Scientific
Research

http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2013.31001

Negation in Sixteen Yorùbá Dialects

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This paper examines the various morpho-syntactic distributions of negation in sixteen Yorùbá dialects and comes up with some interesting questions, observations and claims. Negation is contextualised in the dialects; it is marked by different elements within the word and within the sentence. Some of the NEG formatives examined are used to negate the indicative expressions, others are used in the imperative mood while some others are mainly used to negate the focus marker. Nearly all the NEG Morphemes examined precede the verb except *má/mó* [+NEG] which may be used at the end of the VP. This work believes that within the scope of *àì* [+NEG], it is not a complex negative morpheme; the low-toned "à" is regarded as the negator in the syntax of Yorùbá negation. Following Ouhalla (1999), this work takes the NEG to belong to a category known as the Negative Phrase. It functions as a syntactic Head which projects into a NegP. Here, NEG is taken as an independent category which projects its own X-bar structure NegP; it inhabits a borderline between functional and lexical projections. We observe that the differences between the morphemes of negation in these sixteen Yorùbá dialects are of linguistic change. We also realise in this work that in as much as morphemes of negation in Yorùbá dialects commute with the aspecto-modal marker of negative polarity, they can be placed in the position of the functional category Asp. In essence, negation in the sixteen Yorùbá dialects commutes with the tense/aspecto-modal nuances. The various NEG morphemes of the Yorùbá dialects discussed in this paper have shown that the verbo-aspectual negative polarity subsumes very much as a strong feature.

Keywords: Negation; Yorùbá; Dialect; NegPhrase; Negative Polarity; Functional Category

Introduction

"It is a well established fact that linguistic innovations, and linguistic forms generally, are diffused geographically from one area to another… Geographical diffusions models have been constructed which are able to make reasonably accurate predictions about the geographical routes to be followed by linguistic innovation." (Trudgill, 1986: p. 39) This is the reason why dialectologists in many linguistic situations describe "various forms within the same language" (Petyt, 1980: p. 16). In essence, these are different forms of the same language; they reflect some of the changes that have taken place in the language. It is therefore possible to distinguish a virtually vast number of "different forms" of a language like Yorùbá which has experienced some historical changes. A comparative study of the linguistic features of many Yorùbá "different forms" (dialects), about sixteen of them examined in this paper, will help us determine such changes either from analytical or synthetic perspectives. Consequently, we shall look at the various morphophonological and syntactic realisations of the negative markers of fifteen Yorùbá dialects and compare them with the so-called Standard Yorùbá which we, following Capo (1989), regard as a lect.

The Dialects of the Yorùbá Language

Any language like Yorùbá spoken by more than a handful of people exhibits the tendency to split into dialects which may differ from one another. Majority of the speakers of the language reside in the South-western part of Nigeria but aside from Nigeria, the language is also spoken in countries like Re-

public of Bénin, Togo, Ghana, Cote D'ivoire, Sudan and Sierra-Leone. Outside Africa, a great number of speakers of the language are in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Caribbean Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, UK and America (Abimbola, 1978: p. 2; Hunt, 1977: pp. 17, 51; Lasebikan, 1963: p. 352; Turner, 1958: p. 45; Walkins, 1972: p. 380). One variety of Yorùbá, the Ọ̀yọ́ dialect, has been in use for literary purposes since 1843. It has been the obvious choice for standardization because it serves as inter-dialectal communication. Yorùbá language is a dialect continuum; we regard the so-called Standard Yorùbá (SY) as a part of the Yorùbá, it is not the Yorùbá language. The Yorùbá dialects groupings include the following: Northwest Yorùbá (NWY), Southeast Yorùbá (SEY), Central Yorùbá (CY), Northeast Yorùbá (NEY) and Southwest Yorùbá (SWY). Among them are Àwórì, Èkìtì, Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria), Ifẹ̀ (Togo), Ìjẹ̀sà, Ìjùmú, Ìlàjẹ, Ìyàgbà, Kétu-Mọ̀fọ̀lí, Oǹdó, Òǹkò, Owé, Ọ̀wọ́rọ̀, Ọ̀yọ́-Ìbàdàn and Sábẹ̀ẹ́. We shall examine how negation is realised in the above-mentioned fifteen Yorùbá dialects, the Neg segment structures in these dialects, the tonal morphemes that are used to indicate Neg, evidence of double negation or otherwise, the prosodic features that mark negation in these dialects, the existence of a functional head Neg in Yorùbá dialects and the analysis of the different syntactic and morphological occurrences of Neg in these Yorùbá dialects. Others Yorùbá dialects not mentioned above include Èkó, Ègbádò, Ọ̀sun, Ìbọlọ́, Ìgbómìnà, Mọ̀bà, Ègbá, Ìjẹ̀bú, Ìkálẹ̀, Ọ̀wọ̀, Ọ̀bà-Ìkàrẹ́, Kákáǹdá, Ègbè, Ọ̀họ̀rí, Ìdáisà, Mànígìrì, Ìfọ̀hìn and the Àkókóid group which comprises Ìfira (Ìpèsì, Ìkàrẹ́, Ìrùn, Òkà, Ìbòròpa, Súpárè, Àkùngbá and Ògbàgì), Ẹpìnmì (Ìpè, Ìyàyú ànd Ìṣùà), Ìkákùmọ̀ (Ìkàní, Àúga and Iṣẹ̀), Àkùnù (Àkpè, Ìkaràm, Ìbaràm, Ìyànì,

Gédégédé and Àjọwá) and Arigidi (Oyín, Urò, Ìgásí, Erúṣú and Òkè-àgbè).

The Neg Projection

Negation is contextualised in Yorùbá dialects, and it is both syntactic and lexical. We take Neg in Yorùbá dialects to head an independent projection. Following Ouhalla (1999: pp. 389-391) Neg belongs to a category known as the Negative Phrase. It functions as a syntactic Head which projects into a NegP. The theoretical ground used in this analysis is Transformational Generative Grammar of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995; Ouhalla, 1999). Here, Neg is taken as an independent category which projects its own X-bar structure NegP; it inhabits a borderline between functional and lexical projections. According to Déchaine (1995: p. 135), Neg is "a quasi-functional head". In Yorùbá dialects therefore, Neg has the status of a VP adjunct and can be generated in tense. We do not agree that Yorùbá is a tenseless language; tense is a universal category. In Yoruba language, although the problem of morphemic seg- mentation is raised if the verbs assume the form that indicates time morphologically, but it is however discovered that tense could be grammatically expressed in the language by the use of temporal adverbials that locate situations in time (see Fábùnmi, 1998, 2001, 2006, 2007). The idea that all languages with no morphological indication of the opposition present-past are tenseless will always to be difficult to accept. So, the Yorùbá Neg quasi-functional head-hood is schematised in 1).

1)
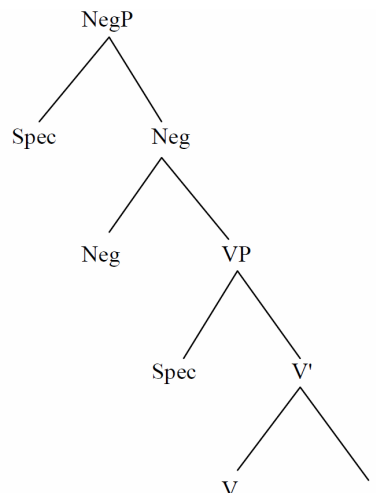
The Morpho-Phonological and Syntactic Distributions of Negation in Yorùbá Dialects

There are several syntactic realisations of negation in nearly all the dialectal varieties of the Yorùbá language. Aside from the Standard Yorùbá, we shall use fifteen of such Yorùbá dialects as analytical models; they are Àwórì, Èkìtì, Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria), Ifẹ̀ (Togo), Ìjẹ̀ṣà, Ìjẹbú, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìlàjẹ, Mọ̀fọ́lí, Oǹdó, Òǹkò, Owé, Ọ̀wọ́rọ̀, Ọ̀yọ́-Ìbàdàn and Sábẹ̀ẹ́.

Negation in Standard Yorùbá

The following formatives in (2) which are exemplified (3) are recognised by Yorùbá language scholars like Bamgbose (1967, 1990); Ogunbowale (1970); Banjo (1974); Ọkẹ (1982); Awobuluyi (1978, 2008) and Adewọle (1999) as negative markers in Standard Yorùbá.

2) i) kò/ò ii) kì í iii) kọ́ iv) má/máà v) mọ́ vi) yé

3) i) Àjọ-olùgbéjọ́ náà kò kò lónìí
   Tribunal the NEG meet today
   "The tribunal didn't meet today."

ii) Wọn kì í ṣe Ọlọ́run
   3P NEG are God
   "They are not God."

iii) Ọba kọ́ ni ó pàṣẹ yìí
   King NEG FOC he give-order this
   "It was not the king who gave this order."

iv) Má/máà sọ̀rọ̀ kankan
   NEG say-word any
   "Don't say anything."

v) Mọ́ sọ̀rọ̀ kankan
   NEG say-word any
   "Don't say anything."

vi) Yé sọ̀rọ̀
   NEG say-word any
   "Don't say anything."

vii) Ẹ kò lọ
   2P NEG go
   "You (p) didn't go."

viii) Ẹ ò lọ
   2P NEG go
   "You (p) didn't go."

ix) Ẹ ẹ̀ lọ
   2P NEG go
   "You (p) didn't go."

x) Ó lè má jẹun
   3S can NEG eat
   "S/he may fail to go."

xi) A kì í rayì
   1P NEG buy-honour
   "Honour can't be bought."

xii) A ì í rayì
   1P NEG buy-honour
   "Honour can't be bought."

The Neg morphemes in (3i & ii) are the sentence negators, the one in (3iii) is the negator of the NP, while those in (3iv, v & vi) are simple imperative negators. In (3vii, viii & ix) and (3xi & xii), the consonants of kò (NEG) and kì í (NEG) are deleted and the stranded vowel are assimilated to the preceding consonants. This is not so for the consonants of the Neg morphemes in (3iv, v & vi). The *má* NEG in (3x) negates part of the predicate that follows it in the sentence. The negative marker in (2i) above belongs to the class of "irrealis auxes and is in Tense," while that of (2iv) is "adjoined immediately to the VP" (see Dechaine, 1995: p. 143).

Negation in Yorùbá Àwórì

In Àwórì dialect of Yorùbá, the morphemes of negation are *kò/ò/kè, kọ́, îíí, ò sì, méè, èé, èyìò*; they are shown in the sentences in (4i-vii) below.

4) i) Olú ò jẹ èrẹ = (SY: Olú kò jẹ eja).
   Olu NEG eat fish
   "Olú did not eat fish."

iii) íìí sòwu/kò mí sòwu = (SY: Kì í ṣe òun).
   NEG it 3S/NEG ASP it 3S
   "It is not him/her."

v) Méè sì lọ = (SY: N kò tíì lọ)
   NEG yet go
   "I have not gone."

vii) Èyìò jẹwun kò dára = (àìjẹun wọn kò dára)
   Nom-NEG-eat 3P NEG good
   "The fact that they did not eat is not good."

ii) Olú kọ́ nì lọ = (SY: Olú kọ́ ni ó lọ).
   Olú NEG FOC go
   "It wasn't Olú that went (there)."

iv) Wùn ò sìì lọ = (SY: Wọn ò tíì lọ)
   3P NEG PERF-NEG go
   "They haven't gone."

vi) Éè ra ẹjá mẹ́ta = (SY: Kò ra ajá mẹ́ta).
   pro NEG buy fish three
   "S/he did not buy three fishes."

The syntax of negation in Yorùbá Àwórì is more or less the same as that of the standard Yorùbá. In (4i, iv & vii), the consonants of the NEG morphemes are also deleted and the stranded vowels assimilated to the last vowel of the preceding itmes. In the other examples, we an establish cases where the morphemes of negation occur at the preverbal position whereas cases of the postverbal positions are very rare. We also observe that negation in Yorùbá Àwórì does not take the form of a tonal

5) i) Sànyà á sùn = (SY: Olú kò sùn).
   Sànyà NEG sleep
   "Sànyà did not sleep."

iii) Olé i sùn = (SY: Olè kì í sùn)
   Thief NEG sleep
   "Thieves don't sleep."

v) Ká sè é kì Isọlá rì á = (SY: Èèṣe tí Ṣọlá kò fi wá).
   Why is it that Sola NEG come
   "Why is it that Ṣọlá did not turn up?"

vii) Móò gbe = (SY: Má gbé e).
   NEG carry
   "Don't carry it."

In utterances in (5i & ii), we notice that Èkìtì dialect obligatorily deletes the consonant of the kè NEG, and there is a tonal change in the last syllable of the subject NP. This is a high tone syllable (HTS) which always occurs before the kè NEG. In (5iii & iv) above, it is shown that the formative i is the NEG morpheme not ei. The form ei is a combination of the HTS and the negator i, the vowel of the HTS will be deleted, its stranded tone will then be transferred to the last syllable of the subject. In Yorùbá Èkìtì therefore, the HTS will always co-occur with the negators. In (5v & vi), the ri/i NEG form negates the verb phrase; it is also used to negate the nominalised VP. From those utterances in (5v-vi), we notice that the ari NEG form is not a single morpheme; likewise the negativising prefix ai cannot be a single morpheme. Following Awobuluyi's (2005) assertion, it

6. i) Ọbẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbẹ = (SY: Ọbẹ̀ kò gbẹ)
   Stew NEG dry
   "The stew did not dry up."

iii) Olú ù lọ = (SY: Olú kò lọ)
   Olú NEG go
   "Olú didn't go."

v) Mọ́ọ̀ lọ = (SY: Má/mọ́ lọ)
   NEG go
   "Don't go."

morpheme despite the use of formatives like méè and éè (the putative negator).

Negation in Yorùbá Èkìtì

In Yorùbá Èkìtì, the morphemes of negation are kè, i, rì/ì, móò/mọ́ọ̀. These NEG morphemes are exemplified the following Yorùbá Èkìtì utterances.

ii) Olú ú jẹun = (SY: Olú kò jẹun).
   Olú NEG eat
   "Olú did not eat."

iv) Ayọ́ i jẹun = (SY: Ayọ̀ kì í jẹun)
   Ayọ̀ NEG eat
   "Ayọ̀ does not eat (the food)."

vi) A rì lọ = (SY: Àì lọ)
   prefix NEG go
   "Failure to go."

viii) Mọ́ọ̀ jà = (SY: Má jà)
   NEG fight
   "Don't fight."

is nominalising prefix à, followed by the ì negator. In (5vii & viii) above, móò/mọ́ọ̀ is used to negate imperatives. The two are variants.

Negation in Yorùbá Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria)

In Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria), the form of the sentence negation is structurally determined by the tone(s) preceding the negator. The preceding words affect the tones in Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria) negative markers; this is shown in (6i & ii). The dialect does not use either kò NEG or kì í NEG forms for its sentence negation; this is exemplified in (6iii & iv). Yorùbá Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria) also uses a lengthened mọ́ NEG to negate the imperative and part of the predicate phrase following the negator in a sentence; this is shown in (6v & vi).

ii) Ata à pọ́n = (SY: Ata kò pọ́n)
   Pepper NEG ripe
   "The pepper is not ripe."

iv) Èmì ì í ri = (SY: Èmi kì í rí i)
   I NEG see him
   "I don't usually see him."

vi) Ó lè mọọ̀ jẹun = (SY: Ó lè má/mọ́ jẹun)
   He might NEG eat
   "He might not eat."

7) i) *Ẹ́ kò lọ = (SY: *Ó kò lọ)   ii) *Ẹ́ ò lọ = (SY: *Ó ò lọ)   iii) Ẹ́ ẹ̀ lọ = (SY: Kò lọ)

   He NEG go   He NEG go   He NEG go

   "He didn't go."   "He didn't go."   "He didn't go."

We notice that the rule which postulates the optional deletion of the initial segment of a grammatical formative that follows one formative and precedes another item is obligatory in Yorùbá Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria). Such rule is optional in the standard Yorùbá. This accounts for the negation of the third person singular pronoun shown in (7) above.

Negation in Yorùbá Ifẹ̀ (Togo)

Negation in Yorùbá Ifẹ̀ (Togo) is expressed by *kò*, *kà*, *mọ́ọ̄* and *àrì* (*à-rì/ì*) as displayed in (8) below.

8) i) Èsérè ẹ̀rẹn kò sàn = (SY: Èrò rẹ kò dára)

   Thought 2s NEG good

   "Your thinking is not good."

  ii) Múfú kò kóyán àà lọ = (SY: Múfú kò gbọdọ̀ tíì lọ)

   Múfú NEG OBL PERF go

   "Múfú ought not to have gone."

  iii) Kò tsàwa ni = (SY: Àwa kọ́)

   NEG is-3p is

   "It is not us."

  iv) Kò tsèwé ẹ̀rẹn = (SY: Ìwé rẹ kọ́)

   NEG is-book 2s

   "It is not your book."

  v) Igidan kà jẹyẹ́n = (SY: Ọmọbìnrin kì í jẹun)

   Damsel NEG eat-food

   "The damsel doesn't eat."

  vi) Olú kà kọin = (SY: Ọba kì í kọrin)

   King NEG sing-song

   "The king does not sing songs."

  vii) Mọ́ọ jẹyẹ́n = (SY: Má jẹ oúnjẹ)

   NEG eat-food "Do not eat food."

  viii) Alápá-mọ́ọ-tsitsẹ́ mọ́ọ lọ o = (SY: Alápá-má-ṣiṣẹ́ má lọ o)

   Lazy-man NEG go

   "Lazy man, do not go."

  ix) Àrìgbọ́n ẹ̀ghẹn èrèn méjì ni = (SY: Àìgbọ́n ẹ̀yin méjèèjì ni)

   Prefix-NEG-wise 3p 2s two is

   "The failure-to-be-wise by the two of you is responsible."

  x) Àrìjẹyẹ́n abesìn kà sàn = (SY: Àìjẹun aboyún kì í dára)

   Prefix-NEG-eat pregnant-woman NEG good

   "Failure-to-eat by a pregnant woman is dangerous."

The negative markers in Ifẹ̀ (Togo) differ from those of Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria) but the differences are of linguistic change. Changes that have taken place in Ifẹ̀ (Togo) have not taken place in Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria). Ifẹ̀ (Togo) does not use *kì í* NEG as a sentence negator, it has replaced it with *kà* which has been completely dropped from Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria) negation morphemes. This is exemplified in (8v & vi) above. *Mọ́ọ* is used to negate the imperatives in Ifẹ̀ (Togo), it is also used to negate part of the predicate phrase that follow it in a sentence. This is shown in (8vii & viii) above. In (8ix & x), *àrì* NEG form is analysed as two different morphemes: *à* NEG is a nominalising prefix while *rì/ì* NEG is the negator. In (8iii & iv) above, we notice that Ifẹ̀ (Togo) does not use *kọ́* as the negator of the NP whereas this is a very common negation structure of the Standard Yorùbá. Instead of using *kọ́* to negate the NP, speakers of Ifẹ̀ (Togo) dialect of Yorùbá will change the entire sentence structure and introduce

a sort of discontinuous negative morpheme surrounding the verb *tse*.

Negation in Yorùbá Ijẹ̀ṣà

The various morphemes of negation in Ìjẹ̀ṣà are dissimilar from those of the Standard Yorùbá already shown in (2) above but repeated as (9) below. The structure of negation in Ìjẹ̀ṣà does not make use of any of the forms in (9) as shown in (10) where we have *éè*, *ẹ́ẹ̀* [+NEG] and *the lengthening of the last segment of NP which usually carries a low tone*.

9) i) kò/ò   ii) kì í   iii) kọ́

   iv) má/máà   (v) mọ́   (vi) yé.

10) i) Mé éè yé fò = (SY: Èmi kò lè fò)

   1s NEG POT jump

   "I cannot jump."

  ii) Ẹ́ẹ̀ gbọ́ọ̀dọ̀ mọ́ bẹ̀ á = (SY: Kò gbọdọ̀ má bẹ̀ wá)

   NEG OBL NEG beg us

   "He must but beg us."

  iii) Péjú ù níí pàtẹ́ọ́ = (SY: Péjú kò níí pàtẹ́wọ́)

   Péjú NEG ASS clap

   "Péjú will not clap."

We notice from the NEG morphemes in (9) and (10) that where the low tone unrounded back vowel /è/ functions as the sentence negator in Ìjẹ̀ṣà, the Standard Yorùbá uses *kò*. The negator in (10i) is therefore derived from the structure in (11) through the process of assimilation of the NEG form to the vowel of the preceding NP.

11) Mo è yé fò → Mí è yé fò → Mé è yé fò = (SY: N kò lè fò)

   I NEG POT jump

   "I cannot jump."

The phonological processes that derived the negation in 10ii) above is quite complex. The underlying NEG stem of the derivation is *kè/kẹ̀*. There is a rule which obligatorily deletes the third person singular pronoun before *kò/kì* NEG in the Standard Yorùbá; this is shown in (12). Such deletion rule is not obligatory in Ìjẹ̀ṣà dialect; this is shown in (13).

12) Ó kò lọ → ø kò lọ → Kò lọ

   NEG go

   "H/she did not go."

13) *Ó kè gbọ́ọ̀dọ̀ rí bẹ́ẹ̀ = (*SY: Ó kò gbọdọ̀ rí bẹ́ẹ̀) (It must not be so).

The consonant of the NEG morpheme in (13) is then deleted to realise (14) where the stranded vowel of the NEG is assimilated regressively to construct (15).

14) *Ó è gbọ́ọ̀dọ̀ rí bẹ́ẹ̀ = (*SY: Ó ò gbọdọ̀ rí bẹ́ẹ̀) (It must not be so).

15) *Ẹ́ è gbọ́ọ̀dọ̀ rí bẹ́ẹ̀ = (*SY: Ó è gbọdọ̀ rí bẹ́ẹ̀) (It must not be so).

However, the vowel co-occurrence rule must apply to (15) be able to form (16) which again is a reflection of another regressive assimilation rule, and to finally produce a grammatically accepted sentence shown in (17). (17) permits an Ìjẹ̀ṣà speaker

to express his/her thoughts within the bounds of the dialect grammar.

16) *É è gbọ́ọ̀dọ̀ rí béẹ̀ = (SY: Ó ẹ̀ gbọdọ̀ rí béẹ̀) (It must not be so).

17) É ẹ̀ gbọ́ọ̀dọ̀ rí béẹ̀
    It NEG OBL be so
    "It must not be so."

It should be noted that all the expressions in (13-16) above are ungrammatical in Ìjẹ̀ṣà; their grammaticality strictly features within the analytical condign of those highlighted phonological rules.

In 10iii) above repeated as (18) below, we notice that whenever a negative marker follows a noun as the subject of the NP (Péjú), such item is lengthened on a low tone; in essence the negation takes the form of a tonal morpheme marked by the Low tone on the aspecto-temporal morpheme *níí* [+ASSUMPTIVE].

18) Péjú ù níí pàtẹ́ọ́ = (SY: Péjú kò níí pàtẹ́wọ́)
    Péjú NEG ASS clap
    "Péjú will not clap."

Negation in Yorùbá Ijẹ̀bú

Negation in Ìjẹ̀bú dialect of Yorùbá is expressed by none of the morphemes of negation shown in (9) above, it is rather expressed by the forms shown in (19) below and exemplified in (20).

19) i) ǹḿ   ii) éèéṣe
    iii) mẹ́ẹ/ẹ́   iv) The tone(s) preceding the negator.
20) i) Wọ́n ǹḿ rẹ̀n nóru = (SY: Wọn kì í rìn lóru)
    3p NEG walk at-night
    "They don't go out in the night."
ii) Éèéṣe ẹ̀wẹn rè é yún-ún = (SY: Èyin kọ́ ni ẹ lọ/Kì í ṣe èyin ni ẹ lọ)
    NEG 2p is there go
    "You are not the ones that went there."
iii) Wọ̀ọ́n ọ̀n níí sù = (SY: Wọn ò níí sùn).
    3p NEG FUT sleep
    "They will not sleep."
iv) a) Olú ù wàá = (SY: Olú kò wá).
    N NEG come
    "Olú did not come."
b) Ayọ̀ ọ̀ọ́ mu ẹmu yó = (Ayọ̀ kò mu ẹmu yó).
    N NEG drink palm-wine full
    "Ayọ̀ did not drink excessive palm-wine."

In (20i & ii), the Ìjẹ̀bú dialect of Yorùbá does not use *kì í* NEG as a sentence negator, it usually replaces it with *ǹḿ* and *éèéṣe*. *ǹḿ* always occurs in Ìjẹ̀bú interrogative sentences, this is witnessed in (21). *ǹḿ* and *éèéṣe* seem to have long been dropped the Standard Yorùbá negative morphemes.

21) Ǹjẹ́ wọ́n ǹḿ ṣe wàá = (SY: Ǹjẹ́ wọ́n kì í ṣe béẹ̀?)
    WH 3p NEG do like-that
    "Didn't they always behave likewise?"

(20iii) represents the phrasal negative markers and it variants in Ìjẹ̀bú. Here, the consonant of *kò* (NEG) is deleted and the stranded vowel is assimilated to the preceding consonant to give the structure in (22). It is the negation of the future tense in Yorùbá Ìjẹ̀bú.

22) a) Wọ̀ọ́n kò níí sù = (SY: Wọn ò níí sùn).
b) Wọ̀ọ́n ò níí sù = (SY: Wọn ò níí sùn).
c) Wọ̀ọ́n ọ̀n níí sù = (SY: Wọn ò níí sùn).
    3p NEG FUT sleep
    "They will not sleep."

The sentences in (20iva & b) confirm our observation that Ijẹ̀bú never uses *kò* for its sentence negation. The NEG in (20iv) is derived from the same NEG in (3i) above (and in other structures like (23) below) through the deletion of the consonant of the NEG and the assimilation of the stranded vowel to the vowel of the preceding NP.

23) a) Olú kò wá
    N NEG come
    "Olú did not come."
b) Ayọ̀ kò mu ẹmu yó
    N NEG drink palm-wine full
    "Ayọ̀ did not drink excessive palm-wine."

Just as we have already noted for the negative tone structures in the Yorùbá Ifẹ̀ (Nigeria), it is the preceding words that affect the tones of Ìjẹ̀bú negative markers as demonstrated in sentences (20iva & b) above.

Negation in Yorùbá Ikálẹ̀

Negation in Ìkálẹ̀ is expressed by a double negation: leèmáà as shown in (24b), (25b). The negative markers can also take the forms shown in (26) and (27) below.

24) a) Olú lè lọ = (SY: Olú lè lọ)
    N POT go
    "Olú can go."
b) Oléè leè máà lọ = (SY: Olú lè má lọ)
    N-NEG POT NEG go
    "Olú can decide not to go."
25) a) Adé éè wúlí = (SY: Adé kò wale)
    N NEG come-home
    "Adé did not come home."
b) Adéè leè máà wúlí = (SY: Adé lè má wá ilé)
    N POT NEG come-home
    "Adé can deicde not to come home."
26) a) àìhùn = (SY: àìsùn)   b) àìjẹun = (SY: àìjẹun)
    c)àìpa = (SY: àìpa)   d) àìrí = (SY: àìrí)
27) a) Olú éè lọ hí ọjà = (SY: Olú kò lọ sí ọjà)
    N NEG go to market
    "Olú did not go to the market."
b) Éè ṣe fífọ Ìyábọ̀ fọ̀fọ̀ múẹn = (SY: Kì í ṣe sísọ ni Ìyábọ̀ sọ ọ̀rọ̀ mìíràn)
    NEG do act-talk N talk other
    "Ìyábọ̀ did not just do all the talking."
c) Kí i yi wéè fẹ́ o? = (SY: Èwo lẹ ò fẹ́ o?)
    WH do 2p one-NEG want
    "Which one you do not want?"

We see in (24 & 25) above that the first element of negation—leè [POT]—also occur for the negative perfective in both (a & b). This probably accounts for aspectual contrasts in the dialect. Both the Standard Yorùbá and the Ìjẹbu dialect have the same negativising prefix *àì*. We agree with Awobuluyi (2005) that *àì* is not a single morpheme, *à* is a nominalising prefix

while *ì* serves as the negator.

Negation in Yorùbá Ìlàjẹ

In Ìlàjẹ, the morpheme of negation for sentence and NPs is *éè* as shown in (28) below. It usually appears as a NEG feature at the end of the sentence, just before the object. It usually maintains its form if preceded by pronouns but has variations in forms depending on the assimilated stranded vowels.

28) a) Méè lọ = (SY: N ò lọ)
   1s-NEG go
   "I did not go."
   b) Áà lọ = (SY: A kò lọ)
   1p-NEG go
   "We did not go."
   c) Án-àn lọ = (SY: Wọn kò lọ)
   3p-NEG go
   "They did not go."
   d) Méè jẹrun = (SY: N ò jẹun)
   1s-NEG eat-food
   "I did not eat food."
   e) Wéè ra ehì = (O kò ra ẹlẹ́dẹ̀)
   2s-NEG buy pork
   "You did not buy the pork."
   f) Ọmà ghán éè họ́nkùn = (Ọmọ rẹ kò sunkún)
   child 2s NEG weeping
   "Your child did not weep."
   g) Áà léè rí ìdí irùnkúnrun = (SY: A kò lè rí ìdí pàtàkì)
   1p-NEG POT see reason important
   "We can not deduce any important reason."
   h) Akin hii éè rí bárẹ̀ = (SY: Akin sọ pé kò rí bẹ́ẹ̀)
   N say-that NEG like that
   "Akin said that it is not so."
   i) Ògúnbọ̀ ọ̀ọ̀ gbọ́dọ̀ jẹrun = (SY: Ògúnbọ̀ kò gbọdọ̀ jẹun)
   N NEG OBL eat-food
   "Ògúnbọ̀ must not eat the food."

Negation in Yorùbá Mọ̀fọ̀lí

Negation is contextualised in Mọ̀fọ̀lí dialect of Yorùbá; it is marked by different elements within the word and within the sentence. Traditionally (29) indicates the various NEG morphemes in the dialect and they are illustrated in sentences (30-35) below.

29) kè, kàn, kà, kọ̀, kọ́ mé [NEG Morphemes].
30) a) Tsànyà kè tsùn = (SY: Sànyà kò sùn)
   N NEG Sleep
   "Tsànya did not sleep."
   b) Tsànyà kè ti tsùn = (SY: Sànyà kò sùn)
   N NEG PERF Sleep
   "Tsànya has not slept."
   c) Ọmọ kéké li mi, n kè líyàwó = (Ọmọ kékeré ni mí, n kò ní ìyàwó)
   child little is me, I NEG have-wife
   "I am but a little child, I am not married."
31) a) An kàn gba tìyá gbọ́ = (Wọn kò gba ti ìyá gbọ́)
   3p NEG accept of-mother believe
   "They did not even accept their mothers' advice."
   b) An kàn gba babà gbọ́
   3p NEG accept father believe
   "They did not even accept their fathers' advice."

32) a) N kà leè tsé o = (N kò lè ṣe é o)
   I NEG POT do it
   "I cannot do it."
   b) N kà gbọ́ kànkàn àfi Mọ̀fọ̀lí = (SY: N kò gbọ́ ìkankan àfi Mọ̀fọ̀lí)
   I NEG hear anything except N
   "I cannot speak any other (language) except Mọ̀fọ̀lí."
   c) Kà a run = (Kò lè run)
   NEG it destroy
   "It cannot be destroyed."
33) a) I kọ̀ gbẹ́dọ̀ ná o = (SY: O kò gbọdọ̀ nà án o)
   2s NEG OBL beat pro
   "You must not beat him."
   b) An kọ̀ fàṣẹ ìyá babà lọ lílé ọkọ = (SY: Wọn kò gba àṣẹ ìyá àti bàbá lọ sí ilé ọkọ)
   3p NEG support mother father go house husband
   "They are now getting married without their parents' consents."
   c) N kọ̀ gbọ́dè mìẹn kú u = (SY: N kò gbọ́ èdè mììràn kún un)
   1s NEG hear-language other with it
   "I do not understand any other language."
34) a) Mé febi pá o = (SY:Má fie bi pa á o)
   NEG with-hunger kill him
   "Don't starve with to death."
   b) Babà kọ́ mé gbọ́rọ̀ í = (SY: Baba kò gbọdọ̀ má gbọ́ ọ̀rọ̀ yìí)
   father NEG NEG hear-word this
   "The father should not hear this issue."
35) a) Bó tsìpẹ̀ kẹẹ̀, a lè kè gbà = (SY: Bí ó bá bẹ̀ wá, a kò níí gbà)
   If-he beg PREV, we POT NEG agree
   "Even if he begs us, we will not agree."

As seen from the sentences above, Mọ̀fọ̀lí negation is both syntactic and lexical. We have three categories of the NEG elements:

1) Indicative NEG elements = *kè/kàn/kà* (used in indicative mood (NP & S)).

2) Imperative NEG elements = *mé* (used in imperative constructions).

3) Focus Marker NEG Elements = *kọ́* (used to negate the focus marker).

Negation in Yorùbá Oǹdó

In Oǹdó, negation is a morpheme with *éè* depending on the form of the vowel preceding the NP or a copy of the final vowel of the morpheme at the end of the utterance (see 36c). The different realisations of the morpheme of negation in Yorùbá Oǹdó are shown in (36a-f).

36) a) Éè see sọkọ ẹ? = (SY: Ta ni ì í ṣọkọ ẹ?)
   NEG who is-husband 2s
   "Who is not your husband?"
   b) Éè dó jí mi nówùọ̀ = (SY: Ma jí mi ní òwúrọ̀)
   NEG is wake me in-morning.
   "Do not wake me up in the morning."
   c) Ọkọ̀ nẹ ẹ̀ẹ ti sá ju = (SY: Ọkọ̀ náà kò sáré púpọ̀)
   motor the NEG PERF run much
   "The motor is not over speeding."
   d) Èlú wee éè tọ́? = (SY: Èló ni o ò fẹ́ tà á?)
   how 2s-much NEG sell
   "How much are you not selling it?"
   e) Wéè dà ti lọ in? = (SY: O ò tí ì lọ ni?)
   2s-NEG yet PERF go now
   "Have you not gone yet?"

f) Aa mí ệè yá = (SY: Ara mi kò yá)
   body my NEG well
   "I am not well."

Negation in Yorùbá Ònkò

Nearly all the negative markers in the Standard Yorùbá—*kò*/*ò*, *kì í*, *kó*, *má*/*máà*/*mó*—are also found in Ònkò dialect. The dialect uses *kò* [NEG] and its variants like *ò*, *ì* and *kì* [NEG] as indicated in (37) below. In simple negative declaratives, the NEG morphemes are put in interverbal and and/or preverbal positions. One phonological feature prominent with Ònkò is the nasal vowel /ɛ̃/ but it does not appear as Ònkò structural negation.

37) a) Wọn ò tse nhkẹn kẹn o = (SY: Wọn kò ṣe nhkan kan o)
    3p NEG do nothing
    "They did not do anything."
   b) A ì í dìgbòlètsù = (SY: A kì í dìgbò lu èṣù)
    1p NEG make-assault-on-devil
    "Do not try to assault the devil."
   c) Qdón ọdón yi ì dùn = (SY: Ọdún ọdún yìí kò dùn)
    celebration year this NEG sweet
    "This year's celebration is not low-keyed."
   d) Itsé nẹ́ẹ̀ ò rọròn pén = (SY: Iṣé náà kò rọrùn rárá)
    work the NEG easy at all
    "The job is not an easy one."

Negation in Yorùbá Owé

In Owé, negation is marked by *gháà* and *mó* morphemes as shown in (38). While *mó* [NEG] can be taken as a variant of *má*/*máà* [NEG] of the Standard Yorùbá, *gháà* [NEG] seems not to easily commute the basic *kò* [NEG] because of the accompanied voiced velar fricative /gh/ segment. However, Awobuluyi (1992: 20) has suggested the occurrence of /gh/ in NEG morphemes like *gháà*, as "an earlier common stage of the Yorùbá language". We also notice that this *gháà* NEG formative in Owé cannot be said to occur as a tone with a copy of the final vowel of the morpheme at the end of NP; so we cannot have negative structures like (39).

38) a) Ilé gháà wó re ibệ̀ệ = (SY: Ilé kò wó sí ibẹ̀)
    House NEG fall PREP there
    "The house did not fall there."
   b) Bàbá gháà fệ ọmọ ìn hunkún = (SY: Baba kò fệ ọmọ tí ó ń sunkún)
    father NEG like child that weep
    "The father does not like a weeping child."
   c) Bólá ghe hi un mó rè = (SY: Bólá sọ pé kí o má lọ)
    N tell that 2s NEG go
    "Bólá said that you should not go."
   d) Hi ghón mó ghàà ọjà o = (SY: Kí wọ́n má wá ọjà)
    that 3p NEG come market
    "That they should not come to the market."

Negation in Yorùbá Òyó-Ìbàdàn

The Òyó-Ìbàdàn negative markers resemble the same markers in Standard Yorùbá which we also regarded as a dialect in this paper. In Òyó-Ìbàdàn, *kò* and *kì í* are the sentence negators as in (39a), *kó* is the negator of the NP as in (39b), *má*, *mó* are the imperative negators as in (39c), while *má* (as shown in 39d) also negates part of the predicate phrase that follows it in a sentence.

39) ai) A kò gberin = (SY: A kò gberin)
    1p NEG chorus-song
    "We did not chorus the song."
   aii) A kì í jẹran sínkìn = (A kì í jẹran sínkìn)
    1p NEG eat-meat chicken
    "We don't eat chicken meat."
   b) Àwa kó ni Qlórun yín tó ga = (SY: Àwa kó ni Qlórun yín tó ga)
    Pro NEG FOC God 2p REL-he tall
    "We are not your God who is tall."
   ci) Má gọ ọ́ = (SY: Má gọ ọ́)
    NEG fool it
    "Don't act foolishly."
   cii) Mó gọ ọ́ = (SY: Mó gọ ọ́)
    NEG fool it
    "Don't act foolishly."
   d) Wón lè má gbìpẹ̀ = (Wón lè má gbìpẹ̀)
    3p can NEG accept-plead
    "They might not accept the plea."

Negation in Yorùbá Tsáàbè

Majority of the speakers of the tsáàbè dialect of Yorùbá are found outside Nigeria, mostly in the Plateau State of the Republic of Bénin. The dialect is classified among the South-west Yorùbá dialect subgroup. Negation is a morpheme with the forms *kò*, *mó* and *kì* as indicated in (40) below.

40) a) N kò tsáé jẹkà = (SY: N kò sáé jẹ ọkà)
    1s NEG rush eat-food
    "I did not rush eating the food."
   b) Yán yún-un mó = (SY: (Má) máa lọ mó)
    HAB lọ NEG
    "You should not be going there."
   c) Olú kì wè = (SY: Olú kì í wè)
    N NEG bath
    "Olú does not always bath."

Negation in Yorùbá Ìyàgbà

In Ìyàgbà, negation is a morpheme with the form *éè*, *kè* and *mó*. This is shown in (41a-c for *éè* [NEG], 41d-f for *kè* [NEG], and 41g-I for *mó* [NEG]) below. Negative declarative sentences may be derived from the positive forms through the use of the negator *éè*. The low tone on this formative usually indicates negation especially when the high counterpart is changed to low, it will be in the negative form.

41) a) Éè yún wẹ = (SY: N ò lọ sí ibẹ̀)
    Pron-NEG go there
    "I did not go there."
   b) Éè yẹ Òjó nrọ gbé lálé = (SY: Òjó lè má wá ní alé)
    NEG POT N can come PREP-night
    'Òjó may not come tonight.'
   c) Oúnjẹ nkà éè jé jẹ ún mi = (SY Oúnjẹ yẹn kò ṣeé jẹ fún mi)
    food that NEG allow eat for me
    "I cannot eat that food."
   d) Ón kè wí ọ ghá ibẹ̀ = (SY: Wọn kò ní kí o wá sí ibẹ̀)
    3p NEG say 2s come there
    "They did not ask you to come there."
   e) Ìghọn ọlóṣà kè gbe arù rẹ̀ rè = (SY: Àwọn ọlóṣà kò jí ẹrù rẹ̀ lọ)
    3p thieves NEG carry luggage his go
    "The thieves did not steal his luggage."

f) Kè bà m àrù gan = (SY: Kò bà mí lẹ́rù gan-an)

    NEG hit me fear much

    "I am not seriously frightened."

g) Ó bá mọ́ gháà, a kè ín ri = (SY: Bí kò bá mọ̀ wá, a kò níí rí i)

    3s if NEG us, we NEG POT see

    "If he did not recognise us, we wouldn't have seen him."

h) Mèé yún wẹ mọ́ = (SY: N ò lọ sí ibẹ̀ mọ́)

    Pron-NEG go there NEG

    "I did not go there anymore."

i) Éè wù ḿ jẹ mọ́ = (SY: Kò wù mí láti jẹ mọ́)

    NEG like me eat NEG

    "I don't feel like eating it again."

Conclusion

From the various morpho-syntactic distributions of negation in sixteen Yorùbá dialects indicated above, it is discovered that the morphemes of negation in the dialects occur at the level of preverbal position. Negation does not occur post-verbally in these dialects. We also notice that negation and tense/aspect are, although separate syntactic units, concatenated in these dialects. In other words, there is a feature [+NEG] which functions as a syntactic Head and projects into a Negative Phrase (NegP). So, in as much as morphemes of negation in Yorùbá dialects commute with the aspecto-modal marker of negative polarity, they can be placed in the position of the functional category Asp. This is premised that Yorùbá does not have grammaticalised time reference but could use temporal adverbials to lexicalise time reference to the moment of speaking. This claim is in consonance with Comrie's (1976: p. 87) assertion that "all languages can lexicalise time reference i.e. by the use of temporal adverbials that locate situations in time, such as English tomorrow, yesterday, at seven o'clock, etc." The various Yorùbá dialects discussed in this paper have shown that the verbo-aspectual negative polarity subsumes very much as a strong feature; negation, therefore, can locate in the functional head Asp because it is displayed preverbally in the polarity of the verb. We agree with Doipohyne (1976: p. 15) that "when a language has a long history of having been written, it is often easy to tell, from the spelling of words alone, some of the changes that have taken place in the language." We observe that the differences between the morphemes of negation in these sixteen Yorùbá dialects are of linguistic change.

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