

*Journal of Language Pedagogy and  
Innovative Applied Linguistics*  
January 2024, Volume 2, No. 1, pp: 112-116  
ISSN: 2995-6854  
© JLPAL. ([jainkwellpublishing.com](http://jainkwellpublishing.com))  
All rights reserved.



## **Philosophical and Logical Origins of the Linguistic Understanding of Negation**

**Vladimir Volkov \***

*Student of Belgorod State University, Russia*

### **Abstract**

*This article deals with the philosophical and logical origins of the linguistic understanding of negation in modern linguistics as well as author tries to exemplify several notions from prominent scholars who contributed in the sphere of linguistics.*

**Key Words:** *negation, affirmative, negative, logical and linguistic relations.*

### **Paper/Article Info**

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

**Volkov, V. (2024). Philosophical and Logical Origins of the Linguistic Understanding of Negation.** *Journal of Language Pedagogy and Innovative Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 112-116.  
<https://doi.org/10.1997/mk2g9y27>

\* Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1997/mk2g9y27>



The category of negation has long attracted the attention of scientists and researchers in the field of linguistics, logic and philosophy. This category has a universal and at the same time contradictory character, which is due to the fact that different scientists interpret the concept of negation in their own way.

C. Baker believes that the negation of a statement is a repeated statement indicating that the first one is false [1]. While, most philosophers, according to P. Brown, declare that negative sentences do not carry the semantic load, in view of the fact, in a broad sense, negation expresses the idea of absence [2]. According to D. Shtelling, the first attempts to classify negative sentences were made by the ancient Greeks. Thus, Aristotle distinguished two types of negation: "predicative", in which the connection between the predicate and the subject is denied, and "phrasal", the effect of which extends to one of the semantic components of a sentence [3]. It is worth noting that this concept it formed the basis for dividing sentences into private-negative and general-negative.

Not only ancient Greek philosophers were engaged in studying the concept of negation within the logical aspect. V.N. Bondarenko notes that ancient Indian philosophers pointed out the existence of a special negative reality, the category of non-existence, where they included its two main features - difference and absence. Moreover, almost all the ancient philosophers recognized the reality of the existence of not only being, but also non-being [3].

V.N. Bondarenko argues that in addition to the above concept, ancient Greek philosophers put forward the idea of the existence of a reality different from this one, which, according to K. Clark, was based on the idea of the world of primitive man, since the analysis of primitive languages indicates that negation was previously transmitted by reference to the so-called category of the "invisible world", while in the developed languages use negative statements for this purpose [4]. As an alternative to the concept of a special negative reality, V.N. Bondarenko points to the existence of the concept of reality, different from this one, which is also ontological. The the most general form this the concept was contained in Plato's doctrine of non-existence, which believed that not there is absolute non-existence, but there is relative [2].

The term "negation" was introduced into philosophy by the German philosopher Georg Hegel, but he put an idealistic meaning into it. In his opinion, the basis of negation is the development of an idea, the development of thought. Other German philosophers, such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, while retaining the term "negation", explained it materialistically. They showed that denial is an integral development of the material reality itself. Negation is also characteristic of the development of knowledge and science. Every new, more perfect scientific theory overcomes the old, less perfect one. Negation is not something introduced into a phenomenon or object from the outside, it is the result of its own, internal development. Objects and

phenomena, as we know, are contradictory and, for the transition to a new, higher quality, they themselves create conditions for their own destruction, developing on the basis of internal opposites. Negation is the overcoming of the old due to internal contradictions, the result of self-development, self-movement of objects and phenomena.

In contrast to the metaphysically interpreted "negation", which emphasizes the gap, the opposite of the features of the previous and subsequent stages of change, the "negation" interpreted dialectically implies a connection, a transition from one stage to another. The dialectical understanding of negation comes from the fact that the new does not completely destroy the old, but preserves all the best that was in it. And not only saves, but it also processes it, raises it to a new, higher level.

From the above theses, it can be seen that negation does not completely destroy the old, but only moves it to a new level, which can be compared with both logic and language. Next, we will draw a parallel of this concept with logic and directly with language.

Negation has always been an object of both linguistics and formal logic. According to formal logic, negation is "... a logical operation that opposes the untrue to a true judgment, the untrue to a false judgment, indicating that the predicate does not correspond to the subject or forms an addition to this class...". In addition, it is noted that it is not a simple failure to detect the expected other specific object that leads to a negative judgment, since the non-existence of one lies in the

existence of the other. In other words, denial is not a reflection of reality and its connections directly, but a way of viewing them by us, based on contrast with the original positive facts.

Logical negation, or rather its formal content (non-existence, absence, otherness, etc.) is a linguistic universal, since it is expressed in the system of all known languages of the world. However, only the opposite poles of judgments are familiar to formal logic: affirmative and negative. A whole scale of intermediate semantic meanings is found in natural language between these two opposite poles, approaching either an affirmation or a negation. This suggests that negative and affirmative judgments are not always opposed in natural language. For the expression of one logical form in speech, a large variety of language forms (lexical, phonetic, grammatical) is observed every time.

The linguistic means of expressing logical negation, which are used in negative judgments, are usually "merged" into two large groups: explicit and implicit. The explicit negation is expressed with the help of formal grammatical and lexical means, and the form of implicit negation is expressed with the help of some words, phrases and phraseological turns with negative semantics, which do not have proper positive forms.

The following sentences can serve as examples of explicit negation:

«I don't want you hollerin' something...». - Я не хочу, чтобы ты кричал что-либо...

"I don't want to go home," she suddenly cried in distress and anguish"- «Я не хочу идти домой»,

вдруг вскрикнула она с отчаянием и тоской в голосе.

In these sentences, the explicit negation is expressed by the verb form "to be" in the past tense and the negative particle "not".

The following sentences can serve as examples of implicit negation:

«His absence was very strange...». - Его отсутствие было очень странным.

«The lack of knowledge let him down». -. - Его подвёл недостаток знаний.

«He failed to appear at the moment». - Он не появился в настоящий момент.

"Stop talking!" - «Не болтайте!».

In the examples given, the words "absence, lack of, fail to and stop" have negative semantics, the values of absence, lack, therefore, to express an implicit negation, a negative particle "to be" is not required.

The semantics of affirmation and negation is a logical property of a proposition-judgment (in classical two-valued logic, a statement that is true at the time of affirmation becomes incorrect at the time of negation, and, on the contrary: true at the time of negation, becomes incorrect at the time of affirmation). But at the same time, semantics is also a grammatical property of a sentence, since in order to express these differences, there are special forms of sentences.

In the present process of thinking, logical forms cannot exist separately from the specific content of thoughts, but they are not part of the subject of formal logic-the science of forms (structures) of thought. Formal logic deals with the study of logical forms

taken in abstraction from the specific content of thoughts. This science is also distracted from the features that interest the grammar of the linguistic expression of thought. This general definition is fully relevant to the formal-logical negation. Formal logic examines negation independently of the means of its expression. As for the grammar (syntax), these two sentences have a completely different structure. «The world is endless» = «The world doesn't end». - Мир - бесконечен = Мир не кончается. In these sentences, one logical negation is represented by different language means. This also indicates that logical negation is not expressed in an extremely economical way in any language (redundancy in the language).

The system of language categories and meanings, which generally corresponds to the system of logical categories and forms, makes it possible to express any logical relations, regardless of whether there is between them (logical and linguistic relations) unambiguous correspondence or not. In this case, denial will not be an exception. Therefore, a formal logical negation has, in principle, the same meaning as that used in natural language, but already refined: the negation operator has an exact, fixed, unambiguous meaning.

The logical meaning of the negation and the linguistic expression of the negation may not always coincide. For example, negative language forms do not always express logical negation. So, the word "priceless" means a positive concept, namely "precious". And, on the contrary, positive language forms can express logical negation - negative

concepts, for example: single = unmarried, blind = eyeless. In addition, in words like "blind" and "eyeless" (the absence of sight and hearing is expressed, in other words, negation), grammar, unlike logic, does not reveal any negation.

In the linguistic literature, it is observed that the logical negation – this is the main content of the grammatical category of negation. Such scientists as E. I. Shendels, E. A. Vasilyeva, N. G., Ozerova, L. P. Shipulina, V. N. Zenchuk, L. A. Novikov. agree with this opinion.

Thus, according to D. Shtelling, the logical category of affirmation and negation contains the main content of the language category, but it does not completely fill it. The linguistic category of affirmation or negation also performs other functions, has relative independence and has its own volume of meanings. The use of negative means in a sentence may

pursue completely different goals, in contrast to the expression of a negative judgment. In other words, not every sentence with a negative corresponds to a negative judgment. It can correspond to a positive judgment and serve as a means of expressing not a judgment, but a prohibition, a question, and other things.

As mentioned above, the logical content of the language category of negation is non-existence, otherness, difference, deprivation. Also, the content of the language negation may include other denotative private meanings, such as: disagreement, objection, refusal, prohibition, protest, and some others. Therefore, negation can also be attributed to formal universals common to all languages. Negation is a component of the thought and the sentence expressing it. The logical value of the negation and the linguistic expression of the negation may not coincide.

## References

- [1]. Barker, C., 2018, "Negative polarity as scope marking", *Linguistics and Philosophy*, 41: 483–510.
- [2]. Brown, P. and C. Levinson, 1987, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [3]. Aristotle, [Cat.] and [De Int.], *Categories and De Interpretatione*, ed. and trans. by J. Ackrill, Oxford: Clarendon, 1963.
- [4]. Clark, K., 1978, "Negation as Failure", in H. Gallaire and J. Minker (eds.), *Logic and Data Bases*, 292–322, Plenum Press: New York.