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Negation in Bisha Arabic

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Abstract

Objectives: Previous studies have provided an analytical description of the phenomenon of negation in Modern Standard Arabic and some other Arabic dialects. In contrast, the phenomenon of negation in the Bishah Arabic dialect has not been described or linguistically analyzed within the framework of Lexical Functional Grammar or any other theory. Therefore, the current research aims to describe and analyze the fundamentals of negation rules in the Bishah Arabic dialect.

Research Methods: A descriptive approach was adopted to analyze elements of negation within the framework of Lexical Functional Grammar. The data set was constructed by the authors, who are native speakers of Bishah Arabic.

Results: The study found that Bishah Arabic has its own methods and tools for expressing negation. It was observed that negation tools are assigned within field I of the analytical sentence structure.

Conclusions: The research concluded that Bishah Arabic is similar to other Arabic dialects in how it expresses negation but possesses unique tools to express the meaning that contradicts reality.

Keywords: Bisha Arabic; Negation; Negative Elements; Sentential Negation and Constituent Negation.

النفي في اللهجة العربية البيشية

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ملخّص

الأهداف: قامت الدراسات السابقة بتقديم وصف تحليلي لظاهرة النفي النحويه في اللغة العربية الفصحى الحديثة، وبعض من اللهجات العربية الأخرى، وعلى النقيض فإن ظاهرة النفي في اللهجة العربية البيشية لم يتم وصفها أو تقديم تحليل لغوي لها ضمن نظرية القواعد الوظيفية المعجمية، وحتى ضمن أي نظرية أخرى. ولذلك يهدف البحث الحالي إلى تقديم وصف وتحليل لأساسيات قواعد النفي في اللهجة العربية البيشية.

منهجية البحث : تم اعتماد نهج وصفي لعناصر النفي وتحليلها ضمن نظرية القواعد الوظيفية المعجمية، وقاعدة البينات تم بناءها من قبل مؤلفي العمل الذين هم متحدثون أصليون بالعربية البيشية.

النتائج: تم التوصل إلى أن العربية البيشية تمتلك طرائقها وأدواتها الخاصة للتعبير عن النفي، كما لُوحظ أن أدوات النفي تم إسنادها ضمن الحقل I في هيكل الجمل التحليلية.

الاستنتاجات الختامية: خُلص البحث إلى أن العربية البيشية تتشابه مع اللهجات العربية الأخرى في كيفيّة التعبير عن النفي، ولكنها تمتلك ادوات فريدة من نوعها لتعبير عن المعنى المنافي لحقيقة ما.

الكلمات الدالة : العربية البيشية، النفي، أدوات النفي ، نفي كلي ونفي جزئي .

Introduction

Lnaguage

The Bisha Arabic (BA) dialect is one of the many dialects spoken in Saudi Arabia (SA), particularly in the southwestern region within the Asir region district. Specifically, it is categorised as a subdialect of the southern region dialect, which itself is among the primary dialects in Saudi Arabia (see map 1). However, BA distinguishes itself from other variants spoken in the southern region of SA due to its unique linguistic characteristics. Notably, BA exhibits differences from the parent dialect and bears similarities to certain Najdi dialects spoken in the central area of SA, as highlighted in Ingham (1994). It stands out notably from other varieties of southern dialects, particularly those in close proximity to the Yemeni borders.

BA is primarily spoken in the city of Bisha and the surrounding villages situated along the banks of the Bisha valley. Bisha city lies in the northern part of the southern province, renowned as Asir. With a population of approximately 300,000 individuals, Bisha is a relatively small city where inhabitants are primarily engaged in the fields of education, public health services, public security, and agriculture. The population comprises various Arabic tribes who communicate in BA, exhibiting minor discrepancies in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. However, there are no discernible differences in grammar among them.

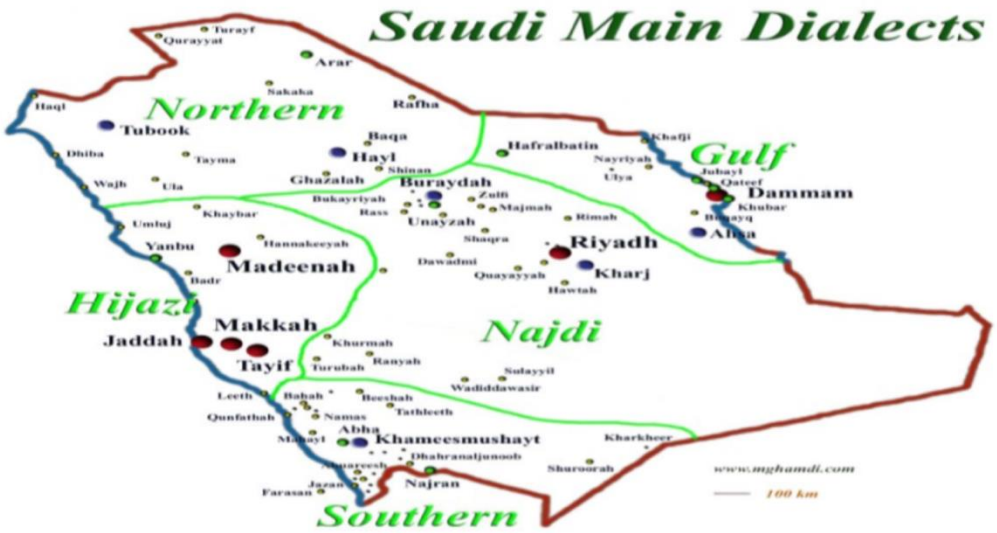


Figure 1. The Main Dialects in SA including BA in the Southern Region, (Source: Google).[1]

Aims of the research study

The syntax of BA, including negation, is yet to be examined. Thus, the current work fills this research gap by providing a linguistic account of negation in this neglected dialect of SA. More specifically, the present study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How does BA express negation?
2. What are the negative devices that BA employs to express negation?
3. How can LFG deal with the word orders and the different types of negation in BA?

[1] http://journal.wrocah.ac.uk

Related Literature

The body of literature discussing negation is extensive. Previous and ongoing studies across various languages worldwide, including works by Fehri (1993), Zeijlstra (2022), Al Khalaf (2022), Alzahrani (2022) and Dey (2023), have made negation a central focus. This review consolidates the key literature pertaining to negation in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Arabic dialects, Saudi dialects, and other linguistic systems.

Negation in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)

Initial research on negation was conducted on the official language of the Arabic world, which is MSA. In fact, various negators are used in MSA: *lā, mā, lam, lan* & *laysa*. The negative particle *lā* is the most frequent negator in MSA. It is employed in both nominal and verbal sentences, typically preceding imperfective verb forms and occasionally perfective forms. Additionally, it is utilised with imperatives, as exemplified in: *lā tabki* 'Do not cry'. The negator *mā* is often used in pre-verbal positions. The two negative particles *mā* & *lā* continue to be used in the majority of modern Arabic dialects. The particle *laysa* negates both verbless & verbal sentences. The negators *lan* & *lam* are only used with the imperfective forms of verbs.

The negative elements *lā, lan, lam*, are different from *laysa* in some respects. The negative forms *lā, lan, lam*, only occur in verbal sentences containing a verbal element that serves as the main predicate. These negative forms are constrained to be adjacent to the primary verbal predicate of the sentence. Additionally, they only occur with the imperfective form of verbs, see examples (1a-c).

(1) a. *I-awlād-u* ***lā*** *ya-kul-ū-n*
def-boys-nom neg 3m-eat.impfv-3mp-ind
'The boys do not eat/are not eating'.
b. *I-awlād-u* ***lan*** *ya-kul-ū*
def-boys-nom neg.fut 3m-eat.impfv-3mpsbjv
'The boys will not eat.'
c. *I-awlād-u* ***lam*** *ya-kul-ū*
def-boys-nom neg.past 3M-eat.impfv-mp.juss
'The boys did not eat'.

Conversely, the negative particle *laysa* shows sub-agreement, see Table 1 and example (2). In addition, it is not constrained to be adjacent to the main verbal predicate of the sentence. Moreover, *laysa* occurs in both nominal as well as verbal sentences. Refer to the data set (2a-c).

Table 1: *laysa*-subject agreement

	SG	**DU**	**PL**
1	*lastu*		*Lasnā*
2m	*lasta*	*lastumā*	*Lastum*
2f	*lasti*	*lastumā*	*lastunna*
3m	*laysa*	*laysā*	*Laysū*
3f	*laysat*	*laysatā*	*Lasna*

(10) a. *laysa* *Ali-un* *ya-kul-u t-tamr-a*
neg.3ms Ali-nom 3m-eat.ipfv-3m the-dates-acc
'Ali does not eat/is not eating dates.'

b. *laysa ʕamii muħāmi-an.*
neg.3ms uncle.my lawyer-acc
'My uncle is not a lawyer.'

c. *laysa muħāmi-an.*
neg.3ms lawyer-acc
'He is not a lawyer.'

The body of Arabic literature concerning negation extends beyond MSA, encompassing active research on this linguistic phenomenon in various other Arabic dialects. For instance, Alluhaybi (2019) delves into negation across different Arabic dialects, including Levantine, Egyptian, Yemeni, Saudi dialects, among others. Alluhaybi (2019) categorises the negation of Arabic verbal sentences as standard negation and also explores the negation of non-verbal sentences, which he refers to as non-verbal negation, such as: *Ali mū fī n-nādi* 'Ali is not in the gym'. He adds another type of negation that is available in some Arabic varieties, including Saudi dialects and MSA. This type of negation can be exemplified by sentences such as *mā fī-h aħad bi-lbēt* 'there is nobody in the house'. He also discusses another form of negation prevalent in many Arabic dialects, referred to as negation with pseudo-verbs. This form of negation is conveyed by employing certain predicates with distinct morphosyntactic properties, setting them apart from the prepositional phrases from which they originated. This type of negation is exemplified by sentences such as *mā ʕend-i galam* 'I do not have a pen'. Alsarayreh (2018) and Alftayeh (2022) elucidate negative concord in Levantine Arabic, Jordanian, and Syrian. They discussed negative concord adverbials, including 'never words' such as *bilmarrah* or *ʔabadan* and 'not-yet words' such as *lahassa* or *baʕid.* In addition, Alftayeh (2022) explicates the different types of negative polarity items (NPIs) in Syrian Arabic, such as nominal NPIs, e.g. indefinite pronouns such as *ħada* 'anyone, someone' and *ši* 'anything, something'. He mentions another way of expressing negation in Arabic. In Syrian dialect, 'pronouns of negation' are used to negate non-verbal sentences. This strategy is premised on the combination of *mā* with a personal pronoun as in *ʔanā mā l-i ħad*a 'I have no one', and this is true for other Arabic dialects as well.

Recent research on dialects in Saudi Arabia has been quite dynamic. For instance, Al-Azraqi (1998) provides insights into various aspects of the grammar of the Saudi Southern (Abha) dialect, including its negation patterns. Al-Azraqi notes that the Abha dialect employs *mā* and *lā* to negate verbal sentences, just like other Saudi dialects. However, she highlights the usage of an additional negator *lis* in the Abha dialect to negate such sentences, as exemplified in phrases like *lis-nī aʕrifak* 'I do not know you'. Meanwhile, Alruwaili (2019) describes different aspects of negation in the Saudi Northern (Turaif) dialect. For instance, Alruwaili mentions that *mā* and *lā* are used to negate verbal sentences, with *mū* and its inflected equivalents being used to negate verbless sentences. Additionally, she describes *lā* and *wala* construction known as *emphatic negative coordination.* Furthermore, Alzahrani (2022) explains another means of negating verbal clauses in Arabic, which is used exclusively in Saudi dialects. Verbal clauses can be negated without using the negative particles *mā* and *lā* in these dialects. Instead, negation is encoded on verbal clauses using the verbs of imminence, such as *baʁa* 'was about to/want', which have two functions: content lexical items and modal verbs. The verb *baʁa* 'was about to/want' can be used in both perfective and imperfective forms, and its scope can only influence the following verb. The negated form of *baʁa* indicates that the occurrence of the action or event occurred following strenuous efforts, as illustrated by sentences such as *mā baʁa ya-ʕṭı-ni riyāl* 'He eventually gives me money/He was about not to give me money'.

In the realm of negation across various languages, a significant body of past and current research has been devoted to exploring negation patterns. This includes works by scholars such as Sells (2000), Dey (2023), Xue and Pan (2023), and Yasin et al. (2023). For instance, Miestamo (2007) conducts a cross-linguistic investigation, compiling negation data from diverse languages. Miestamo categorises sentential negation into two types based on the nature of the negated clause: standard negation and non-standard negation. Standard negation occurs when the negated clause is a declarative

verbal main clause, such as *Sara did not go to bed*. However, in the case of embedded or imperative clauses, the type of sentential negation is identified as a non-standard negation, such as *Do not go*.

Negation System in Bisha Arabic

In BA, negation is expressed by several particles which can negate a verbal or nonverbal sentence or even a constituent. BA utilises four negative particles to express negation. The particles *mā* and *lā* are used to negate verbal sentences, whereas *mū* or its inflected forms are used to negate verbless sentences.

Sentential Negation

The negator *mā* functions as a negator for expressing sentential negation. It is employed to negate finite verbal predicates, whether perfective or imperfective, and it must directly precede the verbal predicate, as demonstrated in the following example: (3a-b).

(3) a. *Tārg* ***mā*** *ħal/y-ħal* *at-tamrīn*
Tārg neg do.pfv.3sgm/3sgm-do.impv.sgm def-exercise.sgm
'Tārg did not do the exercise.' **(simple past)**

The negator *mā* is also used in BA to negate the auxiliary verb *kān,* which denotes the past tense. Notably, the negator *mā* can precede or follow the auxiliary *kān,* see example (4).

(4) a. *Tārg* ***mā kān/ kān mā*** *ya-ktub* *at-tamārīn* *kul* *yōm fī l-fasal.*
Tārg neg be.pfv.3sgm .3sgm-write.impv def-exercises every day in def-class
'Tārg was not used to write the exercises every day in the class.' **(past habitual)**

The negator *mā* is used in BA to negate the auxiliary verb *rāħ* as well, which, in turn, is used to express the future tense. In this instance, the negator *mā* must precede the auxiliary verb *rāħ*, and *mā* is also used to negate pseudo-verbs in BA; see (5-6).

(5) a. *Nora* ***mā rāħ*** *t-aji bukra.*
Nora neg fut 3sgf-come.impv tomorrow
'Nora will not come tomorrow.' **(simple future)**

(6) a. *Tārg* ***mā l-a*** *makān hinā.*
Tārg neg have-3sgm.gen place.sgm here
'Tārg does not have a place here.' **(pseudo-verb)**

In BA, the negator *lā* is used to negate positive imperative verb-forms. The negator *lā* must precede the positive imperative verb. In this case, it expresses a prohibitive meaning, and is used to negate copula, see (7-8).

(7) ***lā*** *tu-rūħ l-bēt.*
neg 2sgm-go.impv home
'Do not go home.'

(8) ***lā*** *tu-kūn wagaħ.*
neg 2sgm-be.impv rude.sgm
'Do not be rude.'

In BA, the negator *mū* and its inflected counterparts are used to negate the different types of present tense verbless sentences. Example (9) denotes an illustration of such a case.

(9) a. *Tārg **mū** imuhandis.*
Tārg neg engineer.sgm
'Tārg is not an engineer.' **(Nominal phrase)**

b. *l-bēt* ***mū*** *kibīr.*
def-house.sgm neg big.sgm
'The house is not big.' **(Adjective phrase)**

c. *Tārg **mū** fī l-bēt.*
Tārg neg in def-home.sgm
'Tārg is not at home.' **(Prepositional phrase)**

The negator *mī* is used with verbless sentences. The subject of verbless sentences negated by *mī* can be present as in example (10a) or it can be deleted as in example (10b). So, the presence of the subject, whether a pronoun or an NP, is optional. What is special about the negator *mī* is that it is used only to negate verbless sentences where the expressed or intended subject is feminine, and accordingly example (10c) is unacceptable. In addition, verbless sentences in BA can be negated by a range of forms that inflect for person, number, and gender. These forms involve the negative particle *mā* that combines with subject personal pronoun forms. The list of these forms is provided in Table 2.

(10) a. *Fatimah **mī** hina.*
Fatimah neg here
'Fatimah is not here.'

b. ***mī*** *hina.*
neg here
'not here.'
Intended meaning: 'She is not here.'

c. **Ali mī hina.*
Ali neg here

Table 2: The BA negative inflected forms

neg.1sg	*māni*	I am not
neg.1pl	*maħn/maħnā*	we are not
neg.2sgm	*mant*	you are not
neg.2sgf	*manti*	you are not
neg.2plm	*mantum*	you are not
neg.2plf	*mantum*	you are not
neg.3sgm	*māhū/mū*	he is not
neg.3sgf	*māhi/mī*	she is not
neg.3plm	*mahum*	they are not
neg.3plf	*mahum*	they are not

The 'pronouns of negation' are also used to negate non-verbal sentences in BA. This approach is premised on combining *mā* with a personal pronoun. The following examples (11a-d) exemplify the manner in which the inflected counterparts of *mū* are used as negators of verbless sentences in Arabic.
(11) a. *Tārg **mahū** imuhandis.*

Tārg neg.3sgm engineer.sgm
'Tārg is not an engineer.' (**Nominal phrase**)

b. *Nora **māhi/mī** kibīr-a.*
Nora neg.3sgf big-sgm
'Nora is not old.' **(Adjective phrase)**

c. *Tārg **mahū** bal-makān.*
Tārg neg.3sgm in-def-place.sg.m
'Tārg is not in the place.' **(Prepositional phrase)**

d. *ʔanā **mā-l-i** aḥadd.*
I neg-dat-1sg one
'I have no one.' **(Pronouns of negation)**

Constituent Negation

The second major type of negation in Bisha Arabic (BA) is constituent negation (CN). Unlike sentential negation, CN targets a specific constituent within a clause rather than the entire clause. BA employs the negative marker *mū* and its alternative form *mahū* to express CN. In the scholarly literature, two main opposing perspectives exist regarding the implications of CN. On one hand, McCawley (1991) contends that the primary distinguishing characteristic of CN is its conveyance of contrastiveness, suggesting a structure of "not x but y."

Conversely, Borschev et al. (2006) argue that CN does not always denote *contrastiveness*. Upon examining data derived from BA, it becomes evident that both viewpoints hold validity concerning constituent negation in BA. The dataset (12a-d) demonstrates that constituent negation in BA can indeed convey a sense of contrastiveness on occasion, while at other times, no contrastive meaning is evident.

(12) a. *Fatimah ta-xss-at **mū** bi-atib, bi-alhandasah.*
Fatimah 3sgf-specialise-pfv.3sgf neg in-medicine.sgm, in-engineering.sgf
'Fatimah specialises not in medicine, but in engineering.' ***(contrastiveness)***

b. *Fatimah rāḥ-at **mū** al-yōm, ʔamas*
Fatimah go-pfv.3sgf neg today.sgm, yesterday.sgm
'Fatimah went not today, but yesterday.' ***(contrastiveness)***

c. *Fatimah jāt mū laḥāl-ha.*
Fatimah come-pfv.3sgf neg alone-3sgf.gen
'Fatimah came not alone.' ***(incontrastiveness)***

d. *Fatimah kān-at mū fī l-bēt.*
Fatimah be-pfv.3sgf neg in def-home.3sgm
'Fatimah was not at home.' ***(incontrastiveness)***

Having presented how sentential negation and constituent negation are expressed in BA, I now proceed further and introduce some other devices used to express negatives.

Negative sensitive items

Negative Sensitive Items (NSIs) are specific expressions found in most languages globally. These expressions exhibit a sensitivity to the presence of negation, showcasing notable distributional disparities. Existing literature outlines two primary categories of such items: Negative Concord Items (NCIs) or n-words, and Negative Polarity Items (NPIs). These two sets demonstrate distinct differences in their distribution. Firstly, NCIs have the ability to convey negation independently, enabling their use as fragment answers, whereas NPIs lack this capability and therefore cannot function as fragment answers on their own. Secondly, NCIs are constrained to a limited range of environments and contexts, restricted to appearing solely in negative or anti-veridical contexts, while NPIs can be licensed in a broader array of environments.

Negative concord items (NCIs)/n-words

Negative Concord Items, also known as n-words, constitute a category of NSIs capable of serving as negative fragment answers in reply to questions. Unlike other NSIs, this type does not suggest double negation when combined with another negative element in the sentence. In BA, various types of NCIs are prevalent in everyday speech, including nominal NCIs, adverbial NCIs such as Never-words and Not-yet-words, and notably, prepositional phrase (PP) NCIs, as elaborated below.

Nominal NCIs

BA includes two types of NCIs: determiner NCIs and adverbial NCIs. The determiner NCIs include *wala* 'even, at least' is combined with an indefinite noun in a *mā* negative construction, and can occur before or after the negated verb. Additionally, the determiner NCI *wala* can occur in a *lā* negative construction. In this case, it is equivalent in meaning to a disjunction or additive particle which mean 'nor, not even'. The determiner NCI *wala* could also be utilised as a negative fragment answer in response to yes-no questions; see examples. Additionally, BA uses the nominal form *abad* 'infinity' to express negation, and can be used as a negative fragment answer which means no/nothing, refer to examples (13-15c).

(13) a. ***mā*** *daxl* ***wala*** *waħad l-klās.*
neg enter.pfv.3sgm not.even one def-class
'Even one student did not enter the class.'

(14) a. ***lā*** *Sara* ***wala*** *Nora fī l-bēt.*
neg Sara not.even Nora in def-house.sgm
'Neither Sara nor Nora are at home.'

(15) a. *min sāfar bārīs ?*
who travel.pfv.3sgm Paris
'Who did travel to Paris?'
b. ***wala*** *waħad*
not.even one
'Not even one.'
c. fī-kum **šey**
in-you thing
'What's wrong with you?'
d. ***abad***
infinity/forever
'nothing.'

The Never-words

BA uses some never-words that are indefinite temporal adverbs such as *marrah* ‘never, not at all’, *marrah* ‘never, never’, *abadan* ‘never’, *lilabad* ‘never’, *nihāʔaiyyan* ‘never’, see the data set in examples (16-17). Such adverbial NCIs must be used in sentential negation construction, and can occur in both initial and final positions. Additionally, they can be used by themselves as a negative fragment answer in response to questions.

(16) a. *Fatimah* ***marrah mā*** *t-ākul laħam.*
Fatimah never neg 3sgm-eat.impv meat
‘Fatimah does not eat meat at all.’

b. *Fatimah* ***(abadan)*** *mā t-ākul laħam (****abadan).***
Fatimah never neg 3sgm-eat.impv meat
‘Fatimah does not eat meat at all.’

d. *Fatimah mā t-ākul laħam* ***nihāʔaiyyan/ marrah marrah****.*
Fatimah neg 3sgm-eat.impv meat never/ never never
‘Fatimah does not eat meat at all.’

(17) a. t-*ħib l-laħam?*
2sgm-like.impv def-meat
‘Do you like meat ?’

b. ***abadan***
ever
‘Never’

The Not-yet-words

BA uses some not-yet-words that are indefinite temporal adverbs such as *lissa* ‘still’, *laħadlān* ‘until now, so far, still’ and strikingly *bāg-i* ‘remain’ which is an active participle *isam fāal* is used in BA as an adverbial NCI meaning ‘still’, which is not found in other Arabic dialects - to the best of my knowledge. In addition, *baʕd* ‘after, still’ is used in BA as an adverbial NCI meaning ‘not yet’. These negative adverbials elements can occur in both negative constructions meaning ‘not yet’ as well as positive ones meaning ‘still’, and can be used to provide a negative fragment answer to questions which confirms that they are NCIs/n-words, see examples (18-19).

(18) a. *Sara mā jā-t* ***lissa/laħadlān.***
Sara neg come.pfv-3sgf yet
‘Sara has not come yet.’

(19) a. *Sara mā* ***bāg-i/ baʕid*** *jā-t ?*
Sara neg still/yet come.pfv-3sgf
‘Sara has not come yet ?’
b. *bāg-i*
still
‘Not yet.’

• PP NCIs

BA interestingly leverages PP NCIs, and some of them do not exist in any other variety of Arabic, to the best of my knowledge. The PPs *lil-yom* 'until today', *la-yōm-ak* 'until today' and *alīn l-ħīn* 'until now', *la-yōm adīn* 'until the day of judgement' *la-yōm l-ħisāb* 'until the day of judgement', *li-abad l-abidīn* 'forever' or *li-ʔaxar mawlūd yulad* 'to the end' are frequently used expressions in BA to convey/imply negative meaning; refer to examples (20a-f). In addition, the PPs *min wāħadd* 'no one', *min gutra* 'nothing' or *min ħaba* are to be labelled as NCIs since they can function as negative fragment answers to questions. These PP NCIs are different from the other mentioned NCIs in that they can only be used in negative fragment answers only, and cannot be used in negative questions despite the negative meaning that they imply, see example (20g).

(20) a. *Sara **mā** jā-t alīn l-ħīn.*
Sara neg comepfv-3sgf until def-now
'Sara has not come yet.'

b. ***mā*** *sār šey la-yōm-ak/ lil-yōm.*
neg happen.pfv.3sgm thing to-day-your/ to-day
'Nothing has happened yet.'

d. *mā jā* ***ħadd/aħadd****?*
neg come.pfv.3sgm one
'Did anyone come?'

e. ***lil-yōm***
to-day
'until today'

g. *min* ***wāħadd***
from one
'no one'

h. *fīh ruz fī l-bēt?*
in-it rice in home
'Is there any rice at home?'

i. ***min ħaba***
from seed
'nothing'

Negative Polarity Items (NPIs)

Kearns (2000) defines Negative polarity items (NPIs) as 'expressions which can only occur in special contexts, including contexts which are, in some sense, in the scope of negation' (p.188). The indefinite pronouns *aħad* 'one, anyone' and *šey* 'thing, anything' are used widely as the most common Negative Polarity items in BA. Most of these NPIs belong to the nominal class. BA makes use of five types of NPIs: nominal NPIs, determiner NPIs, prepositional phrases NPIs, Adverbial NPIs, and idiomatic NPIs.

Nominal NPIs

The indefinite pronouns *ħadd* 'one, anyone', *wāħad* 'one', *aħad* 'one', *šey* 'thing' and its equivalent noun *hāja* 'thing' are used extensively in BA as the most common NPIs. Pertinently, *aħad* is derived from the numeral *wāħad* 'one.' It is used to indicate singular animate beings. The NPI *aħad* occupies the subject or object positions, and NPI *wāħad* 'one' can appear in both subject and object positions. The NPI *šey* 'thing' and its equivalent noun *hāja* 'thing' are used to denote inanimates in BA. These two NPIs can occupy the subject or object positions, but they require to be preceded by a negative element such as *mā* and the sentence's main verb, see examples (21a-b).

(21) a. ***mā*** *rāħ ħadd/aħad/wāħad*.
neg fut one
'No one went.'

b. ***mā*** *šif-t* *šey/hāja*
neg see.pfv.1sg thing
'I saw nothing.

The NPIs *aħadd* 'one, anyone', *wāħad* 'one', *ħadd* 'one', šey 'thing' and its equivalent noun *hāja* 'thing' are different from NCIs in that they can occur in non-veridical contexts such as polar interrogative constructions; see examples (22a-b).

(22) a. *rāħ* ***ħadd****?*
fut one
'Did anyone go?'

b. *šif-t hāja?*
see.pfv.1sg thing
'Did you see anything?'

It is noteworthy that such items cannot be used on their own or in isolation to provide a negative response to the above questions. Instead, they are required to be preceded by the negative particle *walā*, exemplifying an important difference between NPIs and NCIs.

Determiner NPIs

There are three determiner NPIs that are commonly used in BA: *ʔayy* 'any, which', *ħatta* 'even, not even' and *walaw* 'not even'. The determiner NPI *ʔayy* 'any' is combined with *indefinite* nouns that can appear in both subject and object positions. This NPI requires to be used in *sentential* negative construction following the main verb directly, see example (23a). The determiner *ʔayy* can be used in polar questions in BA, but it cannot be used to provide a negative response to such questions, see example (23b).

(23) a. ***mā*** *daxl* ***ʔayy*** *wāħad l-klās.*
neg enter.pfv.3sgm anyone def-class
'No one entered the class.'

b. *šarā-t* ***ʔayy wāħad****?*
buy.pfv-2sgm anyone

‘Which one did you buy?’
* ʔayy

The determiner NPI *walaw* ‘not even’ is combined with *indefinite* nouns and is restricted to occur in sentential negation construction in which it can switch between pre-verbal and post-verbal positions (24). The determiner NPI *walaw* cannot be used in questions and cannot provide a negative fragment response to questions. This explains the strict NPI status of *walaw*.

(24) ***walaw*** *b-kalma* ***maħad*** *sʔal ʕin-ak*
not.even with-word no.one ask.pfv.3sgm about-2sg.gen
‘No one asked about you even with one word.’

The third determiner NPI used in BA is *ħatta* ‘even, not even’ which specifies an indefinite or definite noun indicating a minimised meaning of that noun. It can occur in sentential negation constructions preceding or following the main verb of the sentence. The combination of *ħatta* with an indefinite noun cannot be used in questions and cannot provide a fragment response to questions indicating the strict nature of this NPI. It can also be combined with the NCI *wala* in the absence of sentential negation to form the *wala/ħatta* construction; see examples (25).

(25) a. *mā natag-at* ***ħatta*** *kalma.*
neg utter.pfv-1sg even word
‘I did not utter even a word.’

b. ***ħatta*** *kalma mā natag-at.*
even word neg utter.pfv-1sg
‘I did not utter even a word.’

Adverbial NPIs

BA employs the usage of three adverbial NPIs: *ʕumur* ‘never, ever’, *ʕād* ‘any more’ and *baʕd* ‘yet’. The adverbial NPI *ʕumur* ‘never, ever’ is derived from the homophonous noun *ʕumur* ‘age, life’, see example (26a). Therefore, it inflects for person, number, and gender via an attached pronoun, as is the case with the noun *ʕumur*. It occurs in negative constructions, typically prior to the main verb of the sentence, see example (26b) for illustration. Additionally, it can appear with imperatives negated by *lā* as in (26c).

(26) a. ***ʕumur-ha*** *talāt sanaw-āt.*
age-3sg.gen three year-plf
‘She is three years old.’

b. *Sara* ***mā ʕumur-ha*** *sāfar-t faransā.*
Sara neg age-3sg.gen travel.pfv-3sgf France
‘Sara has not traveled to France ever.’

c. ***la ʕumur-k*** *t-u-rūħ f faransā.*
neg life.2sgm-gen 2sgm-go.impv France
‘Do not ever go to France.’

BA also uses another adverbial NPI which is *ʕād* ‘any more, again’. Originally, it is derived from the verb *ʕād* ‘return,

repeat', as in (27a). It always precedes the main verb of the sentence after being used as an adverb. It must be accompanied with *mā* or *lā* in negative imperative constructions since it has a restricted distribution; see examples (27b-c).

(27) a. *t-tālib* ***māʕād*** *kitābat* *ad-dars.*
def-student-sgm neg repeat.pfv-3sgm writing.sgf def-lesson.sgm
'The student did not rewrite the lesson.'

b. *Ali* ***mā*** *māʕād* *ya-ji* *l-jāmaʕ-a.*
Ali neg repeat.pfv-3sgm 3sgm-come.impv def-university-sgf
'Ali does not come to the university anymore.'

c. ***lā*** *ʕād* *ta-ktub* *ʕalā* *l-judrān.*
neg repeat.pfv-3sgm 2sgm-write.impv on def-wall.plm
'Do not write on the walls anymore.'

The third adverbial NPI used in BA is *baʕd* 'yet'. In negative constructions, *baʕd* appears before the main verb and switches places before and after *mā*; refer to examples (28a-b).

(28) a. ***mā*** *baʕd jā*
neg yet come.pfv-3sgm
'He has not come yet.'

b. *baʕd* ***mā*** *jā*
yet neg come.pfv-3sgm
'He has not come yet.'

Idiomatic NPIs

In BA, there are certain minimal-unit expressions consisting of an object noun phrase combined with a verb from a limited set of verbs in the language. These expressions are specifically used in negative contexts. Examples of such expressions in BA include *riyāl wāħad* 'one pound', *halāla wāħada* 'one penny' or *nus riyāl* 'half pound' ...etc. These expressions are equivalents to the English expressions *a red cent, lift a finger, budge an inch,* etc. Notably, these expressions in BA can switch positions before and after *mā*, as illustrated in the data set (29a-f).

(29) a. ***mā*** *maʕ-i ħatta* ***nus riyāl.***
neg have-1sg.gen even half˙ pound
'I do not have anything.'

b. *ħatta* ***nus riyāl mā*** *maʕ-i.*
even half˙ pound neg have-1sg.gen
'I do not have anything.'

c. ***mā*** *teswa* ***halāla*** ***wāħada.***
neg 3sgf-worth.impv penny-sgf one-sgf
'It does not worth even one penny.'

d. ***halāla wāħada mā*** *teswa*.
penny-sgf one-sgf neg 3sgf-worth.impv
‘ It does not worth even one penny.’

e. ***mā*** *ʔaʕt-īk* ***riyāl wāħad.***
neg give.ˈimpv-2sgm pound-sgm one-sgm
‘I would not give you even one pound.’

f. ***riyāl wāħad mā*** *ʔaʕt-īk.*
pound-sgm one-sgm neg give.impv-2sgm
‘I would not give you even one pound.’

Interim Summary

In the preceding section, I outlined NSIs present in BA, encompassing both NCIs and NPIs. While some NCIs and NPIs used in BA overlap with those found in other Saudi and Arabic dialects, BA employs distinct items or expressions as NCIs and NPIs. Table (1) furnishes an overview of BA's unique NCIs and NPIs, as well as those shared with certain Saudi dialects.

Table 3: BA's NCIs and NPIs

Item	Type	Meaning	Availability
ħadd	NCI/NPI	‘one, anyone’	Exclusively in BA
abad	NCI	‘never’	
marrah	NCI	‘never, not at all’	Exclusively in BA
marrah marrah	NCI	‘never, never’	Exclusively in BA
bāg-i	NCI	‘remain, still’	Exclusively in BA
lil-yom/ la-yōm-ak	NCI	‘until today’	Shared with SA dialects
alīn l-ħīn	NCI	‘until now’	Shared with SA dialects
la-yōm adīn/ l-ħisāb	NCI	‘forever’	Exclusively in BA
li-abad l-abidīn	NCI	‘forever’	Exclusively in BA
min wāħadd	NCI	‘no one’	Exclusively in BA
min ħaba/ min gutra/ min riyāl	NCI	‘nothing’	Exclusively in BA
ʔayy	NPI	‘any, which’	Shared with SA dialects
ʕād	NPI	‘any more’	Shared with SA dialects
riyāl wāħad	NPI	‘one pound’	Shared with SA dialects
halāla wāħada	NPI	‘one penny’	Shared with SA dialects
nus riyāl	NPI	‘half pound’	Shared with SA dialects

An LFG Analysis of the Basic Types of Negation in BA

Several foundational issues persist within LFG research, consistently sparking debate among scholars. Firstly, the positioning of the main verb in BA's c-structure remains contentious, with uncertainty over whether it should fall under the I or V head. Secondly, the intricate nature of negative SVO and VSO word orders in BA poses a significant challenge for analysis. Drawing from Bresnan (1997), it is postulated that auxiliary verbs consistently occupy the I position, mirroring their English counterparts. However, the main lexical verb is believed to have two potential placements: either I or V. Consequently, in the presence of an auxiliary, the lexical verb would reside under V; conversely, without an auxiliary, it attaches to I. Regarding negation, it is assumed that negative elements are always affiliated with I. When an auxiliary is present, both the negative particle and the auxiliary manifest under I, with the lexical verb automatically positioned under V. Conversely, in the absence of an auxiliary, both the negative particle and the main verb are situated under I. The tree structure in (30b) illustrates the I position in a specific Arabic dialect, particularly in BA. Thirdly, the obligatory adjacency between negative particles and lexical verbs in BA presents an additional hurdle demanding

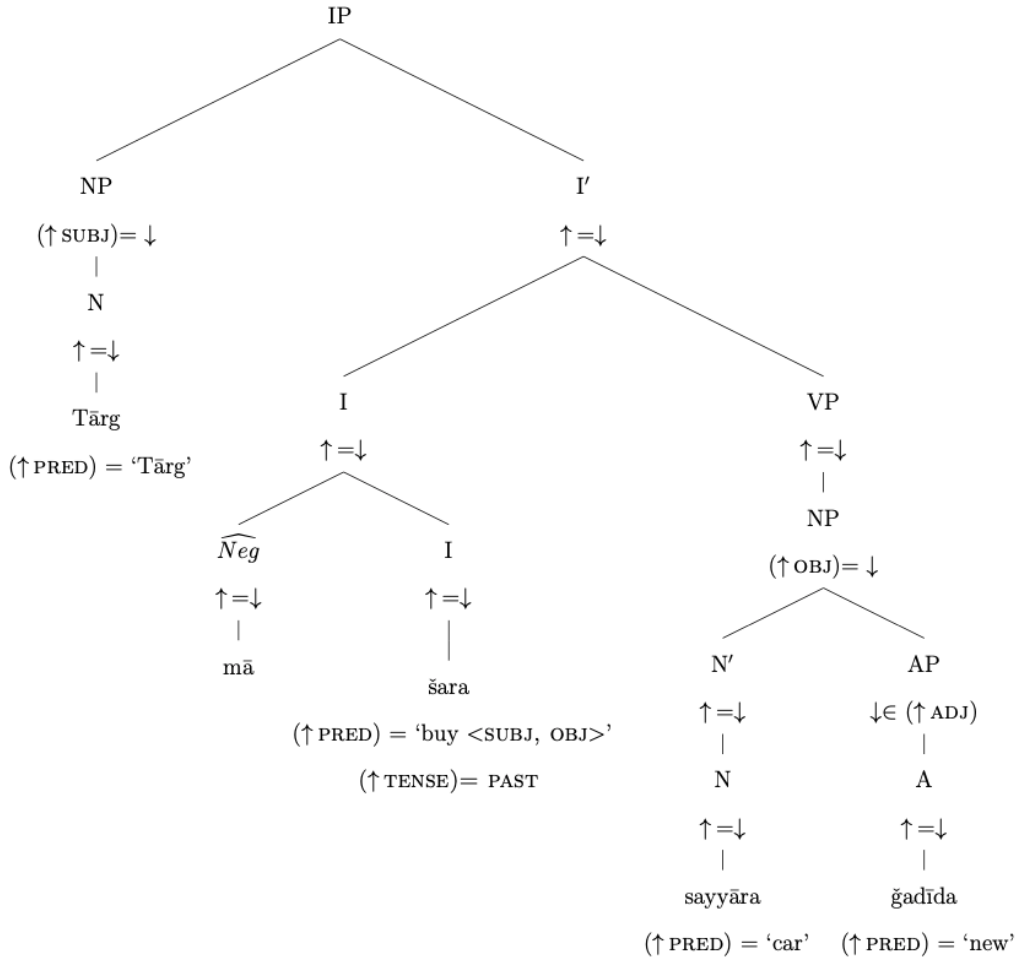
resolution. Fourth, the distinct syntactic properties of negative particles in BA, such as their incapacity to express tense, take complements, or undergo modification, require consideration. Lastly, the differentiation between sentential negation and constituent negation must be delineated clearly within LFG framework. Consequently, the current study amalgamates various assumptions from prior LFG proposals, including those by Al Sharif and Sadler (2009), Przepiórkowski et al. (2015), and Alruwaili (2019). Plausibly, the current analysis posits that negative particles in BA are non-projecting words, restricted to a singular position, namely I, while the lexical verb may assume either I or V positions contingent upon the auxiliary verb's presence. With an auxiliary present, the lexical verb attaches under V; however, in its absence, the main verb attaches under I, adjacent to the negative particle. In f-structures, the notation ENEG is utilised to denote negative elements.

šara **I** $(\uparrow \text{PRED}) = \text{‘buy <SUBJ, OBJ>’}$

$(\uparrow \text{TENSE}) = \text{PAST}$

30) a. *Tārg mā šara sayyāra jadīd-a.*
Tārg neg buy.pfv.3sgm car.sgf new.sgf
‘Tārg did not buy a new car.’

b.



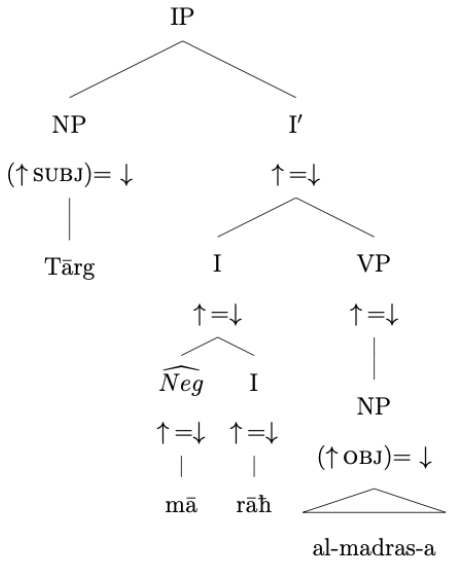
- **Verbal Sentential Negation**

The phrase structure rule for negative SVO sentences:

1. IP → (NP) → I′
2. I′ → I → VP
3. I → Nêg → I
4. VP → NP (↑ (obj) = ↓)

40) a. *Tārg **mā rāħ** al-madras-a.*
Tārg neg go.pfv.3sgm def-school-sgf
'Tārg did not go to school.'

b.



f-structure

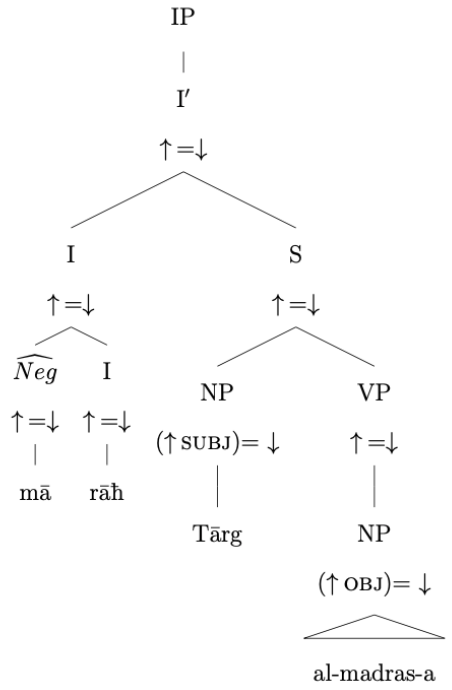
$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'GO <SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{TENSE} & \text{PAST} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{M} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'SCHOOL'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{F} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{ENEG} & + \end{bmatrix}$$

The phrase structure rule for negative VSO sentences:

IP → I′
I → S
I → Nêg → I
S → NP → VP
VP → P (↑ (obj) = ↓)

31) a. ***mā rāħ** Tārg al-madras-a.*
neg go.pfv.3sgm Tārg def-school-sgf
'Tārg did not go to school.'

b.



f-structure

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'GO <SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{TENSE} & \text{PAST} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{M} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'SCHOOL'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{F} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{ENEG} & + \end{bmatrix}$$

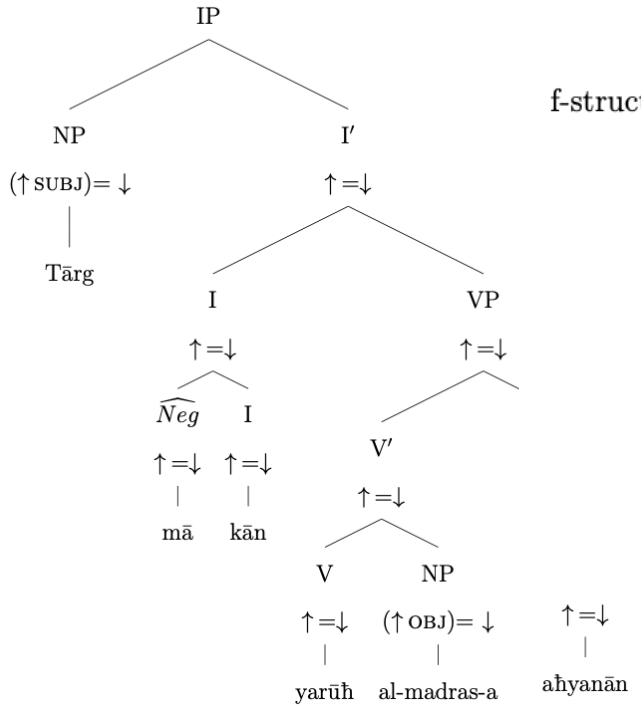
- **Auxiliary structure**

32) a. *Tārg* ***mā kān yarūħ*** *al-madras-a aħyanān*

Tārg neg was go.pfv.3sgm def-school-sgf sometimes

'Tārg did not go to school sometimes.'

b.

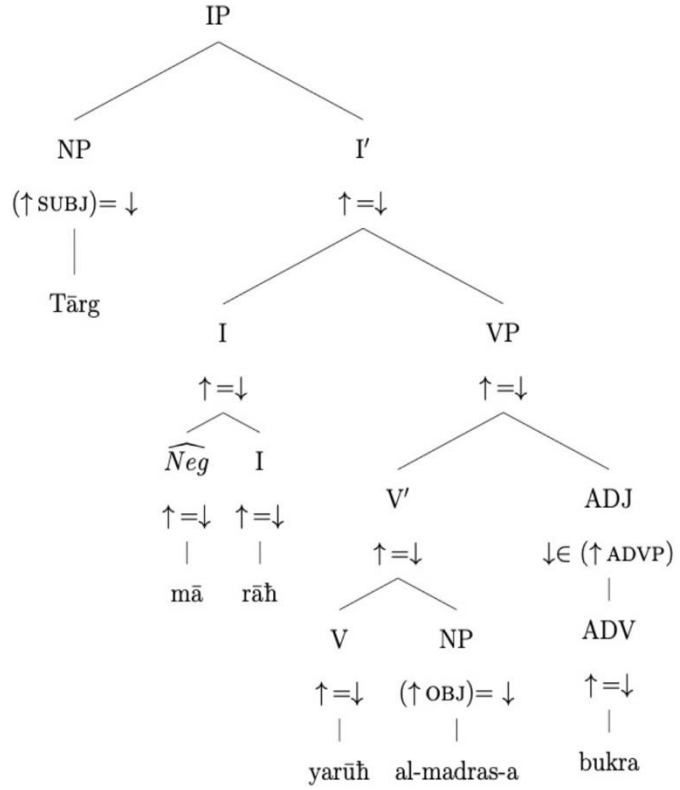


f-structure

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'GO <SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{M} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'SCHOOL'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{F} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{ENEG} & + \\ \text{TENSE} & \text{PAST} \\ \text{ASPECT} & \text{HABITUAL} \\ \text{ADJ} & \{[\text{PRED} \quad \text{'SOMETIMES'}]\} \end{bmatrix}$$

c. **kān** (AUX) V (↑ PRED) = 'was'
(↑ NUM) = SG
(↑ GEND) = M
(↑ TENSE) = PAST
(↑ SUBJ PERS) = 3

33) a.

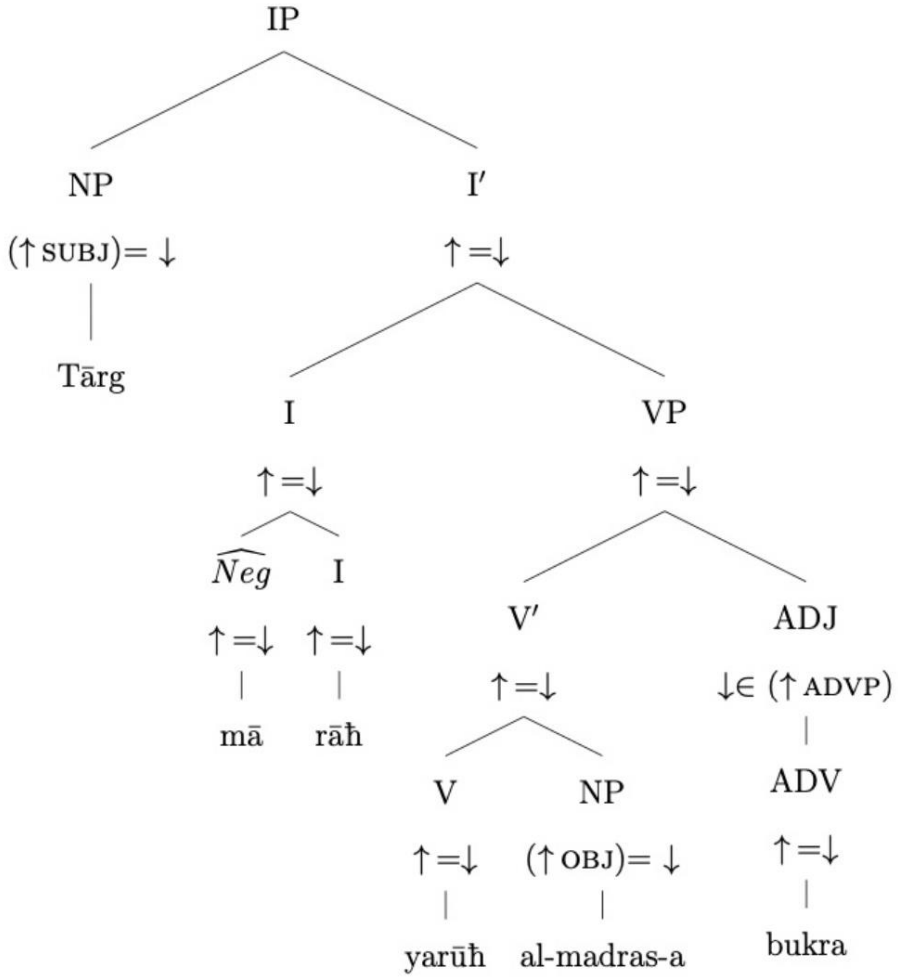


b.

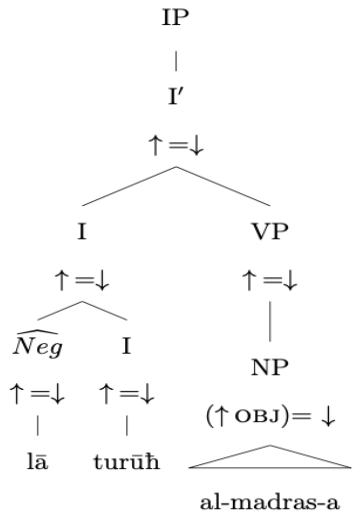
f-structure
[PRED 'GO <SUBJ, OBJ>'
SUBJ [PRED 'TĀRG' PERS 3 NUM SG GEND M]
OBJ [PRED 'SCHOOL' DEF + NUM SG GEND F]
ENEG +
TENSE FUTURE
ASPECT HABITUAL
ADJ { [PRED 'TOMORROW'] }]

rāħ (AUX) V (↑ PRED) = 'went'
(↑ NUM) = SG
(↑ GEND) = M
(↑ TENSE) = FUTURE
(↑ SUBJ PERS) = 3

34) a. **Lā t**agafl al-bāb
neg 2sgm-shut.impv def-door
Do not shut the door.



b.



f-structure
$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'GO <SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{ENEG} & + \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{M} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'SCHOOL'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{F} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

- **Non-Verbal Sentential Negation**

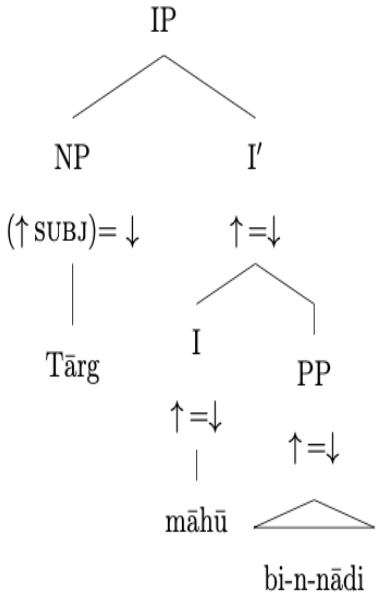
a. IP → NP I′
(↑ SUBJ)= ↓ ↑ = ↓

b. I′ → ε | I S
(↑ TENSE)=PRESENT ↑ = ↓ ↑ = ↓

c. S → NP XP
(↑ SUBJ)= ↓ ↑ = ↓

35) a. *Tārg **māhū** bi-n-nādi.*
Tārg neg.cop.3sgm in-def-house
'Tārg is not in the gym.'

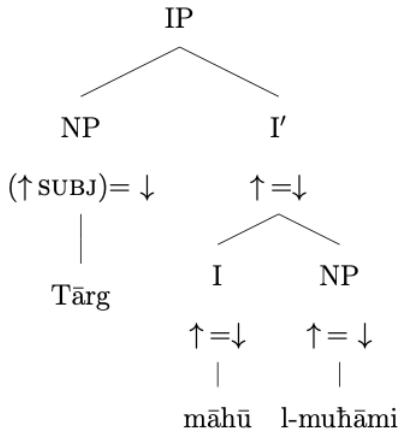
b.



$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'IN<SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'GYM'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{ENEG} & + \end{bmatrix}$$

36) a. *Tārg **māhū** l-muḥāmi.*
Tārg neg.cop.3sgm def-lawyer-sgm
Tārg is not the lawyer.

b.



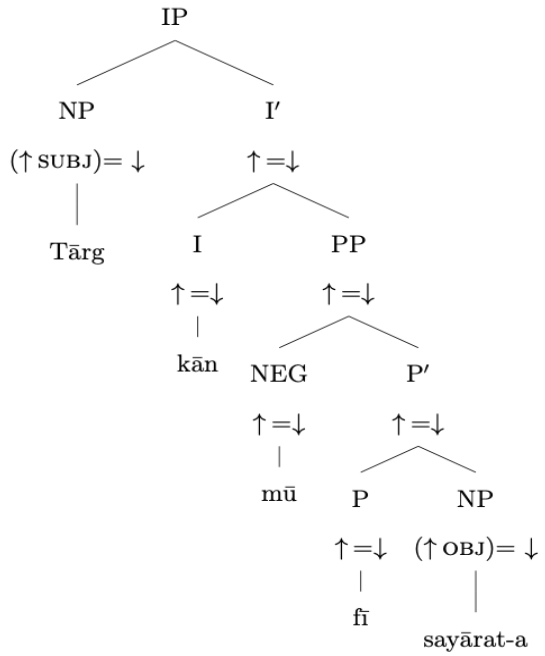
f-structure

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'BE <SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{ENEG} & + \\ \text{TENSE} & \text{PRESENT} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \\ \text{PERS} & 3 \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{M} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'LAWYER'} \\ \text{DEF} & + \\ \text{NUM} & \text{SG} \\ \text{GEND} & \text{M} \end{bmatrix} \end{bmatrix}$$

- **Constituent negation**

37) a. *Tārg kān mū fī sayārat-a.*
Tārg be.pfv.3sgm neg in place-3sgm.gen
'Tārg was not in his car.'

b.



$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'IN<SUBJ, OBJ>'} \\ \text{SUBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'TĀRG'} \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{OBJ} & \begin{bmatrix} \text{PRED} & \text{'HIS CAR'} \\ \text{CNEG} & + \end{bmatrix} \\ \text{TENSE} & \text{PAST} \end{bmatrix}$$

Conclusion

We have conducted a descriptive analysis focusing on fundamental forms of negation within a specific Arabic vernacular dialect, drawing from datasets sourced from BA. Our investigation reveals that BA exhibits distinctive approaches and specialised strategies in expressing negation, notwithstanding some overarching similarities with other

Arabic varieties. Specifically, we've highlighted that BA incorporates its own unique elements for conveying negation, supplementing the conventional elements leveraged in other Arabic dialects. Notably, BA employs *mā, lā, mū,* and their inflected forms to articulate both sentential and constituent negation. BA uses *mī* to negate verbless constructions with feminine expressed or intended subjects only. Regarding NCIs, BA is known to employ additional n-words such as *marrah* 'never, not at all', *marrah* 'never, never', *lil-abad* 'never.' Interestingly, the active participle/isam fāʕal *bāg-i* 'remain' is used widely as a not-yet word. It has also been found that BA makes use of PP NCIs *lil-yōm* 'until today', *la-yōm-ak* 'until today' and *alēn l-ħīn* 'until now'. Strikingly, it has been observed that the PP *min wāħadd* 'from one' is used in BA as a negative fragment answer only, and therefore it has been labelled as a NPI. Additionally, it has been found that *aħad/wāħad/ħadd* 'one' are all used as NPIs in BA. Moreover, *šey/ hāja* 'thing' are found to be used as NPIs in BA. In the LFG analysis, it has been determined that negative particles are most appropriately positioned under the I category within the c-structure. These findings underscore the richness and complexity of BA, revealing it to be among the Saudi dialects harbouring linguistic intricacies warranting further exploration and investigation.

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