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Postpositional Negation in Kanuri: A Case Study of *Nyariwa Kanuribe*

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Abstract: This paper examines postpositional negations in Kanuri text within the framework of descriptive linguistics adopting the works of Cyffer (2009) and Ziegelmeyer (2009) model of approach in analyzing negation types in Kanuri. In conducting the research, both sources of data collection were employed: the primary source includes a Kanuri written text *Nyariwa Kanuribe*, where all the various place where the negations negating the postpositional phrases occurred were underlined and extracted from the text for data presentation and analysis. The study also employed the secondary source of data collection where three linguists from the Kanuri section of the department of languages and linguistics, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria were engaged to validate the data collected from the text. The outcome of the study reveals that there are three particle and markers used in negating the postpositional phrases in the text and the study identified these particle/ markers are: ‘-nyi’, ‘ba’ and ‘bawo’. The negation particle ‘-nyi’ is a bound morpheme cliticized to the verbs while the negation markers ‘ba’ and ‘bawo’ are free morpheme negating postpositional phrases in Kanuri. Finally the study identified one hundred and twelve instances of



the three negation particle and markers with their number of occurrences and their percentages in the text analyzed.

Keywords: Negation, Postposition, Description, Kanuri, Nyariwa, clitic

Introduction

Kanuri is a member of the Saharan branch of the Nilo – Saharan phylum of African languages (Greenberg 1963). Bender (2000:44) presents the Saharan branch according to the following groups: Saharan Kanuri: Kanembu, Daza, Teda–Tubu, Zaghawa –Bideyat, and Berti. Lewis (2009) presents the Saharan languages into Eastern, Western and Northern branch. Kanuri is the widest – spread language in the Lake Chad region and is spoken in all countries bordering Cameroun Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. There are also small numbers of Kanuri speakers in Fezzan Libya. Some Kanuri in diaspora also live in Sudan in around Khartoum. However, Kanuri speakers in Nigeria outnumber those in other countries by far. The estimated number of Kanuri speakers in Nigeria is between three to four million. Those in other countries do not exceed five hundred thousand Cyffer (1998).

Kanuri is an amalgamation of several ethnic groups. The ethnic groups that constitute Kanuri language according to Bulakarima (1991), Bulakarima and Shettima (2012) are twenty different ethnic groups. The speech forms of the Kanuri ethnic groups are further classified into six major dialects. The classification of these six major dialects is based on their phonological, phonetic, morphological and semantic differences. The six major dialects according to Bulakarima (1991), Bulakarima and Shettima (2012) are:

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| i. Manga | iv. Dagəra |
| ii. Mowar | v. Bilma |
| iii. suwurti | vi. Yerwa |



The present study is based on Yerwa dialect of Kanuri which is the most widely used dialect of Kanuri and the standard Kanuri orthography (S.K.O) is written in Yerwa dialect of Kanuri (Cyffer 1991).

Crystal (2008) defines negation as a process of construction in grammatical and semantic analysis which typically expresses the contradictions of some or all of a sentence meaning. In English grammar, it is expressed by the presence of the negative particle (neg / NEG) “not” or “n’t” (the words such as deny. Cyffer (2009) define negation as a mere description of expressing “no” or “not” in the language. The major distinctive can be made between constituent or (local negation) and clausal (or sentential) negation (Klima 1964) . A clausal negation negates an entire preposition (e.g he does not have money) while a constitutes negation is associated with some constituent or clause (e.g he has no money.)

The negative hypothesis is the proposal that postpositional phrases are negated in Kanuri sentence in the text. The postpositional is a common structural unit which can act as a postposition in Kanuri. Therefore the paper examines postpositional negation in Kanuri using text Nyariwa Kanuribe , negation in Kanuri pay much attention on syntactics and semantics description but none of them stated of theirs strides discusses on negation particle or markers negating postpositional phrases in written Kanuri text.

The negative marker takes modifiers of different categories. These categories are mostly optional. Cyffer (2009) and Ziegelmeier (2009) state that Kanuri negations have five different markers that are used in different variants. The five markers are: ba/ bawo, -nyi/ nnyi, nde gənyi and wande/ wandowo.

This paper observes that negative marker or particle that are negating postpositional sentences in text and which types of negative particles or marker are more frequent in negating postpositional phrases. Therefore this paper examines how to describe negation in Kanuri but this

work will give much emphasis to negative sentences or phrase in Kanuri written text within the purview of descriptive approach.

According to Lukas (1937) states that in Kanuri a negative marker is separated from the verb and identifies two negative marker these are originally “adverbs” the ba contraction of ba and the copula “go” is used after the imperfective and the perfective forms. The marker as a separate word (i.e. adverb). the examples below

1a diskin ba

go NEG

I shall not do

b lengən ba

go NEG

I will not go

The examples in (a-b) above show that negative particle ba used with a regular verb to negate the simple sentence in Kanuri. Ziegelmeier (2009) observes that the morphemes: ba and bawo which function as negative existential marker meaning there is no may be used either with a complement or by themselves e.g. in the sentence, ba (there isn't any) secondly, they are used to negate 'have' sentence, ba and bawo are also used in verbal sentence negating the imperfect aspect. The morpheme ba is suffixed to the verb while the morpheme bawo stands on its own the example below

2a kəndagə ba/ bawo

Oil NEG. be

There is no oil

b. kungəna - nzə ba/bawo

Money poss 3SG NEG be

He/she did not have money

c. kəmbu səladin -ba/bawo

food 3SG. Sell impf. NEG

he/she did not sell food

The above example in (2a – c) show that the morpheme ba and bawo are also used in verbal sentences negating the imperfect aspects. This paper describes the syntactic and semantics aspect of postpositional phrase of negation and analyzed the host modifier type in the text by adopting descriptive approach.

The descriptive linguistics a theoretical framework due to the fact that the model is general in nature and can adequately describe the structure of the negation types in Kanuri. Descriptive linguistics gives a comprehensive, systematic, objective and precise account of the patterns and use of a specific language or dialect at a particular point in time. The aim of descriptive linguistic is to describe the facts of linguistics usage as they are not how they are ought to be with reference to some real or imagined ideal state Crystal (1985). The study adopting Cyffer (2009) and Ziegelmeyer (2009) state that Kanuri negations have five different markers that are used in different variants. The five marker are ba/bawo, -nyi/nnyi,nde,gɔnyi and wande/wandowo.

In the text analyzed, we identified one hundred and twelve 112 instances of occurrences of three negation particles/ markers. These are the negation markers ‘ba’ (not), ‘bawo’(not) and the negation particle ‘-nyi’ (not) identified in the text *Nyariwa Kanuribe*. The three negation particle/

markers are presented in the text Table (1) below. The table (1) shows negation types, number of their occurrences and their percentages of their occurrences in the text.

Table1

S/No	types of negation in the text	number of occurrences	percentages of occurrences
1	Ba	72	64.28%
2	Nyi	31	27.67%
3	Bawo	9	8.05%
Total		112	100%

The table (1) above shows the percentages of occurrences of the negation particle and markers found in the text. Negation – ba which constitutes the highest percentages of the occurrences with 64. 28 % in the text analyzed while negation – nyi is the second highest percentage which constitutes 27.67 % and negation bawo has the lowest percentage of occurrence which constitutes 8. 05 %. The study also analyzes the relationship between the negation particle / markers in relationship with their nouns and verbs they are attached with.

Postpositional Negation in Kanuri

In the text analyzed, the study identified negation markers ba, bawo and particle –nyi negating postpositional phrases in Kanuri. The negation markers and particles are free and bound morphemes in Kanuri. The negation marker ‘ba’ and ‘bawo’ syntactically function at the final position of sentences and phrases while the negation particle ‘-nyi’ as clitic cliticized to virtually every grammatical categories of words in Kanuri. This paper examines their syntactic and semantic functions negating postpositional phrases in a written Kanuri text.

The negation marker *ba* negating postpositional phrases in Kanuri

The Kanuri negative marker - *ba* is a type of Kanuri negation marker which negates sentences or constituents but this paper studies the syntax of negation particle *ba* negating postpositional phrases.

The negative marker – *ba* stands as a free morpheme throughout in the text analyzed which is phonetically realized with a falling tone feature –*ba`*. The negative marker – *ba* occurs immediately after the postposition of locative – *n* as exemplified below from the text.

3. ku nyi –ga gərəkə-nyi –ga faida –nyi –n ba

Today you DOM eat= NEG=COND important POSS LOC NEG

‘If I don’t eat you today I will not be grateful’

4. ku kwa -nyi fato –n ba nankaro

Today husband-my house LOC NEG sake REC

‘Today just because my husband is not at home’

In example (3) above, the negative particle –*ba* is a free morpheme occurs immediately after postposition of locative –*n* to negate the whole sentence. Example (3) above shows there are two independent clauses and each contains negation particle and marker while in example (4) the consists of one sentence and the sentence ends with adverbial phrase of reason and cause in Kanuri ‘*nanka*’ (sake) with the clitic postposition-*ro* ‘*nankaro*’ (because). The negation marker ‘*ba*’ which appears at the end of the sentence negate the whole sentence.

Postpositional Phrase With cliticized Negative Particle –*nyi*

In the text analyzed, we identified the cliticized negative particle ‘–*nyi*’ negates postpositional phrase in thirty one instances which constitutes 27.67% of the total negative markers and particle

identified in the text. In this paper, we observed that the clitic negative particle is bound morpheme cliticized to the verbs throughout in a main clause, embedded or subordinate clauses and postposition –ro or –lan is further cliticized to the negative particle ‘nyi’ (not) which already cliticized to the verbs to express different semantic functions –this is one of the characteristics of clitic which distinguishes it affix. The study observed that the postposition –n and ro can be cliticized to the negative particle – nyi to negate the whole sentence. Consider the following examples below taken from the text.

5. nyi abi nankaro kam yezəm ndumaye noza – nyi –n lanəm rəpkam

You what REC person you kill nobody they know-NEG PP you go bury

‘Why did you kill a person and buried him without anybody knowingly’

‘Why did you kill and bury while nobody knows the murder case?’

6. Ngəmtəm -nzə dawu bube –n awo sədin –ma nozə -nyi –ro walwano

Lover-his middle blood LOC thing doing EMP know- NEG PP he become

‘His lover was in the pool of her blood she did not know what to do’

The above examples in (5 and 6) show the negation particle ‘-nyi’ cliticized to verbs that are already containing inflectional suffix (past tense) while the directional –ro and the locative –lan postpositional particles are also cliticized to negative particles to express conditional concessive clauses in Kanuri. In example (5) above, the sentence is a complex sentence consists of two independent clauses and the postposition of locative –n is cliticized to the negative particle ‘– nyi’ to negate the second clause while in example (6) above sentence the postposition – ro is cliticized to the negative particle’ – nyi’ and negates the second clause.

Postpositional Phrases with Negative marker – bawo

The negative marker – bawo is a free morpheme use in nonverbal sentences in Kanuri, the negative marker ‘bawo’ is derived from negative marker and the copular verb ‘wo’ in Kanuri. The copula ‘wo’ is always accompanied by the negative marker – ba it is attached to the negative marker – ba to negate sentences or part of the sentence or phrases in Kanuri. In the text analyzed, we observed that the negative marker - bawo negates phrases related to postpositional as illustrated below taken from the text.

7. sawa -nzə tada talaa -be -də kamu fal –ma na -nzə -lan bawo

Friend POSS boy commoner GEN DET woman one EMP place POSS PP NEG

‘His friend, the son of a commoner has no single woman with him’

8. amma nyi fal –ma na - nəm -lan bawo nyi talaa nanka –ro

But you one EMP place you PP NEG you commoner SUB- DO

‘But you don’t have a single one because you are the son of a commoner’

In example (7) above shows that the sentence is negated with a negation marker ‘bawo’. The negation marker negates postpositional phrase ‘nanzə-lan bawo’ ‘in his possession’ which indicates the place where the negative marker ‘bawo’ (not) occurs after postposition of place or locative ‘lan’ at the sentence final position while in example (8) above where the sentence ends with postpositional phrase which indicates place where the negative marker – bawo is syntactically positioned . The negation marker ‘bawo’ (not) negates directional postpositional phrase ‘ro’ ‘nyi talaa nankaro’ (because you are with a commoner) which only negates the part of the sentence.



Conclusion

This paper examines postpositional negation in Kanuri using a Kanuri written text as a source of data. The study identified three types of negation used in negating postpositional phrases in Kanuri. These are: the negation particle ‘-nyi’, the negation markers ‘ba’ and ‘bawo’. The negation particle ‘-nyi’ bound morpheme is cliticized to verbs to negate the postpositional phrases while the negative markers ‘ba’ and ‘bawo’ are free morphemes independently stand on their own immediately after the postpositional phrases to negate postpositional phrases. The study also identified one hundred and twelve (112) instances of these three negative markers with their number of occurrences and percentages of their occurrences in the text.

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