

# Negation cont., clause types, relative clauses: Week 10

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October 31, 2013

## 1 Negation cont.

### 1.1 Non-affirmative items

Remember that there are certain words that are restricted to negative or positive polarity clauses. The list of these words can be found in (19) on pg. 155. There are several environments which allow these non-affirmative items, a list is given below.

**Overt negatives** *not* in the clause. ‘He didn’t know anybody.’

**Incorporated negatives** doubt, unlikely, improbable, dislikes, prevent, keep from. ‘I doubt that he knows **anybody**.’

**Negative frequency adverbs** seldom/rarely, hardly (ever)/scarcely. ‘I seldom see **any** of them.’

**Quantifiers & quantified adverbs** Only, few. ‘Few people see **any** benefit.’

**Questions** ‘Did you see **anybody**?’

**Hypothetical clauses** if, whether, whatever, etc. ‘Tell me if you see **anyone**.’

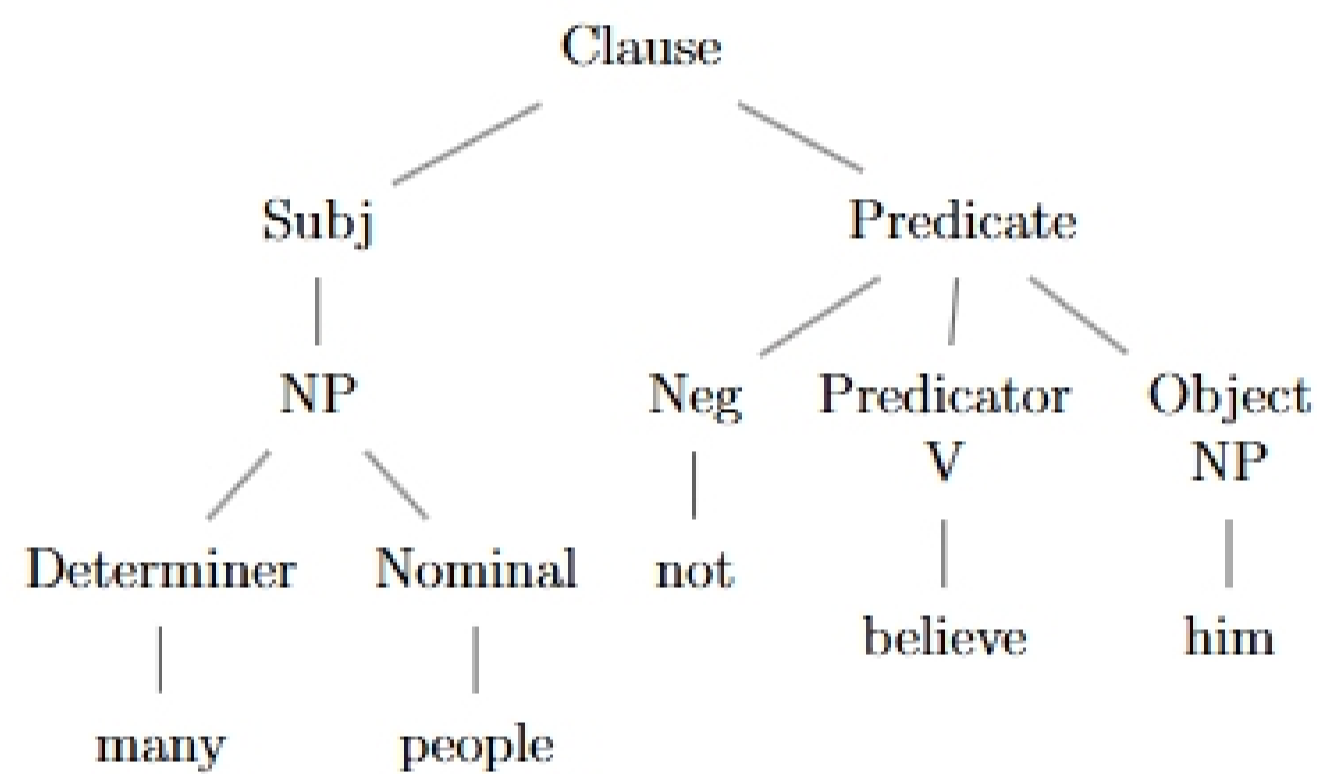
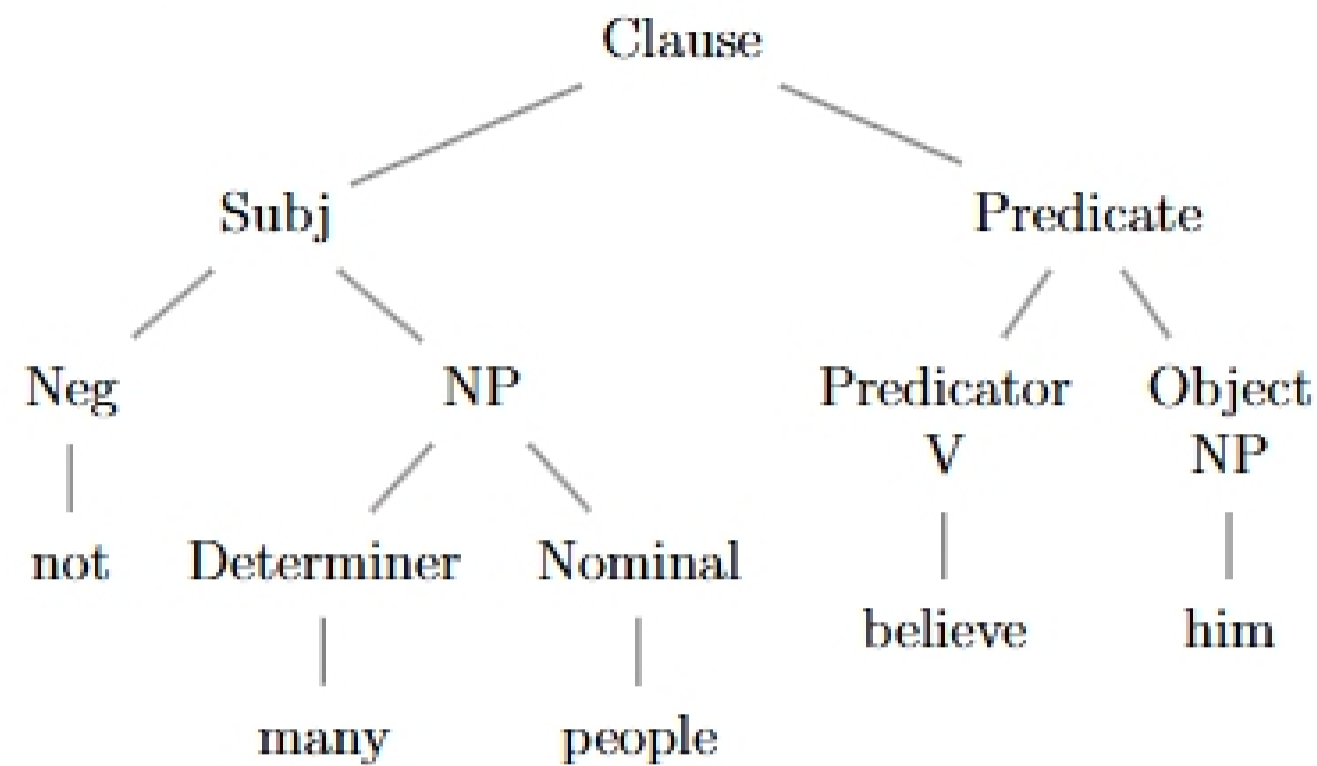
**Comparatives & superlatives** ‘I saw him before anyone else did.’

### 1.2 Double negatives

It is important to note that in non-standard English, double negatives are possible and follow strict rules of use. They are **NOT** illogical, and many languages around the world require double negatives (or negative concord) to form negative polarity clauses. There is a difference between semantic negatives and grammatical negatives. The proof is in the pudding, everyone understands phrases like, “Ain’t nobody got time for that.” as, “No-one has time for that.”

### 1.3 Scope of negation

Easiest if you see it in a tree.



### 1.4 Practice

Do Exercise 1 on pg 158.

## 2 Clause type

Speech act vs. clause type. Generally, we use particular syntactic structures to perform particular speech acts.

There are five major clause types, and they usually correspond to the speech acts in the definitions.

1. Declarative, making a statement.
2. Closed interrogative, asking a yes/no question.
3. Open interrogative asking a wh question.
4. Exclamative, making an exclamatory statement.

5. Imperative, issuing a directive.

There are counter-examples, however, closed interrogatives clauses can be used to issue directives.

(1) Can you hold my beer while I light this on fire?

It is also important to call these clause types, not sentence types, because complex sentences might be made up of more than one clause type.

(2) Do you think *Kim made a mistake*?

Subordinate clauses can contain various clause types as well, but we'll deal more with them in chapter 10.

Declarative sentences are the default clause type, so we'll be looking at the other kinds: interrogatives, exclamatives, and imperatives.

## 2.1 Interrogatives and questions

Closed interrogatives have only two possible answers, open have (virtually) unlimited answers. A response is not an answer, however. One can respond to the question without giving an answer.

### 2.1.1 Closed interrogatives (yes/no questions)

Marked by SAI and rising intonation at the end of the clause. Intonation alone can be used to mark a question, and H & P say that those are not interrogative clauses. I disagree, this is a case where ignoring intonation simply because it is not syntax is silly. But they say the clause type is declarative even though the speech act was a closed question.

### 2.1.2 Polar vs. alternative questions

Polar questions have a yes/no answer, alternative questions have several possibilities separated by *or*. But alternative questions are simply the coordination of two closed interrogative clauses that express a single alternative question. The coordinator *or* can be used in other speech acts, however, so it is potentially ambiguous.

(3) a. Do you want me to give it to mom ↗ or dad ↘?                      alternative question  
      b. Do you want me to give it to mom or dad ↘?                      polar question

### 2.1.3 Interrogative tags

We talked about these with polarity, but they are added to some clauses (usually declaratives). The tag question is usually a pronoun and auxiliary verb, with the opposite polarity of the main clause. These are used to ask for confirmation of a statement.

(4) The House finally passed a clean CR, didn't they?