The Morphosyntax Of Verbal Negation In Rural Jordanian Arabic

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to investigate the morphosyntax of verbal negation and the syntactic behavior of the pseudo verbs ʕind (at - have), and maʕ (with -have) when they undergo negation in Rural Jordanian Arabic (RJA). Based on the analysis of naturally occurring data in RJA, this study reveals that the diffusion of negation varies according to the position of the negative particles and the negated component. In perfective aspects, both ma and ma-… iš can achieve the negation. Apart from the perfective verbs and the pseudo-verb ʕind, -iš can perform the negation alone without the particle ma- with all other verbs and pseudo-verbs. From a syntactic perspective, the negative particle ma- fills the position of the NegP when it negates perfect verbs. As a result, there is no need for the verb to raise to NegP and carry the negative particle to raise Asp. Furthermore, the discontinuous negation ma-…... iš fills the position of the NegP, the verb combines with head of NegP, they all finally raise to T.

Keywords: verbal negation, pseudo verbs, perfective, imperfective, discontinuous.

1. Introduction

Negation is a universal phenomenon that is common to all languages of the world. It is hard to imagine that there is a natural language without a system of negation. "All human systems of communication contain a representation of negation." (Horn, 2001, p.xiii). In every spoken language, we must use negation to express ourselves in various situations: or else it would have been very difficult to negate or deny our affirmative statements. Moreover, negation is one of the basic concepts of any language. Each language has its negative system that includes particles and negated elements. If all the languages had a similar system of negation, it would have been less difficult to learn a second language. Unfortunately, it is not the case. Each language has its own system of negation and expression.

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Arabic, a Semitic language, is one of the most wide-spread languages in North Africa and Southwest Asia. It is part of a language family that is officially called Afro Asiatic family (Ryding, 2005). The Jordanian dialect belongs to the so-called oriental dialects, along with the Syrian, Palestinian, Lebanese dialects.

Negation can be uttered in different ways that use various patterns across the varieties of Arabic. A lot of studies have been carried out on negation in Modern Standard Arabic (henceforth MSA) and other Arabic dialects from a morphosyntactic perspective, but there is still significant work to be done. The distribution of negative particles in verbal and nonverbal sentences has been investigated by many linguists (Sallakh, 2021, Al-Horais, 2017, Murphy, 2014, Al-Momani,2011, Mousa, 2020). This paper aims to investigate the morphosyntactic properties of sentential negation in Rural Jordanian Arabic.

Literature review

Negation in RJA is not as simple as other Arabic dialects. Benmamoun et el. (2013) reports that many Arabic dialects convey negation utilizing the circumfix morphemes ma and –iš. He claims that Moroccan Arabic and Egyptian Arabic use the enclitic –iš goes with the proclitic ma, but –iš is not used in other dialects, such as the Gulf varieties. He argues that the use of –iš in Levantine dialects differs some use it, and others use ma only.

Negation in Arabic varieties can be conveyed in different ways. The formation of negation in these varieties vary from those holding a sole negative marker such as Modern Standard Arabic as in (1), Gulf Arabic, Hijazi Arabic and Syrian Arabic, to those holding two negative markers (bipartite negation), such as Moroccan Arabic as in (2), Egyptian Arabic, Palestinian Arabic, Yemeni Arabic and so forth.

(1) a. maa kataba Ali-un r-risala-t-a.   (MSA)

  NEG wrote.3.M.SG Ali-NOM DEF-letter-3.F.SG-ACC

  'Ali did not write the letter.'

   b. maa Ali-un fi d-daar-i.

     NEG Ali-NOM in DEF-house-GEN

     'Ali is not in the house.'

 (2) a. Omar ma-ktəb-š lə-bra   (Moroccan Arabic)

      Omar NEG-wrote.3.M.SG-NEG DEF-letter

     'Omar did not write the letter.'

  b. Omar ma-ši mriD

    Omar NEG-NEG Sick

    'Omar is not sick.'   (Benmamoun, 2000, p. 7)

Al-Momani (2011) investigates sentential negation in JA and argues that negative particles head their own functional projections. She shows that negation in JA takes place between TP and VP. Al-Momani claims that the negative particles ma ...s and ma: are used to negate copular sentences. Non- copular sentences, on

the other hand, are negated via using the negative particle mis. MSA, in comparison, uses different negation particles to negate copular sentences; it utilizes ma to negate past perfective forms, lam for the past imperfective, lan for the future and lysa for the present tense.

Murphy (2014) conducted a study on negation in Syrian Arabic at the clause, phrase and word levels. He argues that negation in Syrian Arabic is realized via a spectrum of lexical, morphological and analytical means. The varied set of negative particles used to encode negation in SA, he adds, is different than the rest of the Levant dialects. He claims that it is more closely related to Iraqi and Gulf Arabic. In his study, Murphy indicates that the negative particle ma: is used to negate copular sentences in SA, whereas the rest of the particles are used to negate non-verbal sentences. Negative particles such as bidu:n, bala, mu:, mendu:n, and many more are used to negate nouns, adjectives, prepositional phrases, participles and question Tags. They are also used for discourse and pragmatic emphasis. la:, on the other hand, is used for emphatic negation which is explored in depth in his work. However, contrary to what Murphy claims, many of the words used to express lexical negation in SA are also commonly used in JA and other Levantine Arabic dialects(Lebanese, Palestinian and Jordanian).

Mousa (2020) in a paper on sentential negation in Rural Palestinian Arabic reports that negation in RPA is morphosyntactically similar to negation in Modern Standard Arabic. His study indicates that the negative markers ma and is are used for negating both perfective and imperfective verbs, whereas mus is used for negating nominal and non-verbal predicates functioning as a head element of the NegP. He further explains that the post verbal negative particle -is is not as common in Urban Palestinian Arabic.

Negation in RJA has different variations; various methods can be applied to negate imperfect and perfect verb. The particle ma comes before the verb to negate perfective and imperfective verbs; by ma…. -iš, ma procliticizes and –iš encliticizes to the verb. The particle miš is used to negate nominal, adjectival, participle, and prepositional predicates. It is also used to negate imperative/prohibitive verbs. The negative particle la is used to negate

imperative/prohibitive verbs and nominals.. The focus in this paper will be on verbal negation where pre-verbal negative particle ma, the post verbal negative particle –iš and the discontinuous negative particle ma….-iš are used.

1.1 The Negative Morphemes ma, ma….iš, and iš

The discontinuous negative morphemes ma-….-iš, and –iš are similarly used for both perfective and imperfective verbs, as shown in (3) -(5). We express the negation of an imperfective verb by using ma (3), ma…-iš (4), or –iš (5). The imperfective verbs start with b-, to reveal imperfective aspect. It is important to mention that the use of ma with imperfective verbs is not a must as shown in (5).

(3)   **ma**-ba-naam

NEG-ASP- sleep.1SG

'I don't sleep.'

(4)   **ma**-ba-naam-**iš**

NEG-ASP- sleep.1SG-NEG

'I don't sleep.'

(5)   Sami bi-naam-**iš**

       Sami ASP-sleep.1SG-NEG

       'Sami doesn't sleep.'

Regarding the aspect, it influences the negative particle ma….-iš. Two varied forms are used in RJA when the verb is perfective. We can form negation by the first part alone or by the discontinuous morpheme. ma can be used as a separate negation particle (6); ma also can be used as a proclitic, with –iš as enclitic (7). In the imperfective form, iš is used as enclitic, it does not come with perfective form where it is deemed ill-formed in RJA as can be seen in (8).

(6)   **ma** širib Rami

       NEG drank. 3SG.M Rami

'Rami didn't drink.'

(7)   **ma** širb-**iš** Rami

       NEG-drank. 3SG.M -NEG Rami

       'Rami did not drink.'

(8)   * Rami širb-**iš**

       Rami drank. 3SG.M-NEG

       'Rami didn't drink.'

The particles ma, ma…iš and iš are also used for negative imperatives and prohibitives, as in (9) -(10):

(9)   **ma**-tru:ħ maʕ- Ali

       NEG-go. 2SG.M with- Ali

       'Don't go with Ali.'

(10)   **ma**-truħ-**iš** maʕ Ali

        NEG-go. 2SG.M-NEG with -Ali

        'Don't go with Ali.'

Upon examining example (9), we can claim that the meaning of leniency and negation are expressed by the suffix – iš. The degree of prohibition is suggested by the existence and the lack of the suffix –iš. Thus, we can claim that example (10), with the existence of the suffix –iš is a lenient form of prohibition. As a result, example (9) is a stronger form of prohibition due to the lack of the suffix -iš. By dropping ma, we have another form available for negation, using –iš on its own.

(11)   tilʕab-**iš**   maʕ-hum

       play. 2SG.M-NEG   with-them

'Don't play with them.'

According to Palva (1984), prohibitive verbs are different from the imperfective verbs. The prefix b- is attached to imperfective verbs, whereas t- prefix is attached to prohibitive verbs to mark second masculine in imperfective verbs. The particle –iš can be attached to the object clitic in verbs in RJA as it is shown in (12). The particle –š is attached to the object pronoun –ha.

(12)   **ma**-šofit-**ha-š**   ha-l-bent

        NEG-saw.1SG-her-NEG this-the-girl

        'I didn't see this girl.'

The case of the prepositions ʕind (at - have), and maʕ (with -have) in RJA

Arab grammarians do not agree on a certain definition of prepositions. One of these definitions is that propositions are a subcategory of particles and particles as "words that do not have a meaning in themselves, but that have a linking function with other parts of speech" (Louchane, 2006:11). Heine (1997) states that the mapping between location as a source schema that is extended to function as have-constructions is a well-established pattern of grammaticalization. Moreover, Rubin (2004) claims that such change can be found cross-linguistically and is attested in Arabic in both MSA and cross-dialectal. The preposition ʕind 'at' shows how a locative preposition is used to display the abstract field of possession. RJA as an Arabic dialect uses both functions, as a preposition and as a verb to express possession (pseudo verb), shown in (13) and (14).

(13) Al-ħaadeth Sa:r ʕind Id-dactoor

      DEF-accident happen-v2 at DEF-doctor

     'The accident happened at the doctor'

(14) ʕindi beit

    with-me house

    'I have a house'

It is obvious that the preposition maʕ 'with' wins a new function in addition to its main prepositional function. The additional use is very resembling in nature to the new function used by ʕind as in (15) and (16) which show the dual function of maʕ.

(15) Ana ruħit maʕ Ali

     1st p-I went-v2 with Ali

     'I went with Ali'

(16)   maʕi maSa:ry

     With-me money

     'I have money

It is worth mentioning that maʕ and ʕind cannot be used interchangeably because they are semantically different. It has been noticed that ʕind describes a "general possession" whereasmaʕ "refers to immediate possession". (Thackston 1996:40 cited in Rubin 2004:87)

Regarding the negation of the pseudo-verbs maʕ and ʕind, they are deemed non-verbal negation, which are prepositional phrases and adverbials that act like verbs. Arabic varieties speakers who use discontinuous negation ma… iš constantly with verbal predicates deal with pseudo-verbs the same way as standard verbs by the discontinuous negation, ma… iš. We have three negative patterns regarding pseudo- verbs: ma can be used as an independent particle (17), both ma- as proclitic and –iš as an enclitic (18). With ʕind RJA speakers allow either the preverbal or the discontinuous negation, ma… iš. The postverbal is ill-formed.

(17)   **ma** ʕind-i: beit
          NEG with-me   house
          'I don't have a house.'

(18)   **ma**-ʕind-i:-**š**   beit
          NEG-with-me-NEG   house
          'I don't have a house.'

Using –iš by itself as an enclitic is considered ungrammatical in the negation of the pseudo-verb ʕind 'at/have'. This can be illustrated in (19).

(19) * ʕind-i:-š beit

        at-me-NEG a house.

With maʕ RJA speakers use the three alternatives as in (20) -(22)

(20)   ma-ʕi:-**š**   maSa:ri
   with-me-NEG   money
          'I don't have money.'

(21)   ma- ma-ʕi:-**š**   maSa:ri

          NEG-with-me-NEG money

          'I don't have money'

(22)   ma- ma-ʕi   maSa:ri

          NEG-with-me-   money

          'I don't have money'

2. Discussion

In this part, we are going to present the syntactic interpretation of negation and the partition of the negative morphemes in RJA. The NegP Hypothesis of Chomsky (1995), Benmamoun (1992), Shlonsky (1997), Ouhalla (1991), among many others, has been adopted in most of the studies on sentential negation in Arabic dialects. The hypothesis states that negative morphemes head their functional projection located between the tense and the verb. Benmamoun et al. (2013, p.85) state "grammatical categories such as tense

and negation occupy syntactic projections above the lexical categories that contain the thematic head and its associated arguments". This can be illustrated in the following Tree.
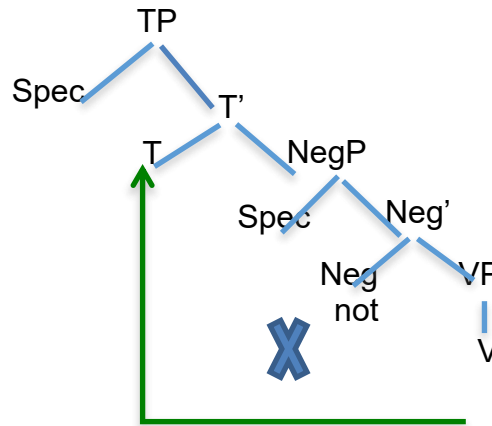

Benmamoun (2000) states that the negative particle in Jordanian Arabic is a head element and it heads its own syntactic projection; sentential negation occupies the position between TP and VP.

3.1 The Negative Particles ma, ma-š, -iš

Let's begin by analyzing the syntax of verbal negation spotlighting on ma in the perfect tense as shown below.

(6)   **ma** širib   Rami
   NEG drank. 3SG.M   Rami
       'Rami didn't drink.'

Ouhalla (1993), Benmamoun (2000), Bahloul (1996), and Aoun et al. (2010) explain that ma the head of NegP is used for sentential negation in various Arabic dialects in both perfective and imperfective verbs. Thus, this sentential negation abides in a place between TP and VP. The verb does not need to be cliticized to the separate negation particle. Consequently, the verb does not need to raise to NegP to pick up the negative particle, rather than raises to Asp, as illustrated in the following tree.
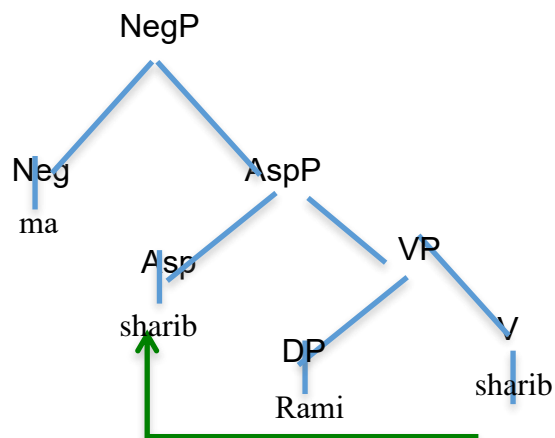
The negative particle ma…. iš acts differently according to the aspect. ma…. iš or ma can be used if the verb is perfective. Like other Arabic dialects, the use of **iš** alone is not possible in RJA. However, the other three variants are possible if the verb is in the imperfective form as previously mentioned (vowel syncope applies to the imperfective verb širib (drink) and similar forms when both particles are used).

(7)   **ma** širb-**iš**   Rami
   NEG-drank. 3SG.M -NEG Rami
         'Rami did not drink.'

Regarding the syntactic analysis of the discontinuous negation, on the one hand, the controversial use of ma…. iš in some variations is considered an adverb like the pas in French (Lucas, 2007). Pollock (1989) investigated the French negative particle from the viewpoint of verb movement. She supposes that ne is typically the head of the French NegP, with pas its typical specifier with finite verbs. Moreover, she claims that the negative particle can be in the adverbial position in VP initial position, with ne as a head. Finally, she states that ne can also be the head of a negative NP generated in an A-position. Consider the following tree diagram taken from (Pollock, 1989: 414)
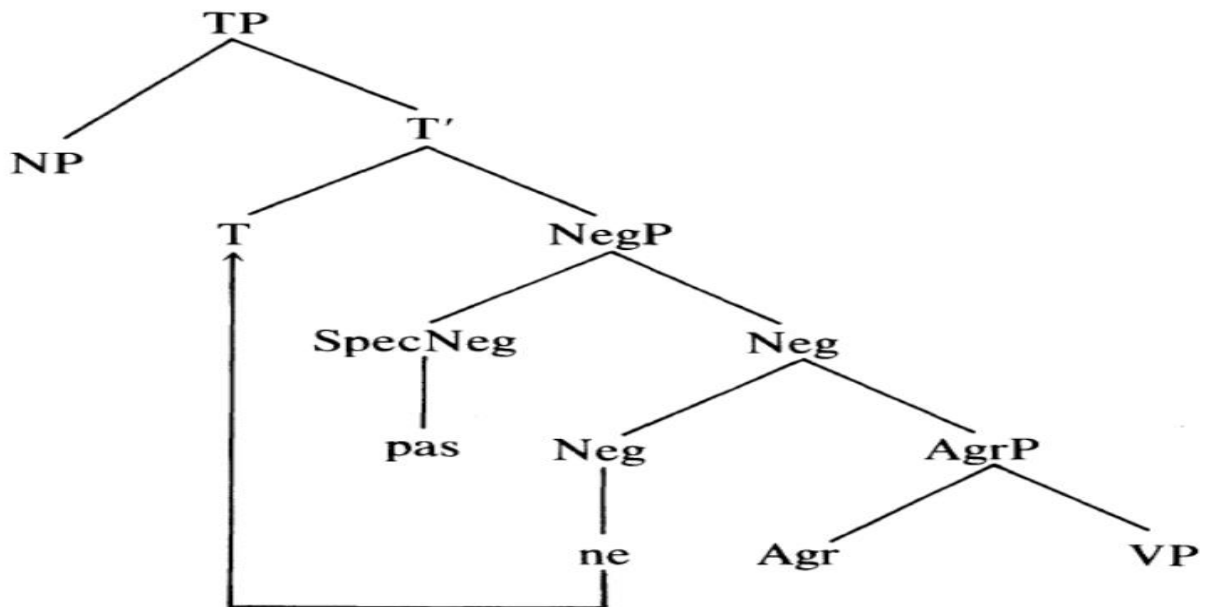
 On the other hand, Benmamoun (1992), Ouhalla (1993) and Shlonsky (1997) claim that -iš occupies Spec of NegP and ma- occupies the head. Therefore, the verb raises to Neg before raising to T; the proclitic ma- cliticizes to the verb and then raises to pick up the enclitic – iš and then raise together to T. Consider the following tree diagram.

TP
spec
T'
T
NegP
spec
NegP'
-iš
Neg
VP
-ma
V
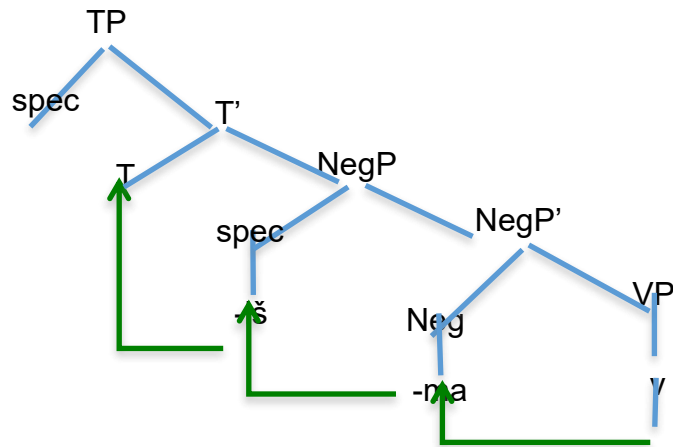
Benmamoun (2000) claims that both ma- and –iš can be the head of NegP. Therefore, because of minimality, the verb cannot pass the Neg head and raise to T. Thus, it must merge with the Neg head to check the +D feature and then raise to T to check the +V feature. Respectively, the subject and verb occupy Spec of VP and V. The following tree diagram shows that the perfect tense negation in RJA might also be indicated by using the discontinuous negative, ma- as a verbal proclitic and –iš as a verbal enclitic. Consider the following tree diagram:

TP
T
NegP
ma+sharibl+ iš
Neg
AspP
ma+sharib+ iš
Asp
VP
ma+sharib+ iš
DP
v
Rami
sharib
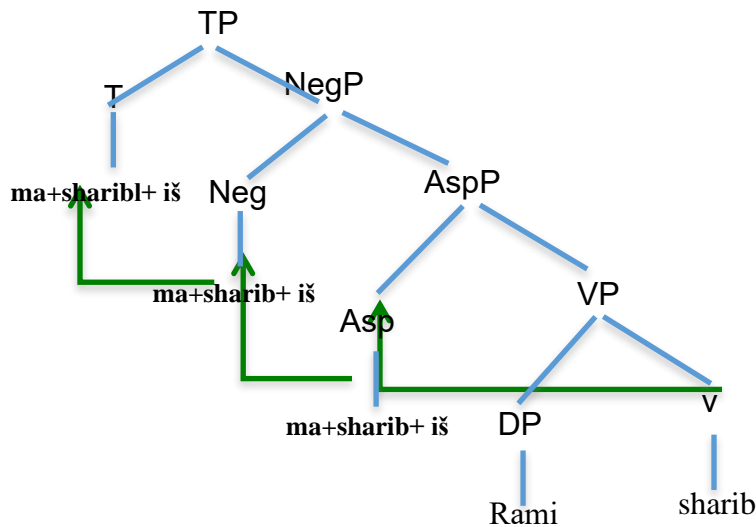
The use of both ma-…-iš is more common in RJA. However, the use of negative enclitic –iš is not a must. iš is mostly used because the stress falls on it. A good piece of evidence to support the claim that –iš must occupy the head of NegP is that we cannot encliticize the perfective aspect by –iš without the proclitic ma, while we can do with imperfective aspect. Consider the following repeated example to illustrate this notion via the tree diagram.

(5)   Rami bi-naam-**iš**
       Rami ASP-sleep.1SG-NEG
       'Rami doesn't sleep.'
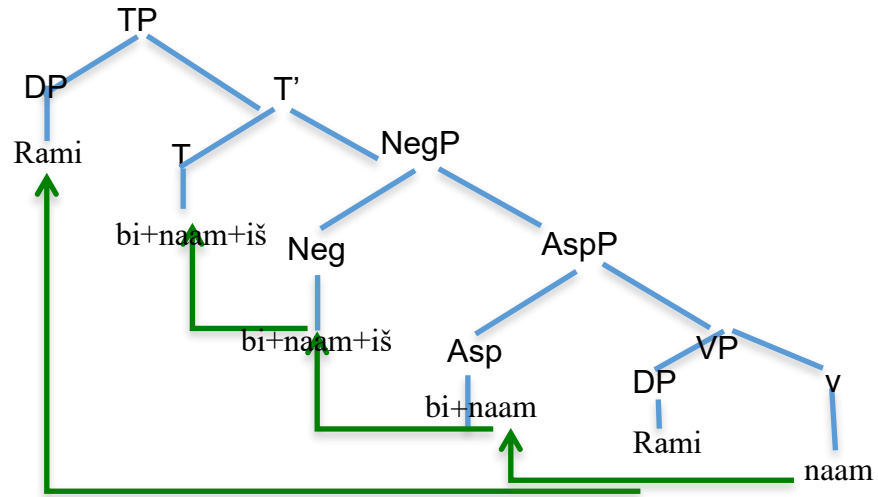
As discussed earlier, maʕ and ʕind can act as prepositions. Therefore, they can be part of a

prepositional phrase. Consider the repeated examples (13) and (15), where ʕind and maʕ are used as locative prepositions. ʕind and maʕ can also be used as temporal prepositions like when we say, [ʕind al-fajer] 'at dawn'/ [maʕ al-ɣroob] 'at sunset].

(13) Al-ħaadeth Saar **ʕind** Id-dactoor

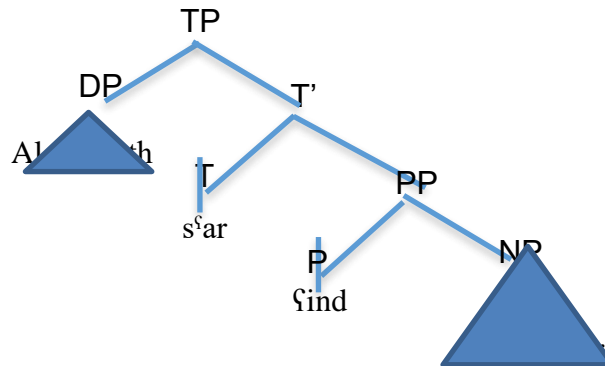   DEF-accident happen-v2 at DEF-doctor

    'The accident happened at the doctor'

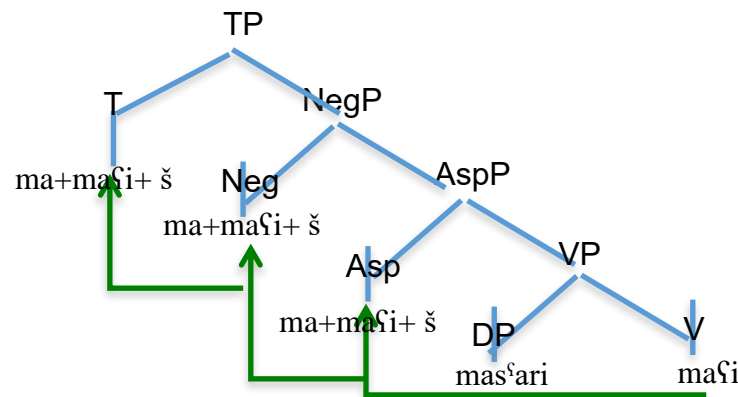(15)   Ani ruħit **maʕ** Ali

     1st p-I went-v2 with Ali

    'I went with Ali'

This can be shown in the following tree diagram:

As far as negation is concerned, we can claim that maʕ and ʕind behave exactly like verbs. They must merge with negation. Pseudo-verbs are negated in the same way as standard verbs and auxiliaries. Consider the following repeated example (21) and the tree diagram that follows:

(21)   ma- ma-ʕi:-š   masˤari

        NEG-with-me-NEG money

        'I don't have money'

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                          TP
                    ╱          ╲
                  T            NegP
           ma+maʕi+ š      ╱        ╲
                        Neg         AspP
                     ma+maʕi+ š   ╱      ╲
                              Asp        VP
                         ma+maʕi+ š    ╱    ╲
                                     DP      V
                                  masˤari   maʕi
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3. Conclusion

This paper investigated the negation of verbal sentences in RJA. It revealed that the distribution of negation differs depending on the position of the negative particles in addition to the negated element. There are different negation strategies in RJA. We use the negative particle ma-…-iš in the perfective and imperfective aspect. Omitting the part of the negative particle ma-…-iš depends on the verb type. Only ma or ma-…-iš is acceptable in perfective aspect. Using either affix or both together is possible and acceptable in imperfective aspect. As a conclusion, the optional negative suffix –iš can be used on its own with all verbs and pseudo-verbs that are negated with ma- except perfective verbs and the pseudo-verb ʕind.

Brusted (2000) tenders that the omitting of –iš indicates emphasis or absolute negation. Syntactically speaking, when ma is used in perfect aspect, it occupies the head of NegP. Thus, the verb does not need to raise to NegP to pick up the negative particle and raise to Asp. However, when ma-…-iš occupies the head of NegP, the verb merges with NegP head then they all raise to T. Finally, in the presence of pseudo-verbs, the use of ma-…-iš is more common. Moreover, they share verb-like features with the class of verbs in RJA.

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