

Negative existentials: forms of indefinite subjects: bare, articles, "special" forms, NPIs (draft)

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This is a tex file `negexistentials_expl`. It lives in the folder `Terraling_jan18`

PLEASE READ BEFORE STARTING THE NEGATIVE EXISTENTIAL PROPERTIES
WE PRESUPPOSE FAMILIARITY WITH THE CODING SCHEMA FOR OBJECT PROPERTIES,
AND EXISTENTIAL CONSTRUCTIONS. PLEASE READ THOSE DOCUMENTS FIRST. THEY ARE
FOUND and .

CG PLEASE NSERT [Link to these documents once they are on-line?](#) Here we are interested in coding the possible form(s) of the pivot or subject in negative existential constructions. In many languages, the pivot (i.e. subject) in a negative existential construction or context differs in form from the pivot in an affirmative existential construction. This is an area of great interest to syntax and semantics: it connects to the (huge) syntax-semantic literature on NPIs (Negative Polarity Items). It raises questions about the scope of indefinites under negation, as well as the syntactic distribution of various expressions.

In the near future, we intend to develop questions about the scope of indefinites w.r.t. negation, and their syntactic distribution.
PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING SCOPE PROPERTIES.

1 Expanding the current coding schema.

We will build on our existing definitions and classification schema of 3 properties (*_1 can be bare, _2 must have an "article", _3 can have an article*). These however are not sufficient for capturing the known variation between languages, as we detail below. We will make two changes: broaden the notion of "article" in *_2* and *_3* to "article/specialized form" in negative contexts, and add an additional property *_4* "an article disappears". We explain why in this document.

1.1 There are two "articles" in French affirmative existentials, but only one in negative existentials

In French affirmative existential constructions, the pivot of a mass noun has two "articles" (*de* ART1, related to Genitive, sometimes called "Partitive"), and the definite article (*le/la/les* ART2), which combine as *du, de l', de la, des*.

- (1) il y a de l'eau dans le lac
it there has DE LE.water in the lake
"There is water in the lake"

Bare noun phrases are not allowed (so the value for *_1* is NO. Both "articles" are obligatory, therefore the value for *_3* is NO. This yields the following values for French indefinite mass nouns in affirmative existential constructions:

SO2 properties:

Indefinite mass noun in affirmative existential constructions for French.

<i>_1</i> can be bare	<i>_2</i> must have an art	<i>_3</i> can have an art	found?
no	yes	no	French

In negative existential constructions, however, the two articles behave differently: *de* (i.e. related to "Genitive") is obligatory, but the definite article *le/la/les* must be absent, i.e. ART2 is disallowed under negation. ¹

- (2) il (n')y a pas d'eau dans le lac
 it (n').there have NEG DE.water in the lake
 there is no water in the lake
- (3) *il (n')y a pas de l'eau dans le lac |
 it N'.there have NEG DELE.water in the lake
 there is no water in the lake

To capture this important property, the properties for negative indefinites must be further refined and expanded.

To this effect, we add a fourth property to the list, which captures the fact an article disappears in the negative indefinite (mass, sg or pl count nouns).

- (4) Property S05_4 (mass/sg count/plural count) subject in a negative existential context: an article disappears

This yields the following 4 properties for negative existentials, and their values for French:

- _1... can be bare : NO
 _2 .. must have an article: YES (*because "de" is obligatory*)
 _3 .. can have an article: NO *because "de" is obligatory, and le cannot be present*
 _4... an article "disappears": YES (*in comparison to the affirmative existential, the definite article le must be absent*).

Question2. about the numeral/indefinite: one

HK to CG: what do we do with singular count nouns, i.e. *FR"un"/ ENGLISHone when it means a single ?*

- (5) a. *Il n y a pas un medecin au village*
 b. *Il n y a pas de medecin au village*
 c. *There is not ONE doctor in the illage*

Should we explicitly exclude a (single) as counting as an article, just like in English one (the strong form of the indefinite: a not a single/ not one . not ONE. (stress, means not a single) If so, how do we explain this. ("not one/ not a single one, versus no, not any" perhaps with a context? Should we make use of focus?)

Singular count nouns in existential constructions:

<i>_1 can be bare</i>	<i>_2 must have an art</i>	<i>_3 can have an art</i>	<i>_4 an article disappears</i>	<i>found?</i>
<i>no</i>	<i>yes de or un</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>yes de or un</i>	<i>French</i>

Negative indefinite existential (*preliminary coding schema*):

<i>_1 can be bare</i>	<i>_2 must have an art</i>	<i>_3 can have an art</i>	<i>_4 an article disappears</i>	<i>found?</i>
<i>no</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>French</i>

_2 remains yes, since *de* must be present in this context.

At the same time, we can now deduce the fact that one of the two articles must be missing: Indefinite mass nouns cannot be bare, because *de* is obligatory, therefore *_3* is no (since neither *de* not *le* is optional *_3*).

¹Vincent Homer (pers comm), (and myself, independently) ²have suggested the definite article in French is a PPI.

Since `_4` lacks an article is 'yes', it must be the case that there are two articles in the affirmative. Other potential candidates for a language like French, where an article goes missing in negative contexts are Bantu languages with so-called augments. (At the present) state we don't make a distinction whether this is obligatory of optional.

1.2 English NPIs and negative determiner: broadening the notion of "article" in negative contexts

Under `_2` and `_3`, we include not just *de* or genitive case (which in some languages count as an "article"², but also negative determiners like English *no*, "special" articles like *any* in English, or other special indefinite forms, reduplicated or not, often called Negative Polarity items, NPI).

It will be important to give as many glossed examples in the database as necessary.

- (6) a. There is no water in the lake
 b. There isn't any water in the lake
 c. ?*There isn't water in the lake
- (7) Negative existential properties:
 Property S05
 A (mass/sg count/plural count) noun in a negative existential context must/can have an **article/specialized** form: Yes/No

Table for Indefinite Mass Nouns in negative existential constructions(*final schema*³)

<code>_1</code> can be bare	<code>_2</code> must have a art/specialized form	<code>_3</code> can have an art/specialized form	<code>_4</code> an art disappears	found?
no	yes	no	yes	French
yes	no	yes	?no	English

1.3 French and Italian

French and Italian differ in that in Italian a mass nouns in the (negative) existential construction can be bare, or they can have the partitive article (*di* + definite article). i.e. *the two articles alternate with the bare form*, (i.e. a language will have a yes value for `_1`, and a yes value for `_3`, as well as a yes value for `_4`. In Italian, the subject in an existential construction is either bare, or it has **both** articles (*di* + definite article).

We code `_4` w.r.t the forms in `_2` and `_3` since the two articles must be present together, `_4` will be NO in Italian, but YES in French. In a language in which with a single article present must be present in negative contexts, as in Croatian(`_4` will be NO as well: Croatian affirmative nominative are bare, so there is no article which could disappear w.r.t. to the affirmative.

Table for Indefinite Mass Nouns in negative existential constructions(*continued*)

<code>_1</code> can be bare	<code>_2</code> must have a art/specialized form	<code>_3</code> can have an art/specialized form	<code>_4</code> an art disappears	found?
no	yes	no	yes	French
yes	no	yes	no	Italian
no	yes	no	?no	English

²when it alternates with a different form for example

³ NB:we must code lacks an article w.r.t. the affirmative, as we can see from Croatian below

This property is (*no* for French, because *de* is obligatory (and French does not allow bare mass nouns), but *yes* for Italian because (standard) Italian allows bare nouns *can be bare* – “*yes*”, or both article *di + def artlice* (can have an article: *yes*), an article can disappear *no*).

In other words, this will allow coding a language in which mass nouns cannot be bare, but must have an article, or a language in which mass nouns can either be bare, or have an article.

As we will show below there are implicational relations in our definitions: the problem is that our definitions must be set up in such a way as to allow a finegrained typology. This means that filling out these properties for each language individually is important.

1.4 Building up the further typology: further examples

The following table is a first shot at the typology for indefinites in negative existential constructions given these 4 properties. (this is done for mass nouns here, but needs to be completed for singular and plural count Ns (for example, a language could have an optional NPI with count nouns), as well (and possibly for “light” nouns (no-one, no-body, no-person, no-thing)).

Table for Indefinite Mass Nouns in negative existential constructions *continued*

_1 can be bare	_2 must have a art/specialized form	_3 can have an art/specialized form	_4 an art disappears	found?
no	yes	no	yes	French
yes	no	yes	no	Italian
no	yes	no	?no	English

1.4.1 Croatian: "Genitive of negation" (Slavic)

We start with the affirmative existential construction. At first blush, Croatian does not really seem to have a special affirmative existential construction⁴.

(8) frizideru je voda
in fridge is water.nom
there is water in the fridge
not: the water is in the fridge

(9) Voda je u frizideru
water.NOM is in fridge
the water is in the fridge *not*: there is water in the fridge
comment: in this order the subject is definite

However, since word order encodes the difference in interpretation, we treat ?? as an instance of a special existential construction, and test all properties of existential subjects in this order/context. Note that the pivot carries nominative case.

Negative existentials; genitive of negation Croatian does have a special form for negative existentials, consisting of a contraction of *negation 'ne'* and *'imati' 'have'*:

(10) Nema vode u frizideru
not.have water.GEN in fridge
there is no water in the fridge

In negative contexts, the indefinite pivot must be genitive (and cannot be nominative). Since genitive contrasts with nominative in the affirmative construction, the genitive case is treated as an article (just like Romance *de/di*) according to our definitions.

⁴Data provided by Daniela Culinovic

Table for Indefinite Mass Nouns in negative existential constructions(*continued*)

_1 can be bare	_2 must have a art/specialized form	_3 can have an art/specialized form	_4 an article disappears	found?
no	yes	no	yes	French
yes	no	yes	no	Italian
no	yes	no	?no	English
no	yes	no	no	Croatian

Croatian differs from French for the values of _4. Since Croatian does not have an article in the affirmative _4 an article disappears is *no*, because the language simply doesn't have an "article" that disappears. This shows it is important to make sure that _4 is based on a comparison with the presence of an affirmative form.

1.4.2 Mandarin Chinese

Table for Indefinite Mass Nouns in negative existential constructions(*continued*)

_1 can be bare	_2 must have a art/specialized form	_3 can have an art/specialized form	_4 an art disappears	found?
no	yes	no	yes	French
yes	no	yes	no	Italian
no	yes	no	?no	English
no	yes	no	no	Croatian
yes	no	no	no	Mandarin

(11) Mandarin

- a. hu li mei-you shui
lake inside NEG.PERF-have water
' There is no water in the lake.'

1.4.3 Samoan

The language has a specialized form of the determiner in negative existential constructions. The question is if the alternation between *le* and the NPI like D *se* is optional or obligatory.

Table for Indefinite Mass Nouns in negative existential constructions(*continued*)

_1 can be bare	_2 must have a art/specialized form	_3 can have an art/specialized form	_4 an art disappears	found?
no	yes	no	no	French
yes	no	yes	yes	Italian
no	yes	no	?no	English
no	yes	no	no	Croatian
yes	no	yes	no	Mandarin
no	? yes/?no	? yes/no	no	Samoan

1.4.4 Wolof

add training data

1.4.5 Basaa

ask Paul...

1.4.6 Gungbe

(Data provided by Enoch Aboh.)

Il y a pas d'eau dans le lac

Sin	má	tò	tò	ló	mè
Eau	NEG	être-LOC	étendue.d'eau	DET	P

Il y a pas pas d'enfants dans la maison.

Ví	má	tò	xwé	gbé
Enfant	NEG	être-LOC	maison	P

Il y a pas de medecin au village

Dòtó	má	tò	tò	ló	mè
Médecin	NEG	être-LOC	village	DET	P

1.4.7 Bulgarian

1.4.8 Korean

1.5 References to add