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Methods of expressing negation via positive & negative structures in Russian language and their equivalents in Persian language

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Abstract

From the cognitive point of view, the Russian & Persian languages belong to the same lingual family – the Indo-European branch; therefore they have similarities in their morphological and syntactic structures. Negative sentences refer to the inexistence of a person or object or their qualities. Negation and negative sentences are discussed in both Russian and Persian languages. There are various forms of negative structures in Russian language which are usually hard to understand for Persian students. Lack of knowledge of these structures lead to misunderstandings. On the other hand, negative structures in Persian language are not so complicated; therefore linguists have paid less attention to this particular concept compared to other grammatical concepts.

In this article, negative expressions in the Russian language are studied via positive and negative structures, and their equivalents and semantic difficulties in Persian language are analyzed.

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Negation, negation modals, sentence, Russian language, Persian language.

Introduction

Comparative Russian-Persian language studies showing similarities and differences in morphological and syntactic structures of languages [Mahboubeh, Mohammad, 2014] is one of the new branches of the Persian linguistics [Taleghani, 2009; Taleghani, 2010]. Studies of negative constructions is a popular school in modern linguistics [Zejlstra, 2011; van Gelderen, 2008; Park, 2014; Ingham, 2003; Shimoyama, 2011], the topic is interesting for the psychology [Du et al., 2014; Christensen, 2009].

Sentences in any language are generally either positive or negative. Basically in Russian language, if there is no negation symbol in the sentence, it is positive; and in case of existence of a negation symbol, then it is considered a negative sentence. These negation symbols can be negation modals, negation pronouns and adverbs, the word *нет* or words such as *нельзя, невозможно* etc. [cf. Partee et al., 2011]. But in some cases, a sentence may be negative although it contains no negation signs; while on the other hand, a sentence bearing negation signs may actually be positive. Here are some examples:

- 1) *Какой он там ученый!* (=Он **не** ученый)
- 2) *Нельзя **не** любить такого человека* (Чехов).

In the 1st example (and similar cases), negation is expressed via tone or positive structured words with a negative semantic. In the 2nd example, the repetition of the negation modal *не* or the presence of words such as *нельзя, невозможно* along with negation modal *не* before the verb gives a positive meaning to the sentence.

Also, in the Russian language, negative sentences may occur as partial (*частноотрицательное предложение*) or general denial (*общеотрицательное предложение*) shown respectively in the 3rd and 4th examples.

3) *Законы пишу не я.*

4) *Законы не пишу я.*

Understanding the meaning of these types of sentences and finding the proper equivalents for them usually comes with difficulties; therefore, such structures shall be discussed based on the theories of Russian linguists, and their equivalents in the Persian language will be analyzed further on.

Sentences in Persian and Russian Languages

Sentence is the most important part of any language and the concept of negation is discussed through it, therefore, we shall first point out to the specifications of "sentence" in Persian and Russian languages.

Khanlari describes the "sentence" in his *Persian Grammar*: "Human beings always express their intentions via sentences. A sentence is built from one or more words which deliver a complete message from the narrator to the listener. Where ever the sentence comes to an end, we put a dot. Sentence types: if a sentence delivers some information, it is called 'indicative'; if it puts forward a question, it is called 'interrogative'; a sentence bearing an order is 'imperative'; and if it expresses a feeling, then it is called an 'emotional sentence'" [Khanlari, 1999, 10]. For conversational disclaimers in Persian, see [Tayebi, Parvaresh, 2014]. S. Kwak points out that "Persian <...> has various ways of expressing negative sentences. Negative markers and other negative elements like NPIs and Negative Concord Items (NCIs) are the elements which construct negative sentences" [Kwak, 2010, 621].

As there are structural differences between the Persian and Russian languages, sentence types also differ in the two languages. Rozental' describes the concept of sen-

tence from the Russian linguists' point of view in *Contemporary Russian language*: "The sentence is the smallest part of speech which is grammatically built from the regular combination of words (or a single word) and has a complete semantic and tone. The sentence is one of the forms of communication; moreover, it's a means for forming and expressing thoughts. Sentence types based on their specifications: 1) simple & compound, 2) **positive & negative**, 3) indicative, interrogative, imperative, 4) single-parted & multi-parted, 5) expanded & non-expanded, 6) complete & incomplete, 7) sentences that are syntactically dividable or undividable" [Rozenal', 2005, 369-372].

Negative Sentences in Persian & Russian Languages

As it was mentioned above, negative sentences are one of the sentence types, which are the main discussion in this article.

The simple sentence in Russian language may be either positive (5th example), or negative. Negative sentences in turn are divided into two types: negative sentences with a negative structure (6th example) and negative sentences with a positive structure (7th example).

5) *Я читаю книгу.*

6) *Я не иду в школу.*

7) *Какой он там ученый!*

As Yartseva explains about the first group of negative sentences, "the semantic element indicating the inexistence of a relation between the parts of a sentence is called *negation*. A sentence containing a negative word or structure is a negative sentence. For example, in '*газеты не принесли*' the relation between the newspapers and the act of *bringing* is negated" [Yartseva, 2002, 354].

Words expressing negation are referred to as *negation words*. "Negation words consist of negation modals *не* and *ни*, negation pronouns and adverbs such as *нигде*, dual conjunctives *ни ... ни*, or words such as *нельзя*, *невозможно* etc." [ibid., 355].

It is also useful to mention Rozenal's description of modals in *Contemporary Russian language*: "Auxiliary words that give additional, emotional and etc. meanings to a sentence or word and are used to express different grammatical relations are referred to as 'modals'" [Rozenal', 2005, 278].

Regarding to the concept of negation in Persian language, Khanlari explains the specifications of negative sentences in his *Persian Grammar*: "Any verb can be used in a negative form, and its sign is the addition of the letter "ن"-"nä" to the beginning of the verb: *näräft, näyamädi, näräfteh bood*. In verbs containing more than one part, the first part stands before the negation letter: *bar näyamäd, kar näkäräm, pish näkeshid*. If the verb is constructed with the prefix "ب"-"be, the mentioned prefix is removed when it is turned to negative: *näräväd-beräväd, bekonäm-näkonäm, beshäväd-näshäväd*. For verbs with the prefix "می"-"mi, the negation letter is attached before the prefix, not the verb: *nemiräftam, nemigooyäm, nemiayäd*. The negative for of the imperative verb is called "نهی", – *nähy* which means restricting someone from doing something. The sign of "نهی" – *nähy* in Persian literature is "م" – *mä* instead of "ن" – *nä*: *mäkon, märo, mägooy*. In the contemporary Persian language, the letter "ن" – *nä* is used for negative imperative verbs: *näkon, näro, nägoo*" [Khanlari, 1999, 125-127].

Ahmadi Givi in his *Persian Grammar* comments about the specifications of positive and negative sentences: "A positive sentence informs or requests the occurrence of an event or having or accepting a condition: *därsät ra bekhan, zähra be mädrese räft*. On the contrary, a negative sentence negates or restricts the occurrence of an event or having or accepting a condition: *härf mäzän, zähra be mädrese näräft*" [Anvari, Ahmadi, 1997, 251].

As we can see, the major difference of negative sentences between the Russian and Persian languages rises in their structure. As we mentioned before, Partial and general negation sentences in the Russian language are expressed via negation modals *не* and *ни* and negation pronouns and adverbs, while the same sentences in Persian language are usually expressed via the addition of the negation letter "ن" to the beginning of the verb.

Examples:

a) Via negation modal "не":

Он может не прийти. – Ehtemal daräd oy näyayäd.

Via negation modal *ни* in the single or repetitive form:

В деревне теперь ни души: все в поле. (Фадеев) – äknoon käsi där roosta nist: häme där däsh t häständ.

Сам он **ни** богат, **ни** знамен, **ни** умен. – *khode oy nä särvätmän äst, nä nami, nä aghel.*

b) Via negation word *нет*:

Молока у матери **нет**, кормить нечем. – *madär hich shiri nädaräd ta ba an koodäk ra täghziyeh konäd.*

c) Via combinations *вовсе не, далеко не, отнюдь не*:

Он **вовсе не** говорил об этом. – *oy äslän där in mored chizi nägoft.*

d) Via negation pronouns and adverbs + verbs with the modal *не* (expressing the intensity of negation):

Никто не ответил на вопрос. – *hich käs be soal pasokh nädad.*

Аня: Дачу свою около Ментоны она уже продала, у нее **ничего не** осталось, *ничего* (Вишневы сад). – *Aniya: khandeye khod ra ke där menton dasht forookhteh bood vä chizi häm bärayäsh baghi nämandeh bood, hich chiz.*

In some cases, several negation pronouns are used with the prefix *ни-* in order to intensify the negation:

Никто нам **никогда ничего** не говорил об этом [Shelyakin, 2003, 270] – *hich käs, hich väght, hich chizi där in mored be ma nägoftah äst.*

Partial & General Negation Sentences in Russian Language & their Equivalentents in Persian Language

Negation sentences in Russian language are presented in two types: general or partial negation. In the general negation sentences, the predicate is denied:

1) Газеты **не принесли**. – *rooznameha ra näyavärdänd.*

2) Ни слово я тебе больше **не скажу**. – *män digär yek käläme häm be to nemigooyäm.*

3) Кроме нас двух в поле никого **не было**. – *hich käs bejöz ma do näfär där däsht näbood.*

In the 1st example, there is a general negation; while in the 2nd and 3rd examples, the general negation is intensified via the modal *ни* and negation pronoun.

Rozental' explains partial negation in his *Contemporary Russian Language*: "In partial negation sentences, the predicate is not denied; instead, other elements of the sentence are negated" [Rozental', 2005, 295-296].

Я не мужа обманула, а самое себя (Чехов) – *män nä shohär ra, bälkeh khodäm ra färīb dadehäm*(=*män shohär ra färīb nädadehäm, bälkeh khodäm ra färīb dadehäm*) [Chekhof, 1984].

Законы пишу не я (Л. Толстой). – *nä män, ghävanin ra minevisäm*. (word-by-word translation) (*in män nistäm ke ghävanin ra minevisäm*.)

Солнце не вечно сияет, счастье не вечно везет (Некрасов). – *khoshid nä ta äbäd mideräkhshäd vä khoshbäkhti nä hämisheh vojood daräd*. (word-by-word translation) (= *khoshid mideräkhshäd ämma nä ta äbäd, vä khoshbäkhti vojood daräd äma nä hämisheh*).

Regarding negation and its specifications Maksimov explains that the implementation of the conjunctive *ни ... ни* along with the negation modal *не* intensifies the negation: *Некоторые студенты не посещали ни лекций, ни семинарских занятий* [Maksimov, 1998, 140]. – *bärkhi äz danesh amoozan nä dār sokhänraniha vä nä dār seminarha sherkät nemikärdänd*.

There is a concord in Russian and Persian languages regarding general negation sentences. In Persian language, such sentences are created via the addition of the letter "ن" – *nä* to the beginning of the verb (as explained above); in other words, the verb is negated. But as we can see in the examples, there are two types of equivalents in the Persian language for the Russian partial negation sentences, one of which is the word-by-word translation.

In addition to the negation sign, the *order* of elements in a sentence is used to intensify denial in Russian partial negation sentences. Although there is no specific order for the elements in Russian sentences, the element that stands at the end of the sentence commonly represents the narrator's main intention. For example, in the sentence "*законы пишу не я*" the negation modal is followed by the pronoun *я*; this, in addition to partial negation, indicates the main intention of the sentence (meaning other people, rather than me, organize the principles).

In his *Contemporary Russian Language* Lekant explains: "If the negation modal stands before the subject or subordinate elements of the sentence, it indicates a partial negation sentence" [Lekant, 2001, 396].

In the Persian language, partial negation sentences are explained as such: "Sometimes, in order to intensify negation, the verb is used in a positive form while

the negation word stands at the beginning of the sentence, before the subject. Here, the word 'نہ'- *nā* which is written separately as an independent word is actually a 'negation adverb'. – "*nā chonin äst = chonin nist*", "*nā oy mārde in kare doshbar bood = oy mārde in kare doshbar nābood*". In this case, it is wrong to use a negative verb: "*mān nā kare oy ra nemipäsändām*". in incorrect, so are sentences such as "*nā mān nā to in sokhan ra nāgoftelim, nā pedārām nā madārām nāyamädänd*" (correct forms: *nā mān in sokhan ra goftehām nā to, nā pedārām amād nā madārām*) [Khanlari, 1999, 128].

Emphasis, tone and pause play a great role in understanding the overall concept and the role of each word in the spoken Persian language. As there is usually no specific sign to indicate these qualities in the written language, some misunderstandings may occur. Depending on the emphasis, a single sentence may express various meanings:

Mān dirooz bārāye khārid be bazar rāftām. Mān rāftām nā hämsārām. Dirooz rāftām nā emrooz. Bārāye khārid rāftām nā bārāye gārdesh. [Arjang, 2000, 7-9].

Likewise, in Russian language, negation in sentences with a positive structure or approval in sentences with a negative appearance is expressed via various means such as the *order* of the elements of speech or intonation. The presence of a predicate at the beginning of the sentence results in a contradiction between the appearance and the meaning of that sentence. For example, the following sentence indicates the refusal of conversation:

Буду я с ним разговаривать! – mān ba oy sohbat khahām kārd!

Negative Sentences with a Positive Structure: Expression of Negation via Tone and Specific Words

In the article about the methods of expressing negation in Russian language Madaeni points out to the structures that express negation in the sentence via visible and invisible methods; and further on discusses the visible methods.

In the visible method, negation symbols such as the modals *не*, *ни* and negation pronouns and adverbs are used:

Он ничего не сделал. – oy hich kari ānjam nādād [Madaeni aval, 2005].

The invisible method consists of two types:

1. *Negation via tone*

In his *Russian syntax* Rudenko-Morgun explains: "There are structures that are apparently positive but in fact they represent a negative meaning; for example:

Нужна мне твоя книга! (= Твоя книга мне совсем не нужна) – *mān be ketabe to niyaz darām!* (= *mān āslān be ketabe to niyaz nādarām*).

Где ему с тобой тягаться! (= Он не может с тобой тягаться) – *oy koja be paye to miresād!* (= *oy be paye to nemiresād*).

Как же будет он тебе помогать! (= Он не будет тебе помогать) – *chi, yāni oy be to komāk mikonād!* (= *oy be to komāk nākhahād kārd*).

Придет он! Жди! (= Он не придет не жди.) – *fekr mikoni oy khahād amād!*
Montāzer mimani! (= *oy nākhahād amād, montāzer nāman*).

Какой он там ученый! (= Он не ученый) – *in digār che daneshmāndi āst!*
(= *oy daneshmānd nist*).

Как же дожидайся, буду я молчать! (= Не буду молчать) – *chi, entezar dari sokoot konām!* (= *sokoot nemikonām*).

In these kinds of sentences, the verb is occasionally used in the infinitive form and the true subject comes in a dative form; most of these sentences are exclamatory" [Rudenko-Morgun, 2001, 32].

Regarding this specific case, Vasilieva explains: "Many grammatical issues represent the specifications of the colloquial style; like the structures that intensify negation, in which case the sentences are exclamatory:

Пойдет он, как же! – *oy khahād amād, chetor tomken āct!*

Есть о чем спорить! – *chizi hām bāraye bāhc kārdān vojood darād!*

Какая это жизнь! – *in che zendegii āct!*" [Vasil'eva, 1995, 77].

As we can see, sentences in the invisible method of negation via tone are usually exclamatory or interrogative.

There are also interrogative sentences in the Persian language bearing the same invisible method. Khanlari explains:

"In the Persian language there are interrogative sentences where the narrator does not request an answer from the listener; but rather intensifies his intentions through questions. These kinds of sentences are referred to as 'intensified interroga-

tive sentences'. When an interrogative sentence begins with "مگر" – *mägär* and "هیح" – *hich* the narrator actually intends to exclaim an answer that is in fact the opposite of the questioned object, with intensification:

Mägär nemibini? = (älbäte) *mibini*.

Mägär adämi näboodi? = (yäghin äst ke) *adämi boodi*.

Mägär fäghiräm? = (häme midanänd ke) *fäghir nistäm*.

Hich khäbär dari? = (bishäk) *khäbär nädari*.

Hich äz khoda nemitärsi? = (älbäte) *mitärsi-or-(älbäte) bayäd betärsi*"

[Khanlari, 1999, 110].

2. Negation via words with a negative semantic

1	2	2	1
<i>Он отказался.</i>	= Он не согласился.	= Oy movafeghät näkärđ.	Oy mokhalefät kärđ.
<i>Он промахнулся.</i>	= Он не попал.	= Oy be häđäf näzäd.	Oy khäta kärđ.
<i>Он опоздал.</i>	= Он не пришел во время.	= Oy be moghe näyamäd.	Oy dir kärđ.

In this case, negation elements are not used; nevertheless, the overall meaning of each sentence is negative. The sentences in the 1st Russian-column have a positive structure and negative semantic; while the sentences in the 2nd Russian-column (which are the Russian equivalents for the first column) express the same negative semantic via the negation modal.

There is a concord for the translation of both above-mentioned columns in the Persian language; sentences in the 1st Persian-column have a positive structure and negative semantic; while in the sentences of the 2nd Persian-column, the same semantic is expressed via negative verbs.

It is interesting to mention that in *Linguistic encyclopedic dictionary* a group of sentences are discussed that have a completely opposite structure; they contain negation elements but the overall semantic is positive:

Он не так уж умен. = Сомневаюсь, что он так уж умен. – oy *anghädř häm aghel nist.* = *shäk daräm ke oy in ghädř aghel bähäd* [Yartseva, 2002, 355].

Positive Sentences with a Negative Structure

In the Russian language, there are sentences that have negation elements but represent a positive semantic. In these types of sentences, two negation elements

stand in the combination of the predicate or next to both fundamental elements of the sentence. Consequently, the negative semantic is removed and a positive one is obtained, semantically referring to objects that should be done, or obligatory actions. This is called a "binary negation". Binary negation is seen in the following situations:

1. The negation modal stands before both the conjugated verb *мочь* – (tävanestän) and the infinitive verb connected to the conjugated verb

Широта его взглядов **не** могла **не** изумлять меня. – *Vosäte negahäsh nätävanest mära mäbhoot näkonäd: (word-by-word translation) = (Vosäte negahäsh mära mäbhoot kârd).*

Он **не** мог **не** скучать в деревне (Тургенев) – *där roosta oy nätävanest deltäng näshäväd: (word-by-word translation) (= där roosta oy deläsh migereft).*

2. The negation modal *не* stands before the infinitive verb while the predicate contains words such as *нельзя* and *невозможно*

Нельзя не сказать – *näbayäd sokhän nägoft (bayäd sokhän goft).*

Нельзя не любить такого человека (Чехов) – *nemitävan chonin färđi ra doost nädasht.*

Я думаю, что *нельзя* будет **не** ехать (Л. Толстой). – *män fekr mikonäm ke bayäd raft.*

3. In conjugated combinations such as *не имеет права* – (hägh nädaräd), *не имеет основания* – (dälili nädaräd), *не в силах (не может)* – (ghader näboodän, nätävanestän) followed by a negative infinitive

Он **не** имел *права* **не** сказать (должен был сказать). – *oy hägh nädasht chizi nägooyäd. (oy bayäd härđ mizäd).*

Никто **не** имеет *права* **не** знать жизни. (Гончаров) – *hich käs hägh nädaräd ke zendegi ra näshnasäd.*

Conclusion

Negative sentences in the Russian language have many complicated forms and structures and express various meanings. Misunderstanding these structures causes difficulties in the proper use of negative sentences for Persian-language students.

Analyzing the methods of expression of negation in Russian and Persian languages, it is concluded that these two languages, both belonging to the Indo-European branch, have structural similarities and differences. For example, by changing the order of a sentence's elements in the Russian language, a complete semantic change of an apparently positive sentence to a negative one may occur. On the contrary, there is no such rule in the Persian language, and the narrator can intensify his intentions via tone and stressing the intended word rather than changing the order or the whole sentence.

Persian-language students should also learn the correct usage of various negation pronouns in the Russian language. Negation pronouns containing the modals *he* and *hu* represent various meanings; while their Persian equivalents may be the same.

In this article positive-structured sentences with a negative semantic were analyzed; and we saw that in some cases, negation is expressed via tone. Also, negative sentences in the Russian language are divided to two types of general and partial denial; in the first case, the verb and in the latter, other elements of the sentence are negated.

Analyzing the semantics and forms of these structures and their equivalents in the Persian language, it is concluded that negative sentences in the Russian language are more complicated structurally and semantically compared to the Persian language, which has a less complicated negation system.

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**Методы выражения отрицания с помощью
положительных и отрицательных структур в русском
языке и их эквиваленты в персидском языке**

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Аннотация

С исторической точки зрения русский и персидский (фарси) языки принадлежат к одной и той же языковой семье – индоевропейской; поэтому они имеют сходные морфологические и синтаксические структуры. Авторы рассматривают способы отрицания и строение отрицательных предложений в русском и персидском языках. В русском языке есть отрицательные формы, которые трудно понять персоговорящим студентам; незнание этих структур приводит к недоразумениям, в то время как отрицательные структуры в персидском языке не настолько сложны. В статье освещается выражение отрицания с помощью отрицательных и утвердительных структур в русском языке, проанализированы их эквиваленты в персидском языке и трудности в понимании.

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Ключевые слова

Отрицание, отрицательная модальность, предложение, русский язык, персидский язык.