

Negated but similar - Negation in the domains of locative, existential, and possessive predication: The case of Indo-European.

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The relationship between the domains of predicative possession, predicate location, and existence has been explored by many scholars. These relationships have often been argued for based on similarities in the structural coding means (i.e., type of copula, indexation, or flagging) deployed in affirmative clauses across these domains. Here, we ask to what degree does this relationship extend to the patterns in which these domains are negated. This is motivated by the well-known finding that negation in these domains shows rich and complex synchronic and diachronic patterns, both in individual languages and cross-linguistically (e.g., Croft 1991, Veselinova 2014, Van der Auwera & Krasnoukhova 2020, Shirtz, Talamo, & Verkerk 2021, Verkerk & Shirtz 2022).

To do this, we focus on the expression of negation in the three target domains across the Indo-European language family, a diverse family with a large amount of data available throughout most of its branches. We explore the variety of ways in which each domain is negated in the languages of our sample, illustrating the typological wealth of negation patterns across the three domains and the intra-linguistic variation in negation patterns within and across domains. We use this to explore the similarities and differences in negation patterns in the three domains across Indo-European and its branches, thus measuring the degree to which negation patterns support the purported grammatical relationship between predicative possession, predicate location, and existence.

To illustrate this variation, consider the Hindi clause in (1), expressing predicative possession with the copula *hai* indexing the possessed and the possessor flagged by *ke* Genitive + *pa:s* ‘near’. The same coding means are deployed also in clauses expressing predicate location, which differ in the relative order of ‘cats’ and ‘book’. The clause in (1) and its predicate location counterpart are both negated by the standard Hindi negation marker, *nahĩ*. The negation of Hindi existentials, however, may also be signaled by *nahĩ* functioning as a negative existential copula, without *hai* (Bashir 2006). This, then, illustrates the difference in negation patterns across domains.

Hindi (Indo-Aryan; own knowledge)

(1) *billi:jo=ke pa:s kita:b nahĩ hai* ‘the cats don’t have the book’
cat.PL=GEN near book NEG COP.PRS.3SG

The Odia negative copula *nah-* is used to negate clauses across all three domains, illustrated in (2a-b). In the past tense, however, the negation marker *no* is deployed, followed by the past tense copula *t^ha*, culminating in a tense/aspect-based split of copular negation that is common across Indo-Iranian. English illustrates another pattern of variation, where existential and possessive predication may be negated by the indefinite negator *no* as in (3a), but also by the English negated auxiliary construction *do + not* as in (3b), or (rarely) by both patterns as in (3c). The strategies found in (3b-c), however, are not available in English existentials and predicate location.

Odia (Indo-Aryan; Neukom & Patnaik: 2003: 343-344; edited glosses)

(2a) *tɔmɔ-rɔ kɔ:ɲɔ kɔnca lɔnka nah-ĩ ki* ‘Don’t you have green chili?’
2.POL-GEN QUANT green chili COP.NEG-3SG Q

(2b) *set^{hi}-re kehi nah-anti* 'There is no one in it'
there-LOC anyone COP.NEG-3PL

English (Germanic; COCA (Davies 2012))

(3) (a) *We have no car* (b) *We don't have a car* (c) *I don't have no car*

In this study, we focus on the emergence of within-family splits in the negation strategies of locative, existential, and possessive predicates. We identify splits of different nature 1) splits affecting all three domains equally (e.g., those based on tense-aspect), 2) splits between domains, such that possession and/or location and/or existence are negated in different ways, and 3) complex combinations of 1) and 2). We typologize the different diachronic processes that give rise to such splits, shedding light on sources of both semantic, lexical, and syntactic innovation that shape the expression of locative, existential, and possessive predicates.

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