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THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEGATION MARKERS IN THE LAMNSO LANGUAGE

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Abstract: This paper investigates the syntactic presentation and distribution of negative markers in the Bantu language of Lamnso, with a focus on the negation particles yo' and la'. Using the Principles and Parameters Theory and analyzing the Lamnso tense system, the study reveals that yo' operates as a free morpheme generated below the TP and above the VP in all contexts of time-specifications (tenses) at the D-Structure, while la' remains constantly generated below the TP within the Conditional Phrase (ConP). Negation is a grammatical phenomenon employing free morphemes, and in-situ generations involve no movement, while ex-situ generations involve a head transformational movement of yo' from NEG to AGR for certain tenses. The Split-Inf hypothesis of Pollock (1989) is used to explain the syntactic distribution of negation markers, which are generated above the TP within the NEGP node. The paper contributes to the understanding of negation in Lamnso and its structuring within Bantu languages, and presents a theoretical framework that can be applied to analyze negation in other languages.

Keywords: negation, Bantu language, Lamnso, Principles and Parameters Theory, Split-Inf hypothesis, morphemes, tense, syntactic presentation, free morphemes, ConP.

Introduction: This paper aims to identify the distribution and syntactic presentation of negative markers in the Bantu language of Lamnso, specifically the negation particles yo' and la'. Negation is an important grammatical phenomenon that plays a crucial role in the structure of languages, and studying its syntactic distribution and presentation can provide insights into the structure of a language. This study uses the Principles and Parameters Theory, which posits that language is made up of fixed and invariant universal principles and a finite number of values or dimensions along which variations can emerge (parameters). The Split-Inf hypothesis of Pollock (1989) is also used to explain the distribution of negation markers in Lamnso. The paper presents an analysis of the Lamnso tense system and investigates the positioning of negation markers, demonstrating that yo' operates as a free morpheme generated below the TP and above the VP in all contexts of time-specifications, while la' remains below the TP within the ConP. The paper concludes that negation in Lamnso is a grammatical phenomenon employing free morphemes, and presents a theoretical framework that can be applied to analyze negation in other languages.

2. Methodology: Data Collection/Presentation

The Lamnso corpus in this paper is partly designed by this writer and self-established and administered, being a native speaker of the language. The other part of the corpus was adopted and adapted from the Lamnso dictionary (ŋwà‟ Nsàv: 2015), Fonkpu(2017, 2013, 2010, 2009, 2008, 2007 and 2005).

2.1 The Negation Markers /Particles of "Not"

Like in most languages, negation is intrinsically associated with tense. For this reason, I will be presenting the "not" markers within the overall tense system in Lamnso.

2.1.1 Yo‟ Within the Lamnso Tense System

According to ŋwà‟ Nsàv (2015), Lamnso has a verb system, expressing tense, aspect and mood in the following order

(i) (Subject) (Tense) (Aspect) verb (Aspect)

Tense is mainly marked by tense particles but in some cases it involves specific tone patterns on the verb. Generally Lamnso manifests seven tenses as we see in tables below:

Table 1 :Present Tense and „yo‟‟‟

Present progressive	Wàn yì kibán | | | Child eat fufu „A child is eating fufu‟
	Wàn yo‟ Ø yì kibán | | | Child Not Po eat fufu „A child is not eating fufu‟

Table 2 :Future Tense and „yo‟‟‟

	Wàn yíiyì kibán | | | Child F1 eat fufu „A child will eat fufu‟
Today	Wàn yo‟ yíi yi kibán | | | | | fufu Child not F1 eat „A child will not eat fufu‟
	Wàn wíiyì kibán | | | Child F2 eat fufu „A child will eat fufu‟
Sometimes later	Wàn yo‟ wíi yi kibán

	| | | | | fufu Child not F2 eat „A child will not eat fufu“
Sometimes further	Wàn ghànyì kibán | | | Child F3 eat fufu „A child will eat fufu“
	Wàn yo“ ghàn yi kibán | | | | | fufu Child not F3 eat „A child will not eat fufu“

Table 3 Past Tense and „yo‟‟‟

	kibán Wàn kì yì | fufu | | | Chil P1 eat „A child ate fufu‟
Today	Wàn yo‟ Ø (la)yì kibán | | | fufu Child not P1 eat „A child did not eat fufu‟
	kibán Wàn -ee yì | fufu | | | Child P2 eat „A child ate fufu‟
Yesterday	Wàn -eeyo‟oo lo yì kibán | Chil | | | P2 not | fufu Asp eat
	Wàn -eè yì kibán | | | | Child P3 eat fufu „A child a te fufu‟
Long (time) ago	Wàn -eèyo‟oò lo yì kibán | | | | | fufu Child P3 not Asp eat „A child did not eat fufu‟

In Lamnso, Po is generally not marked in the simple and negative declarative and perfective usages as illustrated in table above. Consequently, we can give it a null (Ø) marker in subsequent examples. Po goes both for present and progressive usages.

The future tense, like in most Bantu and African languages, has three time-specifications: F1 that is marked by “yíi”, F2 by “wíy” and F3 by “ghàn” as we see in table 2 above. In negative usages, the „yo‟‟‟ marker /particle precedes the tense markers and are realized as free morphemes.

Concerning the past, we still have three time-specifications: P1 marked by „kì‟, P2 marked by a bound –vv (- ee) cluster and P3 marked equally by a bound –vv (- eè) cluster. With the negative usage, the past timespecifications reveal interesting results. Firstly, the P1 marker becomes null (Ø). Secondly, the P2 and P3

tense markers (-vv and -vv) affixed to subject nouns, now precede the negation particle, which in its turn undergoes a kind of vowel harmony with the tense (yo‟oò for P3). Thirdly, it should be noted that the -vv / -vv changes according to the noun classes of subjects.

2.1.2 La‟ Within the Lamnso Tense System

In the conditional usage, „not‟ marked by „la‟‟‟ behaves in the same way as its counterpart „yo‟‟‟ in perfective declarative constructions. Let us thus consider the tables below.

Table 4 Present Tense and „la‟‟‟

Po	À wàn yí kibán… | | | | cond child eat fufu If a child eats / is eating fufu…
	À wàn Ø la‟ yí kibán… | | | | | | fufu cond child Po not eat If a child does not eat fufu…

Table 5 Future Tense and „la‟

F1	kibán… À wàn yíiyì | fufu | | | cond child F1 eat If a child will eat fufu…
	À wàn yii la‟ yi kibán | | | | | eat | fufu cond child F1 not If a child will not eat fufu…
F2	À wàn wíyyì kibán… | | | | cond child F2 | fufu eat If a child will eat fufu…
F2	À wàn wíy la‟ | | | | condyi kibán… child F2 not | | If a child will not eat fufu… eat fufu

F3	À wàn ghànyì kibán… | | | | fufu cond child F3 eat If a child will eat fufu…
	À wàn ghàn la‟ yi Kibán… | | | | | | fufu cond child F3 not eat If a child will not eat fufu…

Table 6 Past Tense and „la‟‟‟

P1	yì Kibán… À wàn kì ||| | | cond Child P1 eat fufu If a child ate fufu…
	À wàn kì la‟ yì Kibán… | || | | cond child P1 | fufu not eat If a child did not eat fufu…
P2	yì |Kibán… À wàn -ee || | eat | fufu cond child P2 If a child ate fufu…
	À wàn -ee la‟ yì kibán | | | | | cond child P2 | not eat Fufu If a child did not eat fufu…
P3	yì |Kibán… À wàn -eè eat | fufu | | cond | chil P3 If a child ate fufu…
	À wàn -eè la‟ yì kibán…

	| | | | | fufu cond child | P3 not eat If a child did not eat fufu…

La', as demonstrated above, follows all the tenses in Lamnso. Interesting to note here is the fact that unlike in Table 3 where the perfective negative usage within the P1 time-specification results in the deletion of the tense marker „kì", the conditional usage within the P1 time-specification maintains the tense marker „kì".

3. A Principles And Parametres Treatment Of Yo" And La"

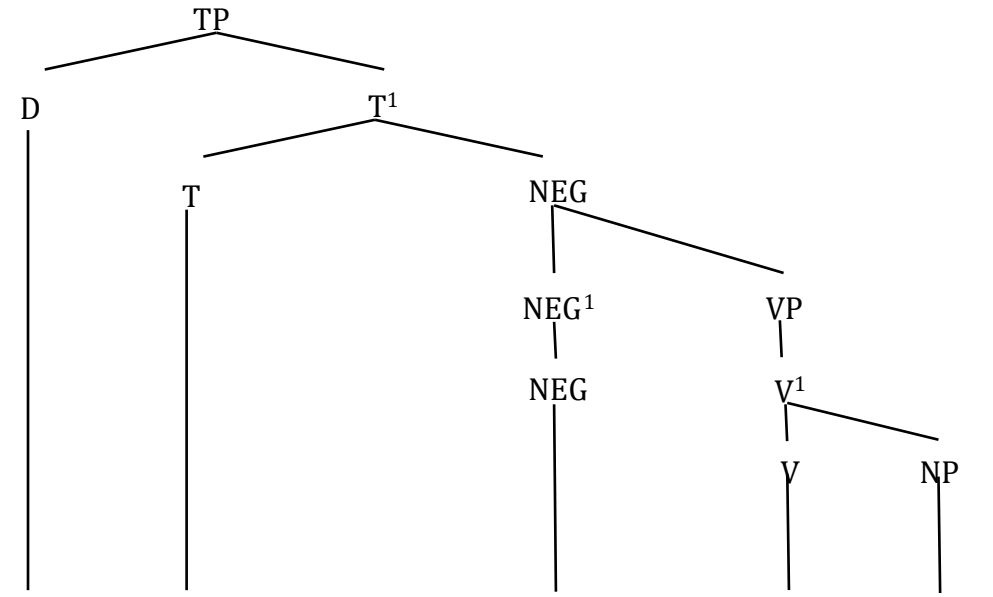
A lot of research on the Principles and Parameters Theory was provoked with the Split- Inf Hypothesis of Pollock (1989) with the aim of determining clause structure (Tanda and Neba (2005:215). Adverbs, negation and any other property that can be ascribed reasonably to an auxiliary system have their own functional categories and are considered distinct at the level of the D-Structure. Consequently, functional categories, viz, tense and negation project TP and T^1 nodes and NEGP and NEG^1 nodes respectively. Secondly, adverbial elements are considered static and only verbs do move from one position to another. In like manner, an agreement phrase (AGRP) is postulated, with the (AGR) head occupying a higher position than the T head (Pollock 1989, Belleti 1990, Chomsky (1993). Despite a number of criticisms (see Iatridou 1990), the Split-Inf hypothesis has been generally accepted with the PPT and the minimalist program (MP).

As intimated by Tanda & Neba (ibid), the basic assumption of the PPT is that language is made up of a set of fixed and invariant independent universal principles which account for the similarities that exist between human languages and a set of finite number of values or dimensions along which variations can emerge (parameters). Children according to this theory are born with principles while language learners are involved with parameter setting. Thus, the aim of this theory is to identify the various parameters and how they can be set in every language. The section that follows offers thus a PPT treatment of negation in Lamnso.

3.1 the Status of Negin Lamnso

In earlier works mentioned above, the position of the negative particle has been observed to vary from language to language. In some languages, NEG occurs before the verbs and in some it occurs after. In some, such as in French, two negative morphemes straddle the verbs (Tanda & Neba 2005:216). In Lamnso, the two negation markers (yo" and la" under study) occur pre-verbally in all context of usages, as demonstrated in the previous examples. Considering that in the PPT and MP frameworks, the negation morpheme is considered a functional category functioning as a head that projects in NEGP, Ouhalla (1991) advanced that NEG should be expected to be hierarchically arranged in the same way across languages.

Bearing this in mind, we move from the premise that NEG in Lamnso is generated below the TP and above the VP. Evidence to back up this claim comes from the P2 and P3 constructions as we see below:



P_2wán -ee yo'óo

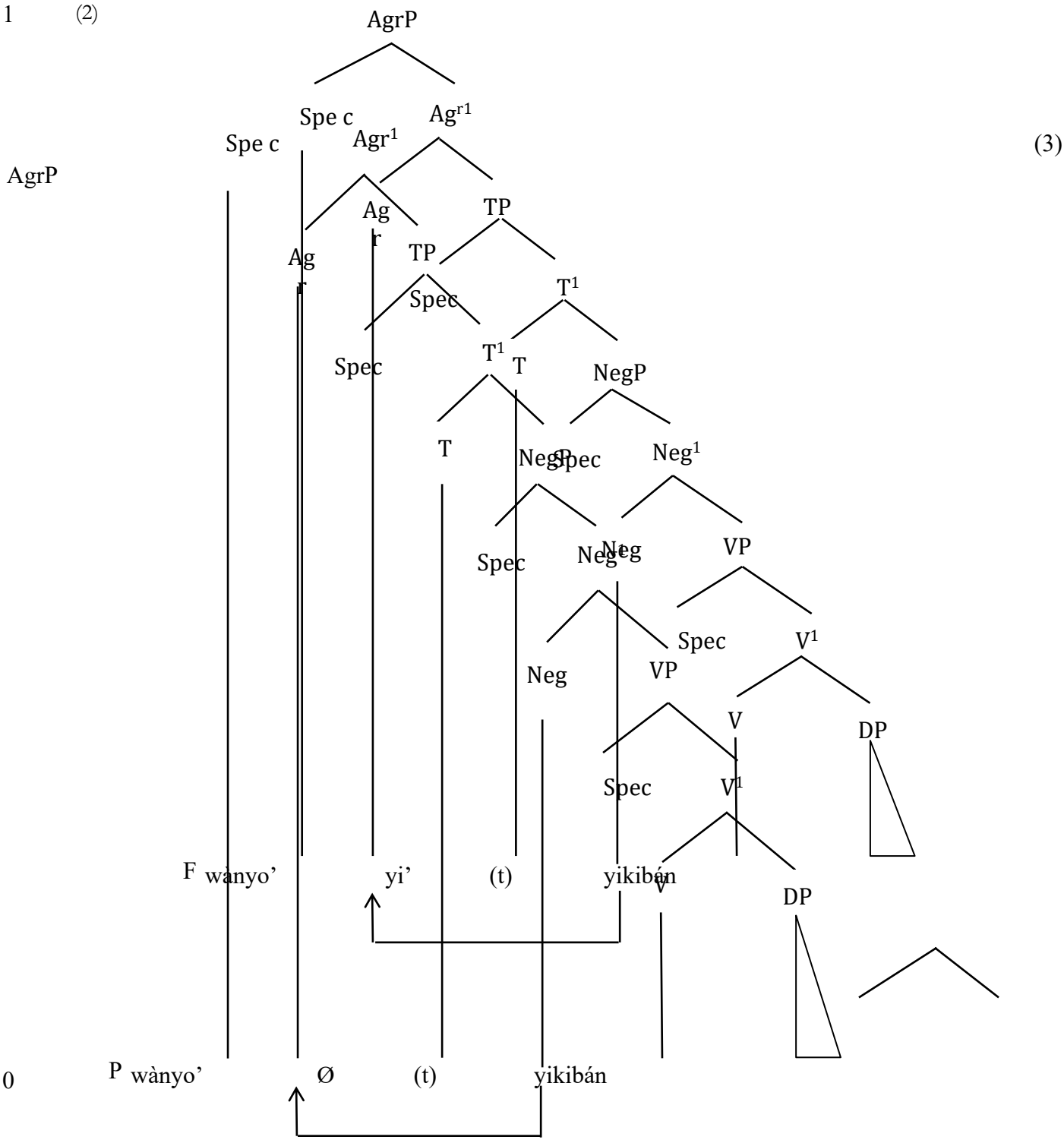
P_3 wan-eè yo'òo yì kibán

NB: It should be noted that these P_2 and P_3 at the same time should be interpreted too as S-structures. In other words P_2 /P_3 D –structures = P_2 /P_3 S –structures.

Having now determined the D –structure NEG position, let us examine the rest of the tenses in relation to what obtains at their S –structure.

Since the Neg markers for F_1, F_2, F_3, Po (Ø) and P1 (Ø) are generated above the TP, we have to determine the landing sites of these makers or the host nodes. Considering that Neg is a head and that it carries tense and agreement features and given that Agr, which is the locus of tense and negation is empty, the NEG markers in the following tenses (F_1, F_2, F_3, P1 and P2) raise up to the Agr Position. Here, we are assuming that „yo"" originates as the head of the NEG P. Following the split-inf hypothesis, we consider that Agr contains an abstract/overt Neg affix (feature). Consequently Neg, which in this language has agreement future, raises to Agr to adjoin to this abstract agreement as demonstrated below with F1, P0 and P1 respectively

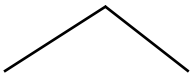
1 (2)


AgrP
Spe c
Agr1
Spe c
Agr1
AgrP
Ag
r
TP
Ag
r
TP
Spec
T1
Spec
T1
T
NegP
T
Neg
Spec
Neg1
Spec
Neg
Neg
VP
Spec
V1
Neg
VP
V
DP
Spec
V1
F wànyo’
yi’
(t)
yikibán
V
DP
0
P wànyo’
Ø
(t)
yikibán

(3)

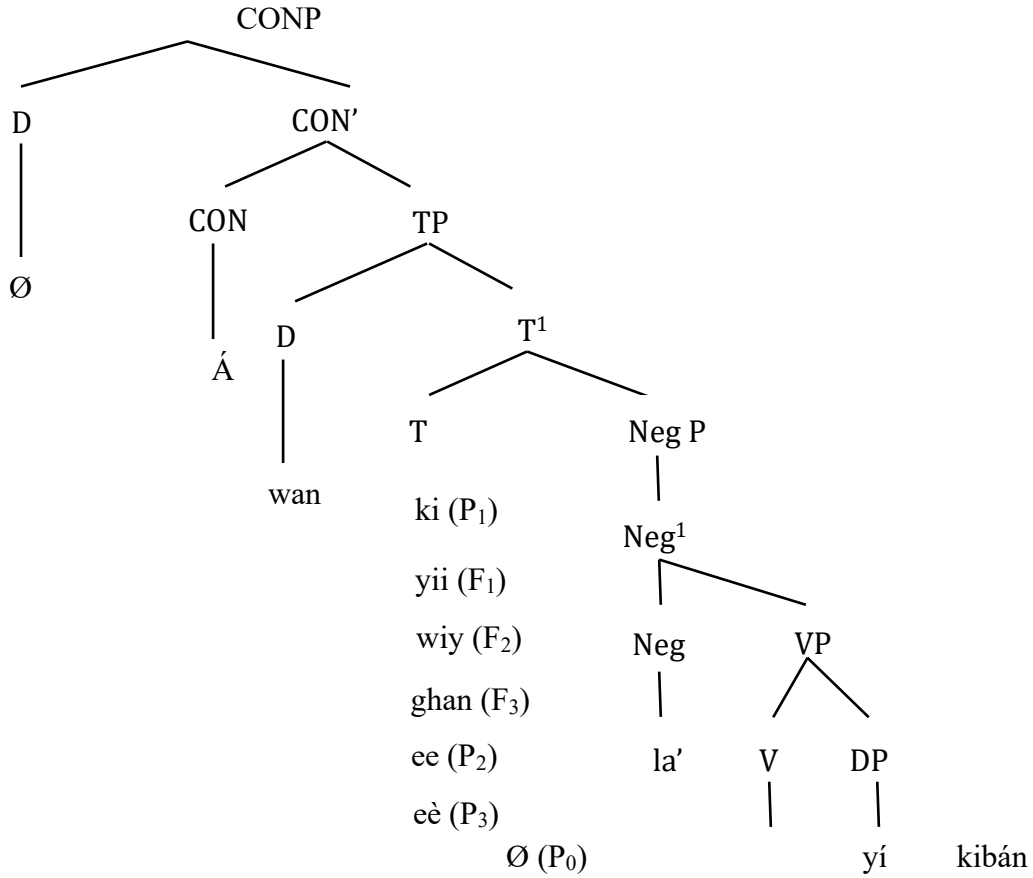
(4)

AgrP



Since within the PPT and the Split-Inf hypothesis, all features can be said to project, we can postulate a CONP with CON as its head. This CON, as seen from what obtains in Lamnso, is generated above the TP.

(5)



4. Conclusion

Negation, in Lamnso as demonstrated above, is a grammatical phenomenon employing the free morphemes *yo'* and *la'* with regards to the perfect declarative and conditional usages. Within the Principles and Parameters Theory analysis, these morphemes are generated either at the in-situ or ex-situ levels below or above the TP, depending on the types of tenses used. Specifically, in-situ generations involve no movement and are generated below the TP. The tenses, in which these in-situ generations are realized, are the P and P3 for *yo'* and all the tenses for the la‟ morpheme. Ex-situ generations on their part involve a head transformational movement for yo‟ from NEG to AGR and these movements are only possible within the P0, P1, F1, F2 and F3 timespecifications.

Abbreviations

P0 = Present/ Present progressive tense P1 = Past tense (Today)

P2 = Past tense (Yesterday) P3 = Past tense (Long (time) ago)

F1 = Future (Today) F2 = Future (Sometime later)

F3 = (Sometime further) PPT = Principles and Parameters Theory
TP = Tense Phrase AGR = Agreement
AGRP = Agreement Phrase NEG = Negation
NEGP = Negation Phrase CON = Conditional
CONP = Conditional Phrase. MP = Minimalist Program
D- Structure = Deep Structure S- Structure = Surface Structure (t) = Transformational movement Split- Inf = Split- Inflectional

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