Negative Particles and Morphemes in Jordanian Arabic Dialects

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Abstract

This paper aims at investigating the negative particles and morphemes in three main Jordanian dialects (Urban, Rural and Bedouin). This quantitative and qualitative study includes 30 teachers from different disciplines who use these dialects. The sample of the study was selected randomly. The research used two research instruments, a checklist and an interview. The findings of this research indicate that there are six particles for negation in the three Jordanian dialects and one negative morpheme. This study recommends that other research be conducted to further examine relevant expressions used for negation in these dialects and other negative particles and morphemes among other Arabic language dialects such as Syrian, Egyptian, Saudi and Moroccan.

Key Words: Negative, Particle, Morpheme, Dialect.

1. Introduction

The Jordanian society has three main dialects of standard Arabic language. These include the rural, Bedouin and urban dialects. The distribution of these dialects is clearly divided according to geographical regions or provinces in Jordan. For example, the urban and rural dialects are found in mountainous and countryside areas such as Irbid, Jarsh, Ajloun, Al Karak and Tafila.Whereas, the Bedouin dialect can be found in desert areas such as Mafraq, Ma'an and other Bedouin areas. In big cities such as Amman, Zarqa, Aqaba and Salt, urban is the main dialect is in these cities (Tawalbeh, 2013). Each dialect is characterized with a specific syntactic, phonological, morphological and lexical properties. That is, a person may be distinguished from his or her specific vocabulary or morphemes that are related to a particular dialect for example when you hear the speaker saying "Ine" that means "me" in English and "Ina" in standard Arabic, you will immediately recognize that, this person is from Irbid and speaks rural dialect (Al Salem, 2012).

Tawalbeh (2013) conducted a research to investigate the effect of colloquial Jordanian Arabic on learning the English Definite Article and negation and focused on the errors of translation committed by school students in their use of definite articles in English language. His study investigated negative particles such as (*maa*) (*laa*) *and (miʃ).* Al Salem (2012) conducted a study to examine negation in standard Arabic and Kuwaiti Arabic. He demonstrated a description of the morph-syntax of negation patterns in SA and KA. She pointed out that SA has six negative elements: *laa*, *Iam*, *Lan, maa, laysa* and *yayr*, whereas in KA there are four negative elements: *laa, maa, muu and yayr*. She divided these elements according to the tense such as *Iam* for past tense, *lan* for future tense and *laysa* for agreement, whereas *laa,maa and yayr* carry neither tense nor agreement. She describes that *maa* in KA is unique because it is used to negate present, past and future tenses.

In this paper the researcher will focus on the negative particles and morphemes based on these three dialects of the Jordanian society and to collect these forms from both noun phrases (NP) and verb phrases (VP) and to compare these forms from in different dialects. For instance, Urban and Rural dialects' speakers in Jordan use a suffix *(–miʃ)* before the noun as in *"Miʃ Zain"* (not good), whereas Rural speakers add (mo) before the noun as in "Mo Zain " (not good), while Bedouin speakers add (mahob) before the noun as in *"mahob Zain"* (not good).

2. Literature Review

A few studies have been conducted to investigate negation in Jordanian Arabic. Al-Momani (2011) conducted a study to present a clear picture about sentential negation in Jordanian Arabic. She also described the various aspects of sentential negation by showing how negation operates with negative particles. The examples throughout her study are taken from daily life conversation of Jordanians. Al-Omari (2008) conducted a study to investigate some forms and uses of negation in both standard Arabic and colloquial Jordanian dialects. She compared SA with JA to show the lexical and syntactic similarities and differences among these codes. The corpus in her study consists of 120 negative sentences from 30 persons from each dialect . She founded that there were a differences between SA and JA and among the dialects of JA, the differences were mostly qualitative ones related to tense, preverbal and postverbal negation. The forms of negation particles, the use of morphemes and quantitative differences related to the number of negative particles. She also found that Urban and Rural dialects use more negative particles than SA , while the Bedouin dialect uses the smallest number of particles. Similarly, Alsharif and Sadler (2009) conducted a study about negation in modern standard Arabic, they found that there were five different particles to express sentential negations *maa, laa, lam, lan and laysa*. They divided these particles according to the tense and noticed that all these particles must precede the verb or the noun. In their study they also proposed that the adjacency requirement is based on the fact of these negative particles are non-projecting words adjoined to the verb. On the other hand, *Laysa* is a fully verbal element and

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occurring only with present tense. Likewise, Christopjer (2015) conducted a recent study on the use of negative morpheme (-iʃ) , in this study he argued that dialects are the means of negating a verbal predicate that involves the enclitic (-iʃ) morpheme spoken in a large areas across coastal Africa, from Morocco into the Southwester Levant and separately in much of Yemen. In the vast majority of these areas (-iʃ) can not function as the sole morpheme of negation, but it must be attached with the verb and also with a preverbal element (maa) as in "ma-bas'alak-ish" (I'm not asking you).

2.Statement of the Problem

In Jordan people use colloquial Arabic language more than standard Arabic , and each dialect has special vocabulary and morphemes that make them different from each other. Negation used frequently and daily in Jordanian speech (Omari, 2008) . As a result ,this research is an attempt to explore the negative particles and morphemes whether as prefixes or suffixes in both NP and VP in Jordanian dialects.

3.Research Objectives

This study intends to achieve the following research objectives :
i. To collect the negative particles and morphemes in each dialect.
ii. To distinguish dialects that use prefixes and which dialect uses suffixes and preverbal and postverbal particles in negative sentences .
iii. To analyze dialect that use preverbal and postverbal particles in both NP and VP in Jordanian colloquial Arabic

4. Research Questions

This work addresses the following research questions:
Q1:What are the negative particles and morphemes used in Jordanian Arabic dialect?
Q2:Which dialect uses negative prefixes?
Q3:Which dialect uses preverbal and postverbal particles in both NP and VP in Jordanian colloquial Arabic?

6. Methods

In order to achieve appropriate data elicitation, the research selected 30 teachers from different disciplines at Amar Bin Yasser Secondary School in Tafila. All of them use three main Jordanian dialects. The sample of the study was selected randomly. The researcher used an interview and a check list that contains 20 negative sentences in standard Arabic. 10 of the selected sentences contain NPs and the other 10 with VPs. The participants of the study were requested to make negative forms for these sentences according to their own Jordanian Arabic dialects. After that, the researcher conducted textual analysis of these sentences and extracts and collected negative particles and morphemes. Then, put them tabled them as a summary for the corpus.

7. Discussion of the Findings

Table.1 displays the negative particles and morphemes used in three different Jordanian dialects including urban, rural and Bedouin. The use of these particles will be analysed based on two main criteria are noun phrase and verb phrase constructs.

Table.1: The Negative Particles and Morphemes in Jordanian Dialects

Dialects	Phrases	NP	VP
Urban		miʃ + noun	verb + -iʃ maa + verb + -iʃ
Rural		mo + masculine noun mee + feminine noun	maa + verb
Bedouin		mo + noun maho + masculine mahe + feminine	maa + verb

According to the analysis of the findings six negative particles in were found to be used Jordanian Arabic dialects and one negative morphemes. Two of them are suffixes and one is a prefix. These morphemes appear only in Urban Jordanian dialect. Other particles of negation are used only before nouns in NP and before the verb in VP. Table (1) displays the particles and morphemes that are used in negative sentences (NP and VP) in each dialect. These are some abbreviations used in the context of this study:

NP → Noun Phrase   - UD → Urban Dialect
VP → Verb Phrase   - RD → Rural Dialect
SA → Standard Arabic   - BD → Bedouin Dialect
EN → English language

7.1 Urban Dialect

As displayed in Table (1) above Jordanian Urban dialect's speakers use one negative particles in NP before the noun (miʃ) as in these sentences:

-Al masjed laysa kareep.   (SA)
-Al masjed miʃ kareep.   (UD)
-The mosque isn't near.   (EN)

While they use one particle maa in VP before the verb and one morpheme (-iʃ) after the verb. So, in this dialect there are two negative particles in VP . On the other hand (-iʃ) can be attached with the verb as a suffix to form negative meaning as in this example :

-Laa taktob ala al-jedar.   (SA)
-Toktob-iʃ ala al-jedar.   (UD)
-Don't write on the wall.   (EN)

The example with two negative particles:

- Ahmad lam yaðhab ela al-madras.   (SA)
-Ahmad maa rahi-iʃ ela al-madras.   (UD)
-Ahmad didn't go to the school.   (EN)

7.2 Rural dialect

As displayed in the Table (1), Jordanian Rural dialect's speakers use two negative particles in NP before the noun, one for masculine (mo) and another for feminine (mee) as in these sentences: (mo) particle and (mee) particle as presented in the following examples, respectively:

-Ali laysa hona.   (SA)
-Ali mo han.   (RD)
-Ali isn't here.   (EN)

-Fatima Layst hona.   (SA)
-Fatima mee han.   (RD)
-Fatima isn't here.   (EN)

In VP Rural's speakers use only one particle for negation before the verb (maa).

-Ahmad Lam yaðhb ela al-madrasa.   (SA)
-Ahmad maa rah ela al-madrasa.   (RD)
-Ahmad didn't go to the school.   (EN)

7.3 Bedouin dialect

As displayed in the Table (1) earlier, Bedouins use three negative particles (mo), (maho) and (mahee) before the noun in NP. The particle (mo) is used in general whereas (maho) is used for masculine and (mahe) for feminine as indicated in the following examples, respectively;
-Ahmad laysa hona.   (SA)
-Ahmad maho ehnia. (BD)
-Ahmad isn't here.   (EN)
-Fatima Layst hona.   (SA)
-Fatima mahee ehnia. (BD)
-Fatima isn't here.   (EN)
In VP, Bedouins use (maa) before the verb with some changes such as adding (we-) prefix to the verb as in this example :

-Ahmad Lann yaðhb ela al-madrasa.   (SA)
-Ahmad maa wedo yroh ela al-madrasa. (BD)
-Ahmad didn't go to the school.   (EN)

Table (2) summarizes how each dialect use different negative particles and morphemes from each other :

Table.2: The Use of Different Negative Particles and Morphemes in Jordanian Arabic Dialects

	NP	VP
(SA)	*Laysa* jameel	Ahmad **lann** yaðhab ela al-madrasa
(UD)	**miʃ** jameel	Ahmad **ma** rah-**iʃ** ela al-madrasa
(RD)	**mo** jameel	Ahmad **ma** rah **ela** al-madrasa
(BD)	**maho** jameel	Ahmad **mawedo** yroh **ela** al-madrasa
(EN)	**not** beautiful	Ahmad **didn't** go to the school.

As in shown in Table (2) above, it is observed that standard Arabic uses *Laysa* as a negative particle in the NP case before a noun and *lann* as a negative particle before a verb in the case of VP. But, Jordanian urban dialect uses miʃ in the NP case and ma rah-iʃ in the VP case, whilst mo in the NP case and ma in the VP case are used in the Jordanian rural dialect. In the Jordanian Bedouin dialect, maho is used in NP to indicate negation and ma to show negation in the VP case. When comparing that of English language, it is realised that a combination of auxiliary verbs and not is the case to construct negation for both noun phrases and verb phrases as shown in the example above in Table (2) discussed earlier.

8. Conclusion

In this research, the researcher investigated the negative particles and morphemes in three main Jordanian dialects (Urban, Rural and Bedouin). The results show there are six negative particles and one negative morpheme as a suffix. Urban dialect's speakers use (miʃ) before the noun in NP, while they use (maa) before the verb and the negative morpheme (-iʃ) after it. In Rural dialect, the speakers of this dialect use negative particles (mo) and (mee) before the noun in NP and (maa) before the verb in VP. Finally, in Bedouin dialect the speakers use negative particles (mo),(mahe) and (maho) before the noun in NP and (ma) before the verb in VP. So, all the three dialects share some negative particles in VP (maa) before the verb. The results also show the differences in negation between these dialects in case of the NP with five negative particles before the noun.

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