

The background features a large, faded watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains a central emblem of a tree with an open book at its base. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF BASRAH' and 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' is visible around the bottom of the circle. The year '1975' is on the left and '1475' is on the right. Arabic text is also present at the top and bottom of the circle.

English Grammar
Fourth Year
2021-2022

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The background features a large, faint watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains the text 'جامعة البصرة' (University of Basrah) at the top, '1975' on the left, '1975' on the right, 'جامعة البصرة' (University of Basrah) at the bottom, and 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' at the very bottom. In the center of the logo is a stylized green tree with a pink trunk and a book at its base.

Week 4: The Simple Sentence

Lecture No. 11: Negation

More than one nonassertive item 1

If a sentence contains a negative element, it is usually negative from that point onward. Nonassertive items must normally be used after the negative element in place of every assertive item that would have occurred in the corresponding positive clause:

- I doubt he has ever owed anything to anyone.
- I've never travelled anywhere by sea yet.

Notice that negative items (normally only one) must always precede the nonassertive items, as in this series of corresponding clauses:

- I haven't ever owed anything to anyone.
- I don't lend any book to any of my students at anytime.
- I lend no book to any of my students at anytime.

More than one nonassertive item 2

Occasionally two negatives occurring in the same clause mean positive:

- I can't not to talk to you. (I have to talk to you)
- I can't not to love you. (I have to love you)
- Not many people have nowhere to live. (Most people have somewhere to live)

Words Negative in Meaning But Not in Form1

There are several adverbs and determiners which are negative in meaning but not in form. They include: seldom, rare(y scarcely, hardly, barely little, few (in contrast to the positive a little and a few).

These can effect clause negation: for example they are followed by nonassertive forms, and sentences in which they appear generally require a positive tag question:

- **Hardly anyone wants the job.**
- **Few changes have ever taken so many people by surprise.**
- **They scarcely seem to care, do they?**
- **They hardly have any friends, do they?**

Words Negative in Meaning But Not in Form2

As with other initial negative adverbials, the adverbs normally cause subject-operator inversion when they are positioned initially as adverbials or as modifiers within an adverbial in literary and oratorical style:

- Little did I expect such enthusiasm from so many.
- Scarcely ever has the Iraqi national team suffered so much humiliation.

In addition, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions with negative meaning may be followed by nonassertive items, particularly any and its compounds:

- She avoided ever speaking to us.
- We are unaware of any hostility.
- They were unwilling ever to accept our help.
- I'm against going out anywhere tonight.
- They decided to leave without telling any of their friends.
- He denies I ever told him.
- I forgot to ask for any change.

Scope of Negation 1

By the scope of negation we mean the semantic influence that a negative word has on the rest of the clause that follows it. Typically, all that follows the negative form to the end of the clause will be non-assertive and within the scope of negation. Thus, in *Some people don't have any sense of humor*, *some* is outside the scope of negation, whereas *any* is inside it.

Scope of Negation 2

As the non-assertive forms are not in themselves negative, they cannot initiate the scope of negation by standing in initial position in the place of a nuclear negative form. Assertive forms such as some and its compounds can occur after a negative word, but they must necessarily stand outside the scope of negation. Compare the difference in meaning between the two following clauses:

- 1. He didn't reply to any of my letters. (None of my letters received a reply)**
- 2. He didn't reply to some of my letters. (Some of my letters received a reply, others did not)**

Scope of Negation 3

The non-assertive form *any* in example 1 expresses the scope of negation as extending to the end of the clause. In example 2, on the other hand, *some* must be interpreted as outside the scope of negation. The scope of negation is closely related to the function of Adjuncts in the clause. Compare the difference in meaning between examples 3 and 4 below, in which the manner Adjunct *clearly* is within the scope of negation in 3, while the attitudinal sentence Adjunct *clearly* in 4 is outside it:

3. She didn't explain the problem *clearly*.
4. She *clearly* didn't explain the problem.

Scope of Negation 4

A negative item may be said to govern (or determine the occurrence of) a nonassertive only if the latter is within the SCOPE of the negative, i.e. within the stretch of language over which the negative item has a semantic influence. The scope of the negation normally extends from the negative item itself to the end of the clause, but it need not include an end-placed adverbial. In a clause with the clause negator not or a negative word such as never or hardly in the same position after the operator, adverbials occurring before the negative normally lie outside the scope. There is thus a contrast between:

- **She definitely didn't speak to him.**

['It's definite that she didn't speak to him.']

- **She didn't definitely speak to him.**

['It's not definite that she spoke to him.']

Scope of Negation 5

When an adverbial is final, it may or may not lie outside the scope:

- I wasn't listening all the TIME. [1] (I listened none of the time)
- I wasn't listening All the time. [2] (I listened some of the time only)

The difference of scope, which is here marked by intonation, reflects an important difference of meaning: [1] means 'For the whole time, I wasn't listening', whereas [2] means 'It is not true that I was listening all the time'.

If an assertive word is used, it must lie outside the scope of negation; therefore [3] and [4] below are parallel to [1] and [2] above:

Scope of Negation 6

- **I didn't listen to some of the speakers. [3]**

['There were some of the speakers that I didn't listen to.']

- **I didn't listen to any of the speakers. [4]**

['There were not any speakers that I listened to.']

The scope can sometimes extend into a subordinate clause:

- **I wouldn't like you to disturb anyone.**