NEGATION AND POLARITY
IN THE GREEK, GOTHIC, CLASSICAL ARMENIAN,
AND OLD CHURCH SLAVIC GOSPELS:
A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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[1] INTRODUCTION

In the field of Indo-European syntax it is of course sound procedure to examine the earliest attested languages and texts, Hittite, Vedic Sanskrit, and Homeric Greek, in order to arrive at an assessment via reconstruction of the likely features of the syntax of the proto-language. But even in this seemingly straightforward procedure there lurks the difficulty that, whereas the texts of Homer and the Rigveda reflect archaic types of poetic production, the Hittite corpus consists overwhelmingly of prose. If we consider the syntax of prose and poetry to be in some degree incommensurate, then the circumstances of our comparison are not ideal. On the other hand, we find among a small group of middle attested Indo-European dialects exactly the opposite situation: in Germanic, Armenian, and Slavic the earliest (or sole) attested material consists of translations from the Greek New Testament. In these instances, then, we have the same text and hence the materials for a ready-made comparative syntax that simply awaits research in order to be made available as a component to be fed into the comparative method together with the results from other Indo-European dialects for the purpose of syntactic reconstruction. Despite these favorable circumstances, however, the comparative syntax of the Gothic, Classical Armenian, and Old Church Slavic gospels (for it is precisely these texts that they all share) has attracted exceedingly little attention. In fact, the only person to have devoted significant attention to this area prior to the twenty-first century was the Swiss scholar Cuendet, who wrote monographs on the use of the imperative and word order in these texts (1924 and 1929, respectively). Recognizing the obvious advantages for comparative syntax presented by this material, I conceived in 1987 a project to analyze these texts for comparative syntactic purposes and have pursued it ever since with many interruptions. My contributions have so far involved only Gothic and Classical Armenian (Klein 1992a, 1992b, 1994, 1996, 1997; Klein & Condon 1993). In addition, over the past twenty years a number of unpublished theses and dissertations have been produced under my direction at the
University of Georgia (in one instance elsewhere with me as co-director) as part of this project, mostly involving Gothic but with frequent inclusion of the Old English gospels (cf. Condon 1990, Kim 1992 [Old English], Tunkle 2000, Govberg-Afros 2002 [Gothic and Old English], Martin 2004 [Old English], Bucsko 2008, Pennington 2010 [Greek, Latin, Gothic, Old English]). In one instance (Thomason 2006) the material of Greek, Gothic, Classical Armenian, and Old Church Slavic has been utilized. In recent years Dag Haug has conceptualized a computerized European version of this project at Oslo University (called Pragmatic Resources in Old Indo-European Languages [PROIEL]) in which the Latin Vulgate also plays a prominent role. It appears therefore that the comparative syntax of these languages is finally getting the attention it deserves.


The first step which must be taken in the consummation of this project is the accumulation of a body of comparative data. Currently no quadrilateral discussion of this material exists in the scholarly literature, aside from the works of Cuendet and Thomason previously noted. The data for such a discussion must therefore be wrung from the texts themselves. Once this material has been gathered and categorized, real syntactic analysis can begin. Pursuant to this goal, I will present here a preliminary study of the comparative syntax of negation and the related issue of negative polarity items. Its modest goal is to expose the comparative facts descriptively and venture a few preliminary analyses across a range of construction types, focusing especially on the formal exponents of these, including modality. With regard to the associated issue of negative polarity, this is not the place to expatiate upon this topic, on which a substantial literature now exists (cf. inter alios Fauconnier 1975, Ladusaw 1980, Horn 1989, Zwarts 1995). In this paper we will understand negative polarity items to refer to certain pronominal or adverbal elements that occur in negative contexts, including items translatable in English as ‘nobody, never, nothing,’ etc. For an in-depth study of negative polarity in the Classical Armenian gospel text cf. Klein 1997.

The corpus on which this analysis is based encompasses the Gospels of Matthew 1:1–11:25 and Mark, chapters 1-9 or just under 20% of the Gospel text in its entirety. For the Greek text, I have used the 26th edition of Nestle & Aland (1979), for Gothic the sixth edition of Streitberg’s Gotische Bibel (1971), and for Old Church Slavic Jagić’s edition of the 11th century Codex Marianus (1960) with occasional variant readings taken from his edition of the Codex Zographensis (late 10th/early 11th century) (1954). For Classical Armenian I have used Künzle’s critical edition of the 10th century Ějmiacin manuscript (1984). The Armenian and Old Church Slavic texts are complete for the parts I have studied for this paper, although Jagić was forced to

use the 13th century Dečani tetraevangelium to provide the text of Matthew 1:1-5:24, which is lacking in both the Marianus and the Zographensis; but the Gothic text is lacking for Mt 1:1-5:15 with brief lacunae between 6:32-7:12 and again between 10:1-23. In Mark as well Gothic lacks 6:31-54. I have broken down the negation into eleven or so categories representing for the most part different clause types with special consideration given to various negative polarity markers.

[3] EXPO NENTS OF NEGATION AND POLARITY

Before presenting the comparative data, we begin by enregistering the basic exponents of negation and polarity in the four languages we are investigating, followed by an overview of their systems of modality and expression of futurity. These are features which will characterize all the passages which we shall subsequently cite and discuss.

The basic exponents of negation in the four languages are as follows:

(1) ou(k); modal mḗ; sequential oúte, oudé; mḗte, mēdé \[Gk\]
    ni; sequential nih \[Goth\]
    oč'; modal mi \[Arm\]
    ne; sequential ni \[OCS\]

While Greek and Classical Armenian retain the Indo-European distinction of indicative and modal negation, Gothic and Old Church Slavic employ a single form in both indicative and modal clauses.\(^2\) In the case of sequential negation only Classical Armenian shows no univerbated form but simply employs ew ‘and’ plus the relevant negation.

We next list the basic negative polarity items found in our corpus. The most striking of these is the Armenian set, where a series in -k' is opposed to a positive polarity series in -mn (oč’ ok’ ‘nobody’ vs. mi omn ‘a certain one, somebody’). The relationship between these two is exactly like that of English any vs. some (cf. Klein 1997). Only Slavic, as we shall see, shows a pure negation ne in certain non-overtly-negative classical negative polarity contexts:

(2) ‘Nobody, nothing’
    ou/mēdeís, ou/mēdén \[Gk\]
    ni...manna/huashun, ni...waiht \[Goth\]
    oč’ ok’, oč’ inč’ (contrast positive mi omn, imn) \[Arm\]
    niktože, ničtože \[OCS\]

\(^2\) The modal negators of both Greek and Classical Armenian are direct avatars of PIE *mḗ (cf. also Skt. mā́). Similarly, Gothic ni and OCS ne both continue the PIE nonmodal negator *né. According to the etymology of Warren Cowgill (1960), both Gk ou(k) and Classical Armenian oč’ are also descended from a strengthened form of *né, *né ḱóyu k”íd ‘not ever’, with ellipsis of the original negator. If so, then both languages, like Sanskrit, originally opposed an indicative negator *né to a modal negator *mḗ.
Finally, we note that although New Testament Greek, Classical Armenian, and Gothic all possess a subjunctive beside an indicative and imperative, OCS lacks this third modal category. NTGreek of course still employs the optative in reduced measure compared to its classical counterpart; but no examples of this mood occur in the negative clauses in our subcorpus. Although the Gothic subjunctive is etymologically an optative, we shall refer to it in this paper as a subjunctive. Of the four languages only Greek possesses a grammatical category called “future tense”. In Gothic the present indicative is capable of signaling future value, and the same is true of the perfective present in OCS. In Classical Armenian the subjunctive, in addition to signaling a range of values normally associated with this mood, signals the future as well. These facts are synopsized in Table 1.

### Table 1: Modal categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Gothic</th>
<th>Cl. Armenian</th>
<th>OCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicative</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The optative is moribund and is not represented in our subcorpus. 2 Etymologically optative. 3 Etymologically optative. 4 Present indicative serves as future. 5 Subjunctive serves as future. 6 Perfective present serves as future; periphrastic future with imati ‘have’ + infinitive.

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[3.1] **Simple negative statement**

We turn now to the various contexts of negation in comparative perspective. The first of these is the simple negative statement showing nonmodal negation + indicative mood in all four languages (3a). In the case of a future statement (3b) Greek juxtaposes the indicative and modal negations ou and mḗ and uses the subjunctive mood. Gothic responds with a present in future value and Armenian with oč’ + subjunctive qua future. In OCS the periphrastic verb imati + infinitive here signals future value:
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(3) a. Mt 6:24 ‘You cannot serve God and mammon’
    ou dúunasthe theôî douleúein kài mamônâî
    [Gk]
    ni magûp guda skalkinon jah mammonin
    [Goth]
    oč’ karêk’ AY cařayel ew mamonai
    [Arm]
    ne možete bogu rabotati. i mamônê
    [OCS]

b. Mt 5:20 ‘You shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven’
    ou mè eisêlthête eis tòn basileían tòn ouranôn
    [Gk]
    ni ßau qimîp in þiudangardjai himine
    [Goth]
    oč’ mtnanîc’êk’ yark’ayowt’iwn erknic’
    [Arm]
    ne imate vûniti vû cêsařístvo nebesînoje
    [OCS]

Example (3b) follows a negative conditional clause (‘if/unless your justice is greater than [that] of the scribes and Pharisees’) and only Gothic is sensitive to the apodotic nature of the context, employing its apodotic particle ßau ‘then’.

Turning now to some typical negative polarity contexts, we find instances involving the meanings ‘nobody, nothing, no longer, and never’, together with combinations of these. Examples are seen in (4a)–(4g):

(4) a. Mk 2:22 ‘And nobody puts new wine into old bottles’
    kài oudeîs bállei oînon néon eis askûs palaióús
    [Gk]
    ni manna giutìb wein juggata in balgins fairnjans
    [Goth]
    Ew oč’ ok’ arkanê gini nor i tiks hins
    [Arm]
    i nikûtože ne vûlivaatû vîna nova vî mûxy vetûxy
    [OCS]

b. Mk 9:39 ‘For there is nobody who shall do a miracle in my name and speak evil of me’
    oudeîs gàr estin hòs poïêsei dúnamîn epî tòî onômatî mou kai dunèsetai
    [Gk]
    takhû kakologêsaí me
    ni mannahun auk ist saei taujîb maht in namin meinamma jah magi
    sprauto ubilwaurdjan mis
    [Goth]
    zi oč’ ok’ ê or arînê zawrott’iwns yanown im . ew karic’ê hayhoyel
    zis
    [Arm]
    niktože bo estû iže sûtvorîtû silô o imenî moemî. i vûzmozetû vûskorê
    zûloslovîti mê
    [OCS]

c. Mt 9:16 ‘Nobody puts a piece of unfulled cloth upon an old garment’
    oudeîs dé epîbâlleî epîblêma hrâkous agnâphou epî himatîôî palaióî
    [Gk]
    aþþan ni hhashun lagjîb du plata fanan þarihîs ana snagan fairnjana
    [Goth]

[3] In presenting the texts I have made some simplifications driven in part by computer-related considerations. First, I have left off the line over holy names in Classical Armenian (e.g. AY, İI) and have written out in full abbreviated words in OCS (e.g. bogu, cêsařístvo nebesînoje). I have also reduced the multiplicity of comma and period-like punctuations in Künzle’s Classical Armenian text to a single period with a space on both sides and have placed the raised dot in Greek on the line.
The greatest degree of variation here is seen in Gothic. Most basic is (4a), where Gk. _oudeís_ ‘nobody’ corresponds to Goth. _ni manna_, Arm. _oč’ ok’_, and OCS _nikŭtože_. Notice here the OCS usage of a genitive object, _vina nova_, in a negative clause, as well as the double negative, _nikŭtože ne_, seen in none of the other languages. Other Gothic options for this value include _ni mannahun_ (4b) and _ni hvashun_ (4c). The contrast of (4b) and (4c) in OCS (_niktože vs. nikoťože...ne_) suggests that the double negative does not appear with the present tense of the verb _byti_, at least when the latter follows the negation. Another interesting feature of OCS seen here is that this language alone of the four we are investigating possesses no compositional negation or privative prefix but employs its independent negation _ne_ in the phrase _ne bělena_ ‘unfulled’ as opposed to Gk. _agnáphou_ and Armenian _ant’ap_. Gothic here uses a separate lexical item _þarihs_. In the meaning ‘nothing’ (4d) Gk. _oudén_ corresponds to Goth. _ni wait_, Arm. _oč’ inč’_, and OCS _nikoliže_, again with single negation and present tense of _byti_. For ‘never’ Gk. _oudépote_ shows two Gothic correspondences: _ni hvashun_ (4e) and _ni aiw_ (4f). In both instances Arm. has _oč’ erbek’_ and OCS _nikoliže_. Finally, the double negative polarity combination ‘no longer anybody’ is seen in (4g), where Gk. _oukěti oudéna_ goes with Goth. _ni þanaseiþs ainohun_, Arm. _oč’ ews zok’ owrek’_ and
OCS nikogože ne. Here Armenian shows yet a third negative polarity item, the local owrek ‘anywhere’ not found in the other texts, whereas OCS of the Marianus, which again shows a double negative, does not capture the oukéti ‘no longer’ of Greek. (It is, however, captured by kū tomu in the Zographensis.)

3.2 Negative commands
The second clause type we shall investigate consists of negative commands. Here Greek shows both mē + impv. and mē + aor. subj. in simple commands as well as a separate category, often called “Gesetzessprache” in which Greek renders biblical commands from the Hebrew Bible via ou + future. The reason for this is that Biblical Hebrew employs the imperfect tense in these instances, and one usage of the Hebrew imperfect is future, the value which this verbal category assumes in all later stages of the language, including the Rabbinical Hebrew contemporaneous with the Greek NT. Since Hebrew employs its nonmodal negation in these constructions (lo’ rather than ’al’), Greek responds with ou rather than mē in these instances. In simple negative commands Gothic employs ni with either the subjunctive or the imperative, Armenian responds with mi + either subjunctive or imperative, and OCS generally shows ne + impv:

5 a. Mt 6.16 ‘Don’t be like the hypocrites, of sad countenance’
   mē gíneste hósper hoi hopokritai skuthrophi [Gk]
   ni waribipl swaswe pài liutans gaurai [Goth]
   mi linik’ ibrew zkelcaworn trtmealk’ [Arm]
   ne bodéti ēko i hūpokriti (Zog: sētujošte) [OCS]

b. Mt 6.13 ‘And do not lead us into temptation’
   kai mē eisenégkēis hêmâs eis peirasmôn [Gk]
   jah ni briggaius un in fraistubnjai [Goth]
   ew mi tanir zmez i p’orjowt’iwn [Arm]
   i ne vīvedi nasū vû napastī [OCS]

c. Mt 10.26 ‘Therefore do not fear them’
   mē oûn phobēthête autoúis [Gk]
   ni nunu ogei̯ izwis ins [Goth]
   Mi aysohetew erknč’ic’ik’ i noc’anē [Arm]
   ne uboite sê ubo ixû [OCS]

d. Mt 6.3 ‘Let your left hand not know what your right hand is doing’
   mē gnôté hē aristerá sou tî poieî hē deksiá sou [Gk]
   ni witi hleiðumeti þeina hâ tauijþ taihswô þeina [Goth]
   mi gitasc’ê jak k’o zinč’ goric’ aj k’o [Arm]
   da ne čjuetû sjuica tvoê. čîto tvorîtû des’nica tvoê [OCS]
e. Mt 5.33 ‘Do not swear falsely’
ouk epiorkéseis  
ni ufarswarais  
mi erdnowc’ows sowt  
ne ĕn lúžq klūnèshi šę

Examples (5a) and (5b) show, respectively, an imperative and a subjunctive in Greek, and in each instance Armenian and OCS show imperatives. Gothic, however, apes the Greek mood in each case. In (5c), where Greek shows a subjunctive, Armenian shows a subjunctive as well. In this case the Gothic ogeiþ is a preterite present and therefore shows no opposition between subjunctive and imperative. In (5d) OCS shows da ne + indicative, even though OCS possesses a third person imperative, while Armenian must respond with a subjunctive because it lacks a third person imperative; and again the Gothic preterite present admits only a subjunctive qua imperative. An example of Gesetzessprache is seen in (5e). Here the pres. ind. is to be understood as a future in OCS; but the Armenian subjunctive must be modal because of its negation. In Gothic the present subjunctive is regularly employed in this usage category.

Polarity items within negative commands are seen in (6a)–(6b):

(6)  
a. Mk 1.44 ‘See that you say nothing to anybody’
hóra měděni měděn eípēis  
saĭh  eů hannoun ni qiþais waĭht  
zgoýš ler mi owmek’ ině’ asic’es  
bljudi šę nikomuže ničesože ne riči

b. Mk 9.25 ‘I command you: go out from him and no longer enter into him’
egó soi epitássō, ékseltthe eks autoû kai měkěti eisélthēis eis autón [Gk]  
ĭk ŋus anabiuda: usgagg us þamma jah þanaseiþs ni galeiþais in  
es tam k’ez hraman . el i dmanē . ew ayl ews mi mtanic’es i da  
azū ti veljø iziti iz nego. i k tomu ne vĩnidi vĩ nĩ

Example (6a) shows both animate and inanimate polarity in a context where the negative command is treated as a complement clause following an imperative. Gothic alone shows an overt complementizer ei, and Greek, Gothic and Armenian all show subjunctives in the complement clause. Lacking such a category, OCS employs an imperative. Notice again here in OCS the independent negation in addition to that in the polarity items. (6b) shows a “no longer/anymore” type of polarity, and Arm. shows ayl ews mi, lit. ‘not further other’, while OCS shows k tomu, lit. ‘henceforth’, not itself a negative polarity item.
[3.3] Questions

The next set of negative clause types we shall examine are questions. Greek has two types of non-wh negative question constructions: those expecting a positive reply and those expecting a negative reply. In the first type Greek shows ou or oukhi followed by the indicative, Gothic shows niu (with the Gothic interrogative particle u) + ind., Armenian shows either oč’ or oč’ apak’ēn + ind., and OCS shows ne li + ind. (with the OCS interrogative particle li):

(7) Negative questions expecting a positive reply

a. Mt 5.46 ‘Do not the tax-collectors do the same?’
oukhi kaì hoi telônai tò autò poioûsin;  
[ Gk ]

niu jah ţai ţiudo ţata samo tajand?  
[ Goth ]

oč’ apak’ēn ew mak’sawork’ znoin gorcen  
[ Arm ]

ne i mytare li tožde tvoretû  
[ OCS ]

b. Mt 7.22 ‘Have we not prophesied in thy name?’
ou tôi sôi onômati proephèteusamen  
[ Gk ]

niu ţeinamma namin praufetidedum  
[ Goth ]

oč’ yanown k’o margarâc’ak’?  
[ Arm ]

ne vû tvoe li imë proročístovaxomû  
[ OCS ]

In the second question type Gk. mé or métì + ind. corresponds to Goth. ibai + ind., Arm. mit’e or mi et’e + subj., and OCS eda + ind.:

(8) Negative questions expecting a negative reply

a. Mt 9:15 ‘Can the sons of the bridal canopy weep so long as the bridegroom is with them?’ (lit. The sons of the bridal canopy can’t weep..., [can they]?)
mê dúnantai hoi huoì tóu numpônos pentheiôn eph’ hóson met’ autôn estin ho numpâpios;  
[ Gk ]

ibai magun sunjus bruþfadis qainon und ţata hweilos ãei miþ im ìst bruþfâps?  
[ Goth ]

mi et’e mart’ inč’ ic’ë mankanc’ aðagasti sowg aðnowl . minč’ p’esayn and nosa ic’ê  
[ Arm ]
edâ mogòtû synove bračûnî plakati sê. donîdeže sú nimi estû ženixû  
[ OCS ]

b. Mt 7:16 ‘Do they collect grape clusters from thorns or figs from thistles?’
(lit. They don’t collect grape clusters...[do they]?)
mêti sullégosun apò akanthôn staphulâs è apò tribólôn sûka;  
[ Gk ]

ibai lisanda af ţaurnum weinabasja aîþpau af wigadeinom smakkans?  
[ Goth ]
Negative purpose clauses

We now turn to negative purpose clauses. Here Gk. ὧπος μὴ + subj. and ἱνα μὴ + subj. correspond to Gothic ei ni + subj., Arm. zi mi + subj., and OCS da ne + ind. Examples are the following:

(10) a. Mt 6.18 ‘In order that you should not appear to men as fasting’
    ὧπος μὴ φανεῖς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νεστεύον [Gk]
    ei ni gasaihvaizau mannam fastands [Goth]
    zi mi erewes’is mardkan ibrew zapahoł [Arm]
    da ne aviši sę člověkomū postęšę [OCS]

b. Mk 3.9 ‘In order that they should not press upon him’
    ἱνα μὴ θλῆβοσιν αὐτόν [Gk]
    ei ni praiheina ina [Goth]
    zi mi nelesc’en zna [Arm]
    da ne sütţajotšę emu [OCS]

Another type of negative purpose clause may be captured by the English rendition ‘lest’. In this category Gk. μὴποτε + subj. corresponds to Goth. ibai hvan + subj., Arm. gowc’e or zi mi erbek’ + subj., and OCS da ne + ind. or eda kogda + ind.:

(11) a. Mt 5.25 ‘Lest your adversary give you over to the judge’
    μὴποτέ σε παραδοθοί ὁ αντίδικος τοῖ κριτῇ [Gk]
    ibai hvan atgibai ṭuk sa andastauva stauin [Goth]
    gowc’e matnic’e zk’ez awsoxn dataworin [Arm]
    da ne prědastū tebe sŏdii [OCS]
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b. Mk 4.12 ‘Lest they turn [from their ways] and [their] sins be forgiven them’
mépote epistrepsós in kai aphethēi autoís tâ hamartémata [Gk]
ibā ivan gawandjaina sic jah afletaindau im frawaurhteis [Goth]
zi m’ erbek’ darjc’in ew t’oc’i noc’a [Arm]
edā kogda obratštū sē i otūpustštū sē i mū grēsī [OCS]

The difference between (11a) and (11b) on the Armenian and OCS level is that both languages are in the second instance sensitive to the polarity value ‘ever’ (-pote) in Gk. mépote (Arm. erbek’, OCS kogda). This is captured in both passages by the hvan of Gothic. Armenian gowc’e of (11a) is the relexicalized 3rd pers. sg. subjunctive of the verb of existence gol, lit. ‘it may be, perhaps’. Gothic ibai, too, may originally have meant ‘it may be so’ (on which more below).

[3.5] Negative result clauses
Negative result clauses show Gk. hóstē mé + infinitive matched by Goth. swaswe ni + ind., Arm. orpēs zi (o)c’ + ind., and OCS ēko ne + ind. Cf. (12a), which also presents the polarity item ‘anyone’ and a double negation in OCS (ne...niktože). The polarity context ‘no longer’ is seen in (12b), where Gothic presents the item juþan not yet seen in any passages so far cited. Here the sense of Armenian minč’ is something on the order of ‘to the point that’:

(12)  a. Mt 8.28 ‘So that nobody was able to pass through that way’
hóstē me iskhúe in tinā paretthein diá tēs hodoù ekeinēs [Gk]
swaswe ni mahta manna usleiþ ģairh ģana wig jainana [Goth]
orpēs zi č’ēr hnar anc’anel owmek’ ģend ģyn ģanaparh [Arm]
č’eo ne možaše niktože miništī potemī tēmī [OCS]
b. Mk 1.45 ‘So that he was no longer able to enter into the city openly’
hóstē mēkēti autòn dünasthai phanerôs eis pólin eiselthein [Gk]
swaswe is juþan ni mahta andaugjo in baug galeiþan [Goth]
minč’ oč’ ews karoľ linel nma yavtnapēs i k’alak’ mtanel [Arm]
č’eo k tomu ne možaše ėvě vū gradû vîniti [OCS]

[3.6] Negative conditional clauses
Negative conditional clauses involve Gk. ei or eán mé + subj. The simplest case involves a protasis of a negative condition, where Gothic responds with either nibai, niba, orjabai ni + ind., Armenian with et’e oč’ or apa t’e oč’ + subj., and OCS with aštē ne + ind.:
a. Mt 5.20 ‘If your justice be not greater than [that] of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven’

b. Mk 7.3 ‘If they do not frequently wash their hands, they don’t eat’

c. Mt 6.15 ‘If you do not forgive men their sins, neither will your father forgive your sins’

It seems quite likely that the Gothic subordinators jabai and nibai/niba represent remnants of a thematized present optative of the ‘be’-verb (PIE *bhuh₂) in the earliest Germanic⁴ with the original values ‘and it be’, ‘it not be’, respectively, with perhaps prosodic-based shortening in niba. The third of these passages follows a positive statement of the exact same condition with inverse result, and Gk. dé, Goth. iþ, and OCS li mark the nexus with the preceding material. In two other passages the negative condition follows a question or a positive universal statement where its value can be captured by English ‘except’. In these instances Armenian shows either et’e oč’ or byac’ et’e, respectively, ‘if not’ or ‘but if’. In both instances OCS responds with tŭkŭmo ‘only, except’:

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[4] That is, to the same stem (probably *bhuh[-e-]) that appears as the base of the Latin future and imperfect in -bit and -bat, respectively.
In neither of these cases does the negative condition involve a full clause, and this is the reason Greek shows simply ei ‘if’ rather than eán, which almost always requires a subjunctive.

In two additional instances negative conditionals involving complete clauses are much more complex:

(15) a. Mk 2.21 ‘otherwise it takes the fullness from it, the new from the old’
   ei dè mé, aírei tò plérōma ap’ autoù tò kainòn tòu palaióù [Gk]
   ibai afnimai fullon af ḥamma sa niuja ḥamma fairnjin [Goth]
   apa t’e oč’ aṙnow irowt’eambn iwrov norm i hnoy anti [Arm]
   aště li že ni vužimed t konečn oč’ nově novoe otů vetúxaago [OCS]

b. Mt 6.1 ‘[Be careful not to perform your almsgiving before men, so as to be seen by them,] otherwise you do not have a reward from your father’
   ei dè měže, misthôn ouk ēkhete parà tŏi patri humôn [Gk]
   aĩḇḇau laun ni habaḇ fram attin izwaramma [Goth]
   gowc’ė ew varjs oč’ andownic’ik’ i hawrë jermě [Arm]
   aště li že ni můzdry ne imate otů otiča vašego [OCS]

The difficulties in these passages lie in the relationship between their underlying semantic structures and their formal expressions in Greek. In (15a) the preceding clause says ‘Nobody sews a patch of unfulled cloth upon an old garment’. The expected continuation of this would be ‘for if one does, the new takes the fullness from the old’. However, the first clause may be underlingly analyzed as possessing two predicates: a higher predicate ‘it is not the case that X’ and a lower predicate ‘somebody sews a patch of unfulled cloth, etc.’ The Greek ei dè mé ‘and if not’ negates the higher predicate, producing a double negative (‘If it is not not the case that X’) and leaving the lower predicate unaffected. This structure is calqued by both Classical Armenian and OCS (the latter, however, with alternative conjunction li); but Gothic responds in its own idiomatic fashion by assuming the truth of the lower predicate via ibai ‘it be so’ (originally the affirmative antonym of nibai ‘it not be’).
In (15b) as well there are two predicates: higher ‘Be careful to X’ and lower ‘you do not perform your almsgiving...’ Here again Greek negates the higher predicate (‘If it is not the case that you are careful’). But in this instance Gothic too denies the higher predicate, not through negation but implicitly through the use of an alternative conjunction ‘or’ (aiþþau). OCS treats this passage just as it does (15a); but the Armenian of (15b) behaves exactly like the Gothic of (15a), assuming the truth of the lower predicate. In fact, the Armenian of (15b) and the Gothic of (15a) constitute an exact match in every regard but etymologically. We have already stated our view that the -bai of Gothic ibai represents an etymological thematic optative to *bhuH₂, and we may here add that the initial i-, a proximal deictic in Indo-European terms, must represent a particle of assertion ‘thus, so’. Armenian gowc’ē is likewise a subjunctive of a verb of existence, here gol ‘be’, PIE *H₂wes ‘spend the night, dwell’, cf. Gothic wisan ‘be’. Its original value is therefore ‘it be (so)’, just like that of Gothic ibai.

[3.7] Negative causal clauses

Negative causal clauses are seen in (16a)–(16d):

(16) a. Mk 4.6 'And because it did not have a root, it dried out'
   kai diá tò mè ékhein hrízan eksēránthē [Gk]
   jah unte ni habaida waurtins gaþaurnsnode [Goth]
   ew zi oč’ goyn armatk’ . c’amak’ec’aw [Arm]
   i zane ne imēše koreniě usūše [OCS]

b. Mk 8.33 ‘Get behind me, Satan; for you do not ponder the matters of God’
   húpage opísō mou, satanâ, hôti ou phroneišès tá tou̱ theou [Gk]
   gagh hindar mik, Satana, unte ni fraþjis þaím gudis [Goth]
   ert’ yets im satanay . zi oč’ xorhis dow zAYsn [Arm]
   idí za műñoj Sotono. ēko ne myśliši ē (Zog. čže) sôtů božěa [OCS]

c. Mk 9.6 ‘for he did not know what he should answer’
   ou gär čídei tí apokrithēi (θ, etc. elálei ‘he was saying’; A, D, etc. lalései ‘he would say’; W, etc. lalēi ‘he is saying’) [Gk]
   ni auk wissa łoa rodidedi [Goth]
   k’anzi oč’ gitër zinic’ xawsēr [Arm]
   ne věděašé bo čtô glagoletů [OCS]

d. Mt 9.13 ‘For I have not come to call the just but sinners’
   ou gär èlthon kalésai dikafous all’ hamartōloús [Gk]
   niþ-þan qam laþon uswaurhtans ak frawaurhtans [Goth]

[5] It should be noted that English ‘otherwise’, which we have employed to translate both (a) and (b), also denies the higher predicate in each instance.
These clauses seem to present a scale of strength from strongly to weakly causal, and all languages but Classical Armenian appear to be sensitive to this distinction. Clearly strongest is the type seen in (16a), where Gk. διὰ τὸ μέν + inf. corresponds to Goth. unte ni + ind., Arm. zi oč’ + ind., and OCS zane ne + ind. The Greek, Gothic, and OCS subordinating conjunctions just noted are the strongest causal conjunctions in their respective languages, and this strength is pragmatically indicated as well by the fronting of cause before result. Less strong is the causal value of (16b), where both Gk. ἥτις ou + ind. and OCS with ēko ne + ind. are sensitive to this gradation, but not Gothic and Armenian. Weakest of all is the causal value of Gk. οὐ γὰρ + ind. seen in (16c) and (16d). The first of these passages, which shows an indirect question as the complement of the verb ‘know’, is preceded by the episode of the transfiguration of Jesus, after which Peter proposes to make booths for Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. None of the versions follow the text presented by Nestle-Aland, but Gothic and Armenian seem to preserve the reading εἶδει of Θ, etc. and OCS the reading lālēsei of A, D, etc., less likely lālēi of W, etc. The second example follows Jesus’ adjuration to the disciples to go and learn the meaning of the biblical statement “I desire mercy and not sacrifice”; and in fact the parallel pericopes in Mark and Luke show no causal conjunction here at all. The weaker causal nexus of these passages is picked up by the Gothic and OCS translators. Gothic shows ni auk + ind. and nīþ-þan + ind., the second of which is not causal but merely conjunctive. Similarly, OCS captures the Gk. γὰρ by its own fairly weak conjunction bo. Peculiar is Classical Armenian, where k’anzi seen in (16c) is in fact the strongest causal conjunction in the language.

[3.8] **Negative relative clauses**

Passages involving negative relative clauses are seen in (17a)–(17d):

(17) a. Mt 10.26 ‘For nothing is hidden which will not be revealed’
ouδὲν γὰρ εστὶν κεκαλυμμένον ἡ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθέσεται [Gk]
iwaiht aik is gahulib þatei ni andhuljaidau [GOTH]
zi oč’ incí’ e i cacowk or oč’ yaytnesc’i [ARM]
Ničtože bo estú pokrūveno eže ne otūkrūveno bōdetū [OCS]

b. Mk 4.22 ‘For there is not anything hidden which will not become clear’
ou γὰρ εστὶν τὰ κρυπτὰ ἡ ἀπὸ μὴ φανερωθῆ ἐγὼ [Gk]
nih allis ist θa fulginis þatei ni gabaĩrhjaidau [GOTH]
zi č’e incí’ i cacowk . or t’e oč’ yaytnesc’i [ARM]
něstū bo nǐčůtože taino eže ne avitū sę [OCS]
c. Mk 9.1 ‘There are some of those standing here who will not taste of death’

eisín tòn hôde hestêkôtôn hoîtines ou mê geûsôntai thanâ-tou

[Gk]
sind sumai þize her standandane þai i ze ni kausjand dauþaus

[Goth]
en omank’ i soc’anê or ast kan . ork’ mi čašakesc’en zmah

[Arm]
štû edini otû súde stôještixû. iže ne imôţû vûkusiti sûmrûti

[OCS]
d. Mk 6.11 ‘And however many as don’t receive you …’

kai hósoi àn mê déksôntai homâs …

[Gk]
jah swa managai swe ni andnimainz izwis …

[Goth]
Ew or oč’ ānkalcz’ in zjez …

[Arm]
i eliko ašte ne priimôţû vasû …

[OCS]

These passages show some subtleties in Greek depending on the degree of indefiniteness of the relative clause; and these are often not reflected in the translations. Thus, (17a) and (17b) differ in Greek in the fact that the first shows relative pronoun + ou + fut. and the second relative pronoun + eân mê + subj. Presumably, the latter is to be understood as less definite than the former, an inference that is echoed also by a detail: in the first passage Greek shows the orthotonic oudén ‘nothing’ in the opening clause, while in the second it has the enclitic ti in the first clause. A hypothesis that immediately presents itself is that the enclitic signals a more indefinite value than the orthotonic. But Gothic alone of the translation languages is sensitive to this, opposing indefinite pronominal ha to nominal waiht. OCS here shows an interesting variation between (17a) and (17b) which may turn out to be significant: in (17a) ničtoţe precedes the copula without an independent negation, as seen earlier; but in (17b) ničûtoţe follows the present tense of byti in existential value, and an independent negation is soddered onto the verb in the form nêstû. The difference appears to be like that of English ‘nothing is’ but ‘there is not anything’. But (4c) cited earlier had niktoţe bo estû in the value ‘there is nobody’, so we may be dealing with a syntactic feature related solely to the position of estû relative to the negative universal. Note that Gk. eân in (17b) is not the same item as the conditional particle seen in (13), but is a substitute for án, as frequently in the NT. The Armenian translator alone feels obliged to capture this with t’e, a less frequent variant of its own conditional particle et’e. Related to these passages is (17c), which shows the typical Greek apparatus for signaling future negation (ou mê + subj.), here within a “qualifying” relative clause introduced by hoîtines and following an indefinite clause. This clause in Greek is equivalent to a prediction and as such is matched by the Gothic present indicative qua future and OCS periphrastic future involving imati + infinitive. But Armenian with its modal negation treats this as falling short of a definite outcome. Here the Gothic þai ize (= izei) seems to be a calque on Gk. hoîtines. Finally, (17d) shows the indefinite Greek relative hósoi àn mê + subj. The value of hósoi is cap-
tured in Gothic by *swa managai swe* and in OCS by *eliko ašte* + ind. Armenian, on the other hand, shows a simple headless relative *or* in indefinite value.

We include in this category several passages in which Greek shows *mé* + ppl., but at least two of the translational versions show relative clauses:

(18) a. Mt 7.19 ‘Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down’

    pándéndron mé poioûn karpòn kalòn ekkóptetai \[Gk\]
    all bagme ni taujandane akran god usmaitada \[Goth\]
    Amenayn cař or oč’ ařně ptowl bari hatani \[Arm\]
    vīško drěvo eže ne tvoritů ploda dobra. posěkajotů \[OCS\]

    b. Mt 7.21 ‘Not everyone saying to me, “Lord, Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven’

    ou pâs ho légōn moi. kúrie, kúrie, eiseleúsetai eis tòn basileián tôn ouranôn \[Gk\]
    ni bâzuh saei qīpiþ mis: frauja, frauja! inngaleiþip in źudangardja himine \[Goth\]
    Oč’ amenayn or asē c’is TR TR mtc’ē yark’ayowt’iwn erknic’ \[Arm\]
    Ne vīškū glagolei mîně. gospodi gospodi vînîdetû vû cěsarištvie nebesîskoe \[OCS\]

These passages show an interesting scope variation in the universal quantifier ‘every/everyone’. In (18a) Gk. *pân* has broad scope over the negation, and this is matched in the translation languages, of which Armenian and OCS show relative clauses. In (18b) Gk. *pâs* functions within the negation, and here, too, the translations place their universal quantifier after the negation. This results in a change in the form of negation in Greek and a change in the quantifier in Gothic.

[3.9] **Sequential negation**

We turn now to instances of sequential negation. A wide range of structures is represented, and these can be broken down into nominal, phrasal, and clausal types. Strictly nominal conjoined sequences are seen in (19a) and (19b):

(19) a. Mt 6.20 ‘where neither moth nor corrosion [lit. consumption] ruins’

    hôpou oûte sès oûte brôsis aphanízei \[Gk\]
    þarei nih malo nih nidwa frawardeiþ \[Goth\]
    owr oč’ c’ec’ ew oč’ owtič apakanen \[Arm\]
    ideže ni črûvî ni tîlê tîlitû \[OCS\]

    b. Mt 9.13 ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice’

    éleon thêlô kai ou thusían \[Gk\]
    armahairtiþa wiljau jah ni hunsl \[Goth\]
    zołormowt’iwn kamim ew oč’ zzoh \[Arm\]
    milostyni xoštô a ne žrûtvê \[OCS\]
In the first of these the archaic Greek sequence οὐτε N₁ οὐτε N₂ is matched by Goth. nih N₁ nih N₂, Arm. oće’ N₁ ew oće’ N₂, and OCS ni N₁ ni N₂. The Gothic sequence represents PIE *ne kʷe, with the same enclitic conjunction reflected in Greek te. Classical Armenian has lost this old conjunction and therefore shows its only conjoined negation structure ew oće’. OCS shows its serial negation ni, ultimately ne + conjunction i, which we have seen in a number of passages already cited. This passage shows pure serial conjunction. The same is not true of (19b), which is implicitly oppositional with its positive/negative component. Here Greek shows the sequence N₁ kai ou N₂ with orthotonic, static (i.e. non-serial) conjunction; and this is matched by the equivalent orthotonic dyad N₁ jah ni N₂ in Gothic and the invariant sequential ew oće’ in Armenian. OCS, on the other hand, captures the implicit nuance of this structure with the oppositional rather than serial a ne.

Phrasal conjunction involving four conjoined prepositional phrases following a negative infinitival clause is seen in (20), where Gk. mète is iterated across every conjoined member, but Gothic shows the enclitic conjunction only in members 2-4. Similar in format is Armenian, whereas OCS shows four iterations of ni:

(20) Mt 5.34-36 ‘But I say to you not to swear at all: neither by heaven...nor by earth...nor should you swear by your head'

Phrasal conjunction involving four conjoined prepositional phrases following a negative infinitival clause is seen in (20), where Gk. mète is iterated across every conjoined member, but Gothic shows the enclitic conjunction only in members 2-4. Similar in format is Armenian, whereas OCS shows four iterations of ni:

Word-level conjunction involving verbs is seen in (21a)–(21b):

(21) a. Mt 6.20 ‘where thieves do not dig through and steal’

hópou kléptai ou diorússéousin oudè kléptousin [Gk]

b. Mt 6.28 ‘they do not toil nor spin’

ou kopíaí oudè néthei [Gk]
In the first of these passages Greek shows the structure ou...oudé with the quasi-enclitic dé which is a vibrantly living conjunction in the NT, whereas te is largely moribund in this text. Gothic responds exactly with its ni...nih, and OCS equivalently with ne...ni. The Armenian rendition is independent with its single negation. This passage is a continuation of (19a) and suggests that perhaps on its way to obsolescence Gk. te was first reduced to nominal conjunctive value. We cite (21b) because of its contrast with (21a) on the Gothic level, showing that the Goths had their own intuitions about where serial negation was appropriate (nih...nih : ou...oudé [b] vs. ni...nih : ou...oudé [a]).

A more complex sequence is the following:

(22) Mk 8.18 'Having eyes, do you not see and having ears, do you not hear? And you do not remember...
ophthalmous ékhontes ou blépете kai òta ékhontes ouk akoúete; kai ou mnêmoneúete...
[Διαλέοντα] augonahabandans ni gasaihlíp, jah ausona habandans ni gahauseiþ jah ni gamunuþ...
[Arm] oči imošte ne vidite. i uši imošte ne slyšite. i ne pomínite li...
[OCS]

In this passage Greek shows the structure O₁ ppl₁ ou V₁ kai O₂ ppl₁ ou V₂ kai ou V₃. Gothic exactly follows the Greek here, as does OCS, which therefore does not treat the verbs as serial but rather as three completely independent clauses, hence ne rather than ni. OCS also understands the last part of the structure as a question (note the particle li). Armenian shows multiple variations from the other versions, including the rendition of both participles by finite verbs, the addition of the verb imanal ‘understand’, and the introduction of the negative polarity item takawin ‘yet’.6

We complete our discussion of sequential negation by citing three passages in which the negation is not straightforwardly sequential, but rather adverbial:

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[6] The final part of this structure is confusing when presented in isolation from its following verse. The King James Version does indeed treat the last clause as a question. But in Greek it is possible to take the question as continuing into the next verse, in which case the wh-word pósous ‘how many?’ would have to be understood as posing an indirect question: ‘And do you not remember, when I broke the five [pieces of] bread into five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments you picked up?’ Nestle-Aland’s text punctuates the Greek in precisely this way, as does Streitberg’s Gothic text, at least for the stretch ‘when I broke...you picked up?’ [Streitberg treats jah ni gamunuþ as part of the prior sentence and hence as standing outside the question]. But both the Armenian and OCS texts show a full stop after ‘five thousand’, continuing with a conjunction ‘and’ followed by a direct wh-word (kani?, koliko). The Armenian text is in any event deficient in not translating Greek éklasa ‘I broke’. Consequently, the OCS best captures the pragmatic value of the phrase ‘And do you not remember’, while going its own way in assessing the relationship between this clause and the indirect question which follows.
(23)  

a. Mk 5.3 ‘who had his dwelling in the tombs, and nobody was able to bind him even with chains’

hòstḕnkatoíkēsineîkhen en toîs mnēmasin, kai oudè halúsesin oudeís edúnato autôn désai

[Gk]  
saei baubain habaida in aurahjom: jah ni naudibandjom eisarneinaim  

manna mahta ina gabindan  

[GoTH]  
oro ew bnakowt’iwn iwr isk i gerezmans ēr. ew oč’ šlt’ayiwk’ ok’ ews  
karër kapel zna  

[Arm]  
iže žilište iméša vů groběxů. i ni želélznomů čžemě ego niktože ne  

možaaše sůvěžati  

[OCS]  

In (23a) the second conjunct in Greek shows kai oudè...oudeís, where oudè is to  

be understood as adverbial ‘(not) even’. Hence, the Greek shows a double nega-  
tion from an English perspective. In OCS this value is captured translationally by ni,  

while niktože ne mogaaše shows the usual double negation we have learned to expect  
in these cases. Gothic shows jah ni...mann, ignoring the Greek oudè, and Armenian,  

instead of repeating ew, the usual way of saying ‘even’ in this language, employs ews,  
as if to say ‘and nobody was able anymore’. In (23b) and (23c) one finds adverbial  

negation following a result clause which in the first instance contains negative po-  
larity mēkēti ‘no longer’. Here Gk. mēdē tā pròs tēn thūran is translated in Gothic as nih  
at daura, in Armenian as ew oč’ āř drann, and in OCS as ni prědũ dverīmi, all of which
say ‘not even at the door’. Finally, in (23c) the two clauses are not coordinated but rather the first is the protasis of a negative condition and the second is the apodosis. Gk. οὐδέ can be understood as meaning ‘neither’ here; and to this Gothic rather reacts with ni + the apodotic particle þau signaling resultative ‘then’ and Armenian with the calque ew ոչ’, here probably to be understood adverbially as ‘also not’, as is OCS ni.

[3.10] Minor categories

There remain only three sparsely attested negative categories that we shall now address. The first of these is the bare negative used in a reply (24). Here Gothic alone shows a special negation ne, while OCS employs its serial negator ni. Armenian in this passage shows a special use of its postposed definite article –n in quotative value:

(24) Mt 5.37 ‘Let your word be “aye, aye; nay, nay”.’
éstō dē ho lógos humôn naí naí, oú oú [Gk]
sijaiþ-þan waurd izwar: ja, ja; ne, ne [Goth]
Ayla elici’ jer ban. ayo. ayo. ew oč’n. oč’ [Arm]
bodi že slovo vaše ei ei. i ni ni [OCS]

Finally, it is well known that both complements of comparatives and clauses of prior circumstance are negative polarity contexts. Cf. English John is smarter than anybody (else) I know or The police apprehended the suspect before he could harm anybody with negative polarity anybody rather than positive somebody. Similarly, with actual negation, French il est plus riche qu’on ne pense or il existait un monde où l’artiste trouve avant qu’il ne cherche (J. Cocteau). Of the languages in our study, OCS alone shows an overt polarity negation in these contexts, either freestanding or in univerbation with a following morpheme (25a)–(25b). Cf. the use of nor for than in some English dialects (He is taller nor I am):

(25) a. Mk 9.45 ‘It is better for you to enter into life lame than having two feet, to be cast into Gehenna’
kalón estin se eiselthein eis tēn zōēn khōlón, e toûs dúo pōdas ēkhonta blēthēnai eis tēn gēnnan [Gk]
dobrē (Zog.: -ēe) ti estu vūniti vu životų xromu. neže dvē nodzē imošte (Zog.: imoštju). vūvrūženu byti vu heonç [OCS]

b. Mt 1.18 ‘Before the two had come together, she was found to be pregnant by the holy spirit’
prin ė sunelthein autouss heurēthē en gastrī ēkhousa ek pneûmatos hagíou [Gk]
prēže daže ne sūnidosta se obrēte se imoštii vu črēvē bē otū duxa svēta [OCS]
[4] Conclusions

In conclusion, I must emphasize that although the material presented in this article is comprehensive for the parts of the text it has covered, some 80% of the text has yet to be canvassed. This will no doubt yield some additional categories and perhaps some new relationships among the means employed to express negation in the various languages of our survey. However, it is unlikely to change greatly the picture presented here, which is remarkable for its consistency from language to language. Once the total range of data concerning negation and polarity in the entire extant text of the Gospels in all four languages has been gathered, analyzed, and presented, an important chapter in the comparative grammars of these languages will have been achieved.

References


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