

## The Syntax of Negation in Gɔsɔɖa Anii

This paper reports original field work on the syntax of negation in Gɔsɔɖa Anii, an understudied Ghana-Togo Mountain language spoken in parts of Togo and Benin. The data fill a descriptive gap and contribute toward our understanding of bipartite negation and the syntax of negative markers.

Basic negated declaratives in Gɔsɔɖa contain a preverbal marker *kV* and a clause-final marker *na* (Morton 2014; Schwarz & Fiedler 2011). Example (1) illustrates how these markers typically interact with basic SVO order:

- (1) Ba-səmpɾə kə ba buŋa wôɖa ɪkashɪ na.  
CL.Y-women NEG AGR.CL.Y FARPST have CL.B.strength NEG  
'Women didn't have power.'

When the subject is not a full nominal phrase, the marker *kV* occurs in pre-subject position:

- (2) Kə ma sôra a yɔ bu-ɖu tuutuuma na.  
NEG1.SG.SUBJ be.able to know CL.Ū-places many NEG  
'I was not able to know many places.'

Postverbal *na* may precede clause subordination markers (3) and question markers (4), and phonologically heavy durational adverbial phrases (5):

- (3) ɪ-ɖe ɪ wôɖa [gɔ-yá [ŋgudɛe ka á yɔ a yalá  
CL.U-that AGR-CL-U have cl.ɛ-market REL.CL.ɛ NEG 2.SG.SUBJ know to sell  
a ɖə na ma]]  
to put.down NEG SUBORD  
'It has a price that you can't sell above.'

- (4) K á cê Kɔtɔnɔ na aa?  
NEG 2.SG.SUBJ go Cotonou NEG QUEST  
'You did not go to Cotonou?'

- (5) Kali k a nyêm na kaashɪjɪ ɔ-jɪɔ na [halt a-ŋɔɔ a-pələmɔ].  
Kali NEG 3.SG.SUBJ drink and either eat CL.E-food NEG since CL.ɛ-month AGR.CL.ɛ-entire  
'Kali didn't drink or eat for the whole month.'

When a sentence expresses two semantic negations, *kV* occurs twice, and *na* occurs only once:

- (6) Kə ma lî/fāŋa waa Kofi k a jɪ akodɛn na.  
NEG 1.SG.SUBJ say/think that Kofi NEG 3.SG.SUBJ eat something NEG  
'I didn't say/think that Kofi didn't eat anything.'

In negative imperatives, the marker *paa* occurs instead of *kV*:

- (7) Paa fɔba na!  
NEG change NEG  
'Don't change!'

Interestingly, the marker *paa* also occurs when irrealis sentences are negated. In such cases, the preverbal negative marker follows the subject marker (cf. 2):

- (8) Ma paa sâra na.  
1.SG.SUBJ NEG walk NEG  
'May I not walk.'

A distinct marker *baa* is used to express negation in fragment answers to *wh*-questions:

- (9) Context: What did they say?  
baa akodən  
NEG something  
'nothing'

While in sentence contexts *baa* means 'each', the fact that it cannot co-occur with the negative word *fɔɪ* 'zero' in similar contexts supports the conclusion that *baa* can also express negation:

- (10) Context: What did they say?  
(\*baa) fɔɪ  
NEG zero  
'nothing' (lit: zero)

The comparison between examples (9) and (10) shows that while the word *fɔɪ* 'zero' is inherently negative, indefinites such as *akodən* 'something' are not, and must combine with syntactic negation to express negative meaning.

The syntax of negative markers in Anii complements previous descriptions and augments our understanding of the syntax of bipartite negation (e.g., Collins et al. 2017, Aboh 2010), as well as the role of sentential force in shaping variation in negative markers.

## References

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