The Semantic- syntactic Scopes of Negation in English language

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Abstract- This study attempts to present a clear picture about negation scoops in semantic and syntactic features in the English language. It aims to describe the various aspects of sentential negation by showing how negation operates with different negative particles, and to illustrate the different positions of negations in English language It also attempts to shed light on the classification of the negative particles in English language according to their occurrences in sentences, i.e., verbal and non verbal sentences and according to their semantic and syntactic positions in these sentences.

I. INTRODUCTION

Negation is a subject of variation across languages. Every language has its own syntactic, semantic and morphological devices expressing negation. A great deal of research has been conducted by English and Arab Linguists on the similarities and differences of negation in the two Language . Not only does this study tackle negation in its wide sense, but also it focuses on a special aspect that is the semantic and syntactic scope of negation in the English language.

The goal of linguistic study is to discover the natures and facts of language, how it is acquired and how it functions? In recent years, much attention has been given to the question of how best to represent the structure of negative phrases and the nature of structures that negate themselves. Negation data in various languages give many significant inferences about the underlying structural principles of negation (Gleason, 2001).

Negation is a universal linguistic notion. Indeed, it is one of the most basic elements in human mind that makes it an indispensible 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.

Negation is a fundamental linguistic phenomenon for the whole language system. It appears at different semantic and syntactic levels and has different purposes or meanings. Brustad (2000) investigated negation in four Arabic dialects from a dialectological point of view. These four Arabic dialects are: Egyptian Arabic (EA), Moroccan Arabic (MA), Syrian Arabic (SA), and Kuwaiti Arabic (KA). She states that the four dialects have three strategies of negation: verbal negation, predicate negation, and categorical negation. She has also defined categorical negation in these dialects as that kind of negation which is not restricted to a single entity or two of the category but includes the whole category which, according to her, does not mirror the mood of the speaker but has a normative aspect that is arrived after witnessing the negation of a certain relationship, incident, member of a group, etc.

II. OBSERVATIONS

In this section, all types of negation in English are to be previewed.

2.1 Types of Negation in English and Arabic

2.1.1 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.

Examples include isn't, aren't, wasn't, weren't (from be), hasn't, haven't, hadn't (from have), won't, wouldn't (from will), shan't, shouldn't (from shall), can't, couldn't (from can), mayn't, mightn't, and mustn't (from may). And we should remember that there is no standard contraction for 'am not'. This is known in Linguistics as the "amn't gap". All conjugations of 'be' are subject to contraction even when used in a non-auxiliary sense. Ex: "He isn't my teacher." ('be' here isn't an auxiliary). In some dialects, 'have' as a main verb is subject to contraction, in other dialects the negation is realized by the insertion of auxiliary 'don't'. Ex: "I haven't a pen." (We rarely see this form.)

"I don't have a pen." (More popular). Here is a review of auxiliary negations including examples. In this table, we can see both contracted forms used in informal writing and speaking and full forms. Table 1:

Tense	Negative element + contracted forms	Examples
Present simple	Do+not = don't Does+not = doesn't	I do not study. She doesn't study.
Past simple	Did+not= didn't	I didn't study.
Present progressive	Am+not (no amn't) Is+not = isn't Are+not = aren't	I am not studying. He is not studying. We aren't studying.
Past progressive	Was+not = wasn't Were+not = weren't	I wasn't studying. They were not studying.
Present perfect	Have+not = haven't Has+not = hasn't	You haven't studied. She has not studied.
Present perfect progressive	Have+not+been = haven't been Has+not+been = hasn't been	I have not been studying. She hasn't been studying.
Past perfect	Had+not = hadn't	You hadn't studied.
Past perfect progressive	Had+not+been = hadn't been	She hadn't been studying.
Future simple	Will+not =won't	I won't study.
Future perfect	Will+not+have = won't have	He will not have studied.
Conditional	Would+not =wouldn't	She wouldn't study.
Conditional perfect	Would+not+have =wouldn't have	She wouldn't have studied.
Modals	can + not = can't or cannot (formal) should+not = shouldn't	I can't study. I cannot study. We shouldn't study.

2.1.2 Noun Phrase Negation

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."

However, it doesn't mean that all noun phrases can be negated by 'not'. For example, we can't say, "Not Lan went to school yesterday."

Based on various analyses of quantifiers (Barwise & Cooper, 1981; Keenan & Stavi, 1986; Tottie, 1991) and negation (Horn, 1989, and those cited in Horn), negation by 'not' is only allowed when the denotation of the negated noun phrase has a readily definable interpretation; more specifically, the set of

possible sizes for the set denoted by the negated noun phrase must be a continuous range of values. We can see more clearly with examples in the following table: Table 2: Example sentences demonstrating when it is grammatical (or interpretable) to negate a noun phrase with '*not*'.

Grammatical	Ungrammatical
1. Not **every** company expects to report increased earnings.	10. *Not **each** citizen files a tax return.
2. Not **all** of NASA's space-science work will be so auspicious.	
3. Not **a** peso is offered.	11. *Not **some** pesos are offered.
4. Not **one** thing in the house is where it is supposed to be.	
5. Not **many** people came to the meeting last week.	12. *Not **several** people came to the meeting last week.
6. Not **any** person can just walk right in there and get what they want.	
7. Not **more than half of** the team showed up last Friday.	13. *Not **most** of the team showed up last Friday.
8. Not **more than 200** people attended the opening gala celebration.	14. *Not **few** people came to the meeting. 15. *Not **no** man left.
9. Not **less than one million** people enjoy listening to ABBA Gold every day.	16. *Not **the** man walked into the store. 17. *Not **John** came on time

From the above table, we can find out the rule of negation by 'not':

- All vs. Every, More than x, Less than x, Few; Many vs. Several; More than half vs. Most.
- 'All' and 'every' can be negated with 'not' and they seem to have the same meaning.
- Ex: "Not all students have to join that activity." = "Not every student has to join that activity."
- 'More than' and 'less than' are grammatical when negated while ' few' is ungrammatical.
- According to Barwise & Cooper's (1981) analysis 'not few' could mean both 'no' and 'many', which is very confusing. Therefore, it cannot be negated by 'not'.
- 'Many' and 'several' have a difference in the grammaticality of their corresponding negating quantifiers.
- Reconsider sentences number 5 and number 12:
- Not many people came to the meeting last week.
- *Not several people came to the meeting last week.

In these sentences, there are two possible values for the size of the set denoted by 'not several': less than the value for several

given by the discourse, or greater than that value. This is very similar to the case of 'few'.
- Not several people came…. = few / no people came…..
- Not several people came .... = everybody / (many people) came…..

The range of sizes for the set denoted by 'not several' is not a continuous set of values (the size is either less than or greater than the value of several), and so 'several' cannot be negated. On the other hand, the size of the set denoted by 'not many' cannot be more than many, since it is possible that 'many' indicated the size of the entire set (many may possibly equal all, so not many $\neq$ all). Hence, 'not many' can only denote a set of size less than the value given for 'many' by the discourse. This set is a continuous set of values, and so 'many' can be grammatically negated.

-        'More than half' and 'most'

Since 'more than half' denotes a set of size anywhere from >50% to 100% of the set (i.e., there are no 'two sides' to more than half), the possible values for the size of the negated quantifier is a closed, continuous set of values (from 0% to 50%), and so the negation is grammatical.

However, 'most' means anywhere from greater than 50% of the set to some value less than 100% of the set, depending on the given situation. So, when we try to negate 'most', it is possible that 'not most' could mean more than 'most' or less than 'most'. Again, we find that the negation of a quantifier is ungrammatical exactly when the set that contains the possible values for the size of the set denoted by the negated quantifier is not a continuous set of positive integral. So, 'most' cannot be negated.

-        'Any' and 'both'

Tottie (1991) notes that, "In present-day-English it is only normal to use not-negation at the beginning of a sentence if the meaning is 'not just any'" (p.102). We can extend this statement to assert that a speaker uses the phrase 'not any x' to indicate that they have a specific set of individuals in mind who in fact can have the property mentioned in the sentence. To make this clear, consider example: "Not anybody is allowed to shake hands with the Queen." [from Tottie, 1991, p.102].

In this example, the speaker means to indicate that nobody, except a very specific group of people (possibly only foreign diplomats) is allowed to shake hands with the Queen. With each use of 'not any x', the negated quantified noun phrase denotes a specific, closed set. The size of the negated set is closed and continuous. Thus, 'not any x' is grammatical. Unlike 'any', however, the speaker who uses 'not both' either intentionally or unintentionally ambiguates the subject of the sentence. Consider the following example: -

-        "Not both David and Amy came to my party."

The addressee is to infer that one person, and not the other, did in fact come to the party. The identity of the person who came to her party is ambiguous, however this is unimportant in terms of the ability of 'both' to be negated. The set of possible

values for the size of the negated set is closed and continuous, so the negation of 'both x' is grammatical.
-        Cardinals Vs A, One

All cardinal determiners that do not equal zero should be ungrammatical when negated.
Ex: * "Not two/twenty/300 hundred people came to the movie debut." However, if the determiner denotes a set of size one, the negation is grammatical because it indicates none, or a set of size zero. Ex: "Not one/a person came to the movie debut."
-        EACH

With 'not each', it is unclear whether the negation negates the universal quantification portion of each or the manner or 'individuating' portion of each. Ex: "Not each company is expected to pay taxes." only a few are required to pay them this quarter. "Not each company is expected to pay taxes." the companies are all expected to pay the tax as a group. The ambiguity of the negation of each leads to its ungrammaticality. So, 'each' cannot be negated.

-        "Determiner 'no'

'No' is another negative determiner which we can place before a noun to bring a negative meaning into a sentence.
"He sold no house last month." = "He did not sell any house last month."
"They will make no cakes for her." = "They won't make any cake for her".
After the determiner 'no', we can use both singular and plural nouns, it mainly depends on the context. Ex: "No new message" is correct if we are dealing with only one message; "No news messages" is correct if we are dealing with more than one message. Restrictive quantifiers 'little' and 'few'. Like 'no', 'little' and 'few' also bring negative meanings to sentences.

However, we should pay attention to the use:
-        Little is used with uncountable nouns:
Ex: "There is little water left."
-        "I have little reason to think they will help."
-        Few is used with plural nouns:
Ex: "There are few men who are capable of doing it. "
         "I know few places that I could recommend to you."
Determiner 'none' and 'neither'

If we use determiner 'no' to refer a singular item, we should use 'none' and 'neither' to refer to an item of a group mentioned afterwards. We use 'neither' to refer to 2 items and 'none' to a group of more than 2.
Ex: "No one knew the answer."
"None of them/the boys/the students knew the answer."
"Neither of them/the boys/the students (just as long as there are only two of them) knew the answer."

Noun phrase negation has a very powerful role in emphasizing. For example, when we say "They will make no cakes for her.", the hearer will pay more attention to the result "no cake" than when we say "They won't make cakes for her."

The second seems a normal action while with the first, we will think "they" as unkind people.

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."

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

Note: Items that are apparently formed by negative prefixes but that are not clearly negative in meaning are not considered (example: disgruntled).

- **Describing Negation**

A describing negation is used to inform, describe the absence of a thing, a person or an event. We often use this type to answer a question with a negative meaning.
Ex: A: Is Nga good at Math?
B: No, she isn't.

- **Rejecting Negation**

A rejecting negation is used to claim that some idea or judgment is wrong. It means that we use this type when we want to raise against an idea.
Ex: A: Nga is good at Math.
B: Nga isn't good at Math at all.

In conclusion, based on these manners and the characteristics of negative sentence in English, we can figure out some similarities and differences of negative sentence in English and Arabic.

The second observation: ambiguous sentences versus unambiguous ones:

Regarding ambiguity or non-ambiguity of English sentences, it should be noted that this study is related to the semantic and syntactic interpretation of ambiguous sentences including negation with certain grammatical aspects. Interestingly, Smith (1975, argues that unambiguous sentences become ambiguous when they are negated. Such as. The following examples:

1. a. john ran until dark.
1. b. john didn't run until dark.

As we have seen in the above mentioned examples : Sentence 1.a is unambiguous whereas sentence 1.b is ambiguous. Sentence 1.b is not the opposite of 1.a because it might mean john, stopped running before it became dark" or "john didn't run until it became dark".

Modality is one of the most widely related aspects that have unexpected behavior under negation. Radden (2007: 224) argues that "The behavior of modal verbs is erratic when they occur with negation". The ambiguity arises not only because the same modal might have more than one meaning but also because the negated modals might negate either the modality or the proposition. In other words, it is not always necessary that the negated modal verbs affect the modality but in certain cases the proposition of the sentence might be negated. These two terms related to the semantic scope on both languages. There are other aspects of grammar that have ambiguity under negation such quantifiers, adverbials, subordinate clauses and others.

The relation between intonation and negation is a necessary one because it plays a crucial role in defining the extension of the scope of negation especially the falling and fall-rise tones. Based on Halliday assumption, this proposal treats intonation as a grammatical, semantic and syntactic aspect.

Actually, the semantic and syntactic scope of negation has been extensively studied in English by linguists around the world and many studies have set out to investigate this domain. Arab linguists have largely neglected this area especially the relation between negation and intonation and such studies on the relation of modality and negation are also very rare in the Arab World. Therefore, in this study I will try to fulfill this gap.

There are certain syntactic aspects that have unexpected behavior under negation in that the unambiguous sentences become ambiguous when they are negated. One of the most widely related aspects which has ambiguity under negation is the negation of modality in that it isn't always necessary that the negative modals affect the modality but in certain cases the proposition of the negative sentences might be negated. So the scope of modal negation is difficult to define in the negative sentences in that either the proposition or the modality might be negated. Consider the following examples:

1. You can't stay here.
2. He mustn't be at school.

Sentence 1 negates the modality. It means that "you are no allowed/permitted to stay here". While sentence 2 negates the proposition in that it means "it is necessary that he isn't at home". There are other syntactic aspects that have scope ambiguity under negation such as quantifiers, adverbials, subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases and others.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article has been an overview of negation where approximately all negation types were tackled. For further research, there are different dimensions which could be explored given the wealth of data available at the Lab School for instance. Researchers could study students with different first languages to see what their inter-language relative to negation looks like. There are many areas that could be explored. And as teachers use second language acquisition research to inform their teaching, the classroom is a logical setting for more research. Finally, reseachers could conduct a comparative study between Arabic and English Language.

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