
AN OVERVIEW OF NEGATIVE MARKERS IN ENGLISH AND ALBANIAN

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Abstract: Negative sentences are the opposite of positive ones; they negate the action expressed in positive clauses by using negative markers and/or negative words. English and Albanian are two languages in which negation is structured and expressed in different ways, although the negative markers are more or less the same. However, even though they may seem similar and corresponding to each other in both languages, they are used in different structures and have different scope. This paper gives a description and comparison of negative markers in English and Albanian. Their use and structure is illustrated by various examples to support the description. Based on this overview, it can be concluded that both English and Albanian have negative particles functioning as negative markers, as well as negative words. However, these negative markers and negative words do not express negation in the same way in these two languages. The simplest difference is that English has only one negative marker of verbal negation – **not**; while Albanian has several negative markers: **nuk/s'** to mark primary as well as secondary verbal negation, **mos** to mark verbal negation in the indicative, subjunctive, conditional and imperative mood; **jo** is used to mark both sentential and constituent negation; **as-** as a negative particle marks both sentential and constituent negation and can be accompanied by one of the verbal negative markers **nuk /s'**. Even though there is a correspondence of **not** and **nuk /s'** to mark verbal negation, there is a misbalance of negative markers and their uses in both languages. A further difference, and a greater one is the use of n-words or negative polarity items (NPIs). English as a single negation language forms negation by using negative verbs with NPI, or by using n-words as absolute negators. For instance, (1) Ben **didn't** see anybody vs. (2) Ben saw **nobody**. In sentence (1) there is a negative verb which cannot be followed or preceded by an n-word, therefore the NPI anybody is used, while in sentence (2) there is a positive verb which allows the use of an n-word such as nobody. On the other hand, in Albanian, n-words such as negative adverbs and negative pronouns are only used accompanied by the verbal marker **nuk/s'**, thus creating negative concord as in the example: **Askush nuk tha asgjë**. In this sentence there are three negative words – **askush, nuk, asgjë**- which contribute to one semantic meaning. As far as conjunctions are concerned, most of them correspond in both languages in both structure and meaning. Similarly, prefixes share similar properties in English and Albanian, they are attached to adjectives, verbs or nouns to express negation, opposition, reversative or removing ideas. English also has a negative suffix **-less**, while Albanian has no negative suffixes, which could be considered as a slight difference.

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NEGATIVE MARKERS

Negative markers are negative particles or negative words used to form negative sentences. Negative markers in English are: **not, no**, negative adverbs: **never, nowhere, no place**; negative pronouns: **no one, nobody, nothing, none**; approximate negators: **hardly, scarcely, barely, few, little**; **negative conjunctions** and **negative affixes**.

On the other hand, Albanian negative markers are: **nuk, s', jo, as, pa, mos, as, negative conjunctions** and **negative prefixes**. In the following sections, there are classifications of negative markers and their use as well as the corresponding Albanian negative markers.

NEGATION BY PLACING NOT AFTER AN AUXILIARY OR MODAL VERB

The most usual form of negation in English declarative sentences is by placing not (or its contracted form n't) after the first auxiliary or modal verb. This type of negation is verbal, and it negates the whole sentence, which means we have to do with sentential negation.

- a. They *couldn't* believe it.
- b. John *had not* seen the movie.
- c. Sam *isn't* studying.

In the cases when there is no auxiliary or modal in the sentence, as it is the case in present and past simple tenses, then we insert the auxiliary do (does, did) and add not after the auxiliary, before the lexical verb.

- a. Tom sleeps. / Tom **does not** sleep.
- b. Kate worked late last night. / Kate **didn't work** late last night.

In speech and in informal writing the contracted form n't is used instead of not. No matter whether it is used in its full or contracted form, not always goes after the first auxiliary or modal verb, before the lexical verb.

ALBANIAN NEGATION BY NUK/S' + VERB

The main negative operators in Albanian are: *jo, mos, nuk, s', jo që jo, jo se jo, as që*, etj. (Domi, 2002a, p. 420).

The corresponding Albanian negative markers to English **not** are the particles **nuk** and **s'**. The negative particle *nuk* is synonymous with the particle *s'* in use and meaning, and they are interchangeable. They negate the meaning of the whole sentence and are usually used before the verbs in the indicative, conditional and admirative moods (Domi, 2002b):

- a. Po nuk shkove, s'merr dot vesh nga ajo pune.
- b. Po ti s'paske gjë moj!

According to Turano (2000) '*nuk* and *s'* appear to the left of the finite verb and they precede the auxiliary in compound tenses and the future and conditional marker *do'* (p.83), which forms a structurally different verb phrase from the English one.

NEGATION BY PLACING NOT BEFORE A PARTICULAR ELEMENT OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND THE CORRESPONDING ALBANIAN NEGATIVE MARKERS

Apart from expressing sentential negation, *not* can also be used to express constituent / non-verbal negation. In such cases it is placed before adjectives, adverbs, prepositions. "Not is also used to negate infinitival, participial and gerundial clauses as well as some finite subordinate clauses" (Blaganje & Konte, p.468):

- a. **Not** aware of the truth, he signed.
- b. The boy learned **not to express his emotions**.
- c. He seemed **not to hear us**.
- d. He expected her answer **not taking his eyes from hers**.

English *not*, followed by a phrase or a clause, is usually translated by *jo* or *mos* into Albanian.

The particle *jo* can be used in both sentential and constituent negation, as well as instead of a verb with a negative particle in a negative sentence such as:

- a. *Ju u larguat, ne jo.*(=Ju u larguat, ne nuk u larguam)
- You left we not
You left, we didn't (leave).

Mos is used before verbs in the optative and imperative mood, as well as after the corresponding particles of subjunctive mood and non-finite verb forms, as in:

- a. Mos dil jashtë!
- b. Ai iku për të mos u kthyer më!
- c. Nxënësit janë larguar duke mos pyetur njeri.

Furthermore, *mos* can replace a whole sentence, especially if it is accompanied by an emotional hue:

- a. Mimoza është lënduar rëndë! – Mos!;

or by adding the plural ending *-ni*, when we address to two or more people to prevent something from happening:

- a. Mosni, është shumë e rrezikshme!

In addition to these, *mos* can be used to express the feelings of the speaker, along with the interjections *more, moj*:

- a. Mos more, mos më thuaj!

The particles *jo* and *mos* can be repeated if we want to emphasize the negation, while *nuk, s',* and *jo* are used with other negative or modal words (Domi, 2002a, p. 421):

- a. Jo, jo atë fustan!
- b. A shkove në kinema?- Sigurisht që jo!.

Such emphatic meaning is also given by the negative particles *jo që jo, jo se jo, as që*, etc.:

- a. Unë jo se jo, por as ti nuk do i ndihmosh.
- b. Nuk do ta ndihmoj, as që lëviz nga vendi.

These negative particles can be used in questions with a positive meaning:

- a. A **nuk** dalim sonte? (= A dalim sonte?),
Shall we go out tonight?
- b. Pse të **mos** punoj? (=Do punoj.)
Why wouldn't I work?

NEGATION BY NEGATIVE ADVERBS

In English, the negative adverb *never* is an absolute negator and is very widely used in forming negative sentences, and it is always used with a positive verb:

- a. We **never** argue.

- b. Sam **never** works on Sundays.

The adverb never is placed before the lexical verb, after the subject.

The adverbs of degree hardly, scarcely, and barely, as well as adverbs of frequency rarely and seldom are called approximate negators, and Huddleston and Pullum (2002) make some notes regarding them:

- “approximate negators mark clausal negation more readily when positioned early:
 - a. Scarcely could he bear to look at them. / He could scarcely bear to look at them.
- The class of approximate negators is not entirely homogeneous (rarely and seldom are somewhat weaker markers of clausal negation than others):
 - b. She visits her parents *only rarely*.
- The approximate negators can occur in subclausal negation like the absolute ones:
 - c. I could do a lot for this place with *barely* any money at all.” (p. 820-821)

Another adverb of place used in negation is nowhere, or no place which is an informal AmE version of nowhere:

- a. There is **no place** like home.
- b. They had **nowhere** to go.

In Albanian (Domí, 2002a, p 364-365) there are adverbs of time and place which are used in negative sentences to emphasise the meaning: asnjëherë, kurrë, kurrën e kurrës, asgjëkundí, askundi, kund, kurrkund. These adverbs are used as complementaries to the negative verb, by contrast of English sentences in which the verb is positive.

- a. **Nuk** e pashë **kurrë**.
I **never** saw him/her.
- b. **S’ë** gjeta **asgjëkundí**.
I didn’t find him anywhere.

NEGATION BY NEGATIVE DETERMINATIVES

“No and none are dependent and independent forms of the determinative no” (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002, p. 812). The determiner no is used before nouns or NP in constituent negation:

- a. He had **no rights**.
- b. **No juvenile** was admitted.
- c. **No juveniles** were admitted.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 389) describe sentences b and c in terms of count and non-count heads. B refers to a specific group of juveniles while c refers to juveniles in general.

No as an absolute negator can also mark clausal negation as in the following example in which the negator is part of the prenuclear PP, and therefore there is subject-auxiliary inversion (ibid. 812):

- a. In **no** city has she been entirely comfortable.

Although there are cases when no is synonymous with not, most of the times there is a difference in meaning:

- a. She is **not** a teacher.
- b. She is **no** teacher.

Sentence a means that she has another job, while b means that she does not have the necessary qualities for being a teacher. In sentence (a) we have sentential negation, while in (b) we have constituent negation. However, if not is followed by a, one or any, it is equivalent to no (ibid, p. 389):

- a. **No boy(s)** in the class passed.
- b. **Not a / one boy** in the class passed.

No is also used to modify comparatives: **no bigger, no more interesting, no different, no longer** (ibid, p. 390).

Other determinatives that are used to form negative sentences, are the approximate negators *few* and *a little*. They both function as determiners in NPs and share the same properties as the adverb approximate negators.

- a. *Few* of the students passed.
- b. Mary had a colleague with *little* ambition.

On the other hand, in Albanian, no does not correspond to Albanian jo, except in negative short answers, such as:

- a. A do shkosh? –Jo.
- b. Are you going? –No.

Otherwise, English **no** is mostly corresponds to Albanian negative sentences with verbal negation not, which can be accompanied by a negative indeterminate pronoun; or by **as**:

- a. There is **no** benefit from this job. (S’ka asnje perfitim nga kjo pune)
- b. She has no heart and no feelings. (Ajo nuk ka as zemer, as ndjenja)

NEGATION BY NEGATIVE PRONOUNS

The pronouns **no one**, **nobody**, **nothing** and **none** are absolute negators used in clausal negation, and they are always used with a positive verb. **No one** and **nobody** are interchangeable, although **nobody** is preferred in speech, while **no one** in writing:

- a. **No one** saw her.
- b. **Nobody** spoke to her.

The indefinite pronoun **nothing** “applies to things or to anything that is ‘not a person’” (Leech et al, p. 322):

- c. They bought **nothing** at all. (= They didn’t buy anything at all.)
- d. **Nothing** happened during the show.

On the other hand, in Albanian, indefinite pronouns are used in negative sentences. They can be classified into two groups: indefinite pronouns which are used to exclude people: **askush**, **asnjë**, **asnjëri**, **kurrkush**; and indefinite pronouns which are used to exclude things: **asgjë**, **hiçgjë**, **kurrgjë**, **asgjësendi**.

- a. Ai **nuk** tha **kurrgjë**.
- He didn’t say anything.
- b. **Askush nuk** e vërejti.
- **Nobody** noticed.
- c. **Asnjëri nuk** tha **asgjë**.
- **Nobody** said anything.

NEGATION BY NEGATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Coordinating conjunctions

The coordinating conjunctions **nor** and **but** are used to express non-contrasting and contrasting ideas respectively:

- a. She didn’t eat, **nor** sleep in that hotel.
- b. She didn’t eat **but** she slept in that hotel.

But can express both clausal and non-clausal coordination as in the forms “‘X but not Y’ and ‘not X but Y’ and X, not Y” (H&P, 2002, p. 1313) illustrated by Huddleston and Pullum (2002) by these examples:

- c. Jill had been invited but her husband hadn’t.
- Jill hadn’t been invited but her husband had. (clausal coordination)
- d. They had not invited Jill but her husband.
- They had invited not Jill but her husband. (sub-clausal coordination)
- e. They had invited Jill, not her husband.

The corresponding coordinating conjunctions in Albanian are **por** and **as**, which express contrasting ideas:

- a. Ema erdhi, **por** nuk e rregulloi dokumentin.
- b. Nuk shkova, **as** nuk e kam ne plan të shkoj.

Subordinating conjunctions

Unless is a subordination conjunction with a negative meaning, it means if... not...:

- a. **Unless** you study, you **won’t** pass your exam.
(= **If** you **don’t** study, you **won’t** pass your exam.)

Correlating conjunctions

“**Neither** is a word with double negative meaning. It always means ‘not one or the other’ (Leech, Cruickshank & Ivanic, 2009, p.310)”. Both **neither** and **nor** are absolute negators and when combined together they form the conjunction **neither...nor**:

- a. **Neither** Danny nor Martin passed the exam.
(= Both Danny and Martin failed the exam.)
(= Both Danny and Martin didn’t pass the exam.)

Other negative conjunctions include: **not...but...**, **not only...but (also)...**:

- b. **Not only** did he leave, **but** he took all the money.
- c. It’s **not** the success, **but** the behavior, that needs improvement.

Neither...nor and **not (only)...but (also)** correspond to Albanian correlating conjunctions **as... as** and **jo vetëm (që)...por (edhe)**. The conjunction **as** is used to express two excluding negative ideas

- d. **As** e pashë, **as** dua ta shoh. (=Nuk e pashë, as nuk dua ta shoh)
- e. **Jo vetëm që** pranoi ftesën, **por** u gëzua shumë.

ALBANIAN NEGATION WITH THE PARTICLE DOT AND NUK PARA / S'PARA

According to Domi (2002a) the particle **dot** is used in indicative negative sentences, interrogatives or conditionals. In indicative negative sentences it is used to either soften or emphasize the negation, while in interrogatives or conditionals it gives the verb a hue of possibility (p. 424):

- a. Ti s'e bën **dot** punën time.
- b. Po s'e bëre **dot** më thuaj.

On the other hand the particle **para** is used along with the negative particles **mos**, **nuk** and **s'** in order to soften the meaning that they convey (ibid):

- a. **Mos para** i dil në sy.
- b. **S'para** i pëlqente. / **Nuk para** i pëlqente.

NEGATIVE AFFIXES

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002) 'prefixes express various kinds of oppositeness and related concepts, as in unreasonable (negation), unfasten (reversal), unhorse (removal), and anti-British (opposition)', (p.1687). These are the prefixes that express negation: a- (an-), dis-, in- (and its alternant forms il-, im-, in-,ir), non-, un-, de-, mis-. These prefixes may be attached to adjectives, nouns and less frequently to verbs. There are cases when these prefixes can be used interchangeably, for instance: impractical- unpractical, however, there are other cases in which two different prefixes attached to the same word, yield different meanings, as in: amoral: 'without moral principles' and immoral: 'morally wrong, or outside society's standards of acceptable, honest, and moral behaviour', or disable: 'to cause someone to have an illness, injury, or condition that makes it difficult for them to do the things that other people do' and unable: 'be unable to do something'.

A distinction should be made between negative and opposition prefixes. Negative prefixes negate the adjective, noun or verb, as in moral-amoral, while opposition prefixes express opposite ideas/ actions, such as attack – counter-attack. The prefixes that express opposition in English are: anti-, counter-, contra- (Pullum 2002, p.1690).

The prefix **de-** does not express a negative idea, but rather reverses it, so it is a reversal or privative prefix, as in caffeinated- decaffeinated (having had caffeine removed). 'Starting from the very simple remark that a verb such as to deconstruct does not mean 'not to construct/ to not construct', and to not deconstruct a building does not mean 'to construct a building', it is argued that negative verbal prefixes do not negate a word (in this case, the word construct), but scope lower' ("The Scope of Negative Prefixes in English and Romanian"). **Dis-** and **un-** can also be reversative prefixes: do-undo, lock-unlock, connect- disconnect, etc.

Removal prefixes are similar to reversal prefixes, however, while reversals only reverse the action, removal prefixes are used in the sense that they 'remove' something: defrost, dishonor, unleash, etc.

Unlike prefixes with negative meaning, suffixes are less frequent. The suffix **-less** is mostly used to negate adjectives that end in **-ful**, such as: careful-careless. Here, I would like to add the suffix **-free**, meaning without. Although never found in any books as a suffix, it exists as a suffix in the Cambridge Dictionary:

-free suffix (NO CHARGE), used at the end of words to mean "without having to pay":

They agreed to let us live there rent-free.

Many banks are now offering interest-free overdrafts to students.

-free suffix (WITHOUT), used at the end of words to mean "without":

No working environment is entirely stress-free.

The journey was surprisingly hassle-free.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/free?q=-free>)

In Albanian, negative prefixes include **pa-**, **jo-**, **mos-**, **kunder-**, **a-**, **anti-**, **an-**, **i-**, **de-**, **in-**, **dis-**, **dez-** (Beci, 2004, p.34-35). The most widely used are the prefixes **pa-** and **jo-**, which are used to form negative adjectives with exclusive meaning. **Pa-** is used to form negative adjectives which are preceded by a particle: **i pabotuar**, **i pashkruar**, **i padenjë**, **i paaftë**, etc., while **jo-** is used to form adjectives without particles **jofetar**, **jozrtar**, **jonormal**, etc. (Domi, 2002a, p.185).

Synonymous with **pa-** are the prefixes **mos-** and **a-**, which are both used with adjectives without particles: **mosmirënjohës**, **mospërfillës**, **asimetrik**, **apolitik**, etc. **Mos-** is also used to form nouns such as **mosbesim**, **mospëlqim**, etc. In the same way as **mos-**, the prefix **pa-** is used to form negative nouns such as **pabarazi**, **padrejtësi**, etc. (p. 145)

The prefixes **anti-** and **kundër-** are synonymous in expressing opposition, with the difference of **anti-** being a borrowing, while **kundër** is Albanian: **antifetar**, **antifashist**, **kundërsulm**, **kundërveprim**, etc.

The prefixes **ç-**, **sh-**, **zh-** are mostly used with verbs to express opposition: **qep-shqep**, **vendos –zhvendos**, **armatos-çarmatos**; but they are also used with adjectives **i drejtë-i zhdrejtë**, **i rregullt- i çrregullt**, etc.

The prefixes a-, i-, in- have lately been substituted by jo-: imoral- jomoral, apolitik-jopolitik, inorganike-joorganike, etc. Finally the prefixes de-, dis-, dez- are used to reverse the meaning of nouns or verbs: decentralizim, dezinfromoj, disfavor, etc.

CONCLUSION

English and Albanian are two languages which do not express negation in the same way, although there are negative markers that correspond in both languages, such as the English verbal negative marker **not** corresponds with Albanian negative markers of verbal negation **nuk/s'**. However, even though they correspond in expressing verbal negation, they are structurally different: English **not** follows the auxiliary or modal verb and precedes the lexical verb, while Albanian **nuk/s'** precedes both auxiliary and lexical verb. Furthermore, English **not** also corresponds with Albanian negative particles **as, jo, mos, pa**.

There is a huge difference between these two languages regarding negative adverbs and pronouns. In English negative adverbs and pronouns are used as absolute negators, they do not require a negative particle to form negative sentences, while in Albanian negative adverbs and pronouns are always used in a sentence with a negative marker.

As for the negative conjunctions and prefixes, they mostly correspond in both languages, except the suffix –less, which does not have a corresponding Albanian suffix.

In order to make this comparison more reliable, a further contrastive analysis is recommended, analyzing examples of negative sentences from both languages, so that general conclusions can be drawn regarding the structure and use of negative markers.

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