



CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

53rd Foundation Day Lecture Series

Lecture 4

Monday, July 26, 2021 at 2:30 pm IST

Negative indefiniteness: new avenues of research



Johan van der Auwera

Johan van der Auwera is emeritus professor of General and English Linguistics at the University of Antwerp. His research focuses on grammatical semantics with special reference to conditionals, mood, modality, negation, indefinites, impersonals, and similatives, from a synchronic and diachronic as well as an areal perspective, and occasionally from a historiographical point of view.

In the last quarter century there has been prolific research on negative indefiniteness and related matters such as negative polarity and negative concord. Yet some issues remain unexplored. The talk will outline three new avenues of research.

First, the study of negative concord has overwhelmingly focused on the analysis of negative pronouns as in *You ain't seen nothing yet*, neglecting negative noun phrases as in *I can't get no satisfaction*. I will show, with data from Jamaican and Belizean Creole, that negative noun phrases may behave differently and thus deserve scholarly attention in their own right.

Second, one might assume that if one knows how a language with negative concord works for negative pronouns and nouns, one would also know how it works for phrases with connective negators ('neither ... nor'). There has been little research. I will show, with data from Balto-Slavic and Romance, that the assumption is unwarranted.

Third, negative (and positive) indefiniteness may (have to) be expressed with an explicit marker of existence (usually a verb), as in Thai *Mây mii khraj hěn chǎn* 'not exist who see me' for 'Nobody sees me.' This strategy has so far received little scholarly attention. I will begin to remedy this situation with results from a study of Southeast Asian languages.

Join us via Google Meet at <https://meet.google.com/rxv-xtak-xgzcp>

LIVE Streaming on



<https://www.youtube.com/c/CIILMysore1>



<https://www.facebook.com/ciilmysore>