Negation in Sana'ani Dialect: A Syntactic Analysis

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the syntactic aspects of negation in the Sana'ani dialect (SD), focusing on the system of negation and the use of different negation markers based on their contexts. The paper thus aims to highlight the diverse syntactic structures of negation markers in this dialect. The paper also studies the distinctive roles of the negation markers 'ma' and '-sh': 'ma' functions as the head of the Negation Phrase (NegP), while '-sh' operates as a clitic occupying the specifier position within a related NegP. Thus, two NegP positions in the Sana'ani dialect can be identified — one above the Tense Phrase (TP) and another below it. Furthermore, the paper distinguishes variations in the negation system based on clause type and other syntactic features. It is hoped that the paper can help provide a clearer understanding of how negation is expressed in the Sana'ani dialect and how this dialect is different from and similar to other Arabic dialects.

النفي في اللهجة الصنعانية: دراسة تحليلية نحوية

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الكلمات المفتاحية

٢. اللهجة الصنعانية	١. النفي
٤. أدوات النفي	٣. الجوانب النحوية

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة تحليل الخصائص أو الجوانب النحوية للنفي في اللهجة الصنعانية (SD)، مع التركيز على بنية النفي وأستخدام أدوات النفي في سياقات متعددة. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز التنوع في البنى النحوية لأدوات النفي في هذه اللهجة. كما تتناول هذه الدراسة الأدوار المميزة لأداتي النفي' ما 'و' —ش': حيث تعمل ' ما 'كبداية عبارة النفي (NegP)، بينما تعمل ' —ش'كأداة متصلة في نهاية الفعل. وبناءً على ذلك، فقد حددت الدراسة وجود موقعين لأدوات النفي في اللهجة الصنعانية؛ أحدهما فوق عبارة الزمن (TP) والآخر تحتها. بالإضافة الى ذلك، ميزت الدراسة بين اختلافات التعبير او استخدام النفي بناء على نوع الجملة، وغيرها من الظواهر النحوية الأخرى. وبذلك يمكننا القول بإن نتائج الدراسة تقدم تفسيراً أوضح لكيفية التعبيرعن النفي واستخدامه في اللهجة الصنعانية، وعن أوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين هذه اللهجة واللهجات العربية الأخرى.

Introduction:

Negation is a fundamental feature of human language, and is present in all known natural languages and dialects (Lindstad, 2007). As Horn (2010) states, the ability to negate is the ability to be human, which includes the ability to refuse, contradict, lie, speak ironically, and distinguish truth from falsehood. In the linguistic theory, negation not only shapes meaning but also reveals important syntactic characteristics unique to each language or dialect.

In the context of Arabic dialects, negation can be expressed with the use of a variety of particles, verb forms, or specific lexical items (Mion, 2015). Studying these patterns enhances our understanding of language variation and syntactic structure. The negation system in Sana'ani dialect (SD), the dialect spoken in the region of Sana'a in Yemen, features specific forms and structures that distinguish it from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and other Arabic dialects as well. One common way to negate a sentence in this dialect is the placement of certain particles such as 'la' and 'ma' before the verb, as well as the attachment of the suffix '-sh' to that verb. The particles 'mish', 'mashi', or 'mabesh' are also used in different contexts to express negation. Analyzing how negation functions syntactically in this dialect can provide valuable insights into its grammatical system.

Statement of the Problem

The existing research on negation in Arabic has mostly focused on some standard and regional dialects, but little has been done on the Sana'ani dialect in general and its negation system in particular. Exploring negation in this dialect is vital to better document and understand its unique linguistic features, enriching the overall knowledge of Arabic dialect diversity.

Questions of the Study

1. What are the sentence types or structures of negation in Sana'ani dialect, and how do the negation markers function in various contexts in this dialect?

2. How does negation interact with syntactic phenomena such as agreement, wh-movement, and clause structure in Sana'ani dialect?

Methodology of the Study

This paper uses a descriptive approach to analyzing the syntactic aspects of the negation system of Sana'ani dialect. The main source of the study data is based on the native speakers' everyday speech (a fieldwork) as well as the judgment of the researcher as a native speaker of Sana'ani dialect. First, the data was collected by the researcher after the collection method was validated by a professor of linguistics. Then, the sentences containing negative markers were uttered in the presence of a group of Sana'ani speakers (males and females) to make sure they are structurally and semantically correct.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to analyzing the negation system of Sana'ani dialect, focusing specifically on its syntactic aspects. This includes the identification and distribution of negation markers within sentences.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research stems from the fact that there is no study focusing on investigating the system of negation in the Sana'ani dialect. The present study therefore is an attempt to shed some light on and provide valuable insights into negation and its markers in this dialect. In doing so, this paper aims to analyze sentence structure, the positions of negation markers, grammatical features of negated sentences, and related phenomena.

Moreover, the present paper plays an important role in preserving cultural

heritage, enhancing theories of language typology and universal grammar, understanding Arabic language diversity as well as the cross-linguistic patterns and universals of negation, expanding documentation of the Sana'ani dialect, and providing a clearer understanding of negation structure in this dialect. Therefore, not only is this paper valuable for linguistic research; it also has practical applications in language teaching, translation, and communication with speakers of Sana'ani dialect.

Data Analysis and Discussion

In Sana'ani dialect, negation is expressed in two ways. The first way is the use of a one-part negation marker, namely 'mish.' The second is the use of a two-part negation marker, namely 'ma . . . -sh'. In other words, this marker of negation consists of a primary negation particle, namely 'ma'; this particle – like in many other Yemeni and Arabic dialects [1] – precedes the verb and may indicate the perfective or imperfective aspect. The secondary part is the suffix '-sh', which often attaches to the verb to emphasize negation and may be blocked in certain constructions.

Negation Particles and their Sentence Placement

  Sana'ani dialect, spoken within the area of Sana'a City and its suburbs, exhibits a unique set of grammatical structures that distinguish it from Modern Standard Arabic and other Arabic dialects. One of the key features of the Sana'ani dialect is its sentence patterns, which play a crucial role in conveying meaning and emphasis. To examine how negation works in this dialect; therefore, it is useful to discuss the occurrences of negation markers in different types of sentence structures as follows [2]:

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[1] This negative marker is also used in Modern Standard Arabic.

[2] For more details on sentence structures, see ʕalamah, (1993); Ryding, (2005); Aoun et al., (2010); Wright, (2011); Ahmed (2012); Hadadi, (2022).

- Declarative Sentences

In Arabic, there are two types of declarative sentences: Verbal and Non-Verbal (N. Verbal declarative sentences start with the main verb followed by the subject (i.e., Verb-Subject Order); they are more common and can come in multiple constructions. In this type of sentences, the negation marker 'ma . . . -sh' is preferred. Non-verbal declarative sentences, by contrast, start with the subject often followed by the main verb (Subject-Verb Order); they are more common in descriptive texts. Below is a discussion of the negation markers in these two types of declarative sentences.

Subject-Verb (SV) Order / Nominal Sentences

In nominal sentences, the negation marker 'ma . . . -sh' is always adjoined to the verb, with *ma* preceding the verb and *-sh* following it. These two parts cannot be separated from the verb by another element, no matter whether they occur in a non-verbal sentence or a verbal one. Compare the following example with the one in (2).

(1) Aħmed **ma**-katab**sh** ʔal-wajib

<div dir="rtl">أحمد ما كتبش الواجب</div>

Ahmed **Neg**-wrote.3ms-**Neg** the-homework
"Ahmed did not write the homework."

(2) **ma**-katab**sh** Aħmed ʔal-wajeb

<div dir="rtl">ما كتبش أحمد الواجب</div>

Neg-wrote.3ms-**Neg** Ahmed the-homework
"Ahmed did not write the homework."

Nominal sentences can be classified into two types: those sentences with verbs as in example (1) and those without verbs as in examples (3), (4) and (5) below. In such verbless sentences, the two parts of the negation marker *ma . . . -sh* are joined to become a one-word negation marker, that is, *mish*. The negation marker *mish* can be followed by a nominal or adjectival predicate. Consider the following examples:

(3) ʔal-madrseh **mish** (heeh) kabeereh

المدرسة مش هي كبيرة

the-school **Neg**-3fs   big

"The school is not big."

(4) a. **ma**-hum-**sh** fi   ʔal-sooq

ماهمش في السوق

Neg.3mp-**Neg**   in   the-supermarket

"They are not in the supermarket."

b. **mish** hum   fi   ʔal-sooq

مش هم في السوق

Neg.3mp   in   the-supermarket

"They are not in the supermarket."

As can be observed from (3) and (4), the single-word negation marker *mish* can occur before or after the nominal element. It can be also seen that the pronoun may be infixed into *mish*, thus bringing it back to its original form, that is, *ma . . . -sh*, as in ماهمش. This dual usage of the negation marker *ma . . . -sh* is a unique property of the Sana'ani dialect. However, it is noticed that in some Arabic dialects, such as 'Jazani', they express negation only by encliticizing the pronoun to 'ma … -sh' (hadadi, 2022). In addition, it is observed that the sentences can stand alone in the absence of a lexical subject, indicating that the nominal clitic (heeh, hum) are merged with negative markers.

It is also worth mentioning that in the absence of a verbal head, clitics can use prepositional, existential particles, and subject clitics as negative markers. For example,

(5) **mabesh** ħal

مابش حل

Neg solution

"There is no solution."

(6) a. **mabesh**   maʕa-hum   ħajeh

مابش معاهم حاجة

Neg with-them thing
"They have nothing"

b. **ma**-maʕa-**hum** shey

ما معاهم شي

Neg-with them thing
"They do not have anything."

Other auxiliary-like elements commonly used in the Sana'ani dialect are يقع 'yagaʕ' (allowed to) and قد 'gad' (anymore/still). These are derived from verbal forms but lost their verbal qualities due to diachronic changes. Again, the parts of the negation marker *ma ... -sh* are attached to these elements rather than the main verb. In addition, 'yagaʕ' expresses modality, while 'gad' expresses the durative aspect (Ahmed, 2012). Consider these examples:

(7) **ma**-yagaʕ**sh**   ʔashel ħajeh **mish** heeh haggy

ما يقعش أشل حاجة مش هي حقي

Neg-allow.3ms-**Neg** take.1s thing **Neg**.3fs mine
"It is not allowed to take something that is not mine."

(8) **ma**-gad**sh**   ʕad-tefʕal shey

ما قدش عتفعل شي

Neg -still-**Neg**.1s   will-do.1s   thing
"I have not done anything yet."

It is worth noting that the auxiliary-like element *gad* may be used in a nominal sentence (i.e., non-verbal sentence). In such a case, the two parts of the negation marker are used as a proclitic and enclitic respectively. Example:

(9) **ma**-gadoo**sh**   jahiz

ما قدهوش جاهز

Neg-still.3ms-**Neg** ready
"It is not ready yet."

Verb-Subject (VS) Order Sentences

These sentences (i.e., verbal sentences) can have different patterns, as follows:

Explicit-Subject Sentences

Like in the SV order sentences, the two parts of the negation marker 'ma ... -sh' in this sentence pattern are inseparable from the verb. For example,

(10) **ma**-katab**sh** Aħmed ʔal-wajeb

ما كتبش أحمد الواجب

Neg-wrote.3ms-**Neg**   Ahmed   the-homework

"Ahmed did not write the homework."

As in (10) above, the verb '*Katab*' is preceded by the primary negative particle *ma-* and followed by the suffix -*sh*.

Implicit-Subject Sentences

This construction is a subtype of VS order sentences, and has an implicit subject. For example,

(11) **ma**-leʕebna**sh** fi ʔal-bait

ما لعبناش في البيت

Neg-played.3mp-**Neg**   in   the-house

"We did not play in the house."

Sentences with Auxiliary-like Elements

This type of verbal sentences refers to the sentences that often have some elements having aspectual functions similar to those of auxiliary verbs in English; that is, these auxiliary-like elements may be used to indicate perfective, imperfective and progressive aspects. In such constructions, the two parts of the negation marker *ma . . . -sh* can be separated from the main verb and attached to the auxiliary-like element. Negation particles merge with the auxiliary-like elements in the same way as it does with the main verbs. Consider the following examples:

(12) **ma**-kan**sh** bi-yelʕab   maʕana fi ʔal-bait

ما كانش بيلعب معانا في البيت

Neg-was.3ms-**Neg** play.3ms   with-us in the-house

"He was not playing with us in the house."

(13) **ma**-ʕad-ʔagulu -hum[3]-**sh** bi-shey

ما عاد اقولهمش بشي

Neg-will-tell.1s-them-**Neg**   anything

"I will not tell them anything."

As illustrated in these examples, the negation particles in the Sana'ani dialect can cliticized to the auxiliary. In (12), the two parts of the negation are not attached to the main verb يلعب; instead, they attach to the auxiliar-like element كان In (13), it is clear that negation can merge with complex heads, (i.e., a verb that is followed by pronominal suffixes or a preposition).

Sentences with Emphatic Negation

In dialectal Arabic, the non-negation word شي 'shey' (thing) becomes a clitic and marks   negation   through grammaticalization. So, there is an interaction between focus and negation, which demonstrates the focus influence on the negation marker. It can be observed that the negation marker 'sh' in Sana'ani dialect is dropped out in the context of focus, as is the adverbial phrase *wallah* 'by God', which is used to express an oath or emphasis, such as with Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), or Negative Concord Item (NCIs). Example:

(14) wallah **ma**-ʕakalt shey   man   ams

والله ما أكلت شي من أمس

by   God   **Neg**-eat.1s anything   from yesterday

"I swear by God, I have not eaten anything since yesterday."

Sentences with Double Negation

Double negation refers to the use of two negative particles occurring within the

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[3] It is clitic clusters that means negation can occur with verbal categories, pronominal clitics, prepositions, or dative constructions.

same sentence or clause. This grammatical construction can have different effects on the semantics of the sentence. Double negation particles cancel each other out to form a positive statement. Example:

(15) heeh **ma**-sarat**sh** ʔal-madrseh **ma doon** ħijab

هي ماسارتش المدرسة من دون حجاب

She **Neg**-went.3fs-**Neg** the-school without hijab
"She did not go to school without a hijab or head cover."

This example shows that the negation marker *ma ... -sh* occurs with the negative preposition *man doon* (without) within the same sentence. Double negation can also be used in a negative answer to a 'Yes/No' question. For example:

(16) a. ma-sar**sh** Aħmed ʔal-madrseh ʔal-yawm?

ماسارش أحمد المدرسة اليوم؟

QP-went.3ms-**Neg** Ahmed the-school today
"Did not Ahmed go to school today?"

b. **mashi**, **ma**-sar**sh**

ماشي ماسارش

Neg, **Neg**-went.3ms-**Neg**
"No, he did not go."

-Interrogative Sentences

Interrogative construction is a technique that is used to ask a question by using interrogative markers.

- Yes/No Questions

In Modern Standard Arabic, there are different question markers, such as *hal* and *al-hamzah*, which disappear in the dialectal system (Ahmed, 2012). For example,

(17) a. hal dhahab-ta ila ʔal-madrasah?

هل ذهبتَ إلى المدرسة؟

QP went.2ms to the-school

"Did you go to the school?"

b. ʔa dhahab-ta ila ʔal-madrasah?

أ ذهبتَ إلى المدرسة؟

QP went.2ms to the-school
"Did you go to the school?"

In example (17) above, the question has the same word order of a verbal sentence (VS), regardless of the existence of the question particle (QP) at the beginning. On the other hand, the question particle in Sana'ani dialect is 'ma' which is similar to the negative marker 'ma', along with the -sh marker attached to the verb in case the yes/no question is negative. Again, in Sana'ani dialect, this type of (yes/no) question is usually expressed by intonation, as there are no question markers or subject-auxiliary inversions. Therefore, the question marker has a similar phonological realization to the negative marker 'ma' as shown in example (18) below.

(18) **ma**-katab**sh** Aħmed ʔal-wajib?

ما كتبش أحمد الواجب؟

Neg/QP wrote.3ms-**Neg** Ahmed the-homework
"Did not Ahmed write the homework?"

In Sana'ani dialect, the negative marker 'mish' can be used also in Yes/No question. For example,

(19) mish hu Mohammed fi ʔal-bait?

مش هو محمد في البيت؟

Neg/QP-3ms Mohammed in the-house
"Is not Mohammed in the house?"

In example (19), the question is in the context of the non-verbal sentence, so the negation is not contiguous to a verb.

-Imperative Sentences

The negative imperative sentences in the Sana'ani dialect are also expressed by

either the negation marker 'ma ... -sh' or 'la ... -sh'[4]. For examples,

(20) a. **ma**-telʕaboo**sh**　ʔal-yawm fi ʔa shareʕ

<div dir="rtl">ما تلعبوش اليوم في الشارع</div>

Neg-play.3mp-**Neg**　today　　　　in the-street

"Do not play in the street today."

b. **la** teghaliq**sh** ʔal-bab

<div dir="rtl">لا تغلقش الباب</div>

Neg close.3ms-**Neg**　the-door
"Do not close the door."

## The Position of the Negative Markers in Phrase Structure

As mentioned before, there are two main systems of negation in Sana'ani dialect: the one-part negative marker, which always comes in the pre-verbal position, and the two-part negative markers, which come in the pre-and post-verbal positions.

The position of the projection of the negative marker (NegP) in the Arabic dialects has been discussed in various research endeavors. However, the Sana'ani dialect in Yemeni Arabic has not been investigated thoroughly. Before discussing a hypothesis for the position of NegP in Sana'ani dialect, it is necessary to survey what has already been proposed for other Arabic dialects or languages.

There are several arguments regarding the position of NegP in the syntactic structure (see, for instance, Ouhalla (1990, 1993), Zanuttini (1997), Benmamoun (2000), Zanuttini (2001), Zeijlstra (2004), Aoun et al. (2010), and Rowlett (2014)). For Pollock (1989), French uses the two-part negative markers 'ne ... pas' as a way of expressing sentential negation, which is also argued to be positioned between TP

and VP. The negative marker 'ne' is considered a weak head that cliticizes to the verb because it does not block head movement, but it encliticizes to it, while 'pas' is an adverbial element. Therefore, the negative markers (ne ... pas) is put into different positions; 'ne' is in Neg while 'pas' is in the specifier of NegP, as shown in (21) below.

(21)
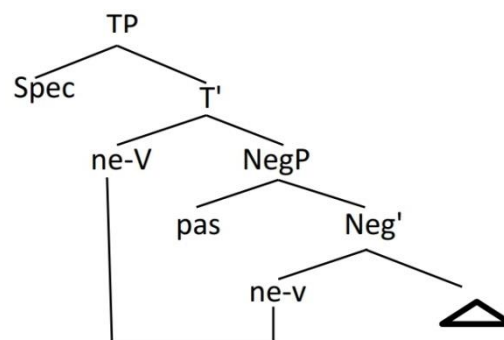
"This (minimalist) analysis was adopted earlier for Arabic; '-sh' is patterned with 'pas' and 'ma' with 'ne'" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 76).

Moreover, Ahmed (2012) said that in Yemeni Arabic, 'ma' is the head of the NegP, while 'sh' is a clitic generated in Spec, ShP[5], as shown in (22) below.

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[4] The negative marker 'la' is inherited from Modern Standard Arabic, in which 'la' is called 'la annahiyah' (prohibition *la*), and also the negative marker 'ma' is inherited from Modern Standard Arabic (Ahmed, 2012).

[5] The reason for the positing of 'sh' in Spec, ShP, is because *sh* is an emphatic negative marker and not inherently negative.

(22)
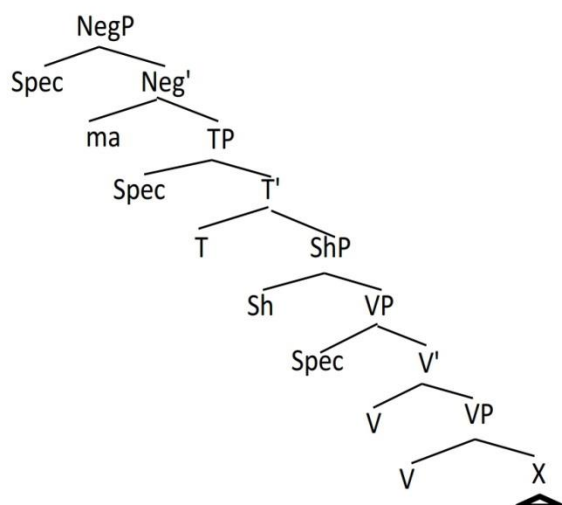
- Negative Declarative Sentences

Now, it can be seen that Ahmed's (2012) proposal appears to be suitable for this sub-section as it deals with the two-part negative marker 'ma...-sh' in the Sana'ani dialect. However, the creation of 'ShP' is not accurate. An argument against the use of '-sh' projection is that in some Yemeni dialects, more specifically 'Tahami Dialect', the negative structure can sometimes be expressed by maintaining the '-sh' negation particle without its accompanying negation marker 'ma.' For example,
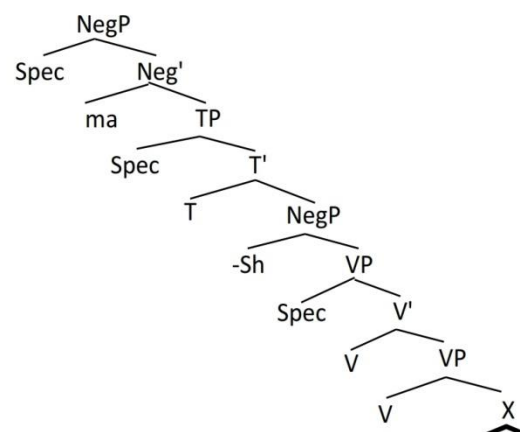
(23) Aħmed ʔakal-**sh**i wa-la   ħajeh

أحمد أكلشي ولا حاجة

Ahmed ate.3ms-Neg and not thing
"Ahmed did not eat anything."

Therefore, the present study would argue that the '-sh' phrase should be replaced by NegP. The analysis thus ends up with two NegP phrases, one above the TP, and one below it. This can be demonstrated diagrammatically as in (24) below.

(24)

We can say, therefore, that, in Sana'ani dialect, generating the two-part negative marker in two different locations seems more plausible than in a single-head location.

So, Sana'ani dialect employs the two-part negative marker 'ma ... -sh' as a way of expressing sentential negation. 'ma' is treated as a strong head that attaches as a prefix to the verb, while '-sh' is an emphatic negation element. They each have distinct categorial features that put them into different positions; that is, 'ma' occupies the NegP, and '-sh' occupies the Specifier of the lower NegP. For example,
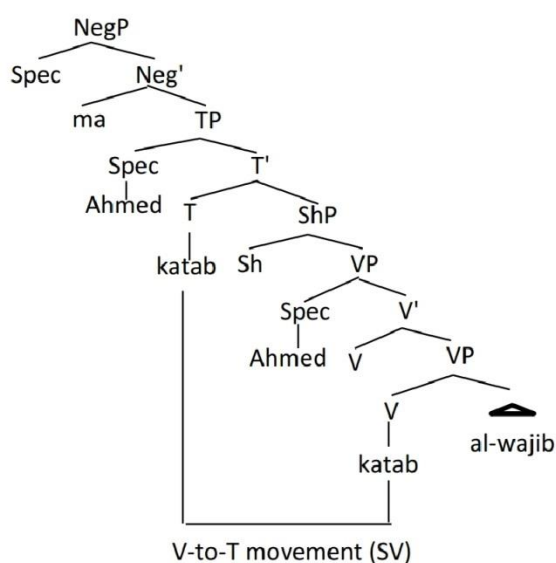
(25) Aħmed ma-katabsh ʔal-wajib

أحمد ما كتبش الواجب

Ahmed   Neg-wrote.3ms-Neg   the-homework
"Ahmed did not write the homework."

The derivation of this example is as follows:

(26)

V-to-T movement (SV)

In this example, the verb moves to T to check its agreement and tense ((+V) and (+D)) features. It skips the negative marker '-sh' because it is in the Spec of a lower NegP. So, the verb does not need to go further. The verb ends with the proclitic 'ma-' and the enclitic '-sh' (Watson, 1993; Albuarabi, 2021).

- Negative Interrogative (Yes/No Questions)

In Sana'ani dialect, negation in Yes/No questions is typically expressed by using intonation with the same negation marker *ma ... -sh*. The intonation typically rises at the end of the question, which suggests a universal feature of interrogative sentences, signaling that a response is sought. Example:
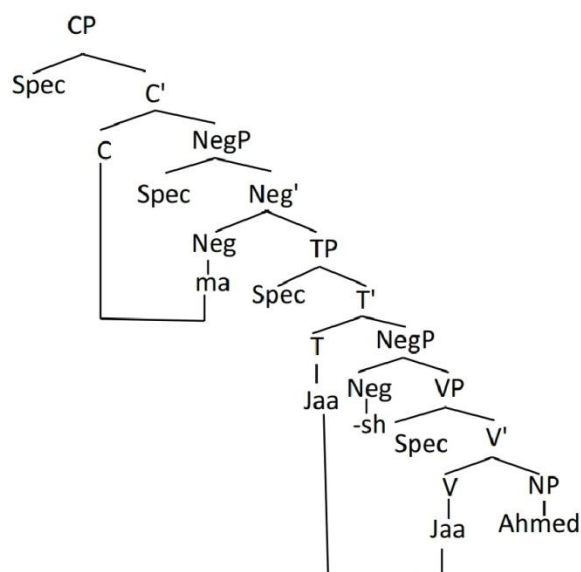
(27) ma jaash Fawwaz?

ما جاءش فواز؟

QP came.3ms.**Neg** Fawwaz
"Did not Fawwaz come?"

The derivation of this example can be illustrated in a diagrammatical form, as follows:

(28)

V-to T movement

In this example, the negation marker 'ma' moves to C'. The verb has to move through tense to avoid violating the Relativized Minimality (RM) (Rizzi, 1990) or the Head Movement Constraint (HMC) (Travis, 1984). As a result, the verb can express both T and C.

- Negative Imperative Sentences

In Sana'ani dialect, negative imperatives with the negation markers *la ... -sh* or *ma ... -sh* require two negative projections in the phrase structure: one for the preverbal 'la/ma' and another for the postverbal '-sh'. Negative imperatives in Sana'ani dialect (SD) has more morphology because negation highlights the person feature, whereas positive imperatives mark the person feature semantically but lack morphology. Additional agreement elements like number and gender are typically added to the verb (Ahmed, 2012). According to Benmamoun (2000), the negative imperative causes the person feature to emerge as a result of the [+D] of negation. Shormani (2021) states that imperatives have tense but only in the present or future, not the past. Shormani bases his suggestion on temporal adverbs such as 'now' and 'tomorrow'.

Zanuttini (1991) proposes that NegP in negative imperatives has two positions: NegP1 and NegP2. NegP1 is positioned above TP and NegP2 is below TP. Moreover, Shormani and Alhussen (2024) argue that the positions of NegP in imperative negatives in Yemeni Arabic are two. The first one is NegP, and the second one is NegClP, as shown in (29) below.

(29)
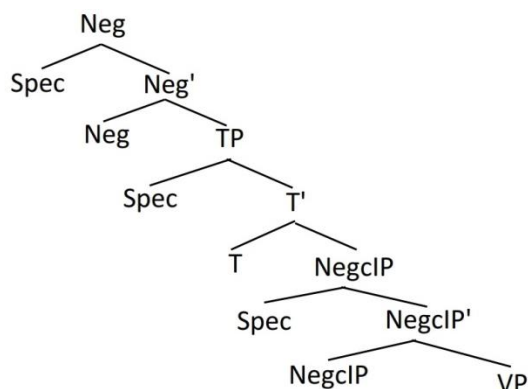
Therefore, in the Sana'ani dialect, there are two bipartite negations (NegPs): The first one is above TP, and the second one is below TP, which is in conformity with this paper's proposal of having two NegPs rather than one NegP and one ShP. However, '-sh' is in fact a negative clitic. In this dialect, Neg will be split into NegP and NegClP as Shormani and Alhussen (2024) proposed for YA. The NegP is the negative marker 'la/ma,' and the NegClP is the negative marker '-sh.' For example,

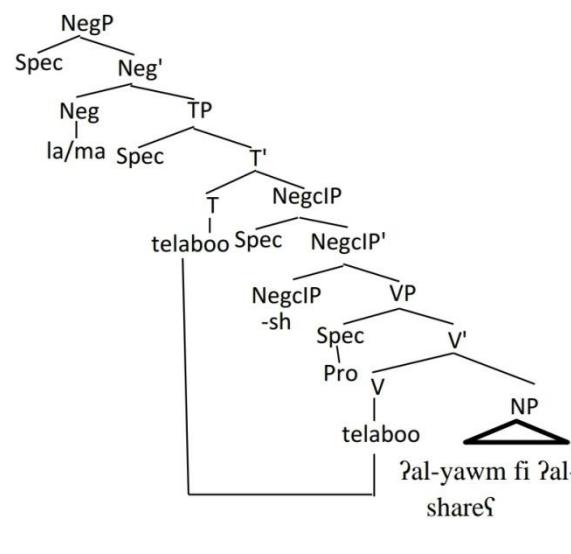(30) **la**/**ma**-telʕaboo**sh**   ʔal-yawm fi ʔal-shareʕ

لا/ ما تلعبوش اليوم في الشارع

Neg-play.3mp-**Neg**   today   in the-street

"Do not play in the street today."

The derivation for example (30) is as follows:

(31)

Negation and Main Clauses vs. Subordinate Clauses

Main clauses and subordinate clauses are fundamental elements of sentence structure in all natural languages, including Arabic dialects. Main clauses are known as independent and can stand alone as complete sentences. Negation in main clauses in the Sana'ani dialect typically uses the negation marker 'ma ... -sh'. 'Ma' is placed before the verb to negate it whereas '-sh' is placed after the verb to emphasize the negation. Example:

(32) Aħmed **ma**-leʕib**sh**   ʔal-yawm

أحمد ما لعبش اليوم

Ahmed   Neg played.3ms-Neg   today
"Today, Ahmed did not play."

As for subordinate clauses, which are dependent and cannot stand alone, they provide additional information to the main clause. But, the negation of subordinate clauses does not differ from that of the main clauses. It is noticeable that the same elements and grammatical categories that influence negation patterns in main clauses also do so in subordinate clauses (Ghadgoud, 2017). In Sana'ani dialect, subordinate clauses exhibit specific characteristics when it comes to negation.

The primary negation marker 'ما' (ma) and the emphatic marker 'ش' (-sh) are commonly used to negate verbs in both main and subordinate clauses. However, when these markers are used in subordinate clauses, their interaction with the main clause cannot affect their interpretation and meaning. For example,

(33) ħabbait anhu **ma**-kan-**sh**   gadeem

<div dir="rtl">حببت انه ما كانش قديم</div>

liked.1s that.3ms **Neg** was.1s-**Neg** old
"I liked that it was not old."

Also, a sentence like the following is possible to use in the Sana'ani dialect:

(34) **ma**-ħabbait-**sh** anhu   kan   gadeem

<div dir="rtl">ما حببتش أنه كان قديم</div>

Neg-liked.1s-**Neg** that.3ms was   old
"I did not like that it was old."

The difference between the two sentences is that their meanings are completely different. In the first sentence (i.e., example (33)), the negation occurs in the subordinate clause, specifically on the auxiliary verb, while in the second sentence (i.e., example (34)), the negation occurs in the main (matrix) clause, resulting in opposite meanings.

In subordinate clauses in the Sana'ani dialect, negation is not only expressed by the two-part marker *ma ... -sh*; the negative element *mish* can also be used. Example:

(35) ħabbait anhu **mish**   gadeem

<div dir="rtl">حببت أنه مش قديم</div>

liked.1s that.3ms **Neg**   old
"I liked that it was not old."

Sana'ani speakers also negate the non-tensed form of the auxiliary *yakoon* with the negation marker 'ma...-sh', as in (36) below, when it appears in a subordinate clause. The auxiliary *yakoon* can only appear in a subordinate clause without another element.

(36) ʔafadhel   anhu   **ma**-yakuoo**sh**

baʕeed

<div dir="rtl">أفضل أنه ما يكونش بعيد</div>

prefer.1s   that.3ms   **Neg**   be.3ms-**Neg** far
"I prefer it not to be far."

In addition, in Sana'ani dialect, the non-tensed form of the standard verb *yaʔkil* (eat) is negated with 'ma... -sh' in a subordinate position. This can be observed when the matrix verb *yufadhel* (would prefer) is in the present simple tense.

(37) ʔafadhel **ma**-ʔakl**sh**   dhalħeen

<div dir="rtl">أفضل ما أكلش ذلحين</div>

prefer.1s   **Neg** eat.1s-**Neg** now
"I would prefer not to eat now."

The same can also be said, with *yufadhel* being negated, as in:

(38) **ma**-ʔafadhel-**sh** ʔakl   dhalħeen

<div dir="rtl">ما أفضلش أكل ذلحين</div>

Neg-perfer.1s-**Neg** eat.1s   now
"I would rather not to eat now."

Negation of Participles

In Sana'ani dialect, active participles behave similarly to nouns and adjectives in that they inflect for gender and number, but unlike verbs, they do not inflect for person. Moreover, unlike non-tensed verb forms, active participles cannot take the future tense marker (Ghadgoud, 2017).

Active participles are negated differently from other verb forms. While other verb forms are negated discontinuously, [6] as illustrated in previous examples, active participles are negated by the occurrence of the single-word negation marker *mish* before them. Example:

(39) a. **ma**-ʕajabnee**sh**   ʔanah **mish** fahim

ʔal-dars

---

[6] 'Negated discontinuously' means that the verbs are negated by the prefix *ma* and the suffix *-sh*.

ما عجبنيش أنه مش فاهم الدرس

Neg-pleased.3ms-obj.1s-**Neg**   that.3ms **Neg** understanding.3ms the-lesson

"I did not like that he did not understand the lesson."

Negation in Embedded Clauses

Embedded clauses, typically functioning as relative clauses or complement clauses, can be negated in the Sana'ani dialect. The negation of these constructions is similar to that of matrix clauses. That is, the same negative markers used to negate matrix clauses can be employed to negate embedded clauses. For example,

(40) ħaawalt ʔafahhem-ha **ma**-tafʕal**sh** mithl-hum

حاولت أفهمها ما تفعلش مثلهم

tried.1s to make understand.1s-obj **Neg**-do.3fs-**Neg** as them

"I tried to persuade her not to do as they do."

If embedded clauses occur in the form of imperatives, the negation is typically expressed by the marker *la ... -sh*, which highlights the flexibility of negation depending on the sentence type. To illustrate the point, the following example is provided where the embedded clause is a negative imperative.

(41) galt-li **la**-taftaħi**sh** ʔal-bab le-ħad

قالت لي لا تفتحيش الباب لأحد

said.3fs-to me **Neg**-open.2fs-**Neg** the-door for anyone

"She said to me, "Do not open the door to anyone.""

In a non-verbal embedded clause introduced with the participial particle أن (inn), the marker *mish* is used to negate that embedded clause. In this case, a pronoun (e.g., هو or هي) is often cliticized to the negative marker *mish*, as shown in (42) below.

(42) gad gult-la-k inn ħadha al-kitab

mish hu ħagak

قد قلت لك أن هذا الكتاب مش هو حقك

modal said.1s to-you that this-book **Neg**.3ms yours

"I have told you that this book is not yours."

Negation and Wh-Movement

Wh-movement (also known as wh-fronting or wh-preposing) refers to transferring a wh-word (e.g., *who*, *when*, *where*, etc.) to the Specifier position within the Complementizer Phrase (Radford, 2009). In the context of negation, the negative marker/markers does/does not affect the wh-movement or phrases. Example:

(43) a. man **ma**-jaa**sh** ams?

من ما جاءش أمس؟

who **Neg**-came.3ms-**Neg** yestarday
"Who did not come yestarday?"

b. leish/lilmeh Fawwaz **ma**-jaa**sh**

maʕana?

ليش/للمه فواز ما جاءش معانا؟

why Fawwaz **Neg**-came.3ms-**Neg** with us
"Why did not Fawwaz come with us?"

As can be observed from these examples, the word order remains as in the declarative form; there is no subject-verb inversion, as is in English. In (43a), the word order is as follows: Wh+ma-V-sh+ Complement. The wh-word *man* is an interrogative particle and refers to the subject. In (43b), the word order is: Wh+S+ma-V-sh+ Complement. The wh-phrase 'leish/lilmeh' is an interrogative particle used in the Sana'ani dialect to ask about the reason.

It is worth noting that, in the Sana'ani dialect, the question word may occur at the beginning or the end of the interrogative sentence. For example:

(44) a. **leish/lilmh ma**-ʕakl**sh** maʕna**?**

ليش/للمه ما اكلش معانا؟

why **Neg**-ate.3ms-**Neg** with us
"Why did not he eat with us?"

b.   **ma**-jaa**sh** Fawwaz **leish**?

<div dir="rtl">ما جاءش فواز ليش؟</div>

Neg-came.3ms-**Neg**   Fawwaz why
"Why did not Fawwaz come?"

Negation and Subject-Verb Agreement

Baker (2008) defines agreement as the grammatical process by which the form of one item induces a second item in the sentence to have a specific form. It refers to a syntactic procedure in which one constituent must have the same value for certain grammatical features, such as person, number, and gender, as another constituent with which it has a specific grammatical relationship (Franklin et al., 2000). In other words, agreement is a formal link between two elements in a particular hierarchical structure where their forms must match (Al-humari, 2023). Agreement happens between two elements in a sentence, such as between verb and subject or between adjective and noun.

In the context of negation in Arabic, the negation marker generally does not trigger agreement with the verb in the same way the subject does. Instead, the agreement between the subject and the verb remains intact regardless of the presence of negation. The same is true of negation in the Sana'ani dialect; that is, the subject maintains gender, person, and number agreement with the verb. But, unlike in Modern Standard Arabic, where S-V agreement is not required in negative Verbal Sentences, the subject in the Sana'ani dialect triggers full agreement with the verb regardless of the type of the sentence, whether it is Nominal Sentence or Verbal Sentence. For example:

(45) a. ʔal-jahal   **ma**-ragadoo**sh**

<div dir="rtl">الجهال ما رقدوش</div>

the-children **Neg**-sleep.3mp-**Neg**
"The children did not sleep."

b. **ma**-ragadoo**sh**   ʔal-jahal

<div dir="rtl">ما رقدوش الجهال</div>

Neg-sleep.3mp-**Neg** the-children

"The children did not sleep."

In (45a), where there is a SV order (i.e. Nominal Sentence), there is full agreement (person, gender, and number) between the preverbal subject *ʔal-jahal* "the-children" and the negated verb *ma-ragadoosh* "sleep.3mp"; similarly, in (45b), where there is a VS order (i.e. Verbal Sentence), there is full agreement between the postverbal subject and its verb in terms of person, gender, and number.

In Modern Standard Arabic, however, the S-V agreement may be affected by the type of the negative sentence. Let us consider the following examples.

(46) a. **lam** yadhhab   ʔal-ʔawlaad-u ila ʔal-madrasati

<div dir="rtl">لم يذهب الأولاد إلى المدرسة</div>

Neg went.3ms the-boys-Nom to the-school
"The boys did not go to school"

b. ʔal-ʔawlaad-u **lam** yadhab-u   ila ʔal-madrasati

<div dir="rtl">الأولاد لم يذهبوا إلى المدرسة</div>

the-boys-Nom **Neg**-went.3mp to   the-school
"The boys did not go to school."

In (46a), where we find a VS order (i.e., Verbal Sentence), there is partial agreement between the postverbal subject subject *ʔal-ʔawlaad-u* "the-boys" and the negative verb phrase *lam yadhhab* "go.3ms"; that is, the verb is inflected for person (i.e., third person) and gender (i.e., masculine), but not for number. In (46b), where we have an SV order (i.e., Nominal Sentence), there is full agreement in terms of person, gender, and number between the preverbal subject *ʔal-ʔawlaad-u* "the-boys" and the verb with negation lam yadhab-u "go.3mp."

Conclusion

This research paper has investigated the negation markers in the Sana'ani dialect and their syntactic features. The negation

system in this dialect has been explained, focusing on its interaction with different sentence structures, including declarative (verbal and non-verbal constructions), interrogative (yes/no questions), and imperative forms. The previous sections present a detailed discussion of the negation markers in these syntactic structures commonly used in the Sana'ani dialect as well as the function of these markers in various contexts. As shown in the examples cited for the purpose of the study, the negative marker 'ma' serves as the head of the NegP, while 'sh' functions as a clitic positioned in the Specifier of that phrase. Additionally, the study highlighted the placement of the negative markers in declarative and interrogative structures, arguing that the two parts of the negation marker 'ma ... -sh' occupy two different positions: 'ma' is placed in NegP that is above TP, and 'sh' is situated in NegP that is below TP. In the context of imperatives, two positions of NegP are identified: 'ma' in Neg and 'sh' in NegCIP, aligning with Shormani and Allhussen's (2024) proposal. Furthermore, the paper investigated the variations in expressing negation based on clause type, including main and subordinate clauses. The paper also explored embedded clauses in the Sana'ani dialect. Finally, the paper examined the interaction of negation with other syntactic phenomena, including wh-word questions and subject-verb agreement.

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