

Negation markers in Polish Sign Language (PJM)

This paper focuses on basic negation markers in Polish Sign Language (*polski język migowy*, hereafter PJM). Our working hypothesis is that PJM is a non-manual dominant language in terms of the dichotomy proposed by Zeshan (2006), which means that a non-manual marker (headshake or head tilt) is obligatory for negating any sign (whether or not it is accompanied by a manual negator). The above hypothesis is confronted with empirical data extracted from an extensive corpus of PJM that is currently being compiled at the University of Warsaw. For the purposes of the present study we have analyzed a sample of corpus data coming from 5 different signers performing 26 different elicitation tasks. The process of tagging the PJM corpus is still in progress, so the amount of data that will have analyzed by the time of the conference will be more extensive than what we refer to here.

The following tags have been used so far in the annotation process: *hsh_NEG* (for headshakes expressing negation); *hsh_ALT* (for headshakes expressing an alternative); *hsh_CL* (for headshakes used in classifier constructions); *hsh_Q* (for headshakes used in questions); *hsh_OTH* (for headshakes with other functions). Additionally, situations in which a negative manual sign is not accompanied by a headshake have been marked as *hsh_∅*. Every token marked with one of the tags mentioned above has also been assigned a part-of-speech (PoS) tag.

The analyzed sample from the PJM corpus consisted of 62,268 tokens (of which 2,007 were assigned one of the above-mentioned tags). The tagging process revealed that PJM signs may be negated by other manual signs (various types of lexical signs that can be translated as 'no' or 'not'), as well as by non-manual markers (mostly headshakes). There is also a possibility of producing morphologically negated signs by preceding them with a circular movement of the wrist.

In detail: tags marking negation comprised 48.6% of all inserted tags. The *hsh_∅* tag (marking the lack of headshake with negative manual signs) was used with 21.1% of the tagged tokens. Remaining types of headshakes, taken together, comprised 30.3% of all occurrences. Our main focus here is on the negative headshake and its distribution. 8.9% of all negative headshakes were co-articulated with verbs of positive meaning (as

sole negators). 14.5% occurred with palm-ups. 33.8% of all negative headshakes were co-articulated with morphologically negated signs. 17.6% occurred with several manual lexemes meaning 'no'. Most importantly, our findings show that among all morphologically negated signs, 49.7% were articulated together with a negative headshake and 50.3% without it. When it comes to 'no' lexemes, 72.2% were accompanied by a headshake and 27.8% lacked it. These results suggest that the headshake has not been grammaticalized in PJM as a mandatory negation marker.

This preliminary study does not support the interpretation of PJM as non-manual dominant language. More importantly, neither does it let us analyze PJM as a manual dominant language (due to the fact that 8.9% of headshakes played the role of sole verbal negators). Our conclusion is that, for the time being, we are not able to classify PJM in terms of the Zeshan dichotomy.

References:

Zeshan, U. (2004). Hand, head, and face: Negative constructions in sign languages. *Linguistic Typology*, 8, 1-58.

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