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The Grammar of Negation in Pite Saami:
A Corpus-based Investigation
Master Thesis

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Affirmation of authorship/Autorsuse kinnitus

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the grammar of negation in Pite Saami by analysing a corpus of spontaneous spoken language. While negation in Pite Saami has been described in earlier grammatical works, no systematic corpus-driven study has previously examined its morphosyntactic behaviour in authentic language use. The study focuses primarily on standard clausal negation, expressed through a finite negation verb combined with a lexical verb in the connegative form. The data consist of ELAN-annotated recordings and transcribed texts compiled from Pite Saami language documentation materials. Instances of negation were extracted using a Python-based search method and manually classified according to grammatical and functional categories. The analysis demonstrates that – as expected – negation in Pite Saami follows a highly regular asymmetric negation pattern in which the negation verb carries tense, mood, person, and number marking, while the lexical verb appears in the connegative form. However, the results also reveal non-canonical variation in past tense constructions, coordination under negation, and hybrid structures possibly influenced by neighboring Saami languages. The study contributes to the documentation of Pite Saami and to broader typological research on negation in Uralic languages.

Keywords: Pite Saami, negation, corpus linguistics, morphosyntax

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List of abbreviations

AB	Absolute
ACC	Accusative case
ADJ	Adjective
ADV	Adverb
AUX	Auxiliary
COM	Comitative case parative
CONJ	Conjunction
CNG	Connegative
DEM	Demonstrative
DU	Dual number
ELA	Elative case
IMP	Imperative mood
IND	Indicative mood
INE	Inessive case
INF	Infinitive
NEG	Negation verb
NOM	Nominative case
NPM	Non-past tense marker
PCL	Particle
PL	Plural number
POT	Potential mood
PRF	Perfect tense
PROG	Progressive aspect
PROX	Proximate
PRS	Present tense
PST	Past tense
PTCP	Participle
REL	Relative pronoun
RF	Relative frequency
SG	Singular number
V	Verb

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and motivation

I first became interested in Pite Saami in 2022, when I took my first course at the University of Tartu under the direction of Joshua Wilbur. Although the course focused on corpus linguistics, Pite Saami was frequently used as an example in the lectures. Through these discussions, and in large part due to the enthusiasm of the lecturer, I developed a strong fascination with the language. I was originally studying German language and literature, but I began to be interested in Finno-Ugric languages. Later, I was fortunate enough to do a retreat to Kääriku, Estonia where I attended a conference on Estonian linguistics. From there, I met Gerson Klumpp who spoke to me about joining the Estonian and Finno-Ugric Languages (EFUL) program, and I was fortunate enough to be accepted. As I continued my studies in the program, my interest in Pite Saami deepened. I noticed that, while there are several corpus-based research and articles on languages such as Estonian, Finnish, and Hungarian, there is a lack of any truly corpus-based investigations of Pite Saami negation. This gap in the literature became a key motivation for choosing it as the focus of my thesis. The opportunity to work with Joshua Wilbur, one of the scholars who has documented Pite Saami extensively, and Gerson Klumpp, who encouraged me to apply for the program, as my supervisors further strengthened my decision.

The Saami languages form a sub-branch of the wider Uralic language family. Pite Saami is further classified as the southern-most Western Saami language in the Northern group. The Saami languages are made up on a dialect continuum and Pite Saami is closely related to Lule and Ume Saami to the North and South of the region where Pite Saami is spoken (Sammallahti, 1998: 20). Throughout this thesis, I will refer to this language as Pite Saami. However, the language also has other names, notably, Arejeplog Saami (Lehtiranta 1992: 1), referring to the main municipality it is spoken in. Furthermore, in the Pite Saami language the endonym *bidumsáme giella* or *bisumsáme giella* is used. Wilbur (2014: 2) explains that speakers of Pite Saami as well as speakers of other Saami languages also often refer to their individual languages as ‘Saami,’ without any other clarification. When speaking Swedish, Wilbur also noted, in his work, that many speakers of Pite Saami also refer to the language as ‘lapska’ stemming from Germanic cultures coming from the area of Lapland and has also been called Pite Lappish, in the past (Wilbur 2014: 2).

Throughout this thesis, I will be using various Saami languages in comparison to Pite Saami. However, it's important to note that the Saami people(s) do not speak a single language, but a group of closely related Saami languages. In Aiko & Ylikoski (2009: 4), it is shown that these languages are often classified between nine currently living Saami languages: South Saami, Ume Saami, Pite Saami, Lule Saami, North Saami, Inari Saami, Skolt Saami, Kildin Saami, and Ter Saami. The languages form a dialect continuum reaching from Central Scandinavia in the southwest to the tip of the Kola Peninsula. However, even neighbouring Saami languages are not always mutually intelligible. Aiko & Ylikoski state, “the degree of divergence of the Saami languages can be compared to that of Romance languages (e.g. Spanish vs. French vs. Italian vs. Romanian)”. (Aiko & Ylikoski 2009: 4)

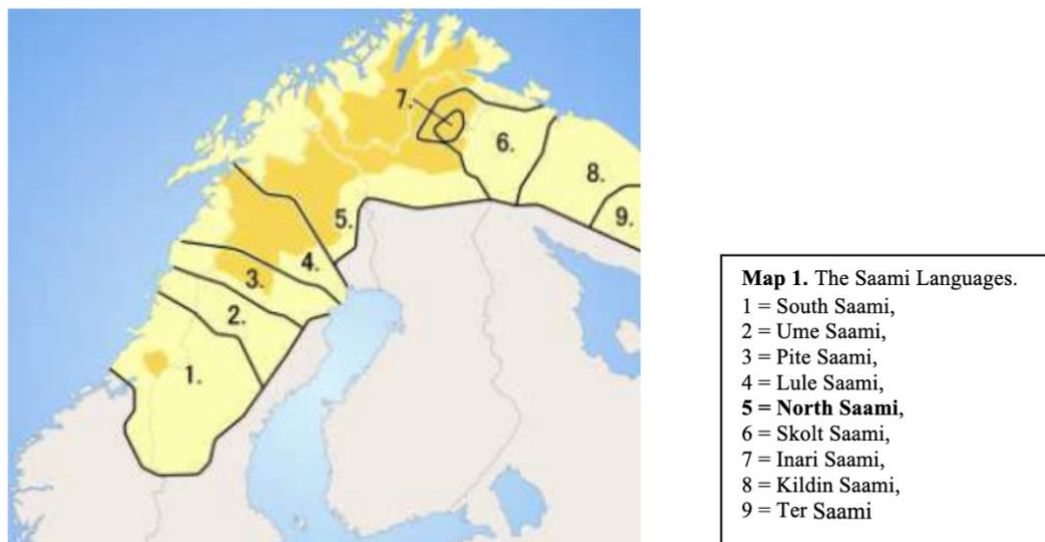


Figure 1: Geographical distribution of the Saami languages (Aiko & Ylikoski 2009: 4)

Figure 1 presents the geographical distribution of the Saami languages. While this overview provides useful geographical context, it does not illustrate the linguistic relationships between the individual languages. For this reason, an additional diagram is included below that represents the Saami languages in a tree-like classification. This representation highlights their genealogical relationships and clarifies why examples from languages such as Lule Saami or North Saami may be more relevant for comparison with Pite Saami than examples from more distantly related languages such as Kildin Saami or Ter Saami.

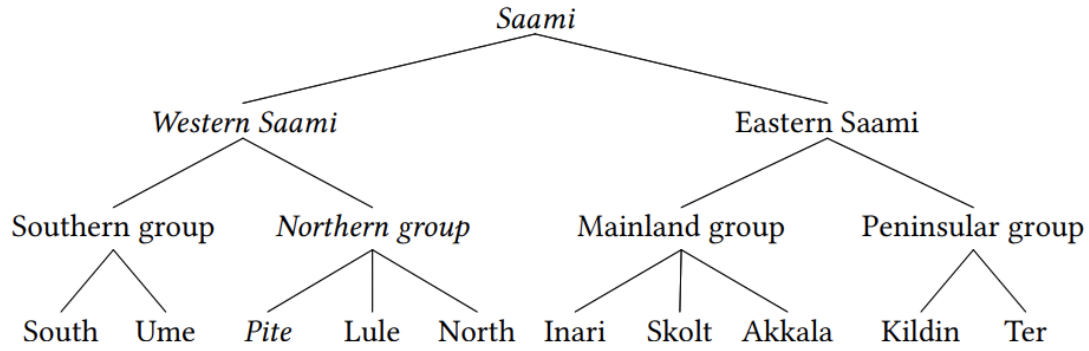


Figure 2: Pite Saami within the Saami sub-branch of the Uralic language family by (Sammallahti 1998: 1-34) “as presented in Wilbur 2014: 2”

1.2 Research context

Negation is a central phenomenon in human language but also one of the most complex to describe. Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy (2015: 24), define negation as, “an operator that changes the truth-value of a proposition.” More broadly, the change of truth-value constitutes the semantic core of negation in natural language. There is another work done by Johan van der Auwera & Olga Krasnoukhova (2020: 90) which defines ‘Standard negation’ as the non-emphatic negation of a lexical main verb in a declarative main clause.

(1) Mary does not love him [standard negation]

Negation in all other functions is referred to collectively as ‘non-standard negation’ shown by the examples below in Example 2 (van der Auwera & Krasnoukhova 2020: 91).

- (2)
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Mary does not love him at all | [emphatic negation] |
| b. Mary does not live here yet | [phasal negation] |
| c. I urge you not to talk to him | [subordinate negation] |
| d. Doesn't Mary love John | [interrogative negation] |
| e. Don't listen to him | [imperative negation] |
| f. Fred is not a teacher | [ascriptive negation] |
| g. There are no blue tigers | [existential negation] |
| h. There are no blue tigers in France | [locational negation] |
| i. Nobody believes him | [negation of indefinites] |
| j. No! | [prosentential negation] |

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| k. Mary disagrees with me | [derivational negation] |
| l. He was without money | [privative negation] |
| m. Don't be surprised if it rains | [expletive negation] |

What makes negation particularly challenging to analyse, however, is its interaction with other grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic domains (Miestamo 2006, 2007: 553; Dahl 2010: 10). This study provides only a brief background on these interactions, focusing instead on the morphosyntax of standard negation in Pite Saami. Within the Uralic language family, negation strategies vary across branches. Negative auxiliary verbs, typically inflecting for person/number (and sometimes tense or mood) while the lexical verb appears in a non-finite or connegative form, are characteristic of Saami and much of Finnic, but other branches often use negative particles or different constructions. This diversity makes Uralic valuable for comparative work (Miestamo 2015: 3)

In Miestamo, Tamm, Wagner-Nagy (2015: 25) it goes on to describe standard negation in Uralic languages to be the constructions used to negate the simple declarative in main clauses which include a verbal predicate. They describe that within the world's languages many will use negation strategies different than the standard notably with existential clauses and other clauses with non-verbal predicates along with imperatives which many times show special negative constructions which differ from standard negation. In this work, it goes on to explain more about the morphosyntax within negation in Uralic languages this including symmetric vs asymmetric negation. Symmetric negative constructions simply add a negative marker to a non-negative clause whereas asymmetric negative constructions involve other structural changes as well (Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy 2015: 14).

Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy (2015: 15) divide asymmetric negation into four main categories.

1. A/Fin, in which the finiteness of the lexical verb is reduced or lost
2. A/NonReal, in which categories expressing non-realized states of affairs
3. A/Emph, in which markers expressing emphasis in non-negatives are used in negatives

4. A/Cat, in which grammatical categories, most notably tense aspect-mood categories, are affected in other ways, often leading to negatives showing a reduced number of paradigmatic choices with respect to affirmatives.

Wilbur (2014: 157) describes the negation verb as always finite inflecting for person and number, and for tense and mood, agreeing with the subject of the clause and the lexical verb that follows the negation verb appears in a special non-finite form called the connegative. This would mean that Pite Saami most closely mirrors asymmetrical standard negation and in the first category labelled as A/Fin as described in Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy (2015: 17). This would match patterns that were noted in this same study between other Saami languages such as South and Skolt Saami which are shown in Table 1.

Construction type	Negative marker	Languages
symmetric	particle	Selkup, Hungarian, Eastern Khanty, Mansi, Komi, Udmurt, Erzya
A/Fin/NegVerb	auxiliary	Forest Enets, Tundra Nenets, Nganasan, Komi, Udmurt, Mari, Erzya, South Saami, <i>Pite Saami</i> , Skolt Saami, Livonian, Finnish, Votic
	neg. existential	Selkup
	non-infl. aux.	Estonian
A/Cat	suffix	Udmurt, Mari

Table 1: Summary of standard negation constructions in Uralic language by Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy (2015: 17), with Pite Saami added.

While these areas are known about Pite Saami, the language remains under-described with respect to the distribution and syntax of its negation patters. By investigating standard negation in a corpus of annotated data, this thesis aims to refine the description of Pite Saami and situate it more precisely within the Uralic negation typology.

From this context arise the central research questions of this study:

1. What morpho-syntactic structures are involved in negation in Pite Saami?
2. How does negation interact with verbal categories (person, tense, mood), clause type, and word order?
3. How is the canonical grammar of negation reflected by actual language use in the corpus? Or are there deviations which may be explained by language contact and or language attrition?

1.3 Negation in Pite Saami

What is known about Pite Saami is that negation is expressed by a finite verb, which is unique in the verbal system because it lacks an infinitive or other non-finite forms. Unlike ordinary verbs, the negation verb is always finite which means that it inflects for person and number, and also for tense and mood, agreeing with the subject of the clause (Wilbur 2014: 240). The lexical verb that follows the negation verb appears in a special non-finite form called the connegative. This pattern contrasts with North Saami, where tense is realized on the lexical verb rather than the negator (Svonni 2009: 92).

The connegative form of the lexical verb is morphologically distinct. It appears in weak grade where consonant gradation is relevant and otherwise lacks additional inflectional marking. This pattern ensures a clear formal division of labour. The finite negation verb carries the agreement and tense, while the lexical verb contributes only its lexical semantics (Wilbur 2014: 157). Imperatives are negated with an imperative form of the negation verb, which again precedes a verb in the connegative (Wilbur 2014: 179-180).

Examples provided from Wilbur's work include (Wilbur 2014: 158):

(3) <i>Mån</i>	<i>iv</i>	<i>vasja</i>	<i>lipsusijd</i>	<i>ja</i>
1SG.NOM	NEG.1SG.PRS	feel.like.CNG	rumen.far.ACC.PL	and
<i>daggarijd</i>	<i>válldet</i>	<i>dán</i>	<i>muddon</i>	
such.ACC.PL	TAKE.INF	DEM.PROX.INE.SG	time.INE.SG	
'I don't feel like taking the rumen fat and such at this time.'				[pit080909.091]

(4) <i>Nå</i>	<i>ittijj</i>	<i>Henning</i>	<i>dä</i>	<i>skihpá</i>	<i>gu</i>
well	NEG.3SG.PST	Henning.NOM.SG	then	become sick.CNG	when
<i>lij</i>	<i>nåv</i>	<i>gállum</i>			
be.3SG.PST	so	freeze.PRF			

'Well, Henning didn't get sick, after he had been freezing like that.' [pit090702.373]

(5) <i>Ele</i>	<i>tsábme!</i>
NEG.SG.IMP	hit.CNG

These example from Wilbur’s work show how the negation verb works in Pite Saami. The examples from 3-5 give examples of how standard negation works in the language. The connegative always follows the negation verb, although its position within the clause is otherwise relatively free. This ordering pattern is also attested with the imperative form of the negation verb, as shown in Example (5). Wilbur (2014: 179) notes only one exception to this pattern, namely constructions involving the verb ‘to be’, illustrated in Example (6).

- (6) *men iv lam dä männå del skålån*
 but NEG.1SG.PRS be.PRF.CNG then 1SG.NOM then school.INE.SG
giesen
 summer.INE.SG
 ‘But I haven’t been in school during the summer.’ [pit080924.622]

The verb *árrot* ‘to be’ the one exception which uses the perfect form: *lam* which is a shortened form of *lä* ‘BE.CNG’ and *urru* ‘BE.PRF’, and is only used with the verb of negation therefore unlike the Examples from (1-3) Example (4) contains more information on the connegative rather than relying on the negation verb (Wilbur 2014: 179). This will be glossed as ‘BE.PRF.CNG.’

The paradigm of the negation verb in Figure 2 shows the present, past and imperative forms. Present tense forms include *iv* (1sg), *i* (2sg), *ij* (3sg), and their dual/plural counterparts, while past tense forms include *ittjiv* (1sg), *ittje* (2sg), and *ittjij* (3sg), among others. Negative imperatives employ forms such as *ele/ilu* (2sg), *ellen/illun* (dual), and *ellet/illut* (plural) (Wilbur 2014: 179).

		SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
PRS	1 st	<i>iv</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>ep</i>
	2 nd	<i>i</i>	<i>ehpen</i>	<i>ehpet</i>
	3 rd	<i>ij</i>	<i>eba</i>	<i>eh</i>
PST	1 st	<i>ittjiv</i>	<i>ettijjmen</i>	<i>ittijjme</i>
	2 nd	<i>ittje</i>	<i>ettijjden</i>	<i>ittijjde</i>
	3 rd	<i>ittjij</i>	<i>ettijjga</i>	<i>ittjin</i>
IMP	2 nd	<i>ele/ilu</i>	<i>ellen/illun</i>	<i>ellet/illut</i>

Table 2: The inflectional paradigm for the negation verb by (Wilbur 2014: 180)

While the paradigm of the negation verb presented in Table 2 reflects the orthography used in the original source, no standardized Pite Saami orthography existed at the time the material was published. Table 3 therefore presents the same paradigm normalized into the current standard orthography and recreated, as closely as possible, following the format used in Wilbur (2014: 180). Both versions are included because the original orthography is relevant for the discussion of the source material in the methodology chapter. However, throughout this thesis, examples are cited in the standardized orthography for the sake of consistency and readability.

		SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
PRS	1st	<i>iv</i>	<i>ien~en</i>	<i>iep~ep</i>
	2nd	<i>i</i>	<i>iehpen~ehpen</i>	<i>ehpit~ihpit</i>
	3rd	<i>ij</i>	<i>ieban~ieba~eba</i>	<i>ie~e</i>
PST	1st	<i>idtjiv</i>	<i>iejmen~ijme~idtjijmen~idtjijme</i>	<i>iejme~ijme~idtjijme</i>
	2nd	<i>idtji</i>	<i>iejden~ijde~idtjijden~idtjijde</i>	<i>iejde~ijde~idtjijde</i>
	3rd	<i>idtjij</i>	<i>iejgan~ijga</i>	<i>idtjin</i>
IMP	2nd	<i>iele~ele</i>	<i>iellen~ellen</i>	<i>ellit~illit</i>

Table 3: The inflectional paradigm for the negation verb in Pite Saami with the standard orthography¹

Finally, the syntax of negation is consistent, and in all recorded examples, the negation verb precedes the connegative, and there are no instances in the corpus of the reverse order (Wilbur

¹ The normalized forms follow the orthographic conventions discussed in a draft of the Pite Saami Standardization Committee meeting minutes 2025/2 (J. Wilbur, pc.)

2014: 242). In summary, negation in Pite Saami involves the use of a finite negation verb with a lexical verb in connegative form. The system reflects a broader Saami typological pattern but also offers important information into the interaction of inflectional morphology and syntax.

1.4 Connegative stem in Pite Saami

Negation in Pite Saami makes systematic use of a verb in connegative, which appears in the scope of the finite negation verb and corresponds semantically to the finite verb form found in affirmative clauses. The connegative is a non-finite form and does not encode person, number, tense, or mood. Instead, these categories are expressed exclusively by the negation verb.

The formal shape of the verb in connegative in Pite Saami is determined by the inflectional verb class of the lexical verb. As shown in Wilbur (2014: 170), each verb class has a predictable connegative form derived from the infinitive stem. Importantly, the formation of the connegative does not involve irregular negation-specific morphology, but follows general inflectional patterns already present in the verbal system.

The following subsections briefly summarize the formation of the connegative for each verb class relevant to the present study.

Class I verbs are characterized by a bisyllabic infinitive form and regular consonant gradation. In this class, the connegative form consistently exhibits the weak grade of the stem and retains the class-marking vowel *-o-*. As shown in Wilbur (2014: 170), the connegative form is derived from the infinitive stem by removing the infinitival suffix, while also reflecting the weak grade of the stem. So, an example of a class one verb meaning ‘to live’ or ‘to feel’ *viess-o-t* becomes *vies-o* in the connegative form.

Class II verbs are bisyllabic verbs marked by the class suffix *-a* (Class IIa) or *-å* (Class IIb) in the infinitive. These verbs may be subject to consonant gradation, umlaut, and vowel harmony. An example from class IIa is ‘to wash’ *bassat* becoming *basa* in the connegative form and from IIb the verb ‘to eat’ *bårråt* is *bår-å* in the connegative. For both subclasses, the connegative form is derived by retaining the infinitive stem and class-marking vowel, while appearing in the weak grade when consonant gradation applies.

Class III verbs are bisyllabic verbs with an infinitive suffix *-e*. Like Class II verbs, they may undergo consonant gradation, umlaut, and vowel harmony. An example of this would be the verb ‘to fry’ *basset* becoming *base* in its connegative form.

Class IV verbs form a smaller and less well-attested class. They are characterized by bisyllabic infinitives and a lack of stem allomorphy, as well as deviant person/number suffixes containing a *-j-* element in finite forms. In contrast to their finite paradigms, the connegative forms of Class IV verb stems do not go through stem allomorphy and the infinitive stem appears unchanged, without additional suffixes. The verb ‘to marry’ *välldut* becomes *välldu* in its connegative form.

Class V verbs are trisyllabic verbs marked by the class suffix *-i* in the infinitive and show no consonant gradation, umlaut, or vowel harmony. Many Class V verbs are derivationally complex. In this class, the connegative form is the verb stem with *-e* suffix. An example would be the verb ‘to speak’ *ságastit* becoming *ságaste* in its connegative form.

This overview of connegative formation and verbal classes provides the necessary background for the corpus-based analysis for this thesis. Since the connegative in Pite Saami is determined by a verb’s inflectional class (Classes I–V), identifying the expected connegative form for each verb is essential when analysing negation in attested data. In the results chapter, this framework will be used to determine whether the connegative forms found in the corpus conform to the patterns described in the grammatical literature, and to classify each negated predicate according to its verbal class.

1.5 Challenges and limitations

Research on Pite Saami presents several challenges that must be acknowledged. First and foremost, Pite Saami is a critically endangered language with a very small number of fluent speakers. As a result, the available corpus data is necessarily limited in size and scope and does not represent all possible registers or interactional contexts. Many recordings involve the same speakers across different sessions, which may reduce variation in the data.

A further challenge has to do with the available primary data. Much of the Pite Saami documentation is contained in ELAN-annotated recordings, which require close, manual examination. While such resources are invaluable for endangered languages, working with them independently demands substantial investment of time and might raise questions of

consistency and coverage. Unlike large, balanced corpora, Pite Saami documentation remains fragmentary, and I must make decision about how to interpret the dataset or leave it to future research. To get around this, I was able to develop a python code which automatically looks through the .eaf files from ELAN to search for the instances of negation in Pite Saami. However, my coding skills are quite limited which also provided a significant challenge to this thesis. This code will be discussed further in the Methodology chapter. There is a separate search option in ELAN which can also be used, however, so far it doesn't yield consistent results. Therefore, I believe that by relying on coding to search through the files itself will get more consistent and reliable results. I believe that the way the files are structured limits the reliability and consistency of the search function within ELAN. For example, when searching for 'V NEG', which is the annotation used for the negation verb in this corpus, ELAN retrieves matches from all tiers within the files rather than only from the speaker's utterance tier. As a result, the search produced a number of results that were not relevant.

Another challenge relates to the availability and accessibility of published sources. The foundational grammatical descriptions of Pite Saami are older. Lagercrantz's *Sprachlehre des Westlappischen* (1926) and Rounq's *Lappische Verbalableitung* (1943) represent early 20th-century work. While this work is invaluable, some of the academic traditions make it a bit more difficult for modern audiences. For example, Lagercrantz's *Sprachlehre des Westlappischen* (1926) has a lot of German grammatical terminology that is not commonly used in modern Uralic linguistics. The treatment of verb paradigms for example (pp. 37-56) uses older labels such as 'Supine' and 'Medialformen'. Furthermore, no electronic copies were found and the physical versions discovered were only allowed to be read directly in Tartu Ülikool library. This presented a small challenge as online sources are a bit easier to search quickly for key words and using online translation tools. While I do speak German a bit, these older physical texts were challenging to read as well as quite different from modern linguistic sources specifically about Saami linguistics.

Rounq's *Lappische Verbalableitung* (1943) includes many examples without glosses which makes it difficult to apply without previous knowledge of Saami morphology. Later studies, such as Lehtiranta's (1992) description of sound and inflectional patterns, provide further detail but are also several decades old. It also has many abbreviations (14-20) in the case of vowel alterations or (42-53) for verb inflection making it quite difficult to read. However, as the

version was also digitized, searching was easier as well as translating the text from Finnish with online translation tools as I am not a speaker of Finnish.

Finally, many of the works are published in different languages such as German, Swedish, Finnish, or Hungarian requiring proficiency in multiple languages or translation tools to make effective use of it. Although Wilbur's grammar (2014) and related work in English have significantly lowered this barrier, a considerable portion of the secondary literature remains difficult to access for those without knowledge of the respective languages. However, the literature will be discussed in more detail in the Literature Review chapter.

1.6 Object of research

This thesis is based on a subset of annotated ELAN files containing naturalistic Pite Saami speech, compiled and provided by Joshua Wilbur as part of long-term language documentation work. The materials have been segmented, glossed, and annotated, making them well suited for syntactic and morphosyntactic analysis.

For the purposes of this thesis, negation is understood as the grammatical operation that reverses the truth value of a proposition (Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy: 2015). The primary focus of the study is clausal negation, expressed by a finite negation verb in combination with a connegative lexical verb. Other types of negation, such as derivational negation or lexical items with inherently negative meaning, fall outside the core scope of the analysis unless they interact structurally with clausal negation.

The term negation verb refers to the finite auxiliary that carries person, number, tense, and mood inflection and precedes the connegative lexical verb. The connegative is defined as the special non-finite form of the lexical verb that occurs exclusively in negative contexts and lacks independent inflectional marking. These terms are used following Wilbur (2014: 240) and established Saami linguistic tradition.

In addition to full clausal negation, the study also considers negative responses, defined as utterances that function as responses to preceding interrogatives and contain an overt negation verb. The antecedent question may be either affirmative or negative; however, only responses with grammatical negation are included in the dataset. Elliptical negative responses, in which

the lexical verb is omitted but the negation verb is retained, are included. Minimal answers lacking both a negation verb and a verbal predicate are excluded.

Finally, the thesis includes instances of constituent negation, where negation scopes over a sub-clausal element (e.g. noun phrases, adverbials, or predicates) rather than the entire clause. Such cases are included when the negation verb is present, and the scope of negation can be determined from morphosyntactic or discourse evidence. The scope of the thesis is limited to Pite Saami as documented in the available ELAN corpus materials. Comparative references to other Saami languages, particularly Lule Saami, are included for contextual and typological purposes, but no independent corpus analysis of these languages is done during this thesis.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, outlines the research questions, and provides the necessary background on Pite Saami and its negation system. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature on negation in Uralic and Saami languages, with particular attention to previous descriptive work on Pite Saami. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and describes the corpus data, as well as the procedures used for extracting and classifying instances of negation.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the corpus-based analysis, focusing on the morphosyntactic properties of negation, including clause structure, variation across contexts, and patterns of use. Chapter 5 discusses these findings in a broader typological and comparative perspective, relating them to patterns observed in other Saami languages and Uralic negation more generally. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the main conclusions of the study and suggests directions for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1 General overview

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the Pite Saami language within the wider context of Uralic negation, Saami linguistics, and Pite Saami grammatical description. By synthesizing both older and modern sources, it becomes possible to trace how the language has been described, what is currently known about its negation system, and where gaps remain.

The primary works for this study are Joshua Wilbur's *A Grammar of Pite Saami* (2014). In addition, typological and comparative perspectives are drawn from Miestamo (2006, 2007) and Miestamo & Koponen (2015), which examine negation in Uralic languages, including Saami varieties. Comparative literature also includes the chapters on Saami languages in *The Oxford Guide to the Uralic Languages*, covering South Saami and Lule Saami (Ylikoski 2022: 130–146), North Saami (Ánte & Ylikoski 2022: 147–177), Aanaar Saami (Valtonen et al. 2022: 178–195), Skolt Saami (Koponen et al. 2022a: 196–218), and Kildin Saami (Rießler 2022: 219–239), as well as the general introduction to Saami (Koponen 2022b: 103–112). These works are not discussed in detail individually, but they inform the comparative framework of this study, particularly regarding the expression of negation across Saami languages. Older descriptive works also play an important role. These include Halász (1893, 1896), Lagercrantz (1926), Ruong (1943), and Lehtiranta (1992). Although these sources do not provide systematic analyses of negation, they offer valuable empirical material and historical context.

Wilbur (2014) provides the most detailed modern description of Pite Saami and serves as the main reference for this thesis. He shows that negation in Pite Saami is expressed by a finite negative auxiliary that inflects for person, number, tense, and mood, followed by a lexical verb in the connegative form. His analysis also includes discussion of past tense and imperative constructions, as well as irregularities. From a broader perspective, Miestamo (2007) provides a typological overview of negation strategies across languages, while Miestamo (2006) discusses negation within a pragmatic framework. Miestamo & Koponen (2015) offer a detailed account of negation in Skolt Saami, which serves as an important point of comparison. Together, these works situate Pite Saami within the wider Uralic pattern of auxiliary-based negation while also highlighting language-specific variation.

2.2 Negation in Pite Saami in earlier descriptive sources

Before modern grammatical descriptions, Pite Saami negation was documented in text collections, dictionaries, and grammars that were not primarily concerned with syntax. These sources attest negation but do not analyse it systematically.

The *Népköltési gyűjtemény: a Pite Lappmark Arjepluogi egyházkerületéből* (Halász 1893) is an extensive collection of short Pite Saami texts. These materials were transcribed using the traditional Finno-Ugric transcription system, and each text is accompanied by a complete Hungarian translation. Most of the texts consist of traditional narrative material, although a small number of poems and songs are also included. While this source doesn't specifically discuss the negation of Pite Saami, it's still an important source for the corpus which will be used.

The *Pite lappmarki szótár és nyelvtan* (Halász 1896) provides a description of Pite Saami morphology in the form of paradigms, together with a lexical component, and represents an important early grammatical and lexicographic source of Pite Saami. There is a small section about the negation verb as well which was the most important for this study.

	Præsens	Præteritum	I. Imper.	II. Imperativus
Sing. 1.	<i>ép, iw</i>	<i>iččiw</i>	—	<i>ellum ma</i>
2.	<i>ih, eh, i'</i>	<i>ičči</i>	<i>cle, al</i>	<i>elluhta, lluhta</i>
3.	<i>ij, i</i>	<i>ičči, iccij</i>	—	<i>ell is, allus</i>
Dual. 1.	<i>ên</i>	<i>iččimên, êimên</i>	—	<i>ellun all in</i>
2.	<i>êhpên</i>	<i>iččiten, êitên</i>	—	<i>elluten, alluten</i>
3.	<i>epa, êpān</i>	<i>iččiķa, -ķan, êikā, eikan</i>	—	<i>elluskan, alluskan</i>
Plur. 1.	<i>êhpe, ehpe</i>	<i>iččime, êimē</i>	—	<i>ellup, allup</i>
2.	<i>êhpēt</i>	<i>iččite, êitē</i>	<i>ellet</i>	<i>elluti, elluti, elloti, el-lut, alluti, allut</i>
3.	<i>eh, e'</i>	<i>iččin</i>	—	<i>ellusa, allusa</i>

Table 4: The inflectional paradigm for the negation verb in Pite Saami (Halász 1896: 40)

This text goes on to explain a bit about how Pite Saami negation works. In standard negation, this source reveals that this is accomplished that same way which was described in Wilbur (2014: 157). With the negation verb being finite and the main verb appearing in the connegative form there doesn't appear to be much difference from what has been described. However, it does mention the use of a second negation imperative which can be seen in Table 4. Halász

(1896: XLI) described this imperative use of the negation verb to be a milder form. Of course, there was no standard orthography at this time so spellings of Pite Saami can be quite different from earlier literature. From the negation paradigm there doesn't appear to be anything extremely different from Wilbur's (2014: 180) paradigm the only area that stands out as quite unusual is the use of a second negation imperative form. Lagercrantz (1926), mentions in the preface to his grammar that Hálász's description of the phonetic system is unsatisfactory but that his inflectional paradigms are reliable (Lagercrantz 1926: 10). However, Hálász's inflectional paradigms and the material presented in Lagercrantz are often contradictory.

Sprachlehre des Westlappischen nach der Mundart von Arjeplog (Lagercrantz 1926) is a grammar written in German and based on approximately three months of fieldwork. During this period, Lagercrantz worked with three Pite Saami speakers who were originally from the municipality of Arjeplog but had settled in the Beiarn area of Norway. The grammar focuses primarily on clause structure from a semantic perspective, contains a relatively limited treatment of morphology, and offers a detailed analysis of the phonological system, supported by phonetic and acoustic experimentation.

Lappische Verbalableitung dargestellt auf Grundlage des Pitelappischen (Ruong 1943) is the doctoral dissertation of Israel Ruong, who later became professor of Saami languages and culture at Uppsala University. As a native speaker of Pite Saami, Ruong presents a comprehensive and systematic classification of verb derivation in the language. This work remains his only study devoted exclusively to Pite Saami. Although negated forms occur in examples, the work is of limited relevance for the present study beyond providing occasional data points.

Finally, *Arjeploginsaamen äänne- ja taivutusopin pääpiirteet* (Lehtiranta 1992) is a Finnish-language description of Pite Saami phonology and inflectional morphology. The study is based on recordings, earlier publications, and archival materials dating from 1950 and earlier. In addition to the descriptive sections, the book includes a number of morphological paradigms, as well as several Pite Saami texts accompanied by both phonetic and orthographic transcriptions and Finnish translations. However, there is not a section dedicated to negation and the Pite Saami text within this work is unfortunately not glossed. There is a mention in this work that the affirmative forms of personal pronouns have in a few cases become enclitic or completely agglutinated in all dialects. It notes that this is especially true for the affirmative forms of negation verbs. (Lehtiranta 1992: 133)

(7) <i>ipma < (iv ma)</i>	<i>mån</i>	<i>hålå</i>
NEG.1SG	1SG.NOM	say.CNG
‘I do not say.’		

While negation is not treated in a dedicated section, paradigms and example sentences allow negative forms to be identified. The lack of glossing and syntactic analysis limits its usefulness for studying clause-level negation. However, the work notes that affirmative forms of personal pronouns may become enclitic or agglutinated, particularly in connection with negation verbs.

This thesis builds on the existing body of research by focusing specifically on the syntax of negation in Pite Saami, using corpus-based data. Although earlier sources are consulted and referenced where relevant, the primary findings of the study are derived from direct analysis of the corpus rather than from previous literature. Consequently, unless explicitly indicated otherwise, all analyses and conclusions presented in this thesis are based on observations drawn from the corpus itself.

Taken together, these earlier sources demonstrate that negation in Pite Saami has long been attested but insufficiently analysed. They provide important historical context and empirical material yet leave significant gaps in the description of negation at the morphosyntactic level. These gaps are addressed more directly only in later work, particularly in Wilbur (2014).

2.3 Negation in North Saami

North Saami negation is quite well described and serves as an important point of comparison of in relation to other Saami languages. Like Pite Saami, North Saami employs a finite negative auxiliary verb that inflects for person and number, while the lexical verb appears in a special non-finite form. However, a key difference lies in the expression of tense.

In North Saami, tense is typically marked on the lexical verb rather than on the negative auxiliary (Kahn & Valijärvi 2017: 143). This contrasts with Pite Saami, where tense distinctions are realized on the negation verb itself. Negative imperatives in North Saami are also formed using dedicated imperative forms of the negation verb, followed by a connegative lexical verb. Despite these similarities, the distribution of grammatical information between the negative auxiliary and the lexical verb differs significantly between North Saami and Pite Saami. In more northern and eastern Saamic varieties, this is the only way of forming a past

negative; the loss of tense inflection for the negative auxiliary in these varieties may be due to influence of Finnic (cf. Bergsland 1946: 170, Korhonen 1967: 214; 1981: 310, Sammallahti 1998: 76–77; 224–225). This can be seen from Examples (8-9) below.

(8) *in bora*
 NEG.1SG eat.CNG.PRS
 ‘I do not eat’

(9) *in borran*
 NEG.1SG eat.CNG.PST
 ‘I did not eat’

(Aikio & Ylikoski 2009: 114)

From these examples the negation verb for both does not change, rather the tense can be confirmed based on the lexical verb which differs from Pite Saami.

2.4 Negation in Lule Saami

Lule Saami is geographically and typologically the closest relative of Pite Saami and therefore provides a particularly relevant comparative framework. As described by Ylikoski (2022:131), Lule Saami exhibits a negation system based on a finite negative auxiliary that agrees with the subject in person and number, followed by a lexical verb in the connegative form.

Standard clause negation in Lule Saami closely resembles that of Pite Saami, but variation is observed in past tense negation, where tense marking may appear on the negative auxiliary, the lexical verb, or both. Lule Saami also has dedicated negative imperative forms and displays irregularities in copular negation, particularly in stative constructions. Additionally, Lule Saami employs remnants of abessive morphology and negative indefinites in expressions of absence.

These features provide a useful point of comparison for Pite Saami, especially with regard to variation in tense marking and the interaction between negation and clause structure. While the overall architecture of negation is similar, differences in detail suggest that Pite Saami cannot be treated simply as a sub-variety of Lule Saami and requires independent analysis. Some examples of standard negation in Lule Saami can be seen below in (10-11).

- (10) *Mån iv mujte suv*
 1SG NEG.1SG remember.CNG. 3SG.ACC
 ‘I don’t remember him/her.’ (SIKOR 2021)

- (11) *Madin oajvvefágajn barggiv, de ittjiv*
 while master’s.degree.COM work.PST.1SG then NEG.PST.1SG
åhpada soames jagev.
 teach.CNG some year.ACC
 ‘When I was doing my master’s degree, I didn’t teach for a year or so.’ (SIKOR 2021)

With Examples (10-11), the negation verb inflects for person and number, and also for tense and mood, agreeing with the subject of the clause while the lexical verb that follows the negation verb appears with connegative stem. However, past tense forms of the negative auxiliary appear to have fallen out of use also in the northern variety, instead, these dialects favour the same strategy as in North Saami, i.e. marking tense on the lexical verb rather than on the negative auxiliary (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 175). An example from the Forest dialect is given in (12).

- (12) *Mån iv máhttám mavge dárogielav.*
 1SG NEG.1SG know.PST.PTCP any.ACC Swedish.ACC
 ‘I didn’t know any Swedish (when starting school).’
 (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 175)

2.5 Negation in South and Ume Saami

South and Ume Saami represent the southern varieties within the Western Saami continuum and exhibit both shared and divergent negation strategies when compared to Pite Saami. Both languages employ negative auxiliaries, although the degree of inflectional marking and the formal properties of a verb in connegative differ (Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy 2015: 379).

South Saami, in particular, shows reduced inflectional complexity in comparison to northern varieties, and its negation system reflects broader morphological simplification. Ume Saami,

which is critically endangered and sparsely documented, exhibits patterns that overlap with both Pite and South Saami, though available descriptions remain limited.

Including South and Ume Saami in the comparative picture allows Pite Saami to be situated more precisely within the Western Saami subgroup. While the present thesis does not aim to provide a detailed comparative analysis, these languages demonstrate that auxiliary-based negation is a stable feature across Saami, even as individual languages diverge in morphological and syntactic detail.

Table 5 shows the positive and negative forms of the present and preterite indicative of the verb *båtedh* ‘to come’ in South Saami.

		Present		Preterite	
		Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Singular	1	<i>båatam</i>	<i>im</i>	<i>böötim</i>	<i>idtjim</i>
	2	<i>båatah</i>	<i>ih</i>	<i>bööti</i>	<i>idtjih</i>
	3	<i>båata</i>	<i>ij</i>	<i>bööti</i>	<i>idtji</i>
Dual	1	<i>båetien</i>	<i>ean</i>	<i>böötimh</i>	<i>idtjimen</i>
	2	<i>båeteden</i>	<i>idien</i> + <i>båetieh</i>	<i>böötiden</i>	<i>idtjiden</i> + <i>båetieh</i>
	3	<i>båetiejägan</i>	<i>eakan</i>	<i>böötigán</i>	<i>idtjigan</i>
Plural	1	<i>båetebe</i>	<i>ibie</i>	<i>böötimh</i>	<i>idtjimh</i>
	2	<i>båetede</i>	<i>idie</i>	<i>böötidh</i>	<i>idtjidh</i>
	3	<i>båetieh</i>	<i>eah</i>	<i>böötin</i>	<i>idtjin</i>

Table 5: Positive and negative forms of the present and preterite indicative of the verb *båtedh* ‘to come’ in South Saami taken from (Blokland & Inaba, 2015, p. 379).

Standard negation in South Saami utilizes a negative auxiliary, which has two tenses (present and preterite), and connegative forms of the lexical verb. This works similarly to Pite Saami where the tense is typically marked on the negative auxiliary. This can also be shown in Table 6 below with Ume Saami.

	Presens		Preteritum	
Sg1	<i>ib</i>	/ 'ip/	<i>idtjuv</i>	/ 'ittʃəv/
Sg2	<i>ih</i>	/ 'ih/	<i>idtjh</i>	/ 'ittʃəh/
Sg3	<i>ij</i>	/ 'ij/	<i>idtjij</i>	/ 'ittʃəj/
Du1	<i>eän</i>	/ 'ien/	<i>*iejmien</i>	/ 'iejmien/
Du2	<i>*iehprien</i>	/ 'iehprien/	<i>*iejdien</i>	/ 'iejdien/
Du3	<i>eägán</i>	/ 'iekaan/	<i>iejgán</i>	/ 'iejkaan/
Pl1	<i>iehprie</i>	/ 'iehprie/	<i>iejmieh</i>	/ 'iejmieh/
Pl2	<i>*ihpede</i>	/ 'iihpətə/	<i>*iejdieh</i>	/ 'iejdieh/
Pl3	<i>eäh</i>	/ 'ieh/	<i>idtjan</i>	/ 'ittʃən/
SgImp	<i>ielieh</i>	/ 'ielieh/		

Table 6: Negation verb forms of the present, preterite, and indicative in Ume Saami taken from (von Gertten 2015: 90)

Similarly, from Table 6, standard negation in Ume Saami utilizes a negative auxiliary, which has two tenses (present and preterite), and connegative forms of the lexical verb. This is similar to both South and Lule Saami as well as Pite Saami.

2.6 Summary and research gap

The literature reviewed above demonstrates that negation in Saami languages is typically expressed through a negative auxiliary combined with a lexical verb. While this general pattern is well established, significant variation exists with respect to tense marking, word order, and interaction with clause type. For Pite Saami specifically, early sources provide valuable empirical evidence.

Although Wilbur (2014) offers the most comprehensive account of Pite Saami negation to date, many questions remain regarding the distribution, frequency, and variability of negation patterns in naturalistic speech. In particular, corpus-based studies focusing on syntactic structure, connegative behaviour, and clause-level variation are still largely absent. This thesis addresses these gaps by providing a corpus-driven analysis of negation in Pite Saami, with particular attention to morphosyntactic structure and usage patterns across clause types.

Comparisons with other Saami languages also set up a basis from which to examine Pite Saami. From the examples shown above, North Saami and Northern dialects of Lule Saami set up a standard which will be referred to later on as the “northern strategy” which places the tense on the lexical verb rather than the negation verb as Pite, Lule, South and Ume Saami have a “southern strategy” which all have a finite negative auxiliary that agrees with the subject in person and number followed by a connegative. In Saami linguistics, this divide is considered one of the most significant morphosyntactic differences that divide the Saami branch in two (Sammallahti 1998: 76–77, 80, 224–225).

3.1 Description of the corpus

Although the corpus was assembled at a single point in time, it contains recordings originating from multiple fieldwork sessions or texts spanning over several decades. The earliest transcriptions date back to the early twentieth century, while the most recent materials were recorded in 2018. This allows for a diachronic observation of negation patterns; however, the primary focus of the present study is synchronic, as the majority of the corpus data originate from more recent recordings.

Mixed-language material is present to varying degrees across the corpus. In the analysis, only utterances in Pite Saami were systematically included; however, clauses containing limited Swedish material were retained where the Pite Saami structure remained analysable. An example of such a mixed utterance is given in (13).

- In this example, the discourse marker *nej* ‘no’ is Swedish, while the remainder of the clause is in Pite Saami.

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given that the present study is based on corpus data rather than grammatical judgements. The Pite Saami material in the corpus is translated into Swedish and/or English in all files, and the corpus subset are annotated. In cases with code-switching this is also indicated within the corpus. I will also provide a list of all the recordings as well as a brief description of the content below in Table 7.

Session	Date	Token Count	Text Type
sje18930000a-halasz1893a-22	01.01.1893	31	narration
sje19210000a-lagercrantz1957a-426	01.01.1926	1747	narration
sje19790000a	01.01.1979	303	written text
sje19860000-rensund1986a-107	01.01.1986	360	written text, narration
pit080924	24.09.2008	2418	conversation
pit090915	15.09.2009	3636	explanation narration
sje20180630b	08.07.2018	38	narration

Table 7: Corpus inventory of the recordings used for this thesis

3.2 Extraction of negation verb forms

To identify relevant instances of negation, a Python script was developed to automatically search the ELAN annotation tiers for occurrences of the Pite Saami negation verb. All identified instances of the negation verb were extracted and compiled into a CSV file. This file was subsequently imported into a Google Sheets document, where individual examples could be systematically examined, filtered, and manually annotated. This workflow made it possible to efficiently identify all relevant tokens of negation while still allowing for detailed qualitative analysis of each occurrence. This approach also relies on the annotations in this corpus subset being annotated correctly.

In order to account for the possibility of non-canonical negation strategies, such as the use of the Swedish negator *inte* ‘not’ in otherwise Pite Saami utterances, additional searches were conducted for *inte* using the ELAN search function. These searches returned only instances occurring in Swedish-language clauses. No examples were found in which *inte* was used within Pite Saami clauses in place of, or alongside, the Pite Saami negation verb.

3.3 Classification

Each extracted instance of negation was manually classified in Google sheets according to a set of grammatical and functional categories. These categories were designed to capture both

the morphosyntactic properties of the negation construction and its behaviour at the clause level.

Instances of negation were identified through systematic searches for forms of the finite negation verb in the ELAN corpus. Since clausal negation in Pite Saami is canonically expressed by means of an inflected negative auxiliary, this procedure was expected to retrieve all relevant instances of negation in Pite Saami clauses.

The following parameters were annotated for each example: Person, Number Tense, Connegative form, Position of the connegative, Expected connegative form, Mood, Clause type, Modal context, Overt Subject, Translation, Multiple negation elements, and Standalone negative responses. The annotation variables can be seen below in Table 8.

Variable	Possible values	Additional Notes
Person	1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.	Based off the inflectional paradigm of the negation verb
Number	SG, DU, PL	
Tense	PRS, PST	
Connegative form	Yes / No + form	Whether a connegative verb is present and its morphological form
Position of connegative	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Relative to the negative auxiliary
Expected connegative form	Expected / Non-expected	Whether the verb appears in the canonical connegative form
Aspect	Perfect, Progressive	Periphrastic construction with auxiliary <i>árrot</i> and non-finite verb form
Mood	IND, POT, IMP	There are 3 moods in Pite Saami
Clause type	Matrix / Subordinate	Subordinate clauses always begin with a subordinator
Modal context	Yes / No	Whether a modal or auxiliary verb is present
Overt subject	Yes / No	Whether an explicit subject NP or pronoun is present between the negation verb and connegative
Translation	Translation in English	Based on the existing corpus translations
Multiple negation elements	Yes / No	More than one negation element in the clause
Standalone negation	Yes / No	Includes negative responses (e.g. ‘no’) without full clause

Table 8: Annotation variables for negation analysis

This classification made it possible to identify recurring structural patterns and variation in the syntax of negation across the corpus. By systematically annotating these features, the analysis aims to provide a detailed and empirically grounded account of negation in Pite Saami as it appears in naturalistic, corpus-based data.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of negation in Pite Saami based on corpus data drawn from an ELAN-annotated corpus consisting of seven Pite Saami files provided by Joshua Wilbur, a collection of annotated materials representing a working dataset of the language. While the corpus consists primarily of recordings, some of the older texts represent transcriptions of narratives collected prior to the widespread use of recording technology.

The focus of this chapter is on clausal negation in declarative contexts, with particular attention to the morphosyntactic properties of the negation verb and its interaction with verb morphology, clause structure, and coordination. Before proceeding, it is important to note that corpora do not provide negative evidence, that is, they can only demonstrate what is attested in a language, but not what is impossible (Stefanowitsch 2020: 3). This point is particularly relevant for the present study, as several generalizations are based on the absence of certain constructions in the dataset. Such absences should therefore be interpreted with caution and not as categorical restrictions of the language.

In Pite Saami, negation is expressed by a finite negation verb which combines with a non-finite complement verb form, traditionally referred to as the connegative. While this system is well attested in earlier descriptive work (e.g. Lagercrantz 1926; Wilbur 2014), the present study contributes a corpus-based perspective on how negation is realized in natural discourse.

The analysis proceeds by first outlining the basic structure of standard negation in Pite Saami, followed by a discussion of variation and extensions of this pattern in different grammatical contexts.

4.2 Standard negation

The negation of declarative verbal main clauses is expressed by combining a finite verb, with tense and mood, and agreeing with the subject of the clause with a lexical verb in a special non-finite form called the connegative which was mentioned in Chapter 1. From all the examples found in this corpus, the connegative form of the verb appears after the negation verb. The standard negation construction is an asymmetric negative construction in Miestamo's (2015: 15) typology and, more specifically, it belongs to subtype A/Fin of asymmetric negation. This subtype is defined by the loss or reduction of finiteness of the lexical verb usually accompanied

by the addition of a finite element (auxiliary); in a negation verb construction (A/Fin/NegVerb), as in Pite Saami, the finite element that is added is the negative marker itself. An example illustrating present-tense standard negation is given in (14).

- (14) *mān* *iv* *diede*
1.SG.NOM NEG.1SG.PRS know.CNG
'I don't know.'
[pit090915.012]

In this example, the negation verb *iv* carries first person singular agreement and present tense marking, while the lexical verb *diede* ‘know’ appears in the connegative form. Corpus data confirm that the verb in connegative consistently follows the negation verb, and no counterexamples were found in which the connegative precedes the negator. While constituent order in Pite Saami is otherwise relatively flexible, negation thus appears to impose a strong constraint on verb order (Wilbur 2014: 241).

In past-tense negation, the negation verb inflects for past tense, while the complement verb appears in a non-finite form appropriate to the construction, typically identical in form to the connegative or participial form described in previous literature this can be seen in (15).

- (15) *Idtjij sãn buoragav ane muhtin*
 NEG.PST.3SG 3SG.NOM good.ACC have.CNG sometimes
 ‘Sometimes she didn’t have anything good.’

[[sje19210000a-lagercrantz1957-426.016](#)]

Here, the negation verb *idtijj* expresses third person singular past tense negation, while the lexical verb *ane* ‘have’ occurs in the connegative form. For indicative clauses, verbs can inflect for present tense, or past. Furthermore, as was mentioned in Chapter 3, the data was categorized as well based on clause type. From all the data found, standard negation is the same whether the clause is a matrix or subordinate clause. This can be seen with the Example (16) which contains the matrix clause and subordinate clause.

- (16) *Iv* *mån* *diede* *jus* *i*
 NEG.1SG.PRS 1SG.NOM know.CNG if NEG.2SG.PRS
mutje
 remember.CNG
 ‘I don’t know if you don’t remember.’

[pit080924.eaf.602]

In Example (16) it can be seen that the subordinator *jus* ‘if’ indicates that there is a subordinate clause. In all cases found in the corpus, the subordinate clause was introduced by a subordinator. From this example, it shows that whether it’s a matrix or subordinate clause, the negation pattern works the same. This was noted as well in South Saami as stated in Blokland & Inaba (2015: 19), that negative subordinate clauses do not differ in any way from main clauses.

4.2.1 Negation in aspectual constructions

Pite Saami features two aspects, perfect and progressive, as described in Wilbur (2014: 155). Both aspects are formed using a combination of the auxiliary verb *årrot* ‘be’ and the relevant non-finite verb form. Firstly, the perfect will be shown. Pite Saami expresses perfect aspect periphrastically by combining the auxiliary verb *årrot* ‘be’ with a lexical verb marked by the perfect suffix *-m*. When consonant gradation is relevant, the verb stem appears in the strong grade (Wilbur 2014: 155-156).

In affirmative clauses, the auxiliary *årrot* functions as the finite verb, inflecting for person, number, tense, and mood, while the lexical verb occurs in the perfect form. This is illustrated in Example (17),

- (17) *men mån* *lev* *tjåjvev* *ruhtastemin* *ullgus*,
 but 1SG.NOM be.1SG.PRS stomach.ACC.SG cut.PROG out
tjådågov *lev* *tjadnam* *tjieboten*
 esophagus.ACC.SG be.1SG.PRS knot.PRF neck.INE.SG
 ‘But I am cutting out the stomach, I have knotted the esophagus in the neck.’

[Wilbur 2014: pit080909.054–055]

Negation in perfect constructions follows the general pattern of standard clausal negation in Pite Saami. In negative clauses, it is the auxiliary verb *årrot* that appears in the connegative form, while the lexical verb remains in the perfect participial form. No additional morphological marking is introduced, and the structure mirrors that of affirmative clauses in all relevant respects except for the presence of the negation verb which is the feature which functions as the finite verb rather than *årrot*. In all cases found in the corpus the order was consistent first was the negation verb, afterwards the connegative form, and finally the perfect form of the verb. This symmetry is illustrated in Example (18), where the negated auxiliary *ij lä* ‘is not / has not been’ scopes over the perfect construction. The perfect form *mannam* ‘gone’ is retained unchanged, indicating that the resultative state did not obtain.

- (18) *Sån dä usjudij, ahte sujna ij lä*
 3SG.NOM PCL think.PST.3SG that 3SG.COM NEG.3SG.PRS be.CNG
buoragit mannam, gu lij nåv tjåskes ja
 well go.PRF.PTCP because be.PST.3SG so cold and
nievres hurrsobuoldagistjavelk.
 bad ride.place

‘Then he thought that it had not gone well for her, because it was so cold and (there was) bad terrain/a bad ridge’

[sje19210000a-lagercrantz1957a.133]

As in affirmative clauses, the perfect participle expresses the resultative component of the event, while finiteness is encoded on the negation verb. From a typological perspective (Miestamo 2005:17), this pattern represents symmetric standard negation, as the negative construction differs minimally from its affirmative counterpart and does not involve additional morphosyntactic complexity.

Pite Saami also appears to allow a past perfect interpretation. In Lule Saami, the past perfect is distinguished by the use of a specialized past-tense connegative form of the auxiliary (e.g. *lim*), which is distinct from the past participle ‘to be’ (*laehkám ~ årrum*). This is illustrated in Example (19), where both forms co-occur in a negated pluperfect construction (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 184).

- (19) *Jávnni ij lim goassak nav ávon*
 Jávnni NEG.3SG be.PST.CNG when.NPM so joy.INE
læhkám
 be.PST.PTCP
 ‘Jávnni had never been so happy.’ (SIKOR 2021)

A structurally comparable pattern is attested in the Pite Saami corpus, as shown in Example (20):

- (20) *ma iellam juhkam vijnav*
 REL.PL.NOM NEG.3PL drink.PRF.PTCP alcohol.ACC.SG
 ‘who had not drunk alcohol’
 [sje19210000a-lagercrantz1957a.093]

In this example, the form *iellam* encodes negation together with a perfect-like meaning, and occurs with a lexical verb in the perfect participial form. Functionally, the construction yields a past perfect interpretation. However, in the corpus used, only examples have been found for the past perfect in the third person plural where in Lule Saami there is a clear paradigm marking the past perfect which can be seen in Table 9 below.

	Present indicative		Past indicative	
	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative
1SG	<i>lav</i>	<i>iv la</i>	<i>lidjiv</i>	<i>iv lim</i>
2SG	<i>la</i>	<i>illa</i>	<i>lidji</i>	<i>illim</i>
3SG	<i>la, l</i>	<i>ij la</i>	<i>lij</i>	<i>ij lim</i>
1DU	<i>lin</i>	<i>en la</i>	<i>lijma</i>	<i>ejma lim</i>
2DU	<i>lihppe</i>	<i>æhppe la</i>	<i>lijda</i>	<i>ejda lim</i>
3DU	<i>libá</i>	<i>æbá la</i>	<i>lijga</i>	<i>ejga lim</i>
1PL	<i>lip</i>	<i>ep la</i>	<i>lijma</i>	<i>ejma lim</i>
2PL	<i>lihpit</i>	<i>ehpit la</i>	<i>lijda</i>	<i>ejda lim</i>
3PL	<i>li</i>	<i>ælla</i>	<i>lidjin</i>	<i>ællim</i>

Table 9: Inflectional paradigm of the copula in the present and past by (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 184)

From a comparative perspective, earlier descriptions for Pite Saami such as Halász (1893:XLI) suggest that an expected past perfect construction would involve the past tense of the negation

verb, followed by the connegative form of *árrot* and a lexical verb in the perfect participial form. However, such fully analytic constructions are not attested in the available corpus material nor attested in any supporting literature on Pite Saami. An example of this construction is given below.

- (21) *Idtiv* *lä* *ähttsem*
 NEG.1SG.PST be.CNG love.PRF.PTCP
 ‘I didn’t like it’ (Halász 1893:XLI)

As the corpus provides no examples of past perfect forms with person marking beyond the third person plural, and previous descriptions do not offer a unified account of the construction, further research is required to establish the full paradigm of the past perfect in Pite Saami. This is particularly important because the Pite Saami example discussed above suggests that the negation verb and the past participial form of *árrot* may be fused with the negation verb, paralleling constructions attested in Lule Saami. Additional investigation is therefore needed both to clarify the structure and distribution of these forms and to determine whether the construction attested in the corpus represents the regular formation of the past perfect, or whether Pite Saami instead followed the pattern proposed by Halász (1893: XLI) in his description of the category. Given the close relationship between Lule Saami and Pite Saami, it seems plausible that the two languages may have employed similar past perfect constructions. However, the currently available corpus data do not provide sufficient evidence to draw a definitive conclusion.

Finally, there are additional examples in the corpus where *iellam* occurs without a following perfect participle, resulting in interpretations closer to a simple past rather than a past perfect. An example of this is given below.

- (22) *iellam* *suv* *fáron* *dållå*
 NEG.3PL 3SG.GEN with.INE.SG fire.PL.NOM

 ja *idja* *lij* *tjåskes*
 and night.SG.NOM be.PST.3SG cold.SG.NOM
 ‘She did not have any fires/matches with her, and the night was cold.’

[sje19210000a-lagercrantz1957a.128]

The second aspect in Pite Saami would be the progressive. However, the corpus did not provide any examples of this construction. Verbs in the progressive indicate that an activity is ongoing. The progressive verb form is marked by the suffix *-min* attached to the verb stem, which is in the strong grade when consonant gradation is relevant and cooccurs with the auxiliary *årrot* ‘be’ (Wilbur 2014: 150). Example (20) provides an example of the progressive form in the affirmative.

(23)	<i>Mánnå</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>Jåssjå</i>	<i>lijmen</i>	<i>ulgon</i>	<i>sirijd</i>
	1SG.NOM	and	Josh.NOM.SG	be.1DU.PST	outside	blueberry-ACC.PL
	<i>tjågge-min</i>					
	pick-PROG					
	‘Josh and I were picking blueberries outside’					
	[pit100310b.032]					

Based on the negation pattern observed in perfect constructions from Example (23), it can be assumed that negation of the progressive would follow the same strategy. However, no examples of progressive constructions were attested in the corpus. This absence may be related to the focus on negative clauses, where aspectual distinctions appear to be less frequently expressed. As a result, no further analysis of progressive aspect can be provided based on the present data.

4.2.2 Imperative negation

It is typologically common for negation strategies in imperatives to differ from those used in declaratives (Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy 2015: 35). This is also the case in Pite Saami. Imperatives are negated using a construction that is structurally similar to declarative negation; however, the negative auxiliary appears in its imperative forms. As in imperatives more generally, the subject is restricted to second person, and the verb is not marked for person, but inflects for number (singular, dual, and plural), as illustrated in Table 9.

		SINGULAR	DUAL	PLURAL
IMP	2nd	ele	iellen~ellen	ellit~illit

Table 9: Negation paradigm of the imperative negation verb in Pite Saami

Unfortunately, the corpus search didn't result in any imperative negation. Therefore, an example from, Wilbur (2014: 158) will be provided in Example (24).

- (24) *Ele tsábme!*
 NEG.SG.IMP hit.CONNEG
 'Don't hit!' (said to a child)²

[sje20121009.11m27s]e (Wilbur 2014, p.158)

In this example, the negative auxiliary *ele* is the imperative form of the negation verb and does not occur in declarative clauses. The lexical verb *tsábme* 'hit' appears in the connegative form, as in other negated clauses. The clause is marked as imperative through the use of the imperative form of the negative auxiliary, together with the absence of overt subject marking and person inflection on the lexical verb.

From a typological perspective, van der Auwera and Lejeune (2005: 290) distinguish different types of second-person singular negative imperatives based on two parameters: whether the verbal form used in negative imperatives differs from that used in positive imperatives, and whether the negation marker differs from that used in declarative clauses. In Pite Saami, negative imperatives use a dedicated imperative form of the negation verb, rather than the indicative negation forms used in standard declarative negation. At the same time, the lexical verb appears in the connegative form, which corresponds to the form used elsewhere in negation. Thus, negative imperatives retain the same basic syntactic structure as other negated clauses, while the use of imperative forms on the negative auxiliary reflects the general morphological marking of imperative clauses in the language. Following Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy's (2015:14) typology, this means that negation in imperatives in Pite Saami cannot be analysed as fully symmetric with declarative negation. Instead, imperative negation constitutes a non-standard negation strategy restricted to a specific clause type. In terms of van der Auwera and Lejeune's (2005: 293) typology of negative imperatives, Pite Saami belongs to Type 2, where negative imperatives employ a dedicated imperative form of the negation verb and an imperative verbal construction that differs from standard declarative negation. While the basic structure of negation is retained, the morphology of the negation verb is

² Repeated from Example (5), originally from (Wilbur 2014: 158)

restricted to imperative contexts and thus constitutes a non-standard negation strategy in Miestamo, Tamm & Wagner-Nagy's (2015: 15).

4.2.3 Coordination under negation

An interesting pattern attested in the corpus involves a single negation verb scoping over two coordinated connegative predicates. While only one clear example of this construction was identified, it is nevertheless noteworthy as it demonstrates that Pite Saami allows coordination under standard negation without repetition of the negation verb.

- (25) *Ij vil máhte jala dâbdâ akhtagav*
 NEG.3PL.PRS even can.CNG or know.CNG anything.ACC
 'they cannot or do not know anything.'
 [sje19860000-rensund1986a.012]

In this construction, the verbs in connegative *máhte* 'can' and *dâbdâ* 'know' are coordinated by *jala* 'or', while finiteness and negation are expressed only once. Both predicates fall within the scope of a single negation verb. Importantly, this construction does not involve multiple negation; rather, it represents a single instance of standard clausal negation with coordinated predicates. This example shows that Pite Saami permits coordination at the level of the verb in connegative, and that the negation construction remains morphologically stable even when extended to multiple predicates within the same clause.

4.2.4 Negation without the connegative

While the majority of negated clauses in the corpus conform to the typical pattern of standard negation in Pite Saami consisting of a finite negation verb followed by a connegative complement, there are a small number of instances which deviate from this expected structure. In these cases, the negation verb is followed not by a connegative form, but by a participial verb form, resulting in a construction that does not fully match the descriptions provided in existing grammatical literature such as Wilbur 2014, Lehtiranta 1992, or Hálász 1893. One such example is given in (22).

- (26) *men dat dav ájgev del idtjij sjaddam*
 but DEM that time.ACC then NEG.PST.3SG become.PRF.PTCP
nåv buorak márrtná
 so good market.NOM
 ‘But at that time it did not become a good market.’ [pit090915.456]

In this example, the negation verb *idtjij* ‘did not’ occurs without a following connegative form. Instead, the lexical verb *sjaddat* ‘become’ appears in the perfect participial form *sjaddam*. Under the canonical pattern of standard negation in Pite Saami, one would expect the negation verb to select a connegative complement (e.g. *idtjij sjadda*). The attested construction therefore represents a departure from the expected connegative structure. This type of construction is also attested in Lule Saami where it appears to be a mixture of the “southern” strategy (NEG.PST + CNG) and the “northern” strategy (NEG + PST.PTCP) where the past tense is coded both in the auxiliary and the lexical main verb (NEG.PST + PST.PTCP). This can be seen in Lule Saami from Example (27) below from Chapter 7 in Ylikoski & Kejonen (2025: 177).

- (27) *Gå ejga diehtám mij jali ma båhtin*
 AS NEG.PST.3DU KNOW.PST.PTCP REL OR REL.PL COME.PST.3.PL
de balos tjiehkádijga suojnij sisi.
 THEN FEAR.ELA HIDE PST.3DU HAY.PL.GEN INTO
 ‘As they didn’t know what was or were coming, they hid themselves in the hay in fear.’ (SIKOR 2021)

As shown from Example (27), this construction from Lule Saami is the same as in (26) from Pite Saami. While this hybrid construction was not very common in the corpus, it is apparently used by some speakers. From a typological perspective, this construction can still be analysed as an instance of standard negation in the sense of Miestamo (2015: 15), as it involves the negation of a declarative verbal main clause. However, it represents a case of asymmetric standard negation, since the negative construction diverges morphosyntactically from its affirmative counterpart through the absence of the auxiliary verb and the lack of a connegative complement. Importantly, such examples are rare in the corpus and do not appear to challenge the overall regularity of connegative formation in Pite Saami.

There is an additional strategy noted in Lule Saami, where there is a loss of the tense inflection for the negative auxiliary this can be shown below in Example (28).

- (28) *Mån iv máhttám mavge dárogielav.*
 1SG NEG.PRS.1SG know.PST.PTCP any.ACC Swedish.ACC
 ‘I didn’t know any Swedish (when starting school).’³
 (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 175)

In this clause, the present-tense form *iv* occurs with the past participle (or past connegative) *máhttám* for a past tense reading. In the standard language, past tense would rather be encoded on the negative auxiliary, which would then occur with the lexical verb in the connegative, as shown previously in with Examples (10-11). In more northern and eastern Saamic varieties, these norther or hybrid constructions are the only way of forming a past negative; the loss of tense inflection for the negative auxiliary in these varieties may be due to influence of Finnic (Bergsland 1946: 170, Korhonen 1967: 214; 1981: 310, Sammallahti 1998: 76–77; 224–225).

While this strategy was not found within the corpus used for this thesis, the same construction is also attested in Pite Saami from Kejonen (2025: 78) with Example (29) as well as Example 30 from Israel Ruong’s dissertation (1943: 53).

- (29) *i neita mannam*
 NEG.PRS.3SG girl.SG.NOM go.PST.PTCP
 ‘the girl did not go’ (ULMA 22200: 4)
- (30) *ij gallgam*
 NEG.PRS.3SG shall.PST.PTCP
 ‘should not’ (Ruong 1943: 53)

This is an interesting observation for Pite Saami. It was noted in Ylikoski & Kejonen (2025: 176) that the negative auxiliary appears to have fallen out of use also in the northern variety of Lule Saami spoken in the Unna Tjerusj reindeer herding district and in the Forest dialect of the Jiellevárre district. These dialects favour the same strategy as in North Saami, i.e. marking tense

³ Repeated from Example (12), originally from (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 175)

on the lexical verb rather than on the negative auxiliary. However, Pite Saami still appears to show a preference for using the southern strategy of marking the past tense form on the negative auxiliary previously shown with Example (15). It appears that these strategies are used in addition to the typical strategy rather than being its replacement.

4.2.5 Case marking under negation

In Pite Saami, negation does not affect the case marking. According to Wilbur (2014: 85), the accusative case marks the object of a transitive verb with the accusative case being the primary way to mark a definite, singular direct object, this can be seen from Example (31) below.

- (31) *Jå nã gal mãn dav usjudav ...*
 yes well surely 1SG.NOM DEM.SG.ACC think.PRS.1SG
 ‘Yes, well, I was thinking that.’
 [pit080924.350]

The object of the sentence *dav* ‘that’ is in the accusative case in the affirmative clause. The same can be seen under the scope of negation below in Example (32).

- (32) *mãn iv tuhttji dav...*
 1SG.NOM NEG.PRS.1SG like.CNG DEM.SG.ACC
 ‘I don’t like those.’
 [pit080924.271]

Here, the object *dav* ‘that’ remains in the accusative case despite the presence of negation. This indicates that case marking is not affected by negation but instead follows the same principles as in affirmative clauses. This pattern is consistent with other Saami languages. For example, Blokland & Inaba (2015: 394) note that in South Saami, positive and negative clauses do not differ with respect to case marking. Similarly, Miestamo & Koponen (2015: 370) observe that negation does not affect case marking in Skolt Saami.

4.3 Negative replies

Languages differ in how they form negative replies to polar questions. Some languages permit a single negative particle, while others require repetition of the verb in the negative. Another relevant distinction concerns replies to negative polar questions: a negative reply may either reject the propositional content of the question or confirm its negative polarity (Miestamo 2015: 43–44).

A similar phenomenon has been described for Lule Saami. Ylikoski & Kejonen (2025: 188) note that negative replies are often expressed using the borrowed particle *næ* ‘no’, while older descriptions (Wiklund 1891: 185; Collinder 1938: 19) mention the emphatic form *ihij* derived from the negation verb *ij*. This parallels the Pite Saami form *ijja* and further supports the idea that monosyllabic *ij* is disfavoured as an independent negative response. The corpus data suggest that the second-person singular present form *i* ‘NEG.2SG.PRS’ would likewise be unlikely to occur as a standalone reply, since it is also monosyllabic. However, no examples of independent *i* response were attested in either the corpus or the available literature, and this therefore remains a topic for future research.

(33) A: *vuājɲnet* *nagin* *bierɲnav?*
 see.PRS.DU2 any bear.ACC
 ‘Did you (two) see a bear?’ [pit080924.015]

B: *ää,* *idɲiv*
 ah no.NEG.PST.1SG
 ‘No, I didn’t.’ [pit080924.016]

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does not occur independently in the corpus. When *ij* appears in responses to questions, it is always accompanied by either a verb in connegative, constituent negation, or the prosodically adapted form *ijja*, discussed above. While *ijja* is not always included in published descriptions of the negation verb paradigm, its use in speaker data shows that it clearly functions as part of the paradigm in practice. This is illustrated in Example (34B).

- (34) A: *diehtet, måtuvvra ij gävdnu*
 know.PRS.2SG motor NEG.PRS.3SG exist.CNG
sámegiellan?
 Saami.language.INE
 ‘You know, there is no “motor” in the Saami language?’
 [pit080924.488]
- B: *ijja*
 NEG.PRS.3
 ‘No.’
 [pit080924.489]

Alternatively, *nej* can be used as shown in Example (35).

- (35) A: *nå buorak lä dále?*
 now good be.PRS now
 ‘Is it okay now?’
 [pit080924.058]
- B: *nej, ij lä gal*
 no NEG.PRS.3SG be.CNG surely
 ‘No, not really.’
 [pit080924.059]

In the corpus, the particle *nej* a Swedish/North Germanic loan occurs in conjunction with the negation verb as a negative reply three times (see Example 35B). However, the particle appears a total of 19 times overall. In the majority of these cases, *nej* does not function as a negative response to a polar question, but rather as an agreeing or responsive particle to a negated statement, as illustrated in Example (36B).

- (36) A: *ij bijla aj ij gävdnu sámegiela*
 NEG.3SG car.NOM also NEG.3SG EXIST.CNG
sámegiela
 Saami.language.INE
 ‘Not for car; it does not exist in the Sámi language.’

[pit080924.490]

- B: *nej*
 no

[pit080924.492]

In this instance *nej* is not in conjunction with a polar question and doesn’t appear to have a negative connotation but rather signals agreeing. This appears to be a case of “confirming the negative alternative” noted in Holmberg (2015: 31). Furthermore, *nej* and its variants frequently appear to function as discourse fillers or to add emphasis rather than as canonical negative responses. In the context of polar questions, this suggests that the particle fulfils a distinct pragmatic function that differs from that of the negation verb. For this reason, instances of *nej* are excluded from the core analysis of negation in this study. Instead, analytical focus is placed on the negation verb and the connegative form. The pragmatic functions of *nej* and related particles, particularly in pragmatic contexts, remain an area for future research.

4.4 Negative indefinites and quantifiers

As this is not the main part of my thesis, I will only briefly mention that in Wilbur (2014: 141), The quantifier *akktak* ‘none, any’ is used to emphasize a negated clause. This was also found when looking at this corpus. According to Wilbur (2014: 141), this is made up of the numeral *akkta* meaning ‘one’ and the derivational suffix *-k*.

- (37) *men dâlen del ij lam akktak huvs*
 but old.days obviously NEG.3SG be.CNG none house.PL
 ‘but in the old days there weren’t any houses here’

[pit090915.100]

(38)	<i>ij</i>	<i>lä</i>	<i>akktak</i>	<i>mij</i>	<i>disste</i>	<i>vassjá</i>
	NEG.3SG	be.CNG	NONE	REL.SG	anymore	bother.PRS.3SG
	<i>dánne</i>	<i>ärrot</i>				
	here	be.INF				
	‘there is no one who bothers being here anymore’					

[pit090915.258]

In the corpus Examples in (37-38), *akktak* occurs within the scope of the negation verb and does not itself contribute independent negation. Instead, it reinforces the negated proposition. In both cases, the clause is negated by the finite negation verb, while *akktak* modifies the nominal domain and strengthens the negative interpretation. These constructions therefore do not involve multiple negation but represent standard clausal negation with quantificational reinforcement. A more detailed investigation of the syntactic status and distribution of *akktak* could be left for future research.

4.5 Constituent Negation

This section is devoted to the negative auxiliary in function of constituent negation. The corpus data shows that the very same auxiliary can be used not only to negate the clause or the verb but to negate other constituents. In (39), the negative auxiliary *ij* targets only the first noun *Gibbnu* and does not negate the following noun phrase (NP) *dut nubbe namma* ‘that other name’.

(39)	<i>ij</i>	<i>Gibbnu,</i>	<i>dut</i>	<i>nubbe</i>	<i>namma</i>
	NEG.PRS.3SG	Gibbnu	that	other	name.SG.NOM
	‘Not Gibbnu, that other name’				

[pit080924.538]

This demonstrates a case of constituent negation, where the negation applies to a single constituent rather than the entire clause. The auxiliary is inflected for third person singular, agreeing with the implicit subject of the construction.

Constituent negation is also attested in constructions containing adverbs. In (40), the negation verb occurs together with the adverb *del* ‘obviously’.

(40)	<i>nej</i>	<i>ij</i>	<i>del</i>	
	no	NEG.3SG	obviously.ADV	
	‘No, obviously not.’			[pit080924.055]

The scope relations in this example are somewhat ambiguous. Rather than the negation targeting the adverb itself, *del* may instead function as an emphatic or discourse-related modifier of the negation, yielding an interpretation closer to ‘obviously not’. Nevertheless, the example demonstrates that the negation verb may occur in elliptical reply constructions without an overt lexical verb.

Taken together, these examples show that negation in Pite Saami may occur in narrow-scope or fragmentary constructions targeting noun phrases and adverbial elements. In the corpus, such constructions consistently employ the third-person singular negation form *ij* ‘NEG.3SG’. However, the limited corpus evidence does not allow firm conclusions regarding the full morphological range of constituent negation, and further research is therefore needed.

4.6 Frequencies

This section examines the frequency of the negation verb in the corpus data analysed in this study. Particular attention is given to the distribution of negation verb forms, affirmative finite verb forms, and the connegative verb forms. By comparing the frequency of these forms, it becomes possible to identify which grammatical categories are most commonly attested in the corpus and which are only marginally represented.

4.6.1 Negation verb forms

One of the first steps undertaken in this thesis was the compilation of an inventory of negation verb forms attested in the corpus. Tables 10-11 present the negation paradigm and affirmative finite verb forms with their absolute and relative frequencies found in the corpus.

		SG	DUAL	PLURAL	TOTAL
PRS	1st	39/20.5	0/0	0/0	39/20.5
	2nd	2/1.1	0/0	0/0	2/1.1
	3rd	107/56.3	0/0	5/2.6	112/58.9
PST	1st	6/3.2	0/0	0/0	6/3.2
	2nd	2/1.1	0/0	0/0	2/1.1
	3rd	17/8.9	1/0.5	11/5.8	29/15.3
IMP	2nd	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0
TOTAL		173/91.1	1/0.5	16/8.4	190/100

Table 10: Negation verb paradigm with absolute and relative frequency from the corpus

		SG (AbF/RF)	DUAL (AbF/RF)	PLURAL (AbF/RF)
PRS	1st	47/4.76	3/0.30	23/2.33
	2nd	35/3.54	0/0	4/0.40
	3rd	145/14.68	0/0	54/5.47
PST	1st	36/3.46	2/0.20	46/4.66
	2nd	26/2.63	2/0.20	16/1.62
	3rd	297/30.06	21/2.13	223/22.58
IMP	2nd	7/0.71	1/0.10	1/0.10
TOTALS		586/59.86	29/2.95	367/37.19
Absolute total: 982 tokens (100%)				

Table 11: Affirmative finite verb forms with absolute and relative frequency from the corpus

The distribution of forms is highly uneven: a small number of negation verb forms account for the majority of instances, while others are sparsely represented or unattested. When compared to the distribution of corresponding affirmative verb forms in Table 11, a clear asymmetry emerges in how morphological categories are distributed across the corpus.

The comparison reveals that the internal distribution of forms is not parallel across the two paradigms. In the affirmative dataset, third person singular past tense forms dominate (30.06%), followed by third person singular present tense forms (14.68%), reflecting a discourse pattern in which third person reference is highly frequent. A similar tendency is observed in the negation paradigm, where the third person singular present form *ij* is likewise the most frequent form, accounting for over half of all negation tokens (56.3%).

What the negation paradigm shows is that the present tense singular forms dominate the dataset. In particular, the third person singular present form *ij* accounts for over half of all negation

tokens. This appears to make sense as this form is also used in constituent negation. First person singular present *iv* is the second most frequent form, while other present tense forms occur only marginally, and imperative forms are unattested in negation in the corpus.

One feature of the data is the near-total absence of dual forms across all tenses. Only a single dual form, *iejgan* (NEG.PST.DU3), is attested, occurring in the recording *sje18930000a-halasz1893a-22* (1983). No additional dual negation forms were found in the more recent recordings examined in this study. This may suggest a reduced use of dual negation forms in the available data; however, the absence of such forms in the corpus does not necessarily imply that they are absent from the language more generally.

In Pite Saami, dual is used when referring to two humans (Lagercrantz 1926: 79). Wilbur notes that there are a few examples in his corpus “in which speakers do not consistently inflect for dual but instead use the corresponding plural form” (2014: 150). This is also noted with other Saami languages as well. Mikael (Svonni 1993: 179, 184). investigates the use of dual among North Saami speaking school children in Sweden with different levels of proficiency. He concludes that most children have difficulties with the dual verb forms. Furthermore, Eriksen states that in North Saami, “The dual seems to be disappearing. These days a lot of people only use plural verb forms instead of dual forms” (Eriksen 2009: 58). This corpus shows that this remains true at least in negation in Pite Saami, where the use of the dual negation auxiliary remains limited. The corpus used for this thesis is consistent with these observations, in that dual negation forms are only minimally attested. This appears to be the case as well in the affirmative verb forms shown in Table 11. From the corpus the affirmative verb forms occur more than with negation, however, they account for less than 3% of the total verb forms.

Plural forms are likewise rare within this corpus seen in Table 10, with only a small number of plural tokens attested. However, this appears to be due to the nature of the recordings rather than an absence especially when considering the affirmative frequency seen in Table 11. While it might be due solely to the corpus size or nature of the corpus, it is interesting that so few past tense forms are observed when considering that, in Lule Saami, that the past tense forms of the negative auxiliary appear to have fallen out of use in the northern variety specifically in the Unna Tjerusj reindeer herding district (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 177). This was mainly shown with the formation of past negatives which can be seen in the previous Examples (12 & 28). In Lule Saami, it has been noted that past tense forms of the negative auxiliary appear to be declining in use in certain varieties (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 177). Pite Saami data does still

use the past tense form of the negation verb as can be illustrated in (41) below. However, as in Lule Saami, Example (42B) presents a case in which the past tense singular form of the negation verb *idtjiv* is expected however, the present tense singular form *iv* form is presented.

- (41) *Idtji* *dån* *mana* *gåk* *dat* *namma*
 NEG.PST.2SG you.SG go.CNG how that name.NOM
flottningen
 flotting.DEF
 ‘You didn’t go to, what was “flottningen”’
 [pit080924.426]

- (42) A. *nå* *vujdni* *iedna* *guhkajuolgagijt*
 well see.PST.2SG many moose.PL.ACC
 ‘Well, did you see many moose?’
 [pit080924.008]

- B. *Näj,* *iv* *däl* *lä,* *men* *vuhtjiv*
 no NEG.PRS.1SG really be.CNG but shoot.PST.1SG
 mån *aktav*
 1SG.NOM aktav.one.ACC
 ‘No, I didn’t, but I shot one.’
 [pit080924.009]

4.6.2 Connegatives

The second part of negation in Pite Saami deals with a verb in connegative. As described in the grammatical literature, Pite Saami verbs are divided into five verb classes, each of which exhibits a characteristic connegative form. An examination of the corpus data shows that all attested verbs occurring in the connegative conform to the expected morphological patterns associated with their respective verb classes. Table 12 below illustrates the distribution of these connegative forms across the five classes.

Verb class	Infinitive	Connegative	Gloss
Class I (bisyllabic, connegative retains -o-)	ådtjot	ådtjo	be allowed, get
Class IIa (bisyllabic, infinitive -at, connegative -a)	ballat	bala	be scared
	gallgat	galga	shall
	gávdat	gávna	find
	gillat	gilla	endure
	mannat	mana	go
	nahkat	naga	manage
	sihtat	sida	want
	sjaddat	sjadda	become
Class IIb (bisyllabic, infinitive -ât, connegative -â)	dåbbdât	dåbdâ	recognize
	hållât	hållâ	say
Class III (bisyllabic, infinitive -et, connegative -e)	adnet	ane	do, make
	ållet	åle	reach
	båhtet	både	come
	diehtet	diede	know
	máhttet	máhte	can, be able to
	mujttet	mujte	remember
	viedjet	vieje	manage
	vuäjdnet	vuojne	see
Class IV (bisyllabic, infinitive -ut, no stem alternation)	gävdnut	gävdnu	exist
	vujdnut	vujdnu	be seen
	lijjsit	lijjsi	succeed
	tuhttjit	tuhttji	like
Class V (trisyllabic, infinitive -it, connegative -e)	málesttit	máleste	cook
	ságestit	ságeste	speak

Table 12: Verb in connegative stem as attested in the corpus

Table 13 presents the attested connegative and related forms of the verb *årrot* ‘be’. Unlike other verbs, *årrot* exhibits irregular behaviour in negation, particularly in aspectual constructions (Wilbur 2014: 178). The corpus shows the connegative form *lä*, as well as *lam*, which is a perfect participle used in connegative function.

		SG	DU	PL
PRS	1 st	<i>lev</i>	<i>lin</i>	<i>lep</i>
	2 nd	<i>lä/’l</i>	<i>lähpen</i>	<i>lehpet</i>
	3 rd	<i>lä/’l</i>	<i>lähpa</i>	<i>lea/’l</i>
PST	1 st	<i>lidjiv</i>	<i>lijmen</i>	<i>lijme</i>
	2 nd	<i>lidje</i>	<i>lijden</i>	<i>lijde</i>
	3 rd	<i>lij</i>	<i>lijga</i>	<i>lidjen</i>
IMP	2 nd	n/a	n/a	n/a
INF	<i>årrot</i>		CONNEG	<i>lä</i>
PRF	<i>urrum/lam</i>			

Table 13: The inflectional paradigm of *årrot* ‘to be’ by Wilbur (2014: 178)

It was mentioned in Wilbur (2014: 178), “the verb *årrot* ‘be’ is unique in having a contracted connegative and perfect form: *lam* ‘be.PRF.CNG’ is a shortened form of *lā* ‘be.CNG’ and *urum* ‘be.PRF’ and is thus only used in conjunction with the verb of negation” (Wilbur 2014: 179). Both *lā* and *lam* are observed in the corpus. No unexpected of *årrot* ‘to be’ were found. All attested forms correspond to those described in the grammatical literature (Wilbur 2014: 179), and no evidence was found for regularization of *årrot* toward the connegative patterns of other verb classes. However, a feature which was not noted in Wilbur (2014) is that the negation of the verb *årrot* ‘be’ has the potential to be contracted in its perfect form *lam* which can merge with the negation verb. An example of this was given in (22), where the form *iellam* is a fusion of the third person plural of the negation verb and the past tense connegative *lam*.

4.7 Word order

As was discussed by Wilbur, “clause-level constituent ordering in Pite Saami is not determined syntactically” (2014: 226). It was mentioned that specific word ordering does occur more frequently than others as noted that SVO word ordering could be preferred due to Swedish being the mediary language in the elicitation sessions. In this section, I am specifically looking at the word order relationship between the negation verb and the connegative form. Although Pite Saami allows considerable flexibility in constituent order at the clausal level, the corpus data indicate that negation gives rise to ordering preferences between the finite negation verb and the connegative lexical verb. Overall, the data show that, while constituent order is not fixed, the internal organization of the negation construction can show ordering preferences.

Distance from the negation verb	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Immediately adjacent	92	67.15%
2	One intervening constituent	28	20.44%
3	Two intervening constituents	14	10.22%
4	Three intervening constituents	2	1.46%
5	Four intervening constituents	1	0.73%
TOTAL		137	100%

Table 14: The distribution of constituent adjacency between the negation verb and connegative

As outlined in Section 4.5.1, distance was measured as the number of intervening tokens between the negation verb and the connegative. The results reveal a strong preference for

adjacent or near-adjacent placement. In 67.15% of all cases, the connegative immediately follows the negation verb. Larger distances are rare, and clauses with three or more intervening constituents together account for less than 3% of the total data. These patterns indicate that, while the corpus material is limited, the negation verb and connegative appear to be attracted to one another.

Although the connegative most frequently follows the negation verb immediately, in the cases where it doesn't the corpus does not reveal any categorical word-order rule requiring adjacency. Instead, separation between the negation verb and the connegative arises from the placement of independently motivated constituents such as overt subjects, adverbials, and objects. The most common intervening elements are personal pronouns and adverbs which will be presented in Table 15.

Intervening element	Gloss	Part of speech	Function	Frequency
mån	1SG	Pronoun	Subject	9
almatj	person.NOM.SG	Noun	Subject	3
dån	2SG	Pronoun	Subject	1
dat	that	Pronoun	Subject	1
sij	3PL	Pronoun	Subject	1
Elsatjav	Elsa.ACC.SG	Noun	Subject	1
gusa	cow.NOM.PL	Noun	Subject	1
suv	3SG.ACC	Pronoun	Object	1
däl	then	Adverb	Adverbial	3
disste	anymore	Adverb	Adverbial	2
mangen	with	Adverb	Adverbial	2
åbbå	quite	Adverb	Adverbial	2
dalloj	then	Adverb	Adverbial	1
TOTAL				28

Table 15: Inventory of intervening constituents between negation verb and connegative (one constituent)

Table 15 presents the distribution of intervening elements between the negation verb and the connegative when exactly one constituent occurs. The data show that a range of constituent types; including subjects, adverbials, and objects can appear in this position, indicating that separation is not restricted to a single syntactic category or function. While subjects, particularly pronominal subjects, appear most frequently, and adverbials are also well represented, objects are only marginally attested in the present data. However, given the limited size of the dataset, this should not be taken to indicate that objects are categorically disfavoured, but rather that they are less frequent within this corpus. Overall, the findings suggest that the

negation verb and the connegative may be separated by various types of constituents. Below are some examples of each constituent type from the corpus representing an intervening constituent as a subject, adverbial, and object.

- (43) *Iv mǎn diede jus i mujte*
 NEG.1SG 1SG know.CNG if NEG.2SG remember.CNG
 ‘I don’t know if you don’t remember.’ [pit080924.602]

- (44) *näj, iv dāl lä, men vuhtjiv mǎn*
 no NEG.1SG then be.CNG but shoot.PST.1SG 1SG.NOM
akktav
 one.ACC
 ‘No, I didn’t, then I shot one.’ [pit090915.eaf.462]

- (45) *Dajna gu lidjin hiejo dä idtj-in*
 then when be.PST.3PL poor.PL then NEG-PST.3PL
suv máhte hiejman adnet
 3SG.ACC be.able.CNG home.INE keep.INF
 ‘Then, since they were poor, they could not keep her at home.’ [pit080924.015]

The next highest percentage of the data set is when there are two constituents between the negation verb and connegative which accounts for 10.22% of the data. From the corpus, there are 14 instances where the negation occurs with two intervening constituents. The inventory will be provided below in Table 16.

Intervening element	Position	Translation/Gloss	Part of speech	Function	Frequency
almatj	1	person.NOM.SG	Noun	Subject	2
báhkka	1	warmth.NOM.SG	Noun	Subject	1
däl	1	obviously	Adverb	Adverbial	3
disste	1	longer	Adverb	Adverbial	2
nagan	1	some	Adverb	Adverbial	1
nagin	1	some	Adjective	Adjectival	1
njuoktjam	1	tongue.NOM.SG	Noun	Subject	2
sáj	1	3DU.NOM	Pronoun	Subject	1
sån	1	3SG.NOM	Pronoun	Subject	3
åbbå	2	quite	Adverb	Adverbial	1
almatj	2	person.NOM.SG	Noun	Subject	1
bamas	2	large.NOM.SG	Pronoun	Subject	1
buoragav	2	good.ACC.SG	Adjective	Adjectival	1
da	2	that.NOM.PL	Pronoun	Object	1
mangen	2	be.with	Adverb	Adverbial	2
máles	2	blood.ELA.SG	Noun	Object	1
namav	2	name.ACC.SG	Noun	Object	1
rátkam	2	dividing a reindeer herd.NOM.SG	Noun	Subject	1
suv	2	3SG.ACC	Pronoun	Object	2
TOTAL					28

Table 16: Inventory of intervening constituents between negation verb and connegative (two constituents)

A notable tendency emerges in the distribution of objects: in these instances, objects do not occur in Position 1 immediately following the negation verb. Instead, they consistently appear in Position 2. However, the absence of objects in Position 1 may reflect a genuine structural tendency, but it may also be influenced by limited corpus size and the restricted range of elicited constructions.

Overall, as was also observed in configurations with a single intervening constituent, the results indicate that the negation verb and the connegative can be separated by a variety of syntactic elements. At the same time, the data could suggest a degree of ordering preference within the intervening positions, particularly with respect to the placement of subjects and objects. This tendency may further reflect an SVO-influenced or SO ordering pattern.

Below are some examples from the corpus with two intervening constituents,

- (46) *dat lij, dat, dasste dat várre*
that be.PST.3SG that from that mountain.NOM
idtjij nagan namav ádtjo
NEG.PST.3SG any name.ACC get.CNG
‘That was, that is why that mountain didn’t get a name.’

[sje20180630b.005]

- (47) *Ij njuoktjam maŋen áro*
 NEG.3SG tongue.NOM with be.CNG
 ‘your tongue isn’t with you’

[pit080924.290]

- (48) *Idtjij sán buoragav ane muhtin*
 NEG.PST.3SG 3SG.NOM good.ACC.SG do.CNG sometimes
 ‘Sometimes she didn’t do well.’⁴

[sje19210000a.016]

- (49) *Idtjij nagin rátkam sjadda dan bálen,*
 NEG.PST.3SG any solution.NOM happen.CNG that.GEN time.LOC
gu sij gillgin ásestit
 then 3PL.NOM begin.PST.3PL trade.INF
 ‘and so there was no dividing up the reindeer this time, since they wanted to do business.’

[sje19210000a.092]

While the corpus does not reveal any categorical word-order rule requiring adjacency, the corpus suggests that separation between the negation verb and the connegative is not unlimited. First, there are no examples with more than 4 constituents shown in this corpus and therefore, it is not known if more could be allowed, however the data does prove that it becomes less common already when more than three constituents occur between the negation verb and the connegative. Examples (50)–(52) illustrate the attested cases with three or more intervening constituents.

⁴Repeated from Example (15), originally from [sje19210000a.016]

- (50) *ábbátj Elsa lä mähtsáj vuállgám*
 little-sister Elsa 3SG.IND.PRS woods.ILL go.PRF.PTCP
ja e sij vil suv gávdnat, maj
 and NEG.PRS.3PL PRO.3PL.NOM further 3SG.ACC find.CNG, REALLY
sij suv tjuorvodi.
 PRO.3PL.NOM PRO.SG3.ACC CALL.IND.PRS
 ‘Elsa went to the woods, and they could not find her, although they called her.’

[sje19210000a .040]

- (51) *vala idtjin sij lijk suv gávna*
 but NEG.PST.3PL 3PL.NOM definitely 3SG.ACC find.CNG
 ‘But they definitely did not find her.’

[sje19210000a .050]

- (52) *iv ma del garra tjåsskemist*
 NEG.PRS.1SG 1SG.NOM REALLY COLD.ADJ WEATHER.ELA
bala, ...
 AFRAID.CNG
 ‘I’m not afraid of really cold weather’

[sje19860000.006]

The same pattern of objects occurring closer to the connegative, previously observed in clauses with two intervening constituents, is also found in examples containing three or more intervening constituents between the negation verb and the connegative. In Examples (50) and (51), the intervening material follows a subject–adverb–object ordering, while Example (52) contains a subject–adverb–NP sequence, where the noun phrase consists of an adjective and substantive. These examples suggest that there may be a degree of constituent ordering within the material intervening between the negation verb and the connegative, with subjects tending to occur closer to the negation verb and objects appearing nearer to the connegative. However,

given the limited amount of available data, further corpus material would be necessary to determine whether this pattern reflects a broader syntactic tendency in Pite Saami.

In addition, a noticeable part of word order is when the negated predicate contains a modal or auxiliary verb, it is the modal or auxiliary that appears in the connegative form, while the lexical verb occurs in an infinitival or participial form. This pattern mirrors affirmative clause structure and does not introduce additional irregularities in negation.

- (53) *Ij vil máhte stuor dåláv adnet*
 NEG3SG.PRS even can.CNG big fire.ACC have.INF
 ‘(One) cannot even have too big a fire.’

In this example, the modal verb *máhte* ‘can’ appears in the connegative form, while the lexical verb *adnet* ‘have’ is infinitival. This pattern is expected and corresponds directly to affirmative constructions. What is worth noting is that in these examples where there is modal force the order is always the negation verb, modal verb in connegative form, followed by the lexical verb in its infinitive form. This is important as in constructions involving modal or auxiliary verbs, it is not the lexical verb that appears in the connegative form. Instead, the modal or auxiliary verb carries the connegative marking. This indicates that the connegative is not strictly associated with the lexical verb.

4.8 Language contact and language attrition

A comparison between the canonical grammar of negation in Pite Saami and the actual usage attested in the corpus shows that, while the dominant pattern remains, there are small but systematic deviations that cannot easily be dismissed as performance errors. Instead, these deviations appear to reflect broader contact-induced change and, to some extent, processes that may be related to language attrition or language contact.

In Riehl (2019: 314) and Yilmaz & Schmid (2018: 225), language attrition refers to the decline or loss of a first language (L1) due to non-use or replacement by a second language (L2). While language contact involves the interaction between two or more languages/varieties, resulting in mutual influence and long-term changes within a speech community.

Canonically, negation in Pite Saami follows a well-described pattern in which a finite negative auxiliary selects a connegative form of the lexical verb. The corpus data largely confirms that

this structure is stable. However, as previously discussed in Section 4.2.4, the presence of constructions in which the negative auxiliary is followed by a participial form rather than a connegative (e.g. *idtijj sjaddam* ‘did not become’) as well as the use of the present tense of the negation verb discussed in Example (42B) demonstrates that speakers occasionally use an alternative structure that diverges from the expected grammatical norm. Importantly, these forms are not isolated tokens but recur across speakers and contexts, suggesting that they are part of the speakers’ grammatical repertoire rather than accidental errors.

The occurrence of an identical hybrid structure in both Pite and Lule Saami might suggest that these deviations are not random, but reflect a shared areal or contact-induced tendency within the Saami linguistic tree. Sammallahti (1998: 76-77, 80, 224-225) notes that the lack of past-tense forms of the negative auxiliary is considered one of the most significant morphosyntactic differences dividing the Saami branch into two. In the case of Lule Saami Sammallahti (1998: 76-77) notes that the loss of it in the varieties of Lule Saami can be considered an innovation, possibly influenced by similar development in neighboring Finnic languages.

From a contact-linguistic perspective, such patterns are possible. Saami languages have long been in contact with Scandinavian languages and, in some regions, Finnic varieties such as Meänkieli, a Uralic language previously treated as a variety of Finnish (Ylikoski & Kejonen 2025: 171). With this multilingual environment there is the opportunity for structural convergence. Yilmaz & Schmid (2018: 225) explains, “All speakers living in bilingual contexts experience a certain amount of change to their L1.” Their research on bilingual processing shows that co-activation across languages is not limited to vocabulary but extends to syntax and phonology as well. For instance, bilingual speakers may transfer strategies or structural preferences from one language to another, especially when constructions are functionally or superficially similar (Yilmaz & Schmid 2018: 226). The hybrid negation patterns observed in Pite Saami might therefore be interpreted as outcomes of such non-selective syntactic forms, where competing grammatical systems influence each other. As was noted in Dussias and Sagarra (2007: 10) for native Spanish speakers who had extensive immersion experience in their L2 English environment parsed Spanish sentences in the way native English speakers would.

In contexts where speakers have long been dominant in another language (e.g. Swedish), reduced use of Pite Saami could lead to partial restructuring or simplification of less frequent

morphological patterns, such as the negation system. The replacement of a connegative with a participial form may reflect such a tendency, especially as the participial construction aligns more closely with patterns available in the dominant contact language. Since the observed forms correspond exactly to established patterns in neighboring Saami varieties, such as Lule Saami, paired with the corpus data revealing that these replacements aren't frequent, it is more convincing to interpret them primarily as contact-induced variation rather than pure attrition.

The linguistic background of the one of the speakers who produced the non-canonical forms in Example (26) from Section 4.2.4 further reinforce this interpretation of language contact rather than attrition. This individual had extensive exposure to closely related Saami varieties and to Swedish. The fact that their productions align with attested patterns in neighboring Saami languages makes it unlikely that these are due to language attrition, but rather due to language contact.

For the grammar of negation, the corpus largely supports the canonical description of negation in Pite Saami, but the attested deviations appear to reflect ongoing change through contact within the Saami language area. That is not to say that language attrition does not occur simply from the corpus data, it appears that the observed constructions point more convincingly toward language contact as the primary explanatory factors of these variations.

5. Summary and discussion

As there is no corpus study-based text written solely about Pite Saami negation, this thesis aimed to examine the morphosyntactic structure of negation as well as the interaction between word order with negation by using corpus data drawn from annotated ELAN materials. The analysis confirms that standard negation in Pite Saami is consistently expressed through a finite negation verb followed by a connegative lexical verb, a structure that aligns with previous grammatical descriptions (e.g. Wilbur 2014). Across the corpus, the negation verb often reliably carries inflection for person, number, tense, and mood, while the lexical verb appears in a non-finite connegative form. The questions answered in this thesis were:

1. What morphosyntactic structures are involved in negation in Pite Saami?
2. How does negation interact with verbal categories (person, tense, aspect, mood), clause type, and word order?
3. How is the canonical grammar of negation reflected by actual language use in the corpus? Are there deviations which may be explained by language contact and/or language attrition?

This thesis has provided a general description of the system of negation in Pite Saami. Notably this includes standard negation and other types of clausal negation, especially the negation of matrix vs subordinate clauses, aspectual constructions, and non-typical strategies. Non-clausal negative expressions such as negative replies, constituent negation and other negation-related phenomena such as the frequency and word order have also been discussed. The findings have been related to current typological knowledge of negation. As pointed out in several sections above, many areas are still in need of further research before a more complete picture of Pite Saami negation can be given. However, the main aspects of Pite Saami negation found are summarized in below in Table 17.

Category	Investigated negation issue	Findings
Clausal Negation	Standard negation	NEG.AUX+V[CNG/PTCP]
	Negation of imperatives	NEG.AUX.IMP+V[CNG]
	Negation in subordinate clauses	NEG.AUX+V[CNG/PTCP]
Non-clausal negation	Negative reply	NEG.AUX(+V) NEG.AUX
	Negative quantifiers	NEG.AUX + V[CNG + akktak]
Other Aspects of Negation	Negation and coordination	NEG.AUX + V.CNG CONJ V.CNG
	Case marking under negation	Negation has no effect on case marking
	Frequency	Dual and past tense forms of the negation verb are infrequent
	Word order	Connegative form of the verb always comes after the negation verb
	Contact/Attrition	Attested deviations appear to reflect ongoing change through contact rather than attrition

Table 17: Summary of Pite Saami negation ⁵

From a typological perspective, the negation system of Pite Saami falls within Miestamo's (2015: 15) category of asymmetric standard negation, subtype A/Fin. The asymmetry arises from the loss of finiteness on the lexical verb and the concentration of inflectional categories on the negative auxiliary. The corpus data also demonstrate that negation in Pite Saami behaves uniformly across matrix and subordinate clauses. No structural differences were observed in the placement or form of the negation verb based on clause type. An interesting finding within this corpus is a mixture of the "southern" strategy (NEG.PST + CNG) and the "northern" strategy

⁵ This chart draws on Miestamo and Koponen's (2015: 48) model for Skolt Saami but has been modified and restructured to account for the morphosyntactic properties of Pite Saami.

(NEG + PST.PTCP) where the past tense is coded both in the auxiliary and the lexical main verb. This was known in Lule Saami, and in these cases, the negation verb is followed not by a connegative form, but by a participial verb form, resulting in a construction that does not fully match the descriptions provided in existing grammatical literatures in Pite Saami. This strategy is similar to more northern and eastern Saamic varieties where this is the only way of forming a past negative (Kejonen 2025: 78).

The corpus also provides evidence that a single negative auxiliary can have scope over coordinated predicates without repetition. The verb in the connegative stem can be coordinated by a coordinator such as *jala* ‘or’, and finiteness and negation are expressed only once. This does not represent multiple negation but rather a single instance of clausal negation with coordinated predicates. This construction demonstrates that coordination may occur at the level of the verb in connegative, and that the negative auxiliary functions as the sole bearer of polarity and finiteness for the entire coordinated structure. The morphology of negation remains stable even when extended to multiple predicates within the same clause.

Languages vary in how they form negative replies to polar questions. Some permit a one-word negative response, while others require repetition of the verb. In the Pite Saami corpus, single-word negative replies are attested, but only a limited subset of forms occurs in this function. Notably, the third person singular present form *ij* cannot function independently as a negative reply. Instead, the form *ijja* is used. This appears to be motivated by prosodic structure. As described by Wilbur (2014: 26), Pite Saami prosodic words are minimally bisyllabic and structured as trochaic feet. The monosyllabic *ij* does not satisfy this requirement, whereas *ijja* does. The use of *ijja* can therefore be understood as a phonologically motivated strategy enabling negation to function as an independent utterance. Importantly, although the Swedish particle *nej* occurs in the corpus (19 instances), it never replaces the Pite Saami negation verb in elliptical replies. Instead, *nej* appears alongside the native negation verb and functions pragmatically, often adding emphasis. This confirms that grammatical negation in Pite Saami is obligatorily expressed by the native negative auxiliary.

Another important finding is that the negative auxiliary is not restricted to clausal negation but can also function in constituent negation. The corpus shows that *ij* may target noun phrases. The auxiliary appears consistently in the third person singular form *ij*, suggesting that constituent negation in the corpus is morphologically restricted. This demonstrates that Pite

Saami allows a productive strategy of narrow-scope negation distinct from standard sentential negation.

The corpus contains 190 negation tokens, but their distribution is highly uneven. The third person singular present form *ij* accounts for more than half of all instances. Dual forms are almost entirely absent, with only a single token attested. Plural forms are likewise rare. Given previous observations that dual marking is weakening in several Saami languages, this may suggest reduced productivity of dual negation in contemporary usage. However, given the limited corpus size, this conclusion must remain tentative. Although Pite Saami allows flexible clause-level word order, the corpus reveals a strong preference for adjacency between the negative auxiliary and the connegative. In over two-thirds of cases, the connegative immediately follows the negative verb.

When looking back at previous literature one of the studies done for Pite Saami first was “*Népköltési gyűjtemény: a Pite Lappmark Arjepluogi egyházkerületéből*” by Halász from 1893. Negation is described on pages XL and XLI. As mentioned, Pite Saami exhibits three moods these are (indicative, imperative and potential). In the corpus that was looked at for this thesis, only the indicative mood was found, and examples of the imperative mood were used from Wilbur (2014). However, for no negation forms were found in the potential mood in this corpus nor in Wilbur (2014). In this source potential mood in Pite Saami is described as “indicating that the action referred to by the verb is likely to happen. Verbs in the potential mood are marked by a linearly segmentable morpheme *-tj-* followed by a person/number suffix” (Wilbur 2014: 152). As I did not find potential mood within negation, and it was also not shown within Wilbur (2014) some examples of potential mood in the affirmative will be shown in Examples (54-57).

- (54) *Nå hăláv, vuolgetjip del*
 well say.1SG.PRS go.POT.1PL obviously
 ‘Well then I say we should probably go.’ [pit090702.013]

The potential mood can also be used as a less severe command as in 55 (Wilbur 2014: 247).

- (55) *vuosjatja káfav*
 prepare.coffee.POT.2SG coffee.ACC.SG

Further investigation is required to determine the present-day status of this form. However, the absence of such forms in the sub-corpus does not mean there is no potential negation forms.

Another area which was mentioned in Lehtiranta (1992) was the use of connected forms of pronouns with the negation verb as mentioned in the literature review. This source notes that some of the forms have become enclitic such as *ipma* (*iv ma*) ‘I not’. It is unclear from this source exactly which personal pronouns this can be used with. Lehtiranta only mentions the singular 1st person form which was also mentioned in Halász (1893: XLI). Looking at this corpus, this phenomenon wasn’t found for any personal pronouns. However, this could be due to the size of the corpus or also possible incorrect annotations. Wilbur (2014) also mentions various instances of encliticized forms; however, “this occurs mainly with the copular and auxiliary verb *lä* when it is preceded by a word ending in an open syllable” (Wilbur 2014: 19).

In Wilbur (2014), there was no reference to enclitic negation verbs and personal pronouns. As this was attested with multiple sources, this should be an area to be examined in more detail with future research as it would be an interesting finding. However, this was not attested within this corpus. Some other areas which were not found within the corpus were specific grammatical functions mentioned in Halász (1893). For example, a past perfect was mentioned for negation.

- | | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| (56) | <i>Idtjiv</i> | <i>lä</i> | <i>ähttsem</i> | |
| | NEG.1SG.PST | be.CNG | love.PRF.PTCP | |
| | ‘I didn’t like it’ ⁶ | | | (Halász 1893:XLI) |

While these are very interesting, examples of these were not attested in the corpus as well as other sources on Pite Saami. Their absence may reflect stylistic restriction, historical change, or corpus limitations. Another area that could be left for future research are the past tense forms mentioned in Section 4.2.4. In Lule Saami there is an example which contains both the

⁶ Repeated from Example (21), originally from (Halász 1893:XLI)

strategies outlined within the same sentence as can be seen below in Example (57) from Yikoski & Kejonen (2025: 177).

(57)	<i>Ieddnerávkkke</i>	<i>giehtoj</i>	<i>Árjakuoven</i>	<i>lij</i>	<i>boadnjásj</i>
	deceased.mother	tell.PST.3SG	Árjepluovve.INE	be.PST.3SG	old.man
	<i>mij</i>	<i>ittijj</i>	<i>sidá</i>	<i>hiejjtet</i>	<i>noajdástallamis</i> <i>ja</i>
	REL	NEG.PST.3SG	want.CNG	quit.INF	practice.sorcery.INF and
	<i>ij</i>	<i>miededam</i>	<i>sân lij</i>	<i>mejdek</i>	<i>boasstot</i> <i>dahkam</i>
	NEG.3SG	admit.PST.PTCP	3SG be.PST.3SG	any.ACC	wrong do.PST.PTCP
	‘My late mother told that in Árjepluovve/Arjeplog there was an old man who didn’t want to quit sorcery and didn’t admit to having done anything wrong.’				
	(SIKOR 2021)				

In Yikoski & Kejonen (2025: 17) it is mentioned that even for Lule Saami this construction isn’t common within the corpus it would be interesting to discover if the same is possible for Pite Saami. Given that both strategies are possible independently.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the description and typological understanding of Pite Saami by providing a systematic corpus-based account of negation. It confirms the robustness of the asymmetric negative-auxiliary construction and highlights areas where earlier descriptions and contemporary data diverge, however, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the corpus is relatively small and may not capture low-frequency or stylistically marked constructions. Second, corpus data can demonstrate what occurs but cannot definitively establish what is ungrammatical. Third, the data consist primarily of indicative clauses, limiting conclusions about the full interaction of negation with mood. Additionally, the absence of certain forms (e.g. potential negation, Imperative II, enclitic negation) cannot be interpreted as evidence of their non-existence. Future research could: examine the status of Imperative II, explore possible dialectal or generational variation, conduct targeted elicitation to determine the productivity of rare or historically attested constructions this could also lead to understanding the validity of the suggested past perfect forms and creating a paradigm similar to what has been done for Lule Saami, pragmatics of negation could also be studied, and more attention can be explored in regards to the word ordering of negation. A broader comparative

study across Saami languages may also clarify whether the hybrid past tense constructions represent language change induced by attrition or by contact influence.

6. Conclusion

This thesis set out to investigate the morphosyntactic structure of negation in Pite Saami using corpus-based data. The primary aim was to provide a detailed description of how negation operates in naturalistic speech and to situate these findings within the broader typology of Uralic negation systems. Three central research questions guided the study: first, what morphosyntactic structures are involved in negation in Pite Saami, second, how negation interacts with verbal categories, clause type, and word order, and third how is the canonical grammar of negation reflected by actual language use in the corpus, or are there deviations which may be explained by language contact and or language attrition?

To address these questions, a corpus-based methodology was employed. The analysis was based on an ELAN-annotated corpus consisting of recordings and texts compiled as part of long-term language documentation work. Instances of the negation verb were automatically extracted using a Python script that searched the orthographic tiers of the corpus files. These results were then manually classified and analysed in order to identify recurring patterns in person, number, tense, mood, clause type, and the distribution of the verbs in connegative stems.

The analysis carried out in this thesis demonstrates that Pite Saami negation is primarily expressed through a finite negation verb that carries person, number, and tense inflection, followed by a lexical verb in the connegative form. This construction corresponds to the well-known auxiliary-based negation pattern characteristic of many Saami and Uralic languages and is consistent with previous literature on Pite Saami. The corpus data confirm that the verb in connegative *stehm* consistently follows the negation verb.

Several additional structural patterns were identified throughout the analysis. Negation behaves consistently across matrix and subordinate clauses. In addition, the corpus revealed occasional cases in which the expected connegative form is replaced by a participial construction, suggesting the existence of minor variation within the negation system. Negative replies and coordinated predicates under a single negation verb were also attested. Taken together, the results of this study provide a corpus-based confirmation of earlier grammatical descriptions while also contributing new empirical observations regarding the distribution and variability of negation in Pite Saami.

Although the primary aim of this thesis has been descriptive and theoretical, the findings may also have broader implications for ongoing work in language documentation and revitalization. Pite Saami is a critically endangered language with a limited number of fluent speakers, and detailed grammatical descriptions are therefore of particular importance. By providing a corpus-based account of negation in natural speech, this study contributes to the growing body of linguistic resources available for the language.

The results may also prove useful for future pedagogical materials or reference grammars intended for language learners and community members. A clearer understanding of how negation interacts with verb morphology and clause structure can support the development of teaching materials and grammatical explanations that reflect actual usage patterns observed in spoken data.

The findings of this thesis contribute to the broader field of Uralic linguistics by offering one of the few corpus-based investigations of negation in Pite Saami. While previous descriptions have identified the basic structure of the negation verb and connegative construction, this study provides empirical evidence of how these structures function in naturally occurring discourse. In this way, the thesis complements existing descriptive grammars and situates Pite Saami more clearly within the typology of Uralic negation systems.

One of the most valuable aspects of the research lies in the integration of corpus methods with traditional descriptive analysis. By extracting and systematically classifying instances of negation across the dataset, it has been possible to identify patterns that might not be immediately visible through manual observation alone. The approach also demonstrates how digital tools can assist in the analysis of endangered language corpora.

At the same time, several limitations must be acknowledged. The corpus used in this study is relatively small and consists primarily of naturalistic recordings involving a limited number of speakers. As a result, the data may not represent the full range of stylistic or dialectal variation present in the language. Furthermore, certain constructions, such as negative imperatives and progressive aspect, were either rare or absent in the corpus, which limited the extent to which these structures could be analysed empirically.

Another limitation concerns the methodological challenges associated with automated extraction from ELAN-annotated corpora. While the Python script used in this study improved

the efficiency of identifying negation verbs, the results still required manual verification and classification. Future work with more advanced corpus tools could potentially expand the scope of analysis.

Future research could build on the findings of this thesis in several ways. First, expanding the corpus to include additional recordings would make it possible to investigate variation across speakers, genres, and discourse contexts. A larger dataset might also provide more examples of constructions that were underrepresented in the present study, such as negative imperatives or progressive aspect.

Second, a more detailed comparative analysis between Pite Saami and closely related languages such as Lule Saami and Ume Saami could further clarify the historical and typological development of negation strategies within the Saami language family.

Finally, future studies might explore the interaction between negation and information structure, discourse functions, or prosody in Pite Saami. Because the language documentation corpus contains natural conversational data, it offers significant potential for investigating how negation operates beyond the strictly morphosyntactic level.

In conclusion, this thesis has demonstrated that corpus-based analysis can provide valuable insights into the structure and usage of negation in Pite Saami. While many aspects of the system correspond to patterns already described in the literature, the present study contributes new empirical evidence and highlights areas where further research would be beneficial.

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Resümee

Käesolev magistr töö käsitleb eituse morfosüntaktilist struktuuri Pite saami keeles. See keel on kriitiliselt ohustatud uurali keelkonda kuuluv keel, mida räägitakse peamiselt Põhja-Rootsis. Kuigi varasemates grammatilistes kirjeldustes on näidatud, et Pite saami keeles väljendatakse eitust negatiivse abiverbi ja konnegatiivse põhiverbi abil, on nende konstruktsioonide tegelik kasutus loomulikus keelekasutuses jäänud suhteliselt vähe uurituks. Käesoleva töö eesmärk on pakkuda korpuspõhist kirjeldust Pite saami keele eituse süsteemist ning paigutada saadud tulemused laiemasse saami ja uurali keelte eituse tüpoloogilisse konteksti.

Töö keskendub kolmele peamisele uurimisküsimusele. Esiteks uuritakse, millised morfosüntaktilised struktuurid osalevad eituse väljendamises Pite saami keeles. Teiseks analüüsitakse, kuidas eitus on seotud erinevate grammatiliste kategooriatega, nagu isik, arv, aeg ja kõneviis, samuti lausetüübi ja sõnajärgjega. Kolmandaks selgitab see, kuidas eituse kanooniline grammatika kajastub tegelikus keelekasutuses ja kas kõrvalekaldeid saab seletada keelekontakti ja/või keelelise hõrenemisega.

Analüüs põhineb Pite saami keele korpusel, mis koosneb loomuliku kõne salvestustest ja tekstidest, mis on annoteeritud programmis ELAN. Korpusmaterjal on kogutud pikaajalise keele dokumenteerimise projekti käigus ning sisaldab mitmesuguseid loomuliku keelekasutuse näiteid. Eituse esinemisjuhtude leidmiseks kasutati Pythonis kirjutatud skripti, mis otsis korpusse annotatsioonitasanditelt negatiivse verbi esinemisi. Leitud näited eksporditi tabelina ning analüüsiti käsitsi, liigitades need mitme grammatilise tunnuse järgi, sealhulgas isiku, arvu, aja, kõneviisi, lausetüübi ning konnegatiivse verbi vormi ja positsiooni alusel.

Tulemused kinnitavad, et Pite saami keeles väljendatakse lauseeitust tavaliselt finiidse negatiivse abiverbi abil, mis kannab isiku- ja ajamärgistust, millele järgneb põhiverb konnegatiivses vormis. Analüüs näitab samuti mitmeid teisi eitusega seotud konstruktsioone, sealhulgas aspektikonstruktsioone, imperatiivset eitust, koordineeritud predikaate eituse all ning eitavaid vastuseid dialoogis.

Kokkuvõttes annab käesolev magistr töö korpuspõhise ülevaate Pite saami keele eituse kasutusest ning täiendab olemasolevaid grammatika kirjeldusi empiirilise materjaliga loomulikust keelekasutusest. Töö tulemused aitavad paremini mõista Pite saami keele eitussüsteemi ning paigutada selle saami ja uurali keelte laiemasse tüpoloogilisse raamistikku.

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