

## More ado about *nothing* - On the typology of negative indefinites

Johan van der Auwera

U of Antwerp

The talk focuses on the frequency and the typology of negative indefiniteness in what I call 'negative quantification', viz. the use of words like *nothing* in sentences that contain no clausal negator, such as *I saw nothing*, and of what is generally called 'negative concord', viz. the use of words like *nothing* in sentences that do contain a clausal negator, e.g. *You ain't seen nothing yet*. The frequency claim is based on a variety sample of 179 languages and it is in disagreement with recent statements, based on a misunderstanding of an influential use of the term 'negative indefiniteness'. The typology is also based on this sample but no less on the research literature. For this typology it is claimed that one needs to draw a distinction between strict and non-strict negative quantification, just like is commonly done for negative concord. The most important parameter is, like for negative concord, the position of the indefinite vis-à-vis the finite verb, but there are more parameters and it is a mistake to see the distinction between strict and non-strict negative concord and strict and non-strict negative quantification as simple two-way contrasts. I will show that subtypes of non-strict negative quantification and non-strict negative concord are very similar, thus defining a fairly symmetrical system.