***Accounting for multiple clause negators in Construction Grammar***

In Construction Grammar, reference to a negation construction usually more accurately describes a negative verbal clause construction (Croft, 2001: 25-7; Ross, 2008). For example, Croft (2001: 25-7) discusses the [Sbj Aux-*n't* Verb] construction for negative intransitive clauses like *I didn’t sleep*, which, according to Croft, is formed by means of multiple inheritance from the negation construction [Sbj Aux-*n't* Verb] and the intransitive construction [Sbj IntrV]. Similarly, Croft and Cruse (2004: 320-2) posit that affirmative imperatives have a negative counterpart under the same schema:



*Croft and Cruse, 2004: 321*

However, models of schemas like that above do not capture the paradigmatic relations between different negators that co-exist in languages as a result of changes to the expression of clause negation. For example, Zwicky and Pullum (1983) show that there are syntactic, semantic and pragmatic differences between the English canonical basic clause negator *not* and affixal (as they argue) *n’t*. This suggests that there are at least two clause negator micro-constructions in English, and it is not clear how they may interact with schemas like that above.

In this talk, then, I explore the factors that may play a role in the use of one negator over another in a language that has multiple clause negator micro-constructions. Data show that late nineteenth-century Milanese has three clause negator micro-constructions: preverbal *non* (i)*,* and postverbal *minga* (ii)and *no* (iii).

1. *Tàs            che****non*** *la* *senta.*

quiet.imp that neg she hear

‘Quiet so she does**n’t** hear.’

1. *L'=è* ***minga*** *lú!*

it =cop neg him

‘It’s **not** him!’

1. *Te vedet* ***no*** *che fann aposta?*

you see neg that do right

‘Do**n’t** you see that they are doing the right thing?

A qualitative analysis demonstrates that use of these negators is determined by syntagmatic relations with specific sets of verbs and clause constructions, as well as by discourse pragmatic functions. I suggest that each clause negator micro-construction is associated with different constructional schemas in the language network through these relations (cf. the four types of associative links in Schmid, 2016), adding another layer of complexity to models like that above. I also argue that these relations lead to the constructionalization (Traugott & Trousdale, 2013) of the discourse marker-like *mi soo no* ‘I don’t know’ construction. Finally, time permitting, I will consider the possibility of an abstract negation schema to which clause negator micro-constructions may belong.

***References***

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