

## ABSTRACT

### THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF NEGATION AND ITS EXPRESSION IN NATURAL LANGUAGE

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The subject of this dissertation is an investigation of the meaning of negation and of its expression in a natural language, namely Swedish.

In part one, I consider the expression of negation (the negative words *not* and *no*, implicit negation, typology of negative expressions, multiple negation, affixal negation, negative attraction, its polar and scalar properties). I also consider the content of negation (polarity phenomena, metalinguistic negation, illocutionary negation, antonymy, criteria of negativity, conceptual analysis).

In part two, I carry out a phenomenological analysis of negation according to the methodology elaborated by Husserl, with focus on the appearance of negation in our world of phenomenal experience and the description of phenomena delimiting the phenomenal field of negation. This leads me to propose three essential concepts of negation: (i) *lack*, related to the absence of some expected object, (ii) *otherness*, related to getting the wrong object and (iii) *obstruction*, related to confrontation with an obstacle.

In part three, I make a list of potentially negative expressions, evaluate their strength of negativity and expression type, and sort them out into three classes: (a) strong syncategorematic, (b) weak syncategorematic, and (c) categorematic. Their negativity is investigated by means of six semantic criteria, and their actualization potential of the three essential concepts is examined. We find that the negativity of an expression is best captured by an index of general negativity and its degree of negativity by an index of strength of negativity. Five grammatical categories (determiners, prepositions, modal adverbs, affixes and verbs) exhibit a higher level of negativity than the other categories (adverbs, feedback words, adjectives, substantives, verb particles and conjunctions). Expressions effecting a specialized actualization of the essential concepts show a higher degree of negativity than expressions effecting a generalized actualization, i.e. actualizing all three concepts. This difference is however neutralized in the case of highly negative terms. Two syntactic categories (affixes and prepositions) exhibit a specialized actualization of each of the three negative concepts.

In part four, I try to show the emergence and development of negation from negative action to linguistic expression.

**Keywords:** Phenomenology, negation, negative facts, negative actions, negative polarity items, polarity phenomena, descriptive analysis, Swedish, semantics, pragmatics.