

Kate Huddleston

Negative Indefinites in Afrikaans

This dissertation is concerned with the syntactic and semantic status of negative indefinites in Afrikaans. The problem posed by negative indefinites is that their interpretation appears to differ across double negation (DN) and negative concord (NC) languages. With respect to negative indefinites, Afrikaans displays features that distinguish it from both typical NC and typical DN languages. Contrary to most NC languages, and similarly to DN languages, standard Afrikaans does not allow negative indefinites to co-occur with a NC interpretation. If multiple negative indefinites do co-occur, the utterance is given a DN interpretation in standard Afrikaans. However, in colloquial Afrikaans multiple negative indefinites can co-occur with a NC interpretation. It is this potential ambiguity between NC and DN interpretations of multiple negative indefinite combinations on the one hand, and the variation in the expression of multiple indefinites in the scope of negation on the other hand, that forms the central focus of the dissertation.

The analysis of negative indefinites in Afrikaans proposed in this dissertation is formulated in the framework of bidirectional Optimality Theory (OT) and is based on both theoretical observations and empirical data.

This dissertation is of interest to researchers working on negation in general and to those interested in Afrikaans, and negation in Afrikaans.

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