NEGATION IN THE AROMANIAN DIALECT OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE: A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Negation is a universal feature of natural languages and one of the most complex phenomena placed at the interface between semantics, syntax, and pragmatics.

The goal of the paper is to elaborate a typological analysis of negation in the Aromanian dialect of Romanian. We will talk about the Negative Markers, the N-words, and the Negative Concord phenomenon. The study will offer an analysis in terms of negation systems between the Aromanian dialect and Standard Romanian and will place the negation in Aromanian whithin a well-known typological model, taken from Giannakidou (1998).

This research has two basic motivations. In the first place, there is no systematic description of the negation system in the South-Danube dialects of Romanian. While the expression of negation in Standard Romanian (or Daco-Romanian, the former North-Danube dialect of Romanian, and the official language of Romania) has benefited of great interest in the 20 past years, descriptions of the Negative Markers (NM) and the N-words in the Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, and Istro-Romanian dialects remain unknown to the researchers. In the second place, a great number of studies on negation in dialects of different languages have been published lately: Italian (Garzonio and Poletto 2009), English (Veenendal, Straatjes and Zeijlstra 2014), French (Burnett 2019), Arabic (Mrayat 2015, Soltan 2017), Finnish (Miestamo 2011), Thai (Rungrojsuwan 2010), Yorùbá (Fábùnmi 2013). Therefore, we consider that only after we have investigated the negation systems in all the Romanian dialects, can we achieve a complete perspective on the Romanian negation.

The paper is structured in 5 sections. In the introductive chapter, we offer some terminological definitions of the main concepts used in the study of negation,

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we present our corpus and some characteristics of the Aromanian dialect. The second chapter deals with the classification of the N-words and the exemplification of the Negative Markers in Aromanian. Section 3 contains the description of Giannakidou's typology of negation, and in chapter 4 we place the negation systems in Standard Romanian and the Aromanian dialect in this typology. The last section contains the conclusions and further perspectives.

1.1. TERMINOLOGY: N-WORDS, NEGATIVE CONCORD, DOUBLE NEGATION

In this subchapter, we will offer short definitions of the basic notions related to negation used in our paper. This will help the reader unfamiliar with, but interested in this topic to better understand the analysis and at the same time we will eliminate other possible interpretations of these notions.

Negative Concord (NC) is a phenomenon in which at least two negative constituents give rise to a single negative reading, like in example (1). Romance and Slavic languages are characterized by NC, as well as Greek, Japanese, Hungarian, Lithuanian, and nonstandard English. Examples of non-NC languages are Standard English, German, Dutch and Scandinavian languages.

(1) *Gianni **non** ha visto **niente**.*(Italian, Giannakidou 2006: 328)
John NM AUX seen nothing
"John didn't see anything."

Double Negation (DN) consists of two negative constituents that give rise to a positive reading, as can be seen from example (2). Double Negation is present in non-NC languages, but also in NC ones, such as the Romance languages. In NC languages, DN occurs in certain particular contexts and under special pragmatic conditions[2]. There are also NC languages not allowing DN, such as the Slavic languages, Greek, and Hungarian.

(2) *Frank heft **niet niemand** gezien.* (Dutch, Giannakidou 2006: 329)
Frank AUX NM nobody seen
"It is not the case that Frank didn't see anybody."

N-words are nominal and adverbial negative constituents occurring in NC constructions (3) and also featuring as negative fragment answers (4). The term was introduced in Laka (1990). Cross-linguistically, it is a heterogeneous class of words in terms of distribution and semantic properties (Giannakidou 2006: 328).

(3) *Nu am spus **nimic***. (Romanian)
NM AUX said nothing
"I said nothing."

[2] For a presentation of Double Negation patterns in Romanian, see Ionescu M. (2017b).

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(4) – *Ce ai spus?* (Romanian)
what AUX said
"What have you said?"
–***Nimic***.
"Nothing."

Negative polarity items (NPIs)[3] are words or expressions that can occur only in certain contexts, such as negation, interrogatives, antecedents of conditionals, etc., known as non-veridical contexts (Giannakidou 1998, Giannakidou and Zeijlstra 2017). The class of NPIs contains not only nominal constituents (*any*) but also adverbs (*ever*), modal verbs, focus particles, and minimizers (*to lift a finger*).

Negative Quantifiers are negative constituents from non-NC languages, such as *nobody* and *nothing* from English. In contrast to N-words, Negative Quantifiers do not co-occur with the Negative Marker (the sentential negation) or with one another. If they co-occur, a DN reading arises.

Sometimes, the term *N-words* is used in the literature as an umbrella term for all the three classes of words defined above. Therefore, to avoid confusion, we choose to use the term **Negative Concord Items** (NCIs) to denote the class of N-words that occur in NC structures.

1.2. THE AROMANIAN DIALECT. CHARACTERISTICS

The Aromanian dialect is one of the three South-Danube historical dialects of the Romanian language, together with Megleno-Romanian and Istro-Romanian. The Aromaian dialect is spoken mainly in Romania, Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Serbia, while Megleno-Romanian is spoken in Greece, the Republic of North Macedonia and Turkey, and the Istro-Romanian dialectis spoken in the peninsula of Istria, Croatia (Nevaci 2018).

The approximate number of Aromanian active speakers is 600.000 (Nevaci 2013b: 18). There is no standardized or official version of the Aromanian dialect, but there are many sub-dialects, each with its particularities. The main subdialects of the Aromanian dialect are Farsherot, Grabovean, Gramostean, and Pindean. For detailed descriptions of the sub-dialects, see Nevaci (2013b, 2018), Saramandu and Nevaci (2018).

1.3. THE CORPUS

During our research, we have gathered around 100 examples containing expressions of negation in the Aromanian dialect. For this paper, the sources of the examples are oral Aromanian texts, recorded during dialectal inquiries (Nevaci 2013b, Saramandu *et al.* 2019), examples taken from lexicographic definitions

[3] For a detailed analysis of Romanian NPIs, see Rizea, Iordăchioaia and Richter (2016).

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from Aromanian dictionaries (DDA 1963, 2013) or from *Basme aromâne* (BA) 'Aromanian fairy-tales'. There are also a number of examples that have been transposed from Standard Romanian into the Aromanian dialect by Manuela Nevaci, who is a native speaker of the Farsherot sub-dialect and whom we are very grateful to. Examples from Standard Romanian are constructed and examples from other languages are taken from the bibliography.

2. NEGATION IN THE AROMANIAN DIALECT

Negation in Standard Romanian has benefited from a lot of interest in the 20 past years, and thus the bibliography on this subject has been enriched with a considerable number of studies: PhD theses and monographic studies (Dominte 2003, Iordăchioaia 2010, Ionescu M. 2017a), collective volumes (Ionescu E. 2004), and articles dealing with different aspects of negation, such as: the Negative Concord (Isac 2004, Fălăuş 2007), the status of N-words (Fălăuş 2008, Iordăchioaia and Richter 2015), the Double Negation (Ionescu M. 2017b), the Negative Fragment Answers (Ionescu M. 2016), the Jespersen Cycle (Ionescu M. 2014), and other particularities of the Romanian negation (Ionescu M. 2015, 2017c, Farkas 2015).

Even if the study of the negation system in Standard Romanian is well represented in the literature, there is no uniform and detailed description of the expression of negation in the other three dialects of the Romanian language. In what concerns the Aromanian dialect, the reader can find information about the verbal negation in the description of the Aromanian verb from Nevaci (2006, 2013a). In addition, the negative pronouns and negative adverbs are mentioned in Nevaci (2011: 126, 2013a: 21, 2013b: 100, 201) and the double use of the indefinite/negative pronouns and pronominal adjectives is discusse in Nevaci (2011: 48, 2013b: 31).

2.1. THE NEGATIVE MARKERS

We have identified three types of Negative Markers (NM) in the descriptions of the Aromanian dialect and in the corpus. The sentential NM (for finite verbal forms) is **NU** (5). Another NM is the lexical negation[4]–**NI**, used for the participle verbal forms (6). In what concerns non-canonical Negative Markers, we found examples with the preposition/conjunction ***fără*** („without") (7):

(5) ***Nu**-l da̯u a̯ **vărnúi̯**.* (Nevaci 2013a: 156)
NM it give to no one
"I do not give it to anyone."

[4] For the distinction between affixal (sentential) and lexical (constituent) negation, see Barbu (2004).

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(6) ***nidiscălicát*** *ǵine di pi cal* (BA 290/7, *apud* Nevaci 2006: 173)
NM-dismounted well from horse
"He hasn't even dismounted from his horse well."

(7) *Şeḑ... nafo̯ára* ***fắră*** *s-ḑâț* ***țivá*** (BA 76/35, *apud* Nevaci 2006: 158)
stay … outside without CONJ-say nothing
"Stay outside without saying anything."

2.2. N-WORDS IN THE AROMANIAN DIALECT. CLASSIFICATION

After analysing the contexts containing N-words from a corpus of Aromanian texts, we have classified them into two paradigms[5]: Type 1 N-words are Negative Concord Items in negative contexts and indefinites in positive contexts. Therefore, we talk about two homonymous classes of words. In example (8a), the first *văr* 'any' is an NPI, while the second *văr* 'no' is an NCI. In example (8b) we give the Standard Romanian equivalent of the Aromanian example in (8a). As can be seen, Standard Romanian makes us of two different words to express the NPI *vreun* 'any' and the NCI *niciun* 'no'.

(8) a. *Víni* ***văr*** *fiĉór?* ‖ ***Nu*** *víni* ***văr*** *fiĉór.* (Saramandu *et al*. 2018: 59)
came any son ‖ NM came no son
"Did any son come?" ‖ "No son came."

b. *A venit* ***vreun*** *băiat?* ‖ ***Nu*** *a venit* ***niciun*** *băiat.*
AUX came any boy ‖ NM AUX came no boy
"Did any boy come?" ‖ "No boy came."

Type 2N-words occur only in NC constructions and they never acquire non-negative/existential meaning. They are always Negative Concord Items. In example (9), the NCI "can" is the Gramostean correspondent to the Farsherot form "văr".

(9) *Tóra fuḑírâ,* ***nu̯-ári can***. (Saramandu *et al*. 2019:25)
all left NM is nobody
"All left, there is nobody."

Besides the contexts with NC, the Negative Concord Items from the Aromanian dialect can occur in the absence of the NM (10). This is a characteristic shared with the Standard Romanian NCIs.

[5] The investigation of the complete paradigms of Negative Concord Items in the Aromanian dialect is the subject of a future paper.

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(10) *Arămâşi cu* ***ţivá*** *tu mắnă.*
left with nothing in hand
"There was nothing left in his hand."

It is known that the DN structures are difficult to process and interpret in NC languages and that they require special intonational and pragmatic conditions. Like in Standard Romanian, we can find in the Aromanian dialect contexts where the Double Negation is possible. Example (11) contains a denial context, where B objects to A's utterance and the first N-word, *VĂR* 'nobody', is pronounced with emphasis (hence, the capital letters). The DN reading comes from the interaction between two negations. The first negation is given by the NCI "văr", while the second one comes from the NC structure resulted from the interaction between the NM "nu" and the NCI "vloară"[6].

(11) A: *Aíĉ o̯ámiń* ***nu̯*** *arắd*^{u} ***vlo̯áră****.*
these people NM lie never
"These people never lie."

B: ***VĂR nu̯*** *ar̯ắdi* ***vlo̯áră****.*
nobody NM lie never
"NOBODY ever lies. (Everyman lies at one point.)"

3. A TYPOLOGY OF NEGATION: GIANNAKIDOU (1998)

The typology of negation that we have used for our study belongs to Giannakidou (1998: 179) and has the following criteria of analysis: the existence of NC and its type (strict or non-strict[7]), the types of N-words, and the number of N-word paradigms in a language, the possibility of non-negative (existential) readings for the N-words. From the intersection of these criteria, a number of 5 language types have resulted and they are classified as follows.

I. Dutch and German are non-NC languages and each of them makes use of only one N-word paradigm. The Negative Quantifier *niemand* 'nobody' is the only expression of negation in the example (12).

(12) *Frank heft* ***niemand*** *gezien.* (Dutch, Giannakidou 1998: 179)
Frank AUX nobody seen
"Frank didn't see anybody."

[6] For an extensive discussion on DN and many similar examples in Standard Romanian, see Iordăchioaia (2010).

[7] For the distinction between strict and non-strict NC, see Giannakidou (1998: 186).

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II. Standard English is also a non-NC language, but unlike Dutch and German, it makes use of two N-words paradigms. Using the appropriate terminology, *anybody* from example (13a) is an NPI, while *nobody* from (13b) is a Negative Quantifier.

(13) a. *I have **not** seen **anybody**.*
b. *I have seen **nobody.***

III. Catalan, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese make use of non-strict NC, which means that in preverbal position, an N-word is incompatible with the NM. In example (14a), the NCI *nessuno* 'nobody' occurs in the post-verbal position, thus requiring the obligatory presence of the NM *non*, while in (14b), the NCI *nessuno* alone bears the negative meaning of the sentence, thus being semantically equivalent to a Negative Quantifier.

(14) a. *Mario **non** ha visto **nessuno***. (Italian, Giannakidou 2006: 349)
Mario NM AUX seen nobody
"Mario didn't see anybody."

b. ***Nessuno** ha visto Mario*.
nobody AUX seen Mario
"Nobody saw Mario."

IV. The Slavic languages, like Serbian, Russian, and Polish are characterized by strict NC, meaning that NCIs cannot occur in a sentence in the absence of the NM, as example (15) shows:

(15) *Ja **nicego*(ne)** skazal*. (Russian, Giannakidou 1998: 178)
I nothing NM said
"I didn't say anything."

V. Greek belongs to the 5th language type in this typology of negation, being characterized by strict NC and two classes of N-words. On one hand, Greek makes use of emphatic N-words, which are NCIs and never occur in non-negative contexts (16). On the other hand, Greek uses non-emphatic N-words, which are NPIs and have existential meaning (17).

(16) *Dhenipa **TIPOTA***. (Giannakidou 1998: 178)
NM said nothing
"I didn't say anything."

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(17) *Pijes **pote/*POTE** sto Parisi?* (Giannakidou 1998: 58)
went ever/*never in Paris
"Have you ever gone to Paris?"

Anastasia Giannakidou chose not to include French in any of these 5 language types, considering that French does not use the standard NC anymore, but a subtype, called Negative Spread (i.e. an NC structure, realized between at least two N-words, in the absence of the NM). The Negative Marker "ne" has lost its negative semantics. The role of the sentential NM has been taken by "pas" (18), but "pas" is banned from NC constructions[8].

(18) *Marie n'a **pas** vu Paul.*(Giannakidou 2006: 352)
Mary not has NM seen Paul
"Mary didn't see Paul."

4. THE PLACE OF NEGATION IN STANDARD ROMANIAN AND IN THE AROMANIAN DIALECT IN GIANNAKIDOU'S TYPOLOGY

In what concerns the negation in Standard Romanian, the main coordinates are given by strict NC and one N-word paradigm. The N-words are NCIs and they never acquire existential, non-negative readings. From example (19), one can see that the NCI *nimic* 'nothing' cannot occur in the absence of the NM. These characteristics lead us to include Standard Romanian in the 4th language type of Giannakidou's typology, together with the Slavic languages. The main difference between Standard Romanian and the Slavic languages with respect to negation is that Romanian allows contexts with DN, while Slavic languages do not.

(19) ***(Nu)** am mâncat **nimic**.*
NM have eaten nothing
"I haven't eaten anything."

Standard Romanian negation has both Romance and Slavic features. On the one hand, Romanian is the only Romance language with strict NC, which makes it similar to the Slavic languages, Greek, and Hungarian. Moreover, Standard Romanian is the only language (from the ones studied in Giannakidou (1998, 2006)) with strict NC that allows DN contexts. On the other hand, Standard Romanian is the only Romance language that does not allow structures with Negative Spread and, together with Portuguese, they are the only Romance languages that do not allow non-negative readings of the NCIs.

[8] For the characterization of French negation, see de Swart and Sag (2002), de Swart (2010), and Giannakidou and Zeijlstra (2017).

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The Aromanian negation is characterized by strict NC and two N-word paradigms. These features lead us to place the Aromanian dialect as a subtype of the 5th language paradigm of Giannakidou's typology, together with Greek. Both Greek and Aromanian negation systems are characterized by strict NC, but the two N-word classes are different. Thus, Type 1 Aromanian N-words correspond semantically both to the emphatic and the non-emphatic Greek N-words, while Type 2 Aromanian N-words correspond semantically to the emphatic Greek N-words. In the Aromanian dialect, as well as in Standard Romanian, the difference in meaning between the emphatic and the non-emphatic pronunciation of the NCIs is not available.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER PERSPECTIVES

Our paper represents an attempt to offer a typological analysis of negation in the Aromanian dialect of Romanian. Both Standard Romanian and the Aromanian dialect make use of strict NC, but the Aromanian dialect has two N-word paradigms, while Standard Romanian has only one. This distinction resulted in different classifications, according to Giannakidou's typology of negation.

The research will be continued in at least three directions. First, we will develop a description of the verbal negation system and the Negative Markers in the Aromanian dialect, comparative to the Standard Romanian one and based on a rich corpus of Aromanian texts. We are interested in analysing the different types of Negative Markers present in the Aromanian dialect, such as the proper negation, the constituent negation, the expletive negation, the negation of non-finite verbal forms, and the non-canonical Negative Markers.

The study will then be followed by the analysis and description of the negation systems in the other two South-Danube dialects of the Romanian language: Megleno-Romanian and Istro-Romanian. Only then we will have a complete perspective on the negation patterns of the Romanian language.

Finally, we aim at enriching our corpus of examples with the results of a dialectal inquiry. By using an interview questionnaire, we aim at gathering data on the negation patterns across the Aromanian dialect.

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NEGATION IN THE AROMANIAN DIALECT OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE: A TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Abstract

The goal of this paper is to investigate the negation patterns across the Aromanian dialect of Romanian and to offer a typological analysis, placing the negation system in Aromanian within a well-known typology of negation (Giannakidou 1998). Like Standard Romanian, the Aromanian dialect is characterized by strict Negative Concord and by the possibility of having contexts with Double Negation, under special conditions. The sentential Negative Marker is *nu* (for finite verbal forms) and the lexical negation *ni-* is used for the participle verbal forms. The preposition *fără* 'without' is used as a non-canonical Negative Marker. In what concerns the N-words, the Aromanian dialect makes use of two classes, each with its particularities in the sub-dialects. Type 1 N-words are Negative Concord Items in negative contexts and indefinites in positive contexts (i.e. two homonymous classes), while Type 2 N-words are always Negative Concord Items. In the first place, these characteristics lead us to include the Aromanian negation in the 5th language type from Giannakidou's typology, due to its similarities with Greek negation. In the second place, the research offered a comparative analysis between the negation systems in the Aromanian dialect and in Standard Romanian. The latter one makes use of only one class of Negative Concord Items (i.e. they never acquire non-negative/existential meaning), thus belonging to the 4th language type in Giannakidou's typology, together with the Slavic languages.

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