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Foreword

There are several features that distinguish human languages from the communication systems of other animals. The most remarked on is the infinite character of the former, the fact that speakers of a human language have a potentially infinite supply of sentences at their disposal. Probably the most remarkable, though, is negation. All human languages contain one or more mechanisms of a negative character; no animal communication does. It is clearly central to the study of language and logic. But just how does it work?

Jon Barwise. 1991. Review of Laurence Horn's *A Natural History of Negation*. *The Journal of Symbolic Logic*. 56/3. 1103.

The present thematic issue of *Jezikoslovlje* is one of many an attempt to find potential answers to the posed question. Being an inalienable part of human nature, existence and culture, negation enjoys the status of one of the few phenomena that have continuously received detailed analyses through history.

In antiquity, the primary focus with regard to the nature of negation lay on the ontological issues, in particular, the tripartite relation between affirmation, negation, and reality. These questions created a well-known and discussed split between philosophers that has not been resolved to the present day. Authors such as Hegel, Russel and Kant, for example, take the asymmetric stand in claiming that negation has a secondary status and is as such inferior to affirmation, whereas Frege and Wittgenstein support the symmetric view in believing that affirmation and negation are of equal rank.

In modern linguistic tradition, the seminal works by Otto Jespersen (1917, 1922, and 1924) on negation (in English) represent the breaking point in the study of ne-



gation: negation in natural languages is no longer predominantly examined from the ontological/philosophical perspective, but becomes the focus of the descriptive linguistic research. The so-called Jespersen's cycle phenomenon, first observed in Jespersen's diachronic study of negation in English, has now become a standardly-used explanation for any diachronic process of grammaticalisation. Half a century later, Klima (1964) used the linguistic apparatus of the then developing theory of transformational-generative grammar to explain the derivation of negative syntactic structures in English. To this day, Klima's (1964) paper represents the starting point of any syntactic investigation into negation – not only English – and has laid the path for pure syntactic accounts of negation, which culminated in 1990s with influential works by Laka (1990), Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman (1995), and Rowlett (1998) among others.

Other linguists, for instance Fauconnier (1975), Ladusaw (1980), Linebarger (1980), van der Wouden (1997), Giannakidou (1998), and Horn (2001) – just to mention some of the most influential for the current linguistic developments – have shown that negation and negation-related phenomena can and, indeed, have to be studied from other, not purely syntactic, perspectives, including the semantic, pragmatic and discursive dimensions.

With these diverse contemporary approaches to negation in mind, our prime goal as the editors of this issue of *Jezikoslovlje*, was to strike a balance between various approaches to negation, and offer the readers a selection of papers that cover as many different angles and perspectives as possible. We have, indeed, been fortunate to have eight papers that reflect our original purpose, and cover study fields such as morphology, syntax, semantic, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and diachronic linguistics. Every paper received sets of comments from two or three reviewers and was further read by the editors. The papers are organized alphabetically.

Kazuhiko Fukushima's morphological paper *Negation as an empirical/conceptual tool: A case study with V-V compounds* shows that negation can be used as a diagnostic test for headedness among lexical V-V compounds in Japanese. The advantage of negation being used as the diagnostic tool lies also in the fact that it guides us to favour lexical approaches over syntactic ones.

It goes without saying (though I will say it anyway), the paper by **Tanja Gradečak Erdeljić** and **Dorijan Gudurić**, focuses on the phenomenon of praeteritio or apophasis as a rhetorical device in political discourse. Analysing the data gathered from British and Croatian newspapers, and transcripts of political speeches, the authors observe a frequent use of various types of negation constructions as



introductory lines for the content which is actually not being negated, but rather accentuated, and concludes that this linguistic phenomenon is universal and that the underlying cognitive processes very cleverly serve quite pragmatic purposes of manipulation by language.

In their contribution *Evaluating knighthood through the discourse functions of negation in “Le Morte D’Arthur” by Malory*, **Tatiana Komova** and **Anastasia Sharapkova** explore the discursive role negation plays in determining the knightly virtues and vices, and in portraying the opposition between a good and a bad knight. Komova and Sharapkova show that negation not only allows the author to explicate the bad qualities of a knight, but also enables him to present the positive ones. In addition, their analysis indicates that negation is not only a logical counterpart of positive utterances, but a powerful tool for featuring knighthood as a socially and ethically important endeavour.

Employing the framework of cognitive linguistics, **Catherine Moreau**’s paper *Over- and out- as negatively-oriented markers* analyses two negatively-oriented markers, the verbal prefixes *over-* and *out-*, as a means of assessing a value in relation to a subjective boundary. More specifically, Moreau argues that the two prefixes in question pertain to different semantic stages of a notional domain.

In *Genitive of negation in the Croatian language*, **Diana Stolac** discusses the syntactic as well as stylistic role of the genitive of negation in Croatian, and contrasts it with the accusative case under the scope of negation. Stolac argues that under the scope of negation, the two structural cases are fully interchangeable only in syntax, whereas stylistically the genitive is used to emphasise negation. This claim is further supported by the analysis of English translational equivalents.

In his corpus-based analysis of the lexical bleaching involving the verbal construction *fail to x*, entitled *Lexical bleaching of the verbal construction fail to x: A contrastive corpus-based study*, **Andrej Stopar** takes into account the syntactic and semantic properties of the construction *fail to x*, and examines its distribution in the BNC the COCA corpora. To contrast the findings on a cross-linguistic level, Stopar uses the parallel English-Slovenian corpus and analyses the Slovenian translations of the construction in question.

Focussing on the development of negation in biblical English in the period from the 11th to the 17th century, **Lidija Štrmelj** discusses negation in English from a diachronic perspective. In her paper *On syntactic and morphological negation in biblical English: A diachronic study*, Štrmelj explores the morpho-syntactic features of negative clauses in Late Old English, Late Middle English and Early Modern Eng-



lish, on the basis of the three English translations of the *Gospel according to John*.

The final contribution of this thematic issue, *Pleonastic negation from a cross-linguistic perspective* by **Irena Zovko Dinković** and **Gašper Ilc** provides some cross-linguistic insights into the phenomenon of pleonastic negation. Focussing on Croatian and Slovenian data, the authors argue that the difference in the scope of negation between sentential and pleonastic negation is mirrored directly in their syntactic properties and different syntactic derivations (e.g. the licensing of *n*-words and the assignment of the genitive case).

Finally, we would like to seize this opportunity and thank all the authors for their enticing contributions, the reviewers for their insightful comments that greatly strengthened the quality of the papers included in the present issue, and our colleagues from *Jezikoslovlje* for their dedicated work.

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