Chapter 27

Negation coding in Ga

Yvonne Akwele Amankwaa Ollennu

University of Education Winneba

The paper investigates negation coding in Ga, a Kwa language. Data analyzed in the paper was gathered from Ga students at the University of Education, Winneba, in addition to the researcher's native intuition. According to Miestamo (2007) negation could be classified under two categories, standard and non-standard negation. It is noted that whichever type of negation is employed in a language, it will be done either morphologically or syntactically. The paper shows that both morphological and syntactic strategies are used for negation coding in Ga. The NP NP and copula types of sentences in Ga employ a syntactic strategy to code negation. On the other hand, SVO sentences are negated morphologically. The SVO type of sentences is negated morphologically via the tense or aspect of the verb type in Ga. The affixes used to negate the SVO sentences also depend on the type of verb used in the sentence.[1]

1 Introduction

The paper investigates negation coding in Ga. Miestamo (2007: 553) categorized negation into two types: standard and non-standard negation. The negation of declarative verbal clauses is termed standard negation and the negation of imperatives, existential, and non-verbal clauses is termed non-standard negation. However, whichever category may exist in the language, certain strategies would be employed to negate the clause. This was noted by Dahl (1979), who examined 240 languages and concluded that negation is expressed either morphologically or syntactically and therefore proposed a typology for negation. He further iterated that the morphological strategy may involve prefixation, circumfixation

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[1]This paper was presented at the 44th Annual Conference of African Linguistics at Georgetown University. It was mistakenly excluded from those proceedings, so we are including it here as a courtesy to the editors of that volume and to the author.

or suffixation. Though Dakubu (2003) discussed Ga clauses and their negation, the strategies employed were not investigated. The focus of this paper is to find which of these strategies are employed in negating clauses in Ga using Dahl's (1979) proposed typology on negation. Dahl, however, claims that his typology may not be universal and may not be generalized due to some lapses. Data analyzed in the paper was gathered from Ga students at the University of Education, Winneba, in addition to the researcher's native intuition. There were 57 students in all comprising 29 males and 26 females.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section gives a short typological background of Ga and includes the verb types and clause types. Section two then examines the negation strategies of the Ga clauses. Section three is the final section and presents the summary and conclusion.

1.1 Brief typological background of Ga.

Ga is a two-level tone language from the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo family. It is spoken in Ghana, along the coastal areas in the Greater Accra region like Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Teshie Nungua, Tema, Kpone among others. Ga has no dialects, but vocabulary differences exist which correlate with differing geographical locations. Ga has cases of downstepping and nasality spreading in certain instances Dakubu (2000). In terms of its vocalic entry, it has five nasal vowels /ã, ĩ, ɔ̃, ũ, ɛ̃/ and seven oral vowels /i, o, ɛ, ɔ, u, e, a/ . All the vowels contrast as they bring about meaning change as shown in (1).

(1)   a. fa 'to borrow'

b. fã 'half'

c. tɔ 'bottle'

d. tɔ̃ 'to be wrong'

The language is similar to Akan in many ways especially in terms of the sentence structure. The two-level tones, that is Low (L) and High (H) in Ga have grammatical and lexical functions. The language has several affixes made up of derivational and inflectional ones. All the major word classes can be found in the language. Some of these word classes have both derived and non-derived members.

1.2 Verb types in Ga

Dakubu (1970; 2003) recognizes two types of verb in Ga. The simple verbal classes consist of verbal stems and can be attached with eleven different affixes which

may indicate one of the following: polarity, aspect, tense and class of the verb stem. Group 1 or class 1 verbs consist of monosyllabic verbs with initial high tone, polysyllabic stems with low tone throughout and a set of twelve monosyllabic low tone stems. The verbs found in class 2 are stems which are monosyllabic with low tones and all polysyllabic stems with initial low tone followed by high. Below, we see examples of each of the two types of verb stems found in Ga.

Verb type 1

(2) Perfect:

    a. Aku é-ˈbí.
       Aku PERF-ask
       'Aku has asked.'

    b. Progressive:
       Aku mìì-bí
       Aku PROG-ask
       'Aku is asking.'

    c. Subjunctive:
       Aku á-bí.
       Aku SBJV-ask
       'Aku should ask.'

(3) Aorist:

    a. Aku ˈbí.
       Aku ask.AOR
       'Aku asked.'

    b. Habitual:
       Aku bí-ɔ.
       Aku ask-HAB
       'Aku asks.'

    c. Future:
       Aku àá-bí.
       Aku FUT-ask
       'Aku will ask.'

Verb type 2

(4) a. Perfect:
Aku é-kè   mì wòlò.
Aku PERF-present 1SG book
'Aku has presented a book to me.'

b. Progressive:
Aku mìì-kè   mì wòlò.
Aku PROG-present 1SG book
'Aku is presenting a book to me.'

c. Subjunctive:
Aku à-kè   mí wòlò.
Aku SBJV-present 1SG book
'Aku ought to present a book to me.'

(5) Aorist:

a. Aku kè   mì wòlò.
Aku present.AOR 1SG book
'Aku presented a book to me.'

b. Habitual:
Aku kè-ɔ   mì wòlò.
Aku present-HAB 1SG book
'Aku presents a book to me.'

c. Future:
Aku àá-kè   mì wòlò.
Aku FUT-present 1SG book
'Aku will present a book to me.'

In the above, the verbs *bí* 'ask' and *kè* 'present' represent the two types of verbs. It will be noticed that prefixes are attached to the verbs in obtaining the perfect, progressive, subjunctive and future. For habitual, a suffix /-ɔ/ which has the allomorph /-a/, is attached to the verbs depending on the vowel in the root of the verb under consideration. The allomorph /-a/ occurs only with verbs that have the vowel /a/ in the final syllable of the root. However it must be noted that there are other affixes – auxiliaries – which are attached to verbs in Ga, but these will not be discussed in this paper.

1.3 Clause types

Dakubu (2003) noted that Ga has NP NP, Copula and SVO clause types. It must be noted that there are sub-groups of the NP NP clause-type. The examples in (7) and (8) are NP plus particles. The particles precede or occur after the NP in the clause.

(6)   Náà yòó   ˈlέ
      PRT woman DEF
      'Here is the woman.'

(7)   Nùú ˈlέ   nέ
      Man DEF PRT
      'This is the man/that is the man.'

(8)   Yòó   ˈlέ   nì.
      Woman DEF PRT
      'It is the woman.'

In examples (7-8) above we observe that the particles *ni* and *nɛ* occur after the noun in the sentences and the particle *naa* occurs at the initial position in (6). These sentences (6-8) do not contain main verbs. It will be completely unacceptable to put a verb in such sentences, as in (9).

(9)   *Nùú lɛ   ba   nɛ.
      Man DEF come PRT

The second sub-group comprises those that contain only two NPs and nothing else. There is no occurrence of particles and these are grammatical in the language. Examples (10)-(11) illustrate this type.

(10)   Nmέˈnέ Sòò.
       today   Thursday
       'Today is Thursday.'

(11)   É-mùsù   gògá.
       3SG-stomach bucket
       'His stomach is a bucket. (His stomach is big)'

However it should be noted that word order is fixed in (10) and (11) to preserve meaning in the NP NP clause type. It cannot be switched or turned around syntactically to mean the same. The clause in (10) shows a relationship of the NP in first position belonging to the class in the second NP, but in (11) the second NP describes the first entity. The copula clause type consists of a defective verb and can be swapped around. The copula clause is made up of NP and VP where the VP contains a copula verb and an NP. The copula verb *ji* is used below to illustrate in (12-15).

(12) Nùù jí   ꜝlɛ́.
     Man cop 3sg
     'He is a man.'

(13) Tsɔ̀ɔ́ɔ̀lɔ̀ɔ̀ jí   Adote.
     Teacher cop Adote
     'The teacher is Adote'

(14) Mí-fɔ́-mɔ̀   gbì jí   wɔ́.
     1sg-give.birth-nom day cop tomorrow
     'My birthday is tomorrow.'

(15) Mí-màmí jí   pòlísìfónyò.
     1sg-mother cop police
     'My mother is a police woman.'

In the above examples in (12) the two NPs are *nùù* 'man' and *lɛ* 'him' and in (13) the two NPs are *tsɔ̀ɔ́lɔ̀* 'teacher' and *Adote* 'name of a person'. The copula verb *jí* has been placed in between the two NPs to form the sentences. It must be noted that without the copula placed in between the two NPs, they will be NPs and not meaningful sentences. One major feature of the Ga copula clause is that the NPs in the clause can be interchanged and the meaning of the sentence remains the same. That is to say, in its structure, there are two NPs and the copula is placed between the two NPs. Changing the positions of the NPs does not alter the meaning of the sentences. There may be a pragmatic change in meaning but the paper will not delve into that. For instance example (13) and (14) above can be rendered as (16) and (17) where the positions of the NPs are changed.

(16) Adote jí   tsɔ̀ɔ́lɔ̀.
     Adote COP teacher
     'Adote is a teacher.'

(17) Wɔ́   ꜜjí mì-fɔ́-mɔ̀   gbì.
     Tomorrow COP 1SG-give.birth-NOM day.
     'Tomorrow is my birthday.'

I believe the choice of one form over another depends on the speaker's focus.

As discussed by Dakubu (2003), in Ga the abbreviation SVO is itself shorthand for SVOOA. Thus, there is the possibility of having two objects and an adjunct and this is because there are transitive, intransitive and ditransitive verbs in Ga. The adjunct is optional, and a sentence could have more than one in a sentence. The verb is the obligatory element in the SVO clause. The main verb in the sentence could have preverbs attached to them. Illustrations are in examples (18 -19) below.

(18) Aku tee   sukuu.
     Aku go.AOR school
     'Aku went to school.'

(19) Aku baa-ba-na   lɛ wɔ.
     Aku ING-FUT-see 3SG tomorrow
     'Aku will see him/her tomorrow'

In (18) the verb *tee*[2] 'went' has a subject *Aku* and object *sukuu* 'school'. In (19) the sentence structure is Subject-Verb-Object-Adjunct (SVOA). The adjunct is often an optional element in Ga.

2 Negation of clauses

Negation of non-verbal clauses in Ga involves the introduction of a negative particle. On the other hand, the verbal clause is negated morphologically through suffixation and circumfixaton. The affix chosen in Ga depends on the verb type. Ga negation is discussed in this section.

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[2] *Tee* is an aorist and an irregular verb form for the verb *ya* 'to go'.

2.1 Non-verbal clauses

At this point, the paper examines the strategies for the negation of non-verbal clauses, which falls in the category of non-standard negation. In negation of both 'NP NP' types of clauses, there is the introduction of a negative particle *jééé*. The source of this particle may be traced to the copula verb *ji*, which when negated becomes *jééé*. It must be noted that it is normally referred to as the negative particle, and that will be maintained in this paper. Clauses in (20-22) below are from the subgroup of the NP type which consists of particles.

(20) Jééé   Aku nì.
      NEG.PRT Aku
      'This is not Aku.'

(21) Jééé   yòó   lὲ   nέ.
      NEG.PRT woman DEF PRT
      'That is not a woman.'

(22) Jééé   nùú lὲ   nì.
      NEG.PRT man DEF PRT
      'That is not the man.'

It can be seen from the above examples (20-22) that *jééé* occurs in initial position. The free negative morpheme precedes the first NP in the clause to be negated. With this type of clause, it will be unacceptable in the Ga language to place the morpheme *jééé* after the noun or clause finally. The morpheme inherently is negative and occurs only at initial position to negate the sentences.

The examples below are the negation of examples (12-12b); the particle *jééé* is placed in between the two NPs as shown in (23) and (24).

(23) Nmɛnɛ jééé   Sòò.
      Today NEG.PRT Thursday
      'Today is not Thursday.'

(24) É-musu   jééé   gògá.
      3SG-stomach NEG.PRT bucket
      'His stomach is not a bucket. (His stomach is not big)'

In the second sub-group of two-NP clauses in (10) and (11), the negative particle occurs in between the NPs and not at the initial position in the clauses. When the negative particle is placed at the initial positions of the clauses, the meaning derived is to correct the value or otherwise of a statement made and not negate them for the above in (23) and (24). This may not be so in all instances as seen in (25) and (26).

(25)   * Aku jééé nì.
      NEG PRT Aku PRT

(26)   * Yòó   lɛ́   jééé nɛ́.
      NEG.PRT woman DEF PRT

In (25) and (26) above, the negative particle cannot be placed before the particle *ni* or *nɛ́* as this is ungrammatical, unlike the examples in (23) and (24) where the negative particle can occur between the two nouns in the sentence.

2.2   Copula clause

In negating the copula sentence the negative form of the copula verb *ji* which is *jééé* is introduced into the sentence. For instance, after negating the above copula sentences in (13-15), the outcome will be (27-29).

(27)   Jééé   nùù jí lɛ̀.
      NEG.PRT man COP 3SG
      'He is not a man.'

(28)   Jééé   tsɔ̀ɔ́lɔ̀ jí Adote.
      NEG.PRT teacher COP Adote
      'The teacher is not Adote.'

(29)   Jééé   mi-fɔ-mɔ   gbi jí wɔ.
      NEG.PRT 1SG-give.birth-NOM day COP tomorrow
      'My birthday is not tomorrow.'/ 'Tomorrow is not my birthday.'

It must be noted that with the possibility of the NPs being interchangeable, such sentences still have the negative particle *jééé* introduced at the initial position of the sentence. For instance (16) and (17) above can be negated and the outcome will be (30) and (31) below.

(30) Jééé Adote jí tsɔ̀ɔ́lɔ̀.
NEG.PRT Adote COP teacher
'Adote is not a teacher.'

(31) Jééé wɔ jí mi-fɔ-mɔ gbì.
NEG.PRT tomorrow COP 1SG-give.birth-NOM day
'Tomorrow is not my birthday.'

The strategy employed in the examples that introduce the negative morpheme *jééé* is the syntactic strategy. A morpheme is being introduced into the clause to form the negative construction. It could be said that the negative form of copula verb *jééé* plus the copula verb *ji* is found in the construction. This is the reason why it has been referred to as a negative particle in Ga literature. Dangme, a very closely related language, has allomorphs of the negative morpheme as noted by Caesar (2012) but there are no allomorphs of the *jééé* negative particle in Ga.

2.3 SVO clauses

SVO clauses, which fall into the standard negation category, employ morphological strategies to form the negative. Negation is formed by the introduction of an affix which is attached to the verb. In the negation of an SVO clause, the tense and the verb type must be taken into consideration.

When the sentence is declarative and in the following tense/aspect: present, progressive, habitual and past, a double copy of the final vowel of the root verb -VV is attached to a high tone verb (type 1). On the other hand, when it is verb type 2 a prefix *e-* plus the double copy of the vowel is suffixed to the verb to negate it. A circumfix or preferably a discontinuous morpheme *e-VV* therefore is used in the negation process for verb type 2. Examples (32-34), which are in the affirmative, are all negated by the same strategy to obtain (35).

(32) Aorist:
Tete bí Aku sànè.
Tete ask.AOR Aku matter
'Tete asked Aku about the issue.'

(33) Progressive:
Tete mìì-bí Aku sànè.
Tete PROG-ask Aku matter
'Tete is asking Aku about the matter/issue'

(34) Habitual:
Tete bí-ɔ   Aku sànè.
Tete ask-HAB Aku matter
'Tete asks Aku about the matter/issue.'

The negative form will be:

(35) Tete bí-íí Aku sànè.
Tete ask-NEG Aku matter
'Tete did not ask Aku about the matter.'

It can be concluded that in terms of negation, there is no distinction between progressive, habitual, and aorist in Ga. The distinctions get lost as the negation marking on the verb is the same for time sequences.

A sentence in the future is as follows:

(36) Affirmative verb type 1
Tete àá-bí   lɛ́.
Tete FUT-ask 3SG
'Tete will ask him/her.'

(37) Affirmative verb type 2
Tete bàá-kè   nii.
Tete FUT-give thing
'Tete will give (a gift).'

(38) Negative verb type 1
Tete bí-ŋŋ   lɛ́.
Tete ask-NEG 3SG
'Tete will not ask him.'

(39) Negative verb type 1
Tete é-ˈké-ŋ   níí.
Tete NEG-give-NEG thing
'Tete will not give (a gift).'

From the above example (38), it can be observed that the suffix *-ŋ* is used to negate the verb with a high tone and a discontinuous morpheme *e-ŋ* is used for the low tone verb in (39).

Negation of the perfect proceeds as follows in (40-41):

(40) Affirmative verb type 1
      Tete é-ˈbí   ˈmí.
      Tete PERF-ask 1SG
      'Tete did not ask me.'

(41) Affirmative verb type 2
      Tete é-kè   mì wòlò.
      Tete PERF-give 1SG book
      'Tete has gifted me a book.'

(42) Negative verb type 1
      Tete bí-kò   mì.
      Tete ask-NEG 1SG
      'Tete has asked me.'

(43) Negative verb type 2
      Tete é-ˈké-kò   mì.
      Tete NEG-give-NEG 1SG
      'Tete did not present to me...'

The analysis shows that the perfect takes a suffix *-ko* which attaches to the verb for verb type 1 in (42) and a circumfix *e-ko* for verb type 2 in (43).

In negating the subjunctive the negative prefix *-ka* is attached to the verb types. It should be noted that the subjunctive already has a prefix *a-* to indicate that mood.

Let's consider the subjunctive. The sentence will be negated as follows:

(44) Verb type 1
      Tete á-ká-bí.
      Tete SBJV-NEG-ask
      'Tete should not ask.'

(45) Verb type 2
 Tete á-ká-kè......
 Tete sʙjᴠ-ɴᴇɢ-present
 'Tete should not present.....'

The imperative can also be negated by attaching the prefix *-káá* to the verb in the singular and the prefix *–ká* for the plural imperative. It must be noted that the singular imperative is a high floating tone. Below are examples in (46a–d and (47) to illustrate this fact.

(46) Singular imperative affirmative:

   a. *Wɔ́* 'You(sɢ) sleep.'

   b. *Yé* 'You (sɢ) eat.'
       Singular imperative negative:

   c. *Kàáwɔ́.* 'Do not sleep.'

   d. *Kàáyé.* 'Do not eat.'

(47) Plural imperative affirmative:

   a. *Nyέ-wɔ-a.* 'You(ᴘʟ) sleep.'

   b. *Nyέ-yè-a.* 'You(ᴘʟ) eat.'
       Plural imperative negative:

   c. *Nyέ-ká-wɔ-a.* 'You(ᴘʟ) do not sleep.'

   d. *Nyέ-ká-yè-a.* 'You(ᴘʟ) do not eat.'

From the above discussion, the SVO clause is negated in accordance with the verb type and tense of that verb. In Ga, negation employs prefixes and circumfixes. The verb type 1 employs prefixes while verb type 2 negates with circumfixes, with the exception of the subjunctive and imperative.

2.4 Other forms of negation

Sometimes sentences are negated by the use of replacive negative words. This was discussed by Caesar (2012: 23) for Dangme (lexical negation). This normally happens in Ga when the verb *yɛ* 'to have' is used. Here, the verb is totally replaced with a negative verb *bɛ* 'not'. This is exemplified in (48) and (49).

(48) Ajele yɛ shìká.
      Ajele has money
      'Ajele has money.'

(49) Ajele bɛ shíká.
      Ajele not money
      'Ajele has no money.'

In (49) the negative verb *bɛ* is used for negation and the verb *yɛ* does not occur in the negative construction.

3   Summary and conclusion

In summary, Ga clauses were examined and classified into three namely the NP NP clause type, the copula clause type and the SVO clauses. Negation of the NP NP and Copula clauses is done using the syntactic strategy which involves the introduction of the negative particle *jééé* at initial or middle position in the clauses. The following were noted for the SVO clause:

- Ga SVO clauses can be negated morphologically. The negation depends on the verb type in the sentence vis-a-vis the tense of the verb. The habitual, progressive as well as the past and present tenses were negated with the suffix -VV for verb type 1 and *e*-VV for verb type 2.

- The perfect negation for verb type 1 is a suffix -*kò*. A circumfix *e-kò* is used for verb type 2.

- Future negation is achieved for verb type 1 with a suffix -*ŋ*. For verb type 2, the circumfix *e-ŋ* is used.

- In the imperative, verb type 1 and 2 both use the prefix *kàá-* and *ká-* for singular and plural imperatives respectively.

- The subjunctive negation uses the *ká-* prefix for both verb types.

3.1   Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper examined the ways of forming negation in Ga. The clause types were discussed and each type was examined to find how they can be

negated. From the study it came to light that non-verbal sentences (NP and Copula types) are negated syntactically by introducing *jééé*, a negative particle. SVO type of sentences is negated morphologically. The negation is marked overtly on the verb in the sentences using affixes. Verb type 1 uses prefixes generally for negation and verb type 2 attaches circumfixes. However it was noted that there are instances where the verb form changed totally when negated. Finally, Ga uses both syntactic and morphological strategies to form negation. This is among the strategies proposed by Dahl (1979) which serves as a stepping stone to examining negation further in Kwa languages as there may be an overlap. The discussion of the negation coding in Ga using Dahl's typology is an attempt to examine the strategies that are used to code negation. The researcher believes that it can also be placed into Miestamo (2007) categorization of negation into standard and non-standard negation. This will be left for future research as Dahl's typology may not cater for all the issues.

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

AOR	Aorist	PART	Particle
COP	Copula	PERF	Perfect
DEF	Definite	PL	Pural
FUT	Future	PROG	Progressive
HAB	Habitual	PST	Past
INGR	Ingressive	SG	Singular
NEG	Negative	SBJV	Subjunctive
NEG.PRT	Negative particle	1SG	First Person Singular
NOM	Nominal Affix	3SG	Third Person Singular
NP	Nominal Phrase		

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