



## Research Article

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### Generative approach to the structure of negative sentences in Albanian

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/bjir-2024-0025>

#### Abstract

This paper examines the components of negative sentences in Albanian from the perspective of generative linguistics. Main aim is to analyze the functions and positions of negative elements in the structure of Albanian sentences, providing a comparison with other languages to highlight the universal features and specificities of Albanian.

The focus of the analysis are the main negative particles such as "nuk", "s", "mos", and "as", which are used to express simple and compound negation, including double and intensive negation. Elements such as "nuk" and "s" are positioned immediately before the verb to express a simple negation and operate in a C-command relation that blocks the placement of other elements between them and the verb. In the syntactic structure, their position is above the subject and immediately before the predicate, blocking any other element from being placed between them and the verb. While "mos" is used mainly in the imperative, subjunctive and imperative moods, taking position before the modal particle or auxiliary verb to control the actions of the verb. "As" reinforces negation and can be positioned before the verb or other constituents to create polynegative structures. Comparisons with languages such as Italian and English emphasize that Albanian has developed polynegative structures, which allow the use of multiple negative elements without violating the grammaticality of the sentence. This analysis suggests that Albanian, through complex negation structures, complies with some of the universal principles of generative linguistics, while simultaneously maintaining special features that challenge some assumptions of standard generative syntax.

**Keywords:** negation, generative linguistics, polynegative Albanian, negation particle, syntactic structure.

#### 1. Introduction

One of the universal phenomena of languages is negation. Through it, *the content of the entire sentence, or an element of it, the existence of a fact is denied, the desire or request is expressed not to do something, to prevent an action, a state, the truth of the non-existence of*

*something is questioned.*

- (1) a. Ajo s'ka të bëjë fare me shpjegimin që u bën ëndrrave populli (Kadare, 1981).  
b. Nuk kemi bukë të tepërt (Blushi, 2008).  
c. Ujët e sternës nuk shkumonte (Kadare, 1971).

In the research on negation in the Albanian language, Gosturani (1976) states that negation in Albanian is realized through grammatical means, which are the negation particles *nuk, s', mos, as, jo, pa, ja*, that generally stand before the verb, but it is noted that the possibility of negation falling on other members of the sentence is not excluded. Based on this criterion of negation, we are dealing with *general negation* if the verb-predicate is negated, and we are dealing with *partial negation* if another member of the sentence is negated. Based on the means of expression in these two divisions, other subdivisions are made into *general simple* and *compound negation* as well as *partial simple* and *compound negation*. In compound negation, *double, multiple, reinforced* and *intensive negation* are observed (Albanian Academy of Sciences, 2002). If some of the negative particles are examined, it can be noticed that the negative particles *nuk* and *s'* are the particles that are most frequently used to express negation and have a topic embedded before the verb. They can be interchanged with each other but it can be said that they have different uses from each other based on discourse situations and styles.

- (2) a. Nuk rishtypi butonin me shenjën e gjelbër, por atë me të kuqen;  
b. Gati sa s'thirra nga gëzimi;  
c. Nuk askush foli;  
d. Gati sa thirra s'nga gëzimi (Banushi, 2015).

These negative particles *always stand immediately before the simple verbal form and when the latter is compound, then they generally stand before the auxiliary part, thus negating the entire compound verbal form or the entire verbal expression* (Albanian Academy of Sciences, 2002). The particle *mos* has a fixed order in the sentence and stands before verbs in the imperative. In cases of negation with subjunctive or with undeveloped forms, the particle *mos* enters between the particle of the subjunctive or the particles for and because of the undeveloped forms and the verb forms.

- (3) a. *Mos prit shi në korrik, se mbete me një shënik.*  
b. *Mos ia urofsha as armikut, o zot.*  
c. *Ishte munduar të tregohej i drejtë, të mos i binte në qafë askujt, të mos i hante hakun as personave që ishin në hetim, dhe më kryesorja, të mos cënonte aspak ligjin.*  
d. *Për të mos gabuar, u tha që më përpara kushtet e vlerësimit.*  
e. *"Vërtet, Zana, ti ke diçka prej artisteje" - thashë duke e shikuar me vërejtje dhe duke mos i vënë rëndësi emrit të regjisorit.*

The particle *mos* stands before the pronominal particle *u* of verbs in the past tense, as well as before short forms of the personal pronoun, whether these are conjugated or not.

- (4) a. *Mos u krih në sy të qerozit.*  
b. *Mos e humb besën se të humbet varri.*  
c. *Mos ia kqyr dokën, po kqytia kokën.*

The particle *as* is found before the verb or before short forms or the particle *u* of the past tense, sometimes followed by *që*, emphasizing the negation.

(5) a. Alma *as* kishte prekur gjë me dorë gjithë ditën.

b. *As* i kujtohej ajo që kishin biseduar.

c. *As* u shkante ndër mend të largoheshin nga aty.

d. Fëmijët *as* që kishin provuar ta merrnin topin nga frika.

Albanian negation shows similarities in its construction with Italian, but does not match the construction of negation in English. Let's compare the examples:

a. *Mos* ki frikë

*Non* aver paura

*Don't* be afraid

\**n't do* be afraid

b. *Nuk/s'* takova askënd

*Non* ho visto *nessuno*

I have *not* seen anyone

\* I have *not* seen *no* one.

c. Kjo rrugë *nuk/s' të çon* kurrkund

Questa strada *non* ti porta da *nessuna* parte

This road *doesn't* lead you anywhere.

\*This road *doesn't* lead you *nowhere*.

For each of the Albanian examples, different grammatical means of negation are used. For Albanian in (a) the negative particle *mos* is used, which in Italian has its counterpart *non* and in English has the shortened form *n't*. The examples also present the simple negation of Albanian and Italian in (a) and the compound negation in (b) and (c). The grammatical means in each of the cases are different for Albanian because in (b) the second grammatical means of negation is a pronoun, while in (c) the second grammatical means is an adverb.

In the comparison we make of the examples, we notice that in the sentences of example (a) we have a coincidence in the number of grammatical means of negation, but we do not notice this coincidence in their topic in relation to the verb of the sentence. Thus, in Albanian and Italian the negative particles *mos* and *non* respectively are placed before the verb, while in English the negative grammatical means *-n't* is placed after the verb.

The differences deepen in (b) and (c) when in Albanian and Italian a compound negation is constructed, so the sentences are grammatical with the use of two grammatical means of negation, while in English the pronoun *anyone* and the adverb *anywhere* are not constructed with a negative element, but an affirmative one, so instead of the negatives *no one* and *nowhere* that would be the *ad literam* translations, the positive adjectives with *any* are used. And if we try to add the second grammatical means of negation, the sentence in English would be ungrammatical. This phenomenon is related to the fact that Albanian and Italian are included in polynegative languages *since several negative elements can be used at the same time in a sentence*. Gosturani (1976) recognizes the following constructions as characteristics of double negation in Albanian:

1) P + m + F or m + F + P

(where *P* is for negative pronouns like *askush*, *kurrkush*, *askurrkush*, *asnjëri*, *asnjëra*, *asnjeri*, *asnjë*, *asndonjë*, *asgjë*, *kurrgjë*, *askurrgjë*, *asgjësend*, *asgjëkafshë*, *hiçgjë*, *hiçgjëkafshë*, *kurrfarë*; *m* is for the negative particle and *F* is for the verb) ;

2) N + m + F or m + F + N

(where *N* is for the negative adverbs *kurrë*, *askurrë*, *kurrkund*, *askund*, *asgjëkundi*, *kurrse-si*, *në asnjë mënyrë*, *aspak*, *asfare*, *fare*, *hiç*, *hiçfare*, *asnjëherë*, *asndonjëherë*, *kurrnjëherë*).

(6) a. Askush nuk paguante mirë për tekstet antike.

b. Asnjeri nuk kishte ndërmend të flinte.

c. Kurrkund nuk gjeta Gjergj Elez Ali.

d. Nuk di fare si do ia bëj.

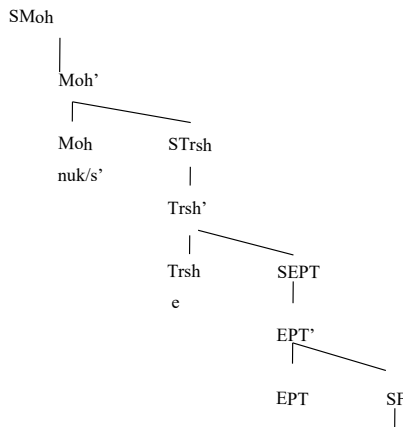
There are cases in Albanian where the use of repeated negation leads to affirmation as in (7):

(7) Syri i stërvitur i Katrinës nuk mund të mos vinte re vuajtjen e Alma Vokshit.

An important aspect of negation is the topic of the grammatical means of negation. Thus, they appear before some word classes, such as: before verbs, clitics or nouns as in the example: *Pa letra mos më eja më në derë!*, but they can also appear on their own, as b.f., in the example: *Këtë, mos!* (When we tell a child not to touch something, for example, a knife, scissors, etc.)

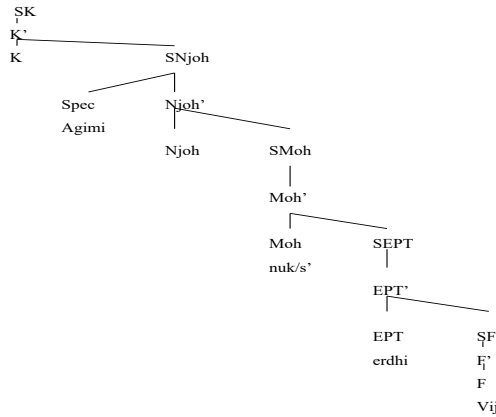
In our analysis, we must remember that negation is a functional head just like *eptim*. From the presentation made above, the negation particles *nuk* and *s'* appear synonymous and always occupy the same position, but this does not happen with the particle *mos*. It has a different distribution in relation to clitics and the particle *të* of the subjunctive, *u* of the past participle or *për të* and *duke* of the undeveloped forms. Since negative particles are required to be placed before the verb, as is the case with short forms, it is understood that apart from the latter, no other element can be placed between them and the verb, so the place of negation must be above the position of the accusative. Based on the above analysis, the following can be stated:

**Scheme 1.**



In the negative demonstrative *Agimi nuk erdhi* the diagram would be (Mita, 2005):

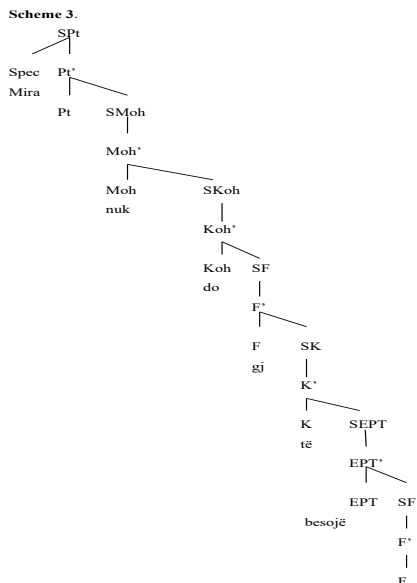
**Scheme 2.**



In the constructions of negation with verb forms with the participle *do* we will have a double structure (Turano, 2000) where the verb will rise in the EPT position in the SEPT leaving behind a trace, but the other verb also rises in the EPT position leaving behind a trace, while the negation is located above the Koh (Mita, 2017) position, that is, above the future or conditional will.

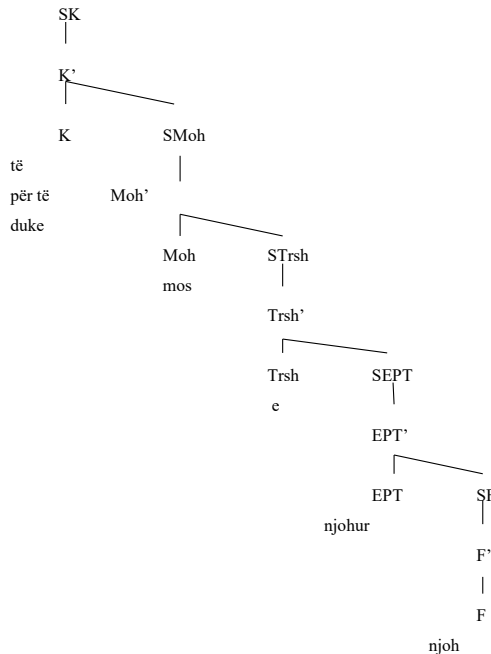
For the sentence *Mira nuk do të besojë* we would have the diagram:

**Scheme 3.**



According to Turano (2000) the lowest layer of K is where the imperative verbs and the undeveloped forms of the infinitive and the subjunctive move. The particles *të* of the subjunctive, *për të* of the infinitive and *duke* of the subjunctive are placed in the K position, leaving behind the short forms that are placed before the verb. For this reason, the negation diagram with *mos* does not present these particles in the lowest position of the K field.

**Scheme 4.**



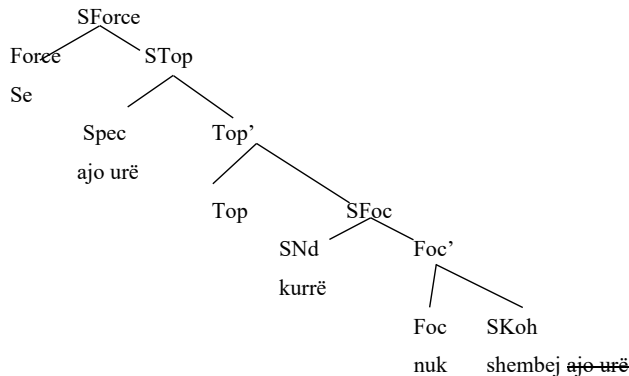
In the case of multiple negation<sup>1</sup>, Kananaj (2015) notes that based on the rule written by Adger (2003), for Albanian it would be said that the *negative element c-commands the element with negative polarity (EPM) in sentences with neutral order of constituents*. The EPM element in Albanian is reinforced with the negative particle *as* or the adverb *kurrë* that form the components of the negation. Based on the proposal of Rizzi (1997), Kananaj (2015) explains that the Force projection is filled by elements that indicate

<sup>1</sup> "What is the nature of the connection of elements in multiple negation? As Chomsky has pointed out, this is an adaptation connection understood as an equality connection between formal features in a given syntactic domain. Negation is also a formal feature, so in the case of multiple negation we are dealing with an adaptation connection. The constituents of multiple negation are semantically not negative words. Syntactically they are marked by an unexplainable feature [MOH]. This feature needs to be in an adaptation connection with the particle not which has the explicable feature [MOH]. Thanks to syntactic adaptation, all unexplainable features [MOH] disappear and so the derivation stands." Josif Mita, *Teoria e sintaksës gjenerative dhe veçanti të gjuhës shqipe*, Prishtinë, 2017, p. 221.

the negative type of the sentence, the S<sub>Top</sub> projection contains the subject which is usually the subject and the adverbs are initially focalized in the position of the specifier of S<sub>Foc</sub> by moving out of S<sub>Koh</sub> to obtain the rhematic interpretation, in Foc the element rheme is placed.

The diagram for (8) would be:

(8) It is said that, that bridge never collapsed.



## Scheme 5.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the place of negation should be above the position of eptim. In negation constructions with verbal forms with the *do* participle, we have a double structure where the verb will rise to the EPT position in SEPT leaving behind a trace, while the negation is above the Koh position, i.e. above the *do* of future or conditional. The EPT element in Albanian is reinforced with the negative particle *as* or the adverb *kurrë* that form the components of the negation. In these cases of multiple negation, the negative elements constitute the rheme and are placed in S<sub>Foc</sub> as specifiers and heads.

Thus, Albanian, through its complex structures of negation, complies with some of the universal principles of generative linguistics, while at the same time maintaining special features that challenge some assumptions of standard generative syntax.

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