

The syntactic structure of negation in Persian

Saera Kwak (Tehran University)

Dept. of Linguistics, Tehran University, Enghelab, Tehran

Tel : 98-932-929-5427

E-mail : smartsaera@hotmail.com

This paper studies the syntactic structures of negative sentences in Persian based on Minimalism.

Following Pollock(1989) and others, I assume that there is a functional projection of negation, NegP headed by the negative marker against which Negative concord item *hič*-phrase¹ checks its [neg] feature. This analysis follows Haegeman's (1995) NEG-criterion, which suggests that the well-formedness condition of negative elements comes from the Spec-Head configuration between [neg] feature and NEG-operator. As is shown in (1), *hičkas* is merged in Spec-vP position as the subject and then moves to Spec-NegP to get its [neg] feature checked.

Multiple NCI constructions like (2) also checks their neg features in the same way.

From the complex sentences involving an NCI, we can assume that Spec-Head relation can be respected either at the time of merge as in (3 c,d), or after the movement of the NCI operator as in (3b).

Furthermore, following Watanabe's (2004) feature cancellation, I propose that the two [neg] features can cancel each other giving an affirmative interpretation as in (4).

Finally, the status of subjunctive marker *be-*, which seems to be in complementary distribution with the negative marker is revisited (5). However, It is shown that in all cases, the meaning of subjunctive is reflected in the verb with [subj] feature. There is a case where we can find the overt subjunctive form, and this is with the verb '*budan*' as in (6). I posit Mood Projection under Neg Projection with subjunctive marker occupying the specifier of the MoodP, checking its [subj] feature against the [subj] feature on the verb after the latter moves to the Mood head.

¹ Its syntactic and semantic properties as a negative concord item is proposed in Kwak&Darzi (2006)

