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**Infrastructure requires a foundation: a base for the canons of negation**

Before determining which canons are relevant for constructing the theoretical space of possibilities in which to calibrate a particular phenomena in Canonical Typology, there must first exist a foundational base or notional starting point from which to anchor the investigation of a domain. In existing applications of this methodology such as Corbett (2006, 2007), the notional starting points or stripped back ‘definitions’ identified for the study of agreement (Steele 1978: 610 in Corbett 2006: 4) and suppletion (Mel’čuk 1994: 358 in Corbett 2007: 11) have been selected from a range of possibilities detailed in a body of literature resulting from a long history of theoretical and descriptive work. However, what characterises these definitions as ‘good ones’ or the most appropriate to use as a starting point for which to define linguistic constructs remains inexplicit; from a methodological standpoint, in developing an infrastructure for Canonical Typology it is necessary to scrutinise the very foundations around which differences can be mapped.

In this paper I illustrate the complexity of the issue by considering linguistic negation – a category that is manifested grammatically to some effect in every language. In particular I address the issue of which components are required in a basic definition of negation within Canonical Typology and which properties of negation should be accounted for through the instantiation of canons. Following on from Bond (2007), I argue that basic definitions are minimally built around a specific form of contrast between possibilities; for linguistic negation, the formal manifestation is the realisation of a contrast between an explicit unrealised world and the real (or some other unrealized) world:

*Negation is a superordinate grammatical category that models a direct contrast between a state of affairs in some unrealized world (the concept(s) expressed by a counterpart affirmative) in relation to the real world or a different unrealized world, projected as a perception or belief of the speaker.*

Crucially, the basic definition suggested here does not make reference to the scope, form or logical entailments of negation, as is the norm in theoretical, philosophical and typological work on the subject to date (e.g. Klima 1964, Horn 2001, Miestamo 2005). While undoubtedly controversial for the study of negation in general, I propose this is the most appropriate methodological stance to take within Canonical Typology, with all other aspects of meaning are dealt with separately in the 21 canons proposed to establish a meaningful multidimensional space.

**References**

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