

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AFRIKAANS NEGATION: FACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

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Afrikaans is commonly cited as an example of a language which has, in the course of its relatively short history, reached Stage 3 of Jespersen's Cycle/JC, i.e. obligatory Negative Concord/NC. This paper has two aims: firstly, to show that this characterisation represents a non-trivial and diachronically important oversimplification of the facts, and secondly, to argue that a generative perspective on the nature of concord elements is crucial to understanding subsequent JC developments.

Synchronically, standard Afrikaans (SA) negation requires the presence of two overtly realised Neg-elements, a preverbal "real" negator and clause-final *nie* (henceforth: *nie*<sub>2</sub>). This is shown in (1). *Nie*'s origins are much disputed (cf. Roberge 2000), but the most plausible analysis, given its sudden and immediately rather systematic appearance in the written record, seems to be that it originated as an emphatic negative tag, initially restricted to the spoken language, i.e. as a discourse particle which served as a reinforcer prior to its grammaticalisation (cf. Roberge *op. cit.*). Crucially, this grammaticalisation produced a C-domain polarity marker (i.e. a Pol-head) rather than a second negative head of the type assumed in i.a. Haegeman (1995) and Zanuttini (1997). That *nie*<sub>2</sub> lexicalises Pol and not a further Neg-head is shown, firstly, by its occurrence in non-negative Colloquial Afrikaans (CA) structures like (2) and by emphatic constituent negation facts like that in (3). Structures like (3), then, show that *nie*<sub>2</sub> serves a polarity-reinforcing function wherever it occurs in the nominal domain, precisely what we might expect of an optional element (cf. Chomsky 2001 on the so-called "Fox-Reinhart" intuition on optionality, and also Condoravdi & Kiparsky 2002, and, for example, the effects of *do*-support in English declaratives). Synchronically, then, CA can be thought of as a Stage 3 language in the clausal domain (*nie*<sub>2</sub> is always obligatory and can thus no longer serve a reinforcing function) and as a Stage 2 one in the nominal domain (*nie*<sub>2</sub> is optional, thereby facilitating negative reinforcement). As *nie*<sub>2</sub> is only possible in constituent negation contexts like those in (4), it is clear that SA is at an earlier point in Stage 2 of the Cycle (cf. Willis 2004). Clearly, then, neither CA nor SA can straightforwardly be characterised as Stage 3 systems, with clausal and nominal domains developing independently of one another. This is also evident from the behaviour of negative indefinites, which do not meet the criteria specified by Giannakidou (2005) and others for the *n-words* that characterise true Stage 3 languages: in combination, they give rise to multiple negative readings (5) and they can stand alone in fragment answers in CA (6). Interestingly, though, there is a context in which CA (but not SA) permits the NC readings found in more familiar Stage 3 languages (e.g. French), namely where negative indefinites co-occur in emphatic structures (cf. van Gass 2007). Thus if (5) is employed emphatically, it can also mean "No-one gives anything" in CA. In certain varieties, notably Kaaps, this usage has become grammaticalised. In respect of this sub-cycle, then, SA, CA and Kaaps can be viewed as systems which have respectively reached Stages 1, 2 and 3. A third cyclic development and, crucially, one which diverges sharply from what has happened in the best studied NC languages, follows directly from that just discussed: the most commonly used emphatic negative indefinite pair, involving the tautologous negators *g'n* (>*geen* = "no/nothing") and *niks* ("nothing"; 7) has given rise to a new sentential negator in CA and Kaaps, namely *g'n* (8). As (8) shows, *g'n* occupies the same position as *nie*<sub>1</sub> and serves as an emphatic sentential negator. Various aspects of this development are interesting, but the fact that it centres on CA's "real" negator, rather than the reinforcing element is particularly noteworthy: in terms of JC, Stage 4 should see Afrikaans's clause-final *nie*<sub>2</sub> being reinforced and replacing *nie*<sub>1</sub> as the "real" negator; instead, we see that CA and Kaaps, the Afrikaans varieties which have progressed furthest along the path to a following Stage, reinforce the "real" negator in a different way. I argue that this development, together with the rise of reinforcing *nie*<sub>2</sub> in non-clausal contexts, signals very clearly that Afrikaans NC is fundamentally and significantly different to what we see in languages like French and other Germanic varieties, and also to NC in earlier Dutch. The difference is further signalled by the fact that even native-speakers sporadically drop *nie*<sub>2</sub> in CA (contrast the behaviour of *pas*), and by the fact that "headlines" requires systematic omission of clause-final *nie*<sub>2</sub>. Independently of contact-related factors like the fact that Afrikaans is exclusively in contact with non-NC systems, there thus appear to be formal considerations suggesting that this language will not, like the other varieties named above, proceed to Stage 4 at some future point.

The above facts can be understood if we consider the "height" of the reinforcing element. In French and earlier English and Dutch, *pas*, *not* and *niet* are clearly elements associated with the thematic domain (vP). By contrast, *nie*<sub>2</sub> very clearly originated as a Pol-head (cf. its discourse origins). Consequently, it was initially limited to the clausal CP (the fact that *nie*<sub>2</sub> survives sluicing, as shown in (9), clearly indicates that it occupies a projection dominating TP), but which has now been reanalysed as a generic polarity layer which may also optionally be activated at the periphery of DPs and other categories. By virtue of its generic status, Pol lacks features (e.g. [fin]) that a specifically clause-oriented polarity head like *do* in English would bear, i.e. it is a significantly impoverished functional category which accordingly exhibits properties conventionally associated with the weakest elements of this class: unstressability, unmodifiability, non-conjoinability, etc. (cf. Oosthuizen 1998, Biberauer 2007a,b). Assuming that grammaticalisation does indeed involve upward reanalysis, as proposed in Roberts & Roussou (2003) and van Gelderen (2004), we can view the initial grammaticalisation of *nie*<sub>2</sub> as involving reanalysis of a discourse-related element which adjoined to one of the lower CP projections (e.g. Rizzi's (2001) Int or Focus) as a polarity head which, in its featurally impoverished form, is located in the higher CP domain (possibly in the region of Force). As such, *nie*<sub>2</sub> is merged significantly higher than is usually assumed for the equivalent concord elements in other NC languages (cf. i.a. Haegeman 1995, Zanuttini 1997, Roberts & Roussou 2003 and Willis 2004). Building on this discrepancy, I propose that grammaticalisation which has reached the outer edge of the left periphery cannot subsequently be reversed to deliver a true negator in the manner that "lower" grammaticalisations involving elements drawn from the VP or TP domains (like *pas*

or *not*) can. Such peripheral grammaticalisations, then, are effectively beyond the reach of JC, with the result that reinforcement-related developments, which systematically stem from speakers' desire always to be able to contrast neutral and emphatic negation (cf. Kiparsky & Condoravdi 2006), will be limited to the domain of "true" negation. In effect, then, the proposal is that the formal properties of the elements which become established as concord elements – specifically, the sort typically ignored by surface-oriented researchers and, indeed, by Jespersen himself – will determine progression to Stage 4 of JC: Afrikaans *nie*<sub>2</sub> lacks the requisite substantive content, being structurally "too high", in contrast to Middle Dutch *niet*, Middle English *not* and French *pas*, all of which arguably were (and remain) VP-elements, which accordingly bore the substantive content required to establish them as Stage 4 "real" negators. To conclude, I show how the proposal extends to varieties of Brazilian Portuguese, which appear to refute it (cf. Bell 2004, Rerisson 2007), ultimately concluding that a non-surface-oriented generative analysis is required to enable us to see (a) why languages often cannot be uniformly characterised as Stage X of JC, and (b) why certain languages, but not others proceed from Stage 3 to Stage 4 of the Cycle.

#### DATA

- (1) *Ek glo nie<sub>1</sub>/nooit sulke nonsens nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 I believe not never such nonsense NEG  
 "I don't believe such nonsense/I never believe such nonsense"
- (2) a. *Ek kan my nouliks/skaars inhou nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 I can me barely in-hold NEG  
 "I can barely contain myself", i.e. I'm very excited
- b. *Ek weier om saam te kom nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 I refuse C-<sub>INF</sub> together to come NEG  
 "I refuse to come along"
- (3) *Ek is nooit nie<sub>2</sub> bang nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 I am never NEG scared NEG  
 "I'm NEVER scared"
- (4) *Nie<sub>1</sub> die boek nie<sub>2</sub>, maar die KOERANT soek ek*  
 not the book NEG but the newspaper seek I  
 "It's not the book, but the NEWSPAPER I'm after"
- (5) *Niemand gee niks nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 no-one give nothing NEG  
 "No-one gives nothing", i.e. Everyone gives something
- (6) A: *Wat het hy jou gegee?*  
 what have he you given  
 "What did he give you?"
- B: *Niks!*  
 nothing  
 "Nothing!"
- (7) *Ek is g'n niks moeg nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 I am no(thing) nothing tired NEG  
 "I am not remotely/the slightest bit tired"
- (8) *Ek is g'n jou vriend nie<sub>2</sub>!* (= SA *Ek is NIE<sub>1</sub> jou vriend nie<sub>2</sub>!*)  
 I am no(thing) your friend NEG  
 "I am jolly well NOT your friend!"
- (9) *Ek weet iemand het gekom, maar ek weet nie<sub>1</sub> wie [~~gekom-het~~] nie<sub>2</sub>*  
 I know someone has come but I know not who come has NEG  
 "I know someone came, but I don't know who"