

Sentential Negation in Standard Arabic and Qassim Dialect

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Abstract

This paper provides an overview of the negative particles in Standard Arabic (henceforth SA) and compares them to the Spoken Qassim Dialect (henceforth QD), focusing on their morphological effects within the sentence. Negation in SA includes six particles (laysa, lam, lammaa lan, laa, and maa) that are used with verbal sentences except for laysa which is used with nominal sentences. The researcher noticed that the particles laysa, lam, lammaa, and lan are no longer used in QA, so only laa, and maa are used as negative particles in QD. Two main groups of morphemes seemed to represent negation elements in QD: verbal predicates are laa and maa, whereas non-verbal predicates are muhub and maakan. The negative marker laa is used in imperative and future sentences and precedes the verb. The negative particle maa precedes the verb in the present tense and is used in perfective and imperfective sentences. The inflected form muhub is derived from the negative particle ma and used to negate non-verbal predicates that are divided into eight inflections.

Keywords: Nominal Sentence, Particles, Sentential Negation, Imperative Sentence, Indicators.

1. Introduction

1.1. Negation: A Crosslinguistic Perspective

All languages change over time, which is one thing that makes them unique. As in the case of English, a speaker of modern English cannot understand Old English. In some cases, Old English might be considered a foreign language that the native speaker needs to learn to understand effectively. When comparing Old English to Modern English, one can trace a lot of grammatical changes (phonological, syntactic, morphological, semantic, etc.). Nevertheless, it is possible that by comparing cases in one language or dialect to those in another and discover the nature of change. One possible question is how and why languages change over time. It is mainly the role of historical linguistics to provide satisfying answers. Comparative Linguistics complements this job and can provide supporting evidence for the answers given by Historical Linguistics. One possible answer is changing the grammar of a language such as creating new words and adding them to the vocabulary of the language. Other changes could be in the overall structure of language, such as the change in the formation of negative structures as in English (O'Grady et al. (1993: 7)):

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1.1.1. Prior to 1200 A.D

1. Ic ne sey not.

“I don't say.”

2. He ne speketh nawt .

“He does not speak.”

1.1.2. By 1400 and thereabouts

3. I seye not the wordes.

4. We saw nawt the knyghtes.

1.1. 3. Nowadays

5. I will not say the words.

6. He did not see the knights.

Sentential negation can be expressed by using one or more negative markers in the sentence. Among those languages in which negation is expressed by the negative marking of one element in the sentence are Arabic, English, Dutch, and Classical Latin. However, other languages like French, Russian, and other Indo-European languages (as well as some varieties of English, Dutch, and German) use more than one negative marker in the sentence (Wouden (1995:311):

7. Personne n'a vu rien

No one not-has seen nothing

“No one saw anything.”

Non-Standard English (Labove (1979))

8. It ain't no cat can't get in no coop.

Negation is achieved in some languages through the use of two negative markers: preverbal and postverbal. These languages include Standard French (Pollock 1989) and West Flemish (Haegeman 1995). Negation is also realized in modern Arabic dialects, such as Moroccan and Egyptian Arabic, through preverbal and postverbal markers (Mohamed and Ouhalla 1995; Benmamoun 2000; Aoun et. al 2010). In the last twenty years, linguists have paid attention to the sentential negation in Arabic (Pollock 1989, Ouhalla 1991, Chomsky 1995, Cinque 1999).

This paper is divided into four sections, each followed by a conclusion. The second section shed light on the Arabic Language and Saudi Arabic. The third introduces SA sentence types. The fourth discusses sentential negation in SA. Sentential negation in QD is covered in the fifth section. The conclusion is presented in the last section.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Arabic Language and Saudi Arabic

One way to think about the Arabic language is as a collection of regional dialects and a unified textual form known as SA that is used in all Arabic-speaking countries for formal written and spoken communication, including books, journals, newspapers, official documents, and so on. However, regional dialects are used and taught to children at home. Each region in Saudi Arabia has its own dialect. The local variants of the language are distinct from one another in terms of their phonology, morphology, and syntax. In addition to this, differences can also be seen depending on the region's sociolinguistic

environment. The following Figure, adopted from Nakamura (1992) clarifies the distribution of dialects in Saudi Arabia.

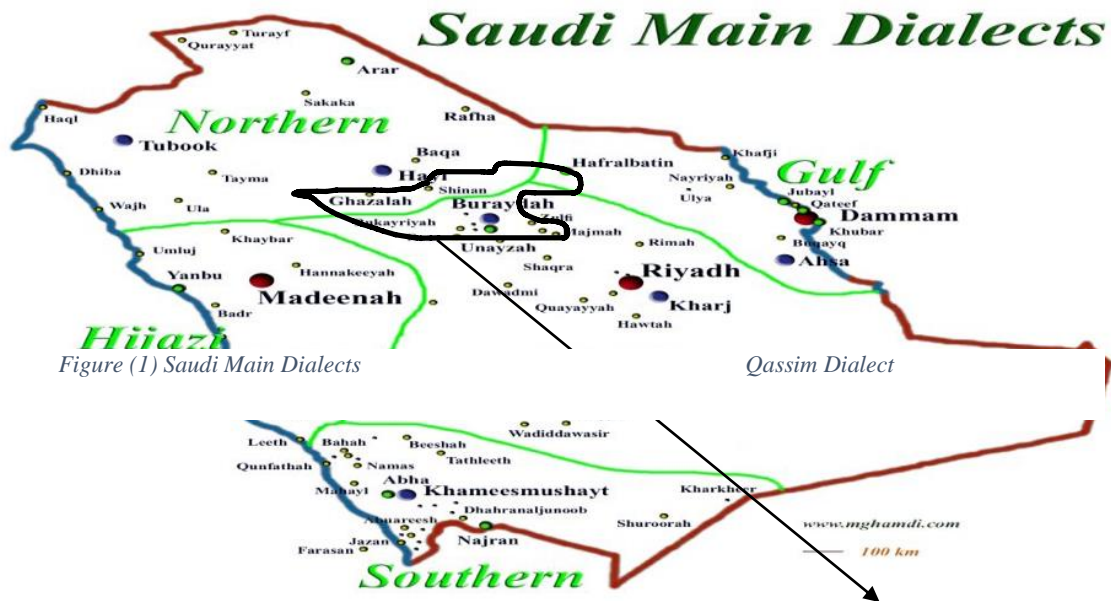


Figure (1) Saudi Main Dialects

Saudi Arabic spoken around the Qassim region (Najd) and evaluated by native Saudi Arabic speakers.

2.2. Standard Arabic sentence types

To begin dissecting negation in sentences, we must first determine if the negation is nominal or verbal. In Arabic, the arrangement of words in a phrase is very important. While some Arabic linguists describe a nominal sentence as one that does not include a verb, others define it as one that begins with a noun regardless of whether it includes a verb or not (Alamah, 1993). There are six potential word orders when a sentence contains a transitive verb, as seen in (SVO), (VSO), (OVS), (VOS), and (SOV) (Alsalem, 2012) as shown in examples of (1, a-f).

a. SVO

9. Ali Kataba Al wajeb
 Ali Wrote the homework
 'Ali wrote the homework.'

b. VSO

10. Kataba Ali Al wajeb
 Wrote Ali the homework
 'Ali wrote the homework.'

c. OVS

11. Al wajeb Kataba Ali
 The homework Wrote Ali
 'Ali wrote the homework.'

d. OSV

12. Al wajeb Ali Kataba
 The homework Ali wrote

‘Ali wrote the homework.’

e. VOS

13. Kataba Al wajeb Ali

Wrote Ali the homework

‘Ali wrote the homework.’

f. SOV

14. Ali Al wajeb Kataba

Ali the homework wrote

‘Ali wrote the homework.’

Therefore, the two main types of Arabic sentences are nominal and verbal. As seen in examples 15 and 16, a nominal sentence does not have a verb, but a verbal sentence does.

15. Ahmed fi ?al-bayt

Ahmed in the-home

“Ahmed is at home.”

16. Thahab Ahmed ?ila ?as-suuq

Went Ahmed to the-market

“Ahmed went to the market.”

2.3. Negation in Standard Arabic

SA employs six negative morphemes. *Laa*, *lam*, *lan*, *lammaa*, *laysa*, and *maa* (Sibawayh 8th Century 1938 edn; Fassi Fehri 1993; Benmamoun 2000; Ouhalla & Shlonsky, 2002; Alhorais 2013). The distribution of negative markers in SA can be divided into three basic categories:

- Negative particles are limited to negating verbal sentences: *laa*, *lam*, *lammaa*, *lan* (Benmamoun, 2000; Ouhalla; Shlonsky, 2002).
- A restrictive negative marker limited to negating nominal sentences (*laysa*).
- A complimentary Negative marker eliminates verbal and nominal clauses (*maa*).

2.4. Limiting negative particles to verbal sentences

Verbal negative indicators are usually preverbal. Thus, using a preverbal negative marker negates the sentence or clause. *Lam*, *lammaa*, *lan*, and *laa* are negative indicators. The first two negative markers are *lam*, *lammaa* as shown in examples 17-18 as the following:

17 a. yathhab Ahmed? ila? al-madrasah

go Ahmed to the-school

“Ahmed goes to school”.

b. lam yathhab Ahmed ?ila ?al-madrasah

not-past go Ahmed to the-school

“Ahmed did not go to school”.

18 a. kataba Khaled-un-Al-darsa.

Write Khaled the lesson

“Khaled has written the lesson”.

b. lammaa ya-ktub-Khaled-un-Al-darsa.

Not-write Khaled the lesson

“Khaled has not written the lesson.”

It is remarkable that there is a morphological shift between lam and lamma in the verb form. While lam suggests a past tense understanding, lamma suggests a future tense one. In example (18b), Lamma means negates the presence of the incident; however, there is an intention to do so.

A third particle that is used in negation in SA is lan which is used to refer to future events as in example (19).

19 a. yathhab Ahmed? ila? al-madrasah ghadan.

go Ahmed to the-school tomorrow

“Ahmed will go to school tomorrow”.

b. lan yathhab Ahmed? ila? al-madrasah

not-future go Ahmed to the-school

“Ahmed will not go to school.”

The fifth negation particle is laa which is used only in the present tense and considered a regular negative in spoken discourse and in imperatives (Benmamoun 2000; Onizan, 2005) as shown in example 20.

20 a. ya-ḏhabu T-Taalib-u? ila l-madrasah Kula sabaah.

go the students to school every morning

“The student goes to school every morning”.

b. laa ya-ḏhabu T-Taalib-u? ila l-madrasah Kula sabaah.

Not-go the students to school every morning

“The student does not go to school every morning”.

laa is also used in imperative sentences as in the example below:

21 a. tathhab? ila? al-madrasah

not go to school.

“Don't go to school.”

b. laa tathhab? ila? al-madrasah

not go to school.

“Don't go to school.”

2.5. An exclusive negation marker for nominal sentences

Laysa, originated from the negative marker laa (Al-Khawalda 1997: 265; Benmamoun 2000) and is considered an imperfective verb and used with nominal sentences as in example (22) below.

22. a. Ahmed laysa fi? al-bayt 1

Ahmed not in the-home

“Ahmed is not at home.”

b. laysa Ahmed fi? al-bayt

not Ahmed in the-home

“Ahmed is not at home.”

Unlike the other Arabic negative particles, *laysa* is a free morpheme that can be inserted in the middle of the sentence (between the predicate and the subject) as in (22a) or at the beginning of the phrase as in (22b).

2.6. A complimentary Negative marker eliminates verbal and nominal clauses (*maa*)

Finally, *maa* is used to express more emphasis on the negation of the event in verbal and nominal sentences in both present and past tenses in certain contexts. Regardless of the word order of the sentence, which can be either SVO or VSO, *Maa* always comes before the verb in the past tense as in (23), and present tense as in (24), and rarely in imperative sentences as in (25)

23. *maa qaal? al-haq*

not said the-trth.

“He did not say the truth.”

24. *maa yathhab Ahmed ?ila ?al-madrasah*

not go Ahmed to school

“Ahmed does not go to school.”

25. *maa tathhab ?ila ?al-madrasah*

not go to the-school

“Don't go to school.”

As shown in the examples above, SA is rich in negation particles. Some of them are restricted to certain usages, for instance, *maa* cannot be used instead of *lam*. However, *lam* is used to emphasize the negation of the event in the past tense. The five negation particles can be summarized in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Negation particles of SA

Negation Particle	Use
Laysa	nominal sentences (present tense)
Lam	verbal sentences (past tense)
Lamma	verbal sentences (future tense)
Lan	verbal sentences (future tense)
Laa	verbal sentences (present tense/ imperative)
Maa	verbal and nominal sentences (past and present tense)

3. Results

3.1. Negation in Qassim Dialect (QD)

Because the Qassim region is a part of the Najdi area, negation can be divided into two types: verbal and non-verbal predicates (Binturki, 2015). Negation of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs are examples of non-verbal predicate negation.

3.1.1 Verbal predicates

Verbal predicates in QD, which are *laa* and *maa*, are used for verbs tenses of imperative, perfective, imperfective, continuous, and future.

3.1.1.1 / laa /

The first negative marker, laa is used in imperative and future sentences and preceded the verb as in the example (26)

26. a- ti-rmii l-kuurah

throw the-ball

‘Throw the ball.’

b- laa ti-rmii l-kuurah

not 2-throw the-ball

“Don’t throw the ball”

3.1.1.2 / maa /

The negative particle maa precedes the verb and is used in perfective and imperfective verbs as shown in the example (27a, b, c).

27 a. ma-ḡrab almaa

Not-drink the Water

‘He did not drink water.’

b. ma-yḡrab almaa

Not-drink the Water

‘He did not drink water.’

c. ma-tḡrab almaa

Not-drink the Water

‘She did not drink water.’

It was clear that (27a) is a perfective sentence, whereas (27a & b) are imperfective sentences that include the prefix (y) and (t) before the verb ḡrab to express gender (y- for male and t- for female).

The negative marker maa is used in verbal sentences of the present tense:

28. a- Khaled yihubb l-kuurah

Khaled like the-ball

“Khaled likes soccer.”

b- Khaled maa yihubb l-kuurah

Khaled not like the-ball

“Khaled does not like soccer.”

*c- Khaled laa yihubb l-kuurah

Khaled not like the-ball

“Khaled does not like soccer.”

As mentioned in (4.1) laa can be used for the present tense; so, example (28c) cannot be used in QD, and laa is used only for the imperative and future sentences as in example (26b).

Moreover, the negative marker maa is used in the past tense as shown in example (29).

29. a- Khaled shtara siyyaarah.

Khaled bought car

“Khaled bought a car.”

b- Khaled maa shtara siyyaarah.

Khaled not bought car

“Khaled did not buy a car.”

*c- Khaled laa shtara siyyaarah.

Khaled not bought car

“Khaled did not buy a car.”

The verbal sentences in the past tense using laa as in (29c) cannot be used either in the SA or in the QD. However, the negative particle maa is used in the past tense in the QD as shown in (29b).

3.1.2 Non-verbal predicates

The non-verbal predicate in QD is muhub and maakan. Hub in muhub is constructed primarily from the negative particle ma and used for verb tenses of present and future. According to Binturki (2015), the term muhub is a Najdi Arabic non-verbal negation predicate that refers to the various forms of the masculine third-person singular morpheme. Muhub can be categorized into eight markers of agreement as shown in the following Table.

Table 2 Non-verbal predicates in QD

1S.M& F		3S.M	3S. F	2SP.M&F	3S. M	3S. F	3PL.M&
maniib	mannaab	manntab	manteb	mantumb	muhub	maheeb	muhumb

QD negation particle muhub and its variants are used to negate a wide variety of predicate words, including nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, active participles, adverbs, and prepositions as shown in the following examples:

3.1.2.1 Maniib: it is used with a noun and agrees with the first singular masculine and feminine pronouns as in (30).

30. maniib mudris

(1S. MSC& FEM)-not a teacher

“I am not a teacher.”

3.1.2.2 Muhub: it comes with a preposition and agrees with the third singular masculine pronoun as in (31).

31. muhub fi il-madrash

(3S.MSC)- not in the school

“He is not in the school.”

It is used also with an adverb as in (32).

32. al-iktibar muhub-alyom

(3S.MSC)-test-not-today

“The test is not today.”

Moreover, muhub comes with a preposition and agrees with the first singular masculine pronoun as in (33).

33. al-kalam muhub maʕ-i

(3S.MSC)- the-pen-not-with-me

“The pen is not with me.”

3.1.2.3 Maheeb: it is used with an adjective and agrees with the third singular feminine pronoun as in (34).

34. il-gorfh maheeb kebierh

(3S.FEM)-The room-not-big

“The room is not big.”

3.1.2.4 Mannaab: it comes with a preposition buh in QD and agrees with the first singular masculine and feminine pronouns as in (35).

35. mannaab-buh

(1S.MSC& FEM)- I-Not-in

“I am not in.”

3.1.2.5 Manntab: it comes with the verb rayh in the future tense and agrees with the third singular masculine pronoun as in (36).

36. manntab rayh mana

(3S.MSC)- you-not- go- with us

“You will not go with us.”

3.1.2.6 Manteb: it comes with a preposition and agrees only with the third singular feminine pronoun as in (37).

37. manteb fi il-madrash

(3S.FEM)- you-not-in the school

“You are not in the school.”

3.1.2.7 Mantumb: it is used with the preposition buh and agrees with the second-person masculine and feminine pronouns as in (38).

38. mantumb-buh

(2SP.MSC& FEM)- you-not- in the school

“You will not in the school.”

3.1.2.8 Muhumb: it is used with the preposition buh and agrees with the plural masculine and feminine pronouns as in (39).

39. muhumb-buh

(3PL.MSC& FEM)-they-not- in the school

“They will not in the school.”

Besides using muhub to negate sentences in the further tense, maakan is also used to refer to the past tense as shown in the example (40).

40. Ali maakan yktaba Al wajeb

Ali not wrote the homework

“Ali did not write the homework.”

As shown in the examples above, the negative particles of QD are divided into two main groups: verbal and non-verbal predicates. Verbal predicates are laa and maa, whereas non-verbal predicates are muhub and maakan as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Negative particles of QD

Type	particle	Use
verbal predicates	laa	imperative sentences
	maa	present tense/past tense
Non-verbal predicates	Mu-hub	future tense and nominal sentences
	Maa-kan	past tense

4. Conclusion

As in SA, three negative particles in the QD are used instead of six. The particles “laysa”, “lam” and “lan” are no longer used in QD. Speakers' negation constructions in QD were described in detail here. Negation morphemes seemed to fall into two broad categories: verbal and non-verbal. The negative marker laa is used in imperative and future sentences and preceded the verb. The negative particle maa precedes the verb in the present tense and is used in perfective and imperfective sentences. On the other hand, the non-verbal predicates in QD are muhub and maakan. The inflected form muhub is used to negate non-verbal predicates in the present and future tenses and is categorized into eight inflections.

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