create Negative sentences, without adding no/not/any negative Expression. So, when using negative adverb, we don't need the 'no' part of a negative sentence. There is a negation rule in English: If we want to state that something is not true, we can form a negative sentence by adding the word "not" after the first auxiliary verb in the affirmative.

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