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Socio-Linguistic Viewpoint with Reference to the Construction and Usage of Negative Sentences

Linguistics

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Abstract

Because of the fact that in the speech of different individuals, it is noticed a different selection of negative particles no, not, don't in this article our target of study are the full negative sentences or partial negative sentences which express the negation with these negative particles. The material that was going to be studied was collected through the oriented talk but even written materials such as: tests, projects. The measurements/surveys were laid during the time period 2010-2013. Through the method of quantity study of speech where the linguistic change are the negative sentences in the Albanian language with the particles no, not, don't and the social change is age, we can say that in these constructions at young age group it is aimed: 1. Reduction/simplification of the structure of negative sentences. 2. Reduction/simplification of the quantity of the negative particles more precisely. Related to this, we can't say that this phenomenon impoverish the repetoire of the individuals, therefore their communicative competence, because we have to do with alternative variants. Also, we can say that exactly at the young age group it is noticed even the possibility of the possible transformations in the syntactic, Albanian system in relation to negative constructions which eventually should be considered as an evolution.

It is impossible that the linguistic view of the phenomenon can be detached from the social one which leads to the valuation in a new way of the facts minute in appearance. **(U. Labov)**

I. Change age conditions the Albanian negative structures

It is known that the communicative competence, in the sociolinguistic viewpoint implies the ability of the individuaal to communicate in terms defined from the situation and the linguistic, social, phsychic, pragmatic norms, so, language should be considered as a social behaviour.

Our target of study are the full negative sentences or partial negative sentences which express the negation with the negative particles *no, not, don't*.

In the speech of the different individuals, a speech which includes the two forms: the spoken and the written one, it is noticed a different selection of these negative particles, in the cases of the alternative constructions. During the discussions with students most of them classified one alternative as a form of prestige, while others confessed that the construction that they used was the only one they knew.

Such a fact was proved even by the disability to solve an exercise oriented to constructions almost not used by them. Then, it comes the question: are there extralinguistic causes which condition these constructions? In socio-linguistics, when it is spoken about linguistic change, it can never be seperated the linguistic aspect from the social one. If one part of the evolution is pleasingly explicable with the internal stuctural factors of the system then the other part requires to be seen from the perspective of the social group where it belongs. Specially the look at the extralinguistic factors is necessary for the investigation of the linguistic change, of the origin and of the shove of that process. (Shkurtaj Gj, 1999, 133)

Therefore, the object of the study were groups of students of different age that were later classified in two groups: age 20- 25 and 40-55. During the collection of the material, at first the individuals were oriented to construct or select one of the alternatives. In the cases when an individual used both alternatives, he was required to select the alternative that he believed that was more prestigious, in formal situations, or in informal

situations.

  II. **Measurements about the frequency of the selection of syntactic changes, negative sentences with particles** *no, not, don't*

Samples: Two groups of individuals.

  A. Age group 20-25.
  B. Age group 40-55.
  Number of people for each group: 30 or 35.

Their status: students and other educated people.

The method of collecting the material:

  a. Orientated conversation/talk
  b.   Written materials such as tests, projects, exercises.

Linguistic (syntactical) variables are the negative sentences in Abanian language with the particles no, not, don't.

Social variables is the age.

The quantity of the measures: three surveys done during the years: 2010, 2012, 2013.

The construction and usage of these negative sentences is analyzed with reference to these linguistic functions:

1) referential (denomination), that is to say the expression of thought;

2) expressive, that is related with what is said, with the spiritual mood or the behaviour.

3) connotative that is related with what the speaker aims to get from the recipient;

Below there are arranged the alternatives that constitute a certain syntactic negative sentence.

  1. *Concretely related to the cases when the ''no/not'' particle is placed ahead the subordinate sentence before the proper conjuction, to negate a reason, intention, condition, time, place, consequence etc.*

-Na¹ That day he was late <u>not because there was too much traffic</u>, but because of staying some minutes more with the journalists. (Cause)

Na² That day he was not late because of the traffic, but he stayed some minutes more with the journalists.

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Na¹	2	7	7	23
Na²	28	23	93	77

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Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Na^1	6	11	17	31
Na^2	29	24	83	69

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Na^1	7	9	20	31
Na^2	29	26	80	69

Tab. 1

-N b¹ He stopped not <u>to clean the glass</u>, but to speak with them. *(Intention)*

Nb ² He did not stop to <u>in order to clean the glass, (to clean the glass)</u>, but to speak with them.

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nb^1	4	7	13	23
Nb^2	26	23	87	77

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nb^1	7	11	20	31
Nb^2	28	24	80	69

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nb^1	3	8	8	23
Nb^2	32	27	92	77

Tab. 2

What should be emphasised is the fact that the alternative with the particle *not*, results to be used by the individuals of both age group, not only for the formal situation but even for the informal situations. But in the age group A the structures with the particle *not* have greater usage frequency, which are considered by the users

simpler and more prestigious. The same thing we can say even for the two other negative sentences (where the particle *not* refers to the main part of the sentence), which don't have simpler structure than the two previous examples, but are chosen as more suitable forms. Concretely for the cases:

-N c¹ He was going to reply to you <u>not when they would inform him</u>, but when he had time. *(time)*

Nc ² He would not reply when they informed him, but when he had time

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nc¹	8	3	27	10
Nc²	22	27	73	90

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nc¹	11	5	31	14
Nc²	24	30	69	86

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nc¹	7	7	20	20
Nc²	28	28	80	80

Tab.3

-Nd¹ They would set up the camping <u>not where there was water</u>, in order not to be disturbed by the wild animals. *(place)*

Nd ² They would set up the camping (there) <u>where there was no water</u>, in order not to be disturbed by the wild animals.

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nd¹	1	6	3	20
Nd²	29	24	97	80

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Age group A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nd^1	3	7	8	20
Nd^2	32	28	92	80

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Age group A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nd^1	2	9	6	26
Nd^2	33	35	94	74

Tab. 4

2. ***In the case when the particle "no/not" is used instead of a verb preceded by a negative particle for example:***

-N e¹ We should control here if they work <u>or not</u>.

Ne ² We should control. Do they work here <u>or they do (not) work.</u>

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Age group A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ne^1	9	11	30	31
Ne^2	21	19	70	69

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Age group A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ne^1	7	19	20	54
Ne^2	28	16	80	46

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Age group A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ne^1	13	12	37	34
Ne^2	25	23	63	66

Tab. 5

Again in the young age group the usage of the first alternative prevails, *but in a relevant percentage even the second alternative is selected which means that these two constructions function in a paralel way.*

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3 *"no/not" particle before the nominative clause (adjectives or noun) of the nominative predicate e.g:*

-N f¹ He was <u>not calm</u>, but shocked.

Nf² He <u>was not calm</u>, but he was shocked.

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nf¹	0	0	0	0
Nf²	30	30	100	100

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nf¹	0	0	0	0
Nf²	30	30	100	100

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Nf¹	0	0	0	0
Nf²	30	30	100	100

Tab. 6

In an absolute way it is not selected by the age group A the variant with the particle *no*, the same even for group B, it results an irrelevant percentage. Fully convinced, we can say that the constructions with the 'no' particle before the nominative clause of the nominative predicate can no longer be used.

4. *The negative particle "no/not" before a term which is in confrotation with another one of the same function*

> *- N g¹ This was her daughter-in-law <u>not her daughter</u>.*
> *Ng² This is <u>not her daughter</u>, but her daughter-in-law. (the subject is negated)*

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ng¹	2	6	6	20
Ng²	28	23	94	80

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ng^1	6	8	17	23
Ng^2	29	27	83	77

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ng^1	3	6	8	17
Ng^2	32	29	92	83

Tab. 7

-    *N gj¹ Swimming is learnt <u>not on the ground</u>, but in the sea.*
-    *Ngj² Swimming <u>is not learnt on the ground</u> but in the sea. (the place is negated)*

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
$N gj^1$	1	3	3	10
$N gj^2$	29	27	97	90

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
$N gj^1$	3	4	8	11
$N gj^2$	32	31	92	89

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
$N gj^1$	1	6	3	17
$N gj^2$	34	29	97	83

Tab. 8

Even for these alternatives the young age group has the tendency to avoid the constructions with the particle *not*. Whereas the age group B the first alternative has a later usage frequency.

5. The particle „don't" opposite the particle „not" in cases of a full negation.

- *Ma¹:<u>Don't bring</u> me the book anymore.*
- *Ma² <u>I do not want you to bring me</u> the book.*

Year   2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Age group B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ma¹	30	28	100	93
Ma²	0	2	0	7

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ma¹	21	25	60	71
Ma²	12	10	40	29

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Ma¹	26	29	74	82
Ma²	9	6	26	18

 Tab. 9

Based on the data the variant with the particle *don't* prevails for the age group A.

The constructions with *not*, in the spoken language of these age group can be judged by the people of the same age, so for this reason we can say that in this case there is a clear conformism.

6 The particle "don't " in a conditional subordinate clause.

- Mb¹ *<u>If you don't say</u> it to the doctor, who will say?*

- Mb² *<u>Providing you do not say it,</u> who will say?*

Year 2010

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Mb^1	0	18	0	60
Mb^2	30	12	100	40

Year 2012

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Mb^1	0	8	0	23
Mb^2	30	27	100	77

Year 2013

linguistic (syntactical) variables	Frequency of selection Group.A	Frequency of selection Group.B	Relative frequency (%) Group.A	Relative frequency (%) Group.B
Mb^1	0	21	0	60
Mb^2	35	14	100	40

Tab. 10

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, in the case of the usage *don't* in conditional sentences we can certainly say that the age group A doesn't use this construction. Whereas the age group B selects it in a considerable percentage. It is obvious from the comparative data, as these surveys are held repeatedly during the three years 2010, 2012, 2013, we can say that age in this case should be considered as a social change that affects in the construction and usage of these linguistic negative sentences. Taking into consideration the selections of age group A (young age) we can say that with these constructions it is aimed:

- reduction/simplification of the structure of negative sentences.

 - reduction/simplification of the quantity of the negative particles more precisely:

a. The particle *not* has a **greater frequency** of usage in the cases of a subordinate sentence before the proper conjuction in order to negate a reason, an intention, a condition, the time, place, concession.

b. The particle *not* has a **greater frequency** in the cases when *particle ”no” is used instead of a verb which is preceded by a negative particle as well as before a part which is in opposition with another one of the same function.*

c. The particle *not* **often competes** with constructions with the particle *don't* in the case of a full negation sentence, also it has a greater frequency of usage in the cases of the usage in a subordinate conditional sentence.

Related to this, we can't say that this phenomenon impoverish the repetoire of the individuals, therefore their communicative competence, because we have to do with alternative variants that aren't semantically differentiated, especially when it is known that the tendency of the system of standard language is that of being as much functional as possible.

In these conclusions, we can't leave apart the linguistic conformism about those forms that are etiquetted as more prestigious. The power of individuality and conformism affect on our linguistic behaviour and this influence has different levels based on which idiolects appear.

 Going on with the reasoning we can say that exactly at the young age group it can be found the possibility of the possible transformations in the syntactic system that should be considered as an evolution.

Here we would make a logical analogy with the childish language e.g:

R.Jacobson (and his followers) admit that some changes of the childish speech can be in origin of the evolution of languages.

        Moris Gramont says: *"If we collected the linguistic features of a great number of children then it could be created a kind of grammar of all possible transformations that have had or that will have one day a place in one of whatever human languages ".* (Grammont, 1902; 61 and Stein, 1925b). Shkurtaj Gj., 1999, 86)

In our case we should be cautious about the results. But we wouldn't be mistaken if we said that these selections of the young age group constitute a transitional phase that can be followed by the absolute prevalence in the linguistic system, that of chosen alternatives. Related to this process we can quote that "Accurate analyses of Lebov, not only indicate the importance and the social value of the elements often considered as unimportant but also highlight the need to take into consideration all at once the three aspects of the problem which he defines: **a) transition** (analysis of each level of passing from one phase to the other); **b) inclusion** (individualization or the findings of the systematic rapports and relationships in which the innovator element is put in relation with the other elements); **c) valuation** (interconnection between the linguistic change and the social factors and variabilities)." (Shkurtaj Gj., 1999, 135)

This issue was interpreted according to the methods of quantitative study of speech. Nowadays the development of quantitative studies which is otherwise called even Labovian socio-linguistics introduces important data that are integrated within the contemporary linguistic theories.

The quantitative studies of speech have a special importance for the theoritical linguistics because they include those aspects of language e.g: syntactic constructions that are considered essential for the theoretician linguists. Hadson R., Sociolinguistics, 2009, 162)

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