

# No Means No? Multiple Negation Markers in Wagdi

Zoomdemic, 20<sup>th</sup> April (Day 26 of Great Lockdown)

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# What does negation mean?

# Negation: An Introduction



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# Negation in Language

- Negation is denying the truth value of the negated sentence or of a part of the sentence. Example:

1 (a). Ram eats an orange.

(b). Ram does **not** eat an orange

[It is not the case that Ram eats an orange]

- Negation marker: negation expressed by some negatively marked, overt element, with variation lying only in the type, position and number of such markers. Example: 'not'.

# Question time:

- Try to list down some words from your language, which express negation.

# Expression of Negation

- Horn (1989) noted that negation in language is a marked phenomenon, and hence needs to be overtly expressed by introduction of a marker in the negated sentence.
- Greenberg (1966) had suggested that there are only a limited number of strategies which would cover all the ways in which negation is expressed in language.
- Zanuttini (2001) lists three different types of negation elements:
  - (a) Morphological negation
  - (b) Morphosyntactic negation
  - (c) Lexical negation

# Morphological Negation

- Dependent morpheme that can be integrated in the verb. Example (Zeijlstra, 2013):

2. John elmalari ser**medi**

(Turkish)

John apples like.NEG.PAST.3sg

‘John doesn’t like apples’

# Morphosyntactic Negation

- A verbal cluster, with a negative auxiliary expressing tense, aspect, mood and person. It may be distributed between the negative auxiliary and the main verb.

Example (Payne, 1985):

3. na'e 'ikai ke 'alu 'a Siale (Tongan)

ASP NEG ASP go ABS Charlie

'Charlie did not go.'



# Lexical Negation

- Independent and overt lexeme which are negatively marked and are different from the corresponding affirmative verb.

Example:

4 (a). sunil seb khaa-ta hai (Hindi)

Sunil apple eat-IMPV.SGM be.PRES

‘Sunil eats an apple’

(b). sunil seb **nahiin** khaa-ta (hai)

Sunil apple NEG eat-IMPV.SGM be.PRES

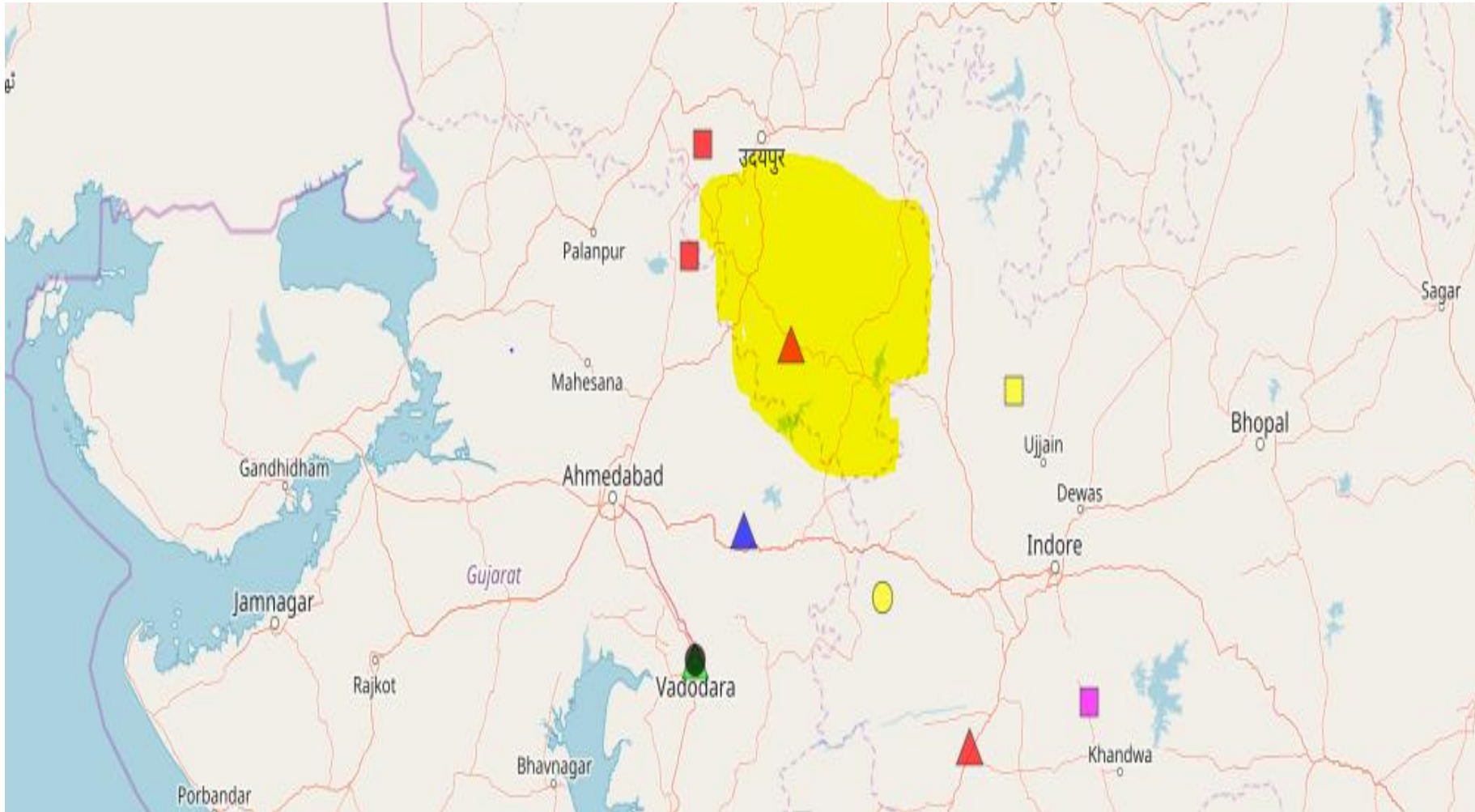
‘Sunil does not eat an apple’

# Question time:

- How does your language express negation? Is there just one way of expressing negation or more?

# Introduction to Wagdi

- Wagdi is a dialect of Bhil Languages (BL), a group of languages spoken by people of the Bhil tribes.
- “...displays an amalgam of features incorporated from its surrounding linguistic environment” (Phillips, 2005)
- Many sub-dialects and observed micro-variation based on geographical, social, cultural and economic factors .



# Negation Markers in Wagdi

- Wagdi expresses negation by 5 different types of lexical negation markers

*I. ne* (sentential or propositional negation)

*II. nathi* (copular negation)

*III. na* (anaphoric negation)

*IV. nak* (imperative negation)

*V. nakke* (polite imperative negation)



# *nathi* : Copular Negation

- *nathi*: *nathi* is used to express stative or copular negation. Example:

6 (a). mu doctor hũ

(Wagdi)

1SG doctor be.PRES

“I am a doctor.”

(b). mu doctor nathi/\*ne/\*nake

1SG doctor NEG

“I am not a doctor.”

# Question time:

- Translate into your language the following

(1) Pinky is a doctor.

(2) Pinky is NOT a doctor.

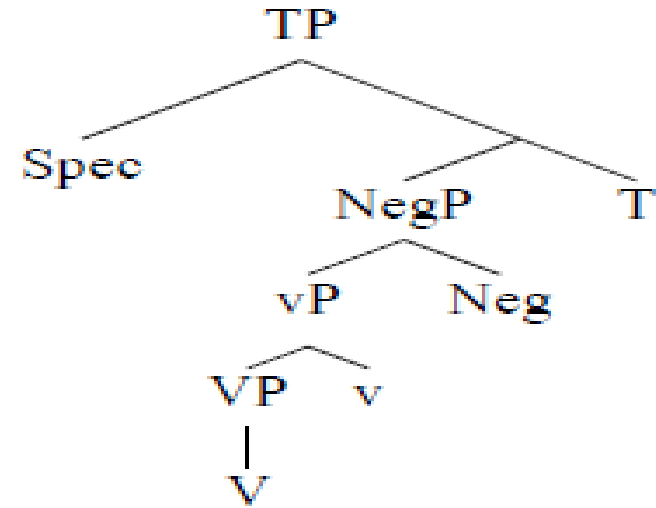
Does the copula construction in your language have an auxiliary verb?  
Is the negation marker in (2) different from your canonical negation marker?



# Contd...

- As we can see from example 6 (b), *ne* occurs in the pre-verbal position, whereas *nathi* occurs in the sentence-final position, where usually the copula is present..
- Lets assume an independent syntactic projection for negation (NegP). NegP, situated somewhere between T and V moves to incorporate with the copula at T.

# Contd...



# Contd...

- An interesting fact about the negative marker *nathi* is that it surfaces only for copula constructions in present tense and not for past tense. For example:

7 (a). ram doctor hato

(Wagdi)

Ram doctor be.PAST

“Ram was a doctor.”

(b). ram doctor ne/\*nathi hato

Ram doctor NEG be.PAST

“Ram was not a doctor.”

# Contd...

- If we assume a ‘Neg to T’ movement in the case of negative copula constructions in Wagdi, it is blocked in the past tense context.
- The incorporation of negation into tense, aspect or mood markers is a known phenomenon in many IA languages. For example:

8. ram sandhyaakaaLi kadhi shaaL-et nasto (Marathi)  
ram evening ever school-LOC NEG.EXS  
“Ram is never in the school in the evening”

9. ram kharaa gubru nathi (Gaddi)  
Ram good boy NEG.COP  
“Ram is not a good boy”

# Contd...

- Need for inquiry about ‘incorporated negation’ in IA languages.
- Another important clue: The absence of *nathi* in past tense copula constructions.



# Question time:

- Answer the question “Did you eat the mangoes” in your own language. Can you answer it just with the negation marker (one, word) or you have to say a full sentence? Is the one word answer different from your canonical negation marker?

# *nak*: Imperative negation

- *nak*: *nak* is used to express the negation of a command which has to be immediately followed. Example:

11 (a). aaNaaa kamraa-me jaa/jo (Wagdi)

This room-LOC go

“Go inside this room!”

(b). aaNaaa kamraa-me nak/\*nakke jaa/jo

This room-LOC NEG go

“Don’t go inside this room!”



# *nakke*: Polite Imperative Negation

- *nakke*. *nakke* is used to warn or request for future action. Example:

12 (a). aaNaaa kamraa-me jaa-je (Wagdi)

This room-LOC go-SUB  
“Please! go inside this room.”

(b). aaNaaa kamraa-me nakke/\*ne/\*nathi jaa-je

This room-LOC NEG go-SUB  
(in the future) “Do not go inside this room.”

# Question time:

- Translate into your language the following

(1) Go inside!

(2) Don't go inside!

Is the negation marker in (2) different from your canonical negation marker?

# Broad questions about negation

- What projection(s) are involved in expression in of negation?
- How do languages differ in the structure and configuration of the system to express negation?
- What is the nature of these projections and what are the features that they carry?

# Formalised objectives

- Determining the syntactic position of negation in the clausal structure.
- Determining the nature of negation, whether  $X^0$  or XP (head or phrasal).
- Assumption: There is an independent functional projection NegP (negation phrase) expressing negation morphology in the clausal spine. (Pollock (1989), Zanutinni (1991, 1997, 2001)).

# Conclusion

- The cross-linguistic variation in expression of negation.
- Wagdi has five different types of negation markers.
- Portuguese has one negation marker...(Sad ☹)
- Need for alternate theory, to explain facts about negation from Wagdi to Portuguese.

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