

Splitting Neg: Sentential Negation Patterns in Cairene Egyptian Arabic Revisited

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Negation

- Cairene Egyptian Arabic (CEA), like several other Arabic dialects, exhibits a two-pattern negation system: the discontinuous *maa...š* pattern and the independent *miš* pattern.

1a. maa-saafir-t-i-š. ما سافرتش.

NEG-traveled-1SG-EV-NEG

‘I did not travel.’

b. Ahmad miš doktor. أحمد مش دكتور.

Ahmad NEG doctor

‘Ahmad is not a doctor.’

Main questions on the morphosyntax of sentential negation

- The generative literature on the morphosyntax of sentential negation in Arabic dialects (e.g., Eid 1993, Shlonsky 1997, Benmamoun 2000, Ouhalla 2002, Aoun *et al* 2010, among others) has typically focused on three main issues:
 - (i) The conditions regulating the distribution of the two negation patterns;
 - (ii) The position of negation in clause structure (higher or lower than T); and
 - (iii) The grammatical status of the -š segment of the negation marker in both patterns.

Previous answers and a new proposal

- In the relevant generative literature, it has been generally suggested that negation patterns are the result of syntactic head movement, that Neg is lower than T, and that the -š is either a Spec of NegP or part of a discontinuous Neg head.
- In this paper, I empirically question these assumptions.
- Instead, I argue that negation patterns are better dealt with as the result of morphological head movement, that Neg is higher than T on the clausal hierarchy, and that -š is a distinct ‘formally negative’ head that can be deleted under certain conditions.

Distribution of negation patterns in CEA

- The main challenge to a syntactic analysis of negation patterns in CEA is that the distribution of negation patterns within the same dialect does not follow a verbal-non-verbal contrast, or a perfective-imperfective distinction. Rather, the contexts in which each pattern occurs do not constitute a homogenous set.

Contexts of the *maa...š* pattern

- In addition to its occurrence with perfective verb forms (1a), the discontinuous negation can also be hosted by the present tense aspectual imperfective (2a), pronominals (2b), the existential expletive *fii(h)* (2c), and PPs whose complement is a pronominal (2d).

Contexts of the *maa...š* pattern

- 2a. maa-ba-saafir-š kətiir ما باسافرش کثیر.
 NEG-ASP-travel.1SG-NEG much
 ‘I don’t travel much.’
- b. maa-huu-š/maa-huwwa-a-š doktoor ماهوش/ماهواش دكتور.
 NEG-3SG-NEG/NEG-3SG-EV-NEG doctor
 ‘He is not a doctor.’
- c. maa-fii-š ḥad hinaa مافيش حد هنا.
 NEG-in.it-NEG someone here
 ‘There is nobody here.’
- d. maa-ʿand-ii-š ʿarabiyyah ما عنديش عربية.
 NEG-at-me-NEG car
 ‘I don’t have a car.’

Contexts of the *miš* pattern

- Similarly, in addition to copular structures (1b), the independent *miš* pattern occurs optionally with the present tense aspectual imperfective (3a), obligatorily with future verb forms (3b), and less preferably with copular structures with predicate PPs (3c).

Contexts of the *miš* pattern

- 3a. miš ba-saafir kətiir مش باسافر كثير.
NEG ASP-travel.1SG much
'I do not travel much.'
- b. miš ħa-saafir مش هاسافر.
NEG FUT-travel.1SG
'I will not travel.'
- c. ? miš ʔand-ii ʔarabiyyah ؟ مش عندي عربية.
NEG at-me car
'I don't have a car.'

Variation in hosting categories

- On the other hand, cross-dialectally, certain categories are able to host negation in some dialects, but not in others.
- For example, while nominals and adjectives in CEA cannot host negation, they can do so in Moroccan Arabic (MA) and Southern Egyptian Arabic (SEA) (cf. Benamoun 2000 and Khalafallah 1969, respectively).

Egyptian vs. Moroccan

4a.	*Aḥmad	maa-doktoor-š	EA	*أحمد ما دكتورش
	Ahmad	NEG-doctor-NEG		
b.	*Aḥmad	maa-taʕbaan-š	EA	*أحمد ما تعبانش
	Ahmad	NEG-tired-NEG		
4a.	huwa	maa-fəllaḥ-š	MA	هو ما فلاحش.
	he	NEG-farmer-NEG		
	'He is not a farmer.'			
b.	huwa	maa-Twil-š	MA	هو ما طويلش.
	he	NEG-tall-NEG		
	'He is not tall.'			

Adjacency

- Notice also that in the presence of multiple potential hosts for negation, merger is always with the closest one.

- 5a. maa-fii-š ħad hinaa مافيش حد هنا.
 NEG-in.it-NEG someone here
 ‘There is nobody here.’
- b. *fii-h maa-ħad-i-š hinaa *فيه ماحدث هنا.
 in-it NEG-someone-NEG here

Morphological factors in negation

- It seems, then, that the key factors relevant to the distribution of negation patterns are related to affixality of the negative head, the hosting-ability of certain categories but not others, and adjacency.
- These are more easily accommodated into a morphological analysis than into a syntactic analysis.

Head movement in the grammar

- The status of head movement in the grammar has been subject to debate, with some proposing to treat it as an operation of the morphological component (Chomsky 2001, Boeckx and Stjepanović 2001).

Conclusion #1

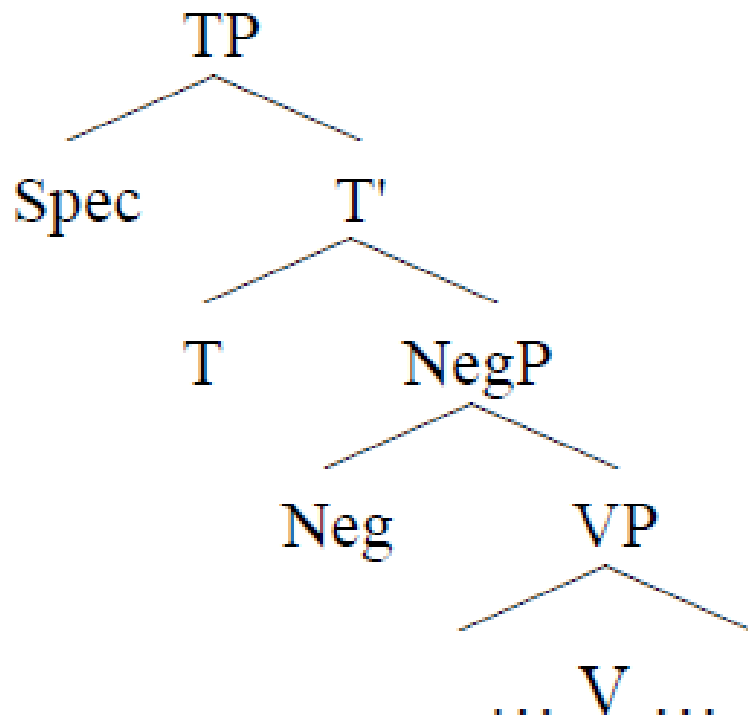
- I conclude, then, that a morphological analysis in terms of the affixal properties of functional heads, the hosting-ability (or lack thereof) of different syntactic categories, and adjacency, is to be preferred on both empirical and conceptual grounds.

Where is Neg on the clausal hierarchy?

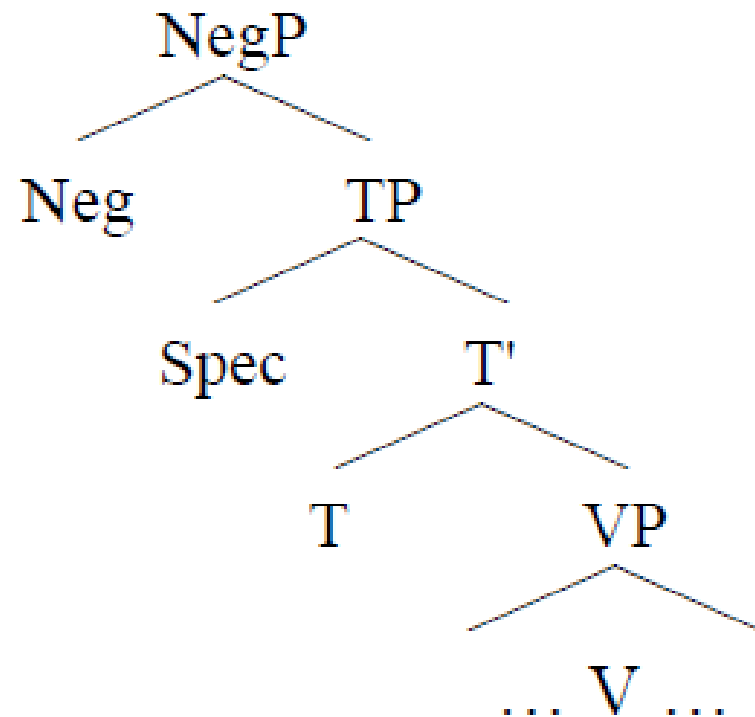
- There have been two proposals regarding the placement of the head hosting negation on the clausal hierarchy in Arabic dialects:
 - **The low-Neg analysis**, where Neg is lower than T in the syntactic tree (Benmamoun 2000; Ouhalla 2002; Aoun et al 2010).
 - **The high-Neg analysis**, where Neg is higher than T in the syntactic tree (Diesing and Jelinek 1995; Soltan 2007).

Where is Neg on the clausal hierarchy?

Low-Neg analysis



High-Neg analysis



A challenge to the low-Neg analysis

- A serious challenge to the low-Neg analysis comes from the fact that the *miš* pattern may indeed occur with perfective verb forms.
- This happens in two contexts: in some subdialects of Egyptian Arabic (Soltan 2007), and in the speech of Egyptian children (Omar 1967).

miš + the perfective

- The following pattern is common in the speech of Egyptians from the Sharqeyyah governorate as well as children in the early stage of language acquisition:

6. ʔanaa miš ləʔib-t أنا مش لعبت.
I NEG played.1SG Sharqeyyah Egyptian Arabic
'I did not play.'

miš + the perfective

- But it may actually be less localized. From Facebook in post-revolution Egypt:

- "ساعات بندم انى **مش كنت** عايش فى القاهرة عشان اعيش اللحظات الحلوة دى بس الحمد لله مصر فيها رجاله فى كل حنة تحيا مصر اللهم ارزقنى الشهادة يارب."
- "المجلس العسكرى حاول اكثر من مرة ان يجهض الثورة و**مش قدر**."
- "انتو غلطانين يا ادمن لانه الناس طردته من المؤتمر **مش حصل** مشادات ولا بتاع."

A challenge to the low-Neg analysis

- Under the low-Neg analysis, there is no way to derive the sentence in (6) without V skipping over Neg on its way to T, followed by Neg moving over the T complex, to generate the right word order.
- Both movements would violate the *Head Movement Constraint* (HMC); skipping heads is not allowed (Travis 1984).
- These negation patterns are thus underivable under standard assumptions, if Neg were indeed below T.

The high-Neg analysis

- By contrast, if Neg is higher than T, all we need to assume is that in this dialect (as well at the relevant stage of children's acquisition of Arabic), Neg is not required to merge morphologically with a T specified for past tense, thereby giving rise to the *miš*-pattern instead.

Conclusion #2

- There is strong empirical evidence from negation patterns in Sharqeyyah Egyptian Arabic as well as negative utterances by Egyptian children in the early stages of language acquisition that Neg has to be higher than T in CEA clause structure, and presumably in all other Arabic dialects as well.

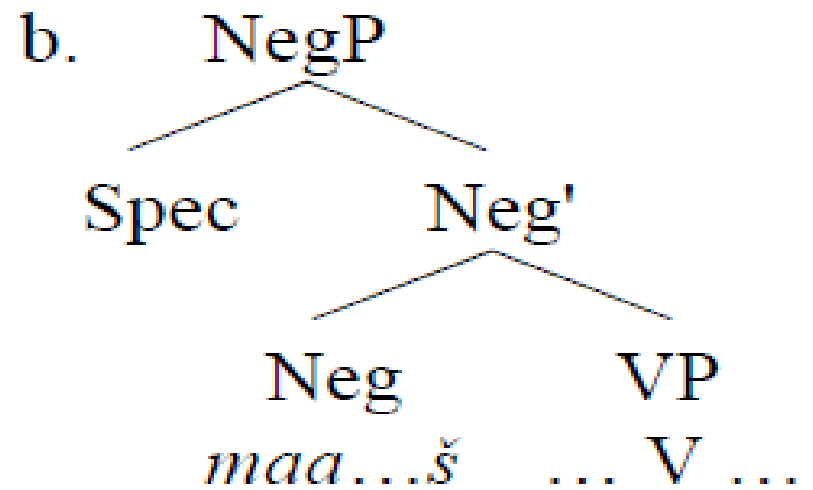
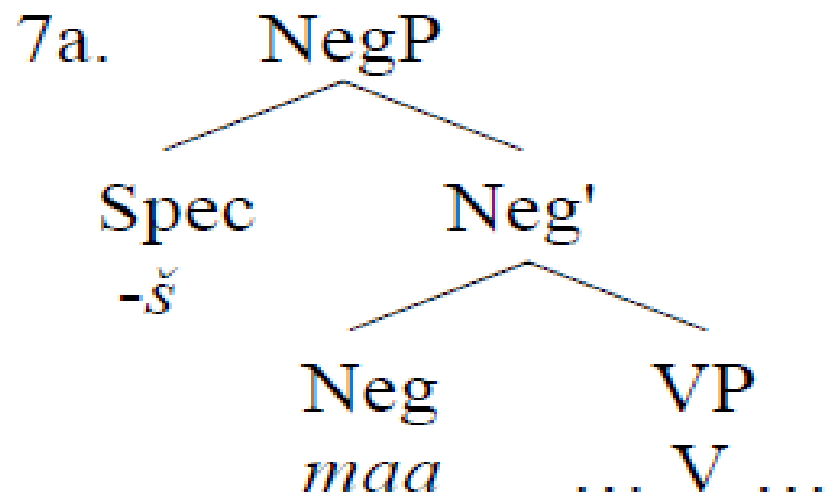
The grammatical status of -ṣ̌

- The -ṣ̌ segment appears in both negation patterns in CEA:
 - as a suffix in the discontinuous negation pattern *maa...ṣ̌*, and
 - as a subpart of the negation marker *miṣ̌* in the independent negation pattern.

The grammatical status of -ṣ̌

- There have been two analyses for the status of -ṣ̌:
 - (i) **-ṣ̌ as a Spec of NegP** (along the lines suggested for *pas* in French French; cf. Pollock 1989, Ouhalla 1990, and Moritz and Valois 1994)
 - (ii) **-ṣ̌ as a subpart of a discontinuous negative head** (Bahloul 1996; Benmamoun 2000; Aoun et al 2010).

The grammatical status of $-\check{s}$



-š in NPIs contexts in MA

- Empirical facts from Negative Polarity Item (NPI) contexts in MA seems to favor the SpecNeg analysis of -š.
- In the presence of an NPI in the sentence, the -š obligatorily disappears (Benmamoun 2006).

-š in NPIs contexts in MA

- 8a. ma-qrit(*-š) hætta kitab ما قریت حتی کتاب.
 NEG-came.3SGM even book
 ‘I didn’t read any book.’
- b. ma-ža(*-š) hætta wahəd ما جا حتی واحد.
 NEG-came.3SGM even one
 ‘No one came.’
- c. hætta wahəd ma-ža(*-š) حتی واحد ما جا.
 even one NEG-came.3SGM
 ‘No one came.’
- d. Nadya ʔommər-ha ma-žat(*-š) نادية عمرها ما جت.
 Nadya ever-her NEG-came.3SGF
 ‘Nadya never came.’
- e. Omar baqi ma-ža(*-š) عمر باقي ما جا.
 Omar yet NEG-came.3SGM
 ‘Omar hasn’t come yet.’

-š in NPIs contexts in MA

- Notice that the discontinuous head analysis for -š does not have a straightforward explanation for this Neg-NPI interaction fact.
- It has to assume a rule at the sub-morphemic level that can only target -š, but not the negative marker *maa*.

-š in NPIs contexts in CEA

- That said, the SpecNeg analysis of -š does not work for CEA, since this dialect does not exhibit the same Neg-NPI interaction facts.
- In particular, of all the NPIs that CEA has, only *šumr* (=‘ever’; literally=“life/age”) induces -š disappearance, and only when the NPI is in pre-Neg position.
- In all other contexts and with all other NPIs, -š obligatorily surfaces. Compare, for example, *šumr* (= ‘ever’) and *lissah* (= ‘yet’).

ʕumr (= ‘ever’) vs. *lissah* (= ‘yet’)

- 9a. *ʕumr-ii* *maa-saafir-t*(-š)* Masr عمري ما سافرت مصر.
 ever-my NEG-traveled-1SG-(*NEG) Egypt
 ‘I have never travelled to Egypt.’
- b. *maa-saafir-t*(-š)* Masr *ʕumr-ii* ما سافرتش مصر عمري.
 NEG-traveled-1SG-*(NEG) Egypt ever-my
 ‘I have never travelled to Egypt.’
- 10a. *Mona* *lissah* *maa-saafir-it-*(š)* منى لسه ما سافرتش.
Mona yet NEG-traveled-3SGF-*(NEG)
 ‘Mona has not travelled yet.’
- b. *Mona* *maa-saafir-it-*(š)* *lissah* منى ما سافرتش لسه.
Mona NEG-traveled-3SGF-*(NEG) yet
 ‘Mona has not travelled yet.’

ʔayy (= ‘any’) and *xaaliṣ* (= ‘at all’)

- -š is obligatory in sentences with *ʔayy* (= ‘any’) and *xaaliṣ* (= ‘at all’).

- 11a. ʔanaa maa-šuf-t-i-*(š) ʔayy haagah أنا ما شفتش أي حاجة.
I NEG-see.PERF-1SG-EV-NEG any thing
‘I didn’t see anything.’
- b. ʔanaa maa-šuf-t-i-*(š) haagah xaaliṣ أنا ما شفتش حاجة خالص.
I NEG-see.PERF-1SG-EV-NEG thing at all
‘I didn’t see anything at all.’

Conclusion #3

- Evidence from \check{s} -NPI interactions indicates that treating $-\check{s}$ as Spec of NegP runs into an empirical problem in CEA .
- Since the discontinuous negative head analysis is similarly problematic, we are left with the need for a new analysis.

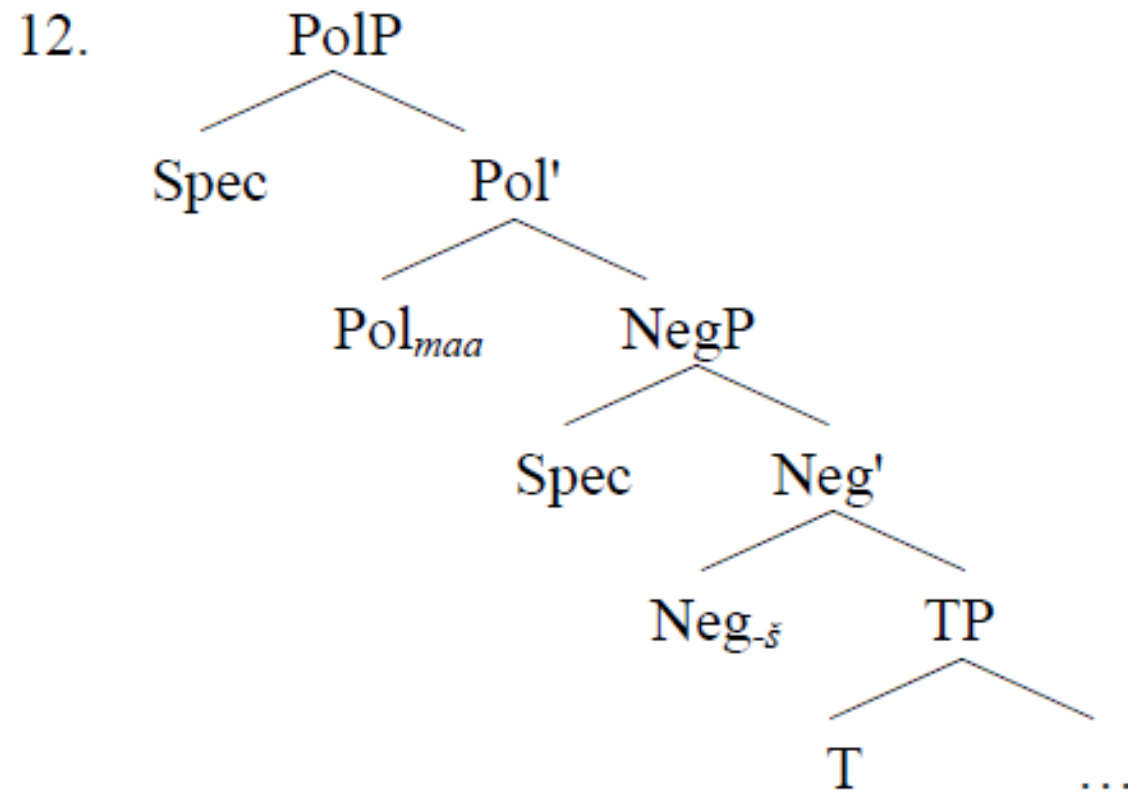
Interim summary

- Inter- and intra-dialectal variation in negation patterns favors an analysis in terms of morphological, rather than syntactic, head movement.
- Attested negation patterns in some subdialects of Egyptian Arabic as well as in Egyptian children's speech provides strong evidence that Neg is higher than T in the clausal hierarchy.
- Third, the morphosyntax of NPI contexts in CEA is incompatible with treating -š as SpecNegP or as a subpart of a composite head, hence the need for an alternative analysis. I propose this next.

Splitting Neg

- To account for the negation facts discussed in this paper, I propose to split Neg into two heads: *maa* and *-š* are separate heads (called Pol and Neg, respectively); see Zeijlstra (2004, 2008) for a split-Neg proposal as well.
- Neg and Pol are located higher than T, but only *maa* is specified for semantic negation, while *-š* is only formally negative, a property it probably acquired diachronically, and which requires licensing by *maa* in the syntax (via selection or Chomsky's 2001 *Agree*).

A Split-Neg structure




Deriving negation patterns in CEA

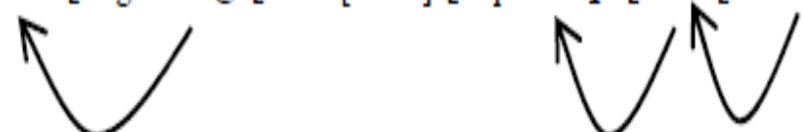
- To account for the distribution of the two negation patterns, a head movement algorithm applies in the mapping from the syntax to the morphology, along the following lines:
 - 13a. In contexts where Neg is adjacent to a hosting head *H*, *H* moves to Neg and then to Pol, and the circumfixal *maa-H-š* pattern arises.
 - b. Otherwise, Neg incorporates into Pol, giving rise to the *miš*-pattern.

Deriving negation patterns in CEA

14a. $[_{\text{PolP}} \text{Pol} [_{\text{NegP}} \text{Neg} [_{\text{TP}} \text{T}_{[+\text{PAST}]} [_{\text{vP}} \text{v} [_{\text{VP}} \text{V} \dots]]]]] \longrightarrow [\text{maa-saafirit-i-š}]$



b. $[_{\text{PolP}} \text{Pol} [_{\text{NegP}} \text{Neg} [_{\text{TP}} \text{T}_{[-\text{PAST}]} [_{\text{AspP}} \text{Asp} [_{\text{vP}} \text{v} [_{\text{VP}} \text{V} \dots]]]]]] \longrightarrow [\text{miš ha-saafir}]$



Parameterization

- Under this analysis, the locus of parametric variation is in the hosting-ability of heads/phrases adjacent to Neg and Pol.
- In CEA, $T_{[+PAST]}$ obligatorily moves to host negation, but not so in Sharqeyyah EA.
- Similarly, while nouns and adjectives can serve as hosting heads for negation in both MA and SEA, that's not the case in CEA.

The *ʕumr* (= ‘ever’) vs. *lissah* (= ‘yet’) puzzle

- Why does *ʕumr* induce deletion of -š, but *lissah* (= ‘yet’) does not.
- An answer is possible if we compare the grammatical properties of both NPIs.
- In particular, it turns out that the two items differ as to whether or not they have a (formally) negative feature.
- Two diagnostics show this.

Occurrence in nonnegative environments

- First, *ʕumr* may occur in nonnegative environments such as interrogatives or the protasis of a conditional, but *lissah* cannot.

Occurrence in nonnegative environments

- 15a. ʔinta ʕumr-ak saafir-it Masr? انت عمرڪ سافرت مصر؟
 you ever-you travel.PERF.2SGM Egypt
 ‘Have you ever traveled to Egypt?’
- b. law ʕumr-ak saafir-it Masr laazim tə-zuur ʔaswaan
 if ever-you travel.PERF.2SGM Egypt must.PTCP IPFV.visit.2SGM Aswan
 ‘If you ever travel to Egypt, you must visit Aswan.’ لو عمرڪ سافرت مصر لازم تزور اسوان.
- 16a. Aħmad gih *(wallaa) lissah? أحمد جه * (ولا) لسه؟
 Ahmad come.PERF.3SGM or.not yet
 ‘Has Ahmad come or not yet?’
- b. *law Aħmad gih lissah ... *لو احمد جه لسه ...
 if Ahmad come.PERF.3SGM yet
 ‘*If Ahmad arrived yet, ...’

Occurrence as fragment answers

- Second, *lissah* may occur as a fragment answer, while *ʕumr* cannot.

Occurrence as fragment answers

- 17a. *Question:* ?inta saafir-t Masr ?abl kidah? انت سافرت مصر قبل كده؟
you travel.PERF-1SGM Egypt before this
'Have you traveled to Egypt before?'
- b. *Answer:* *?umr-ii *عمري.
ever-my
'Never.'
- 18a. *Question:* huwwa Mona wasal-it? هوا منى وصلت؟
Q Mona arrive.PERF.3SGF
'Has Mona arrived?'
- b. *Answer:* lissah لسه.
yet
'Not yet.'

The negativity of $-\check{s}$

- As it turns out, the $-\check{s}$ segment shares the property of formal negativity with *lissah*, as opposed to *ʕumr*, given its inability to occur in nonnegative contexts.

The negativity of -š

- 19a. *šuft-i-š Aḥmad ?il-nahaar-dah? *شفتش احمد النهارده؟
see.PERF.2SGM-EV-NEG Ahmad the-day-this
Intended reading: 'Did you see Ahmad today?'
- b. *law šuft-i-š Aḥmad ?il-nahaar-dah ... *لو شفتش احمد النهارده؟
if see.PERF.2SGM-EV-NEG Ahmad the-day-this
Intended reading: 'If you saw Ahmad today, ...'

The negative diachrony of -š

- Notice also that -š is generally assumed to be a phonological reduction of Classical Arabic šayʾ (literally = ‘a thing’) in its accusative adverbial NPI function (cf. Lucas 2010), as in the Qur’anic verse in (20) below, hence its origin is also negative.

The negative diachrony of -š

20. ʔinna ʔallah-a laa ya-zlim-u ʔal-naas-a šayʔ-an
COMP Allah-ACC NEG IPFV-be.unjust-IND the-people-ACC thing-ACC
wa-lakinna ʔal-naas-a ʔanfus-a-hum ya-zlim-uun
and-but the-people-ACC selves-ACC-their IPFV-be.unjust-IND (*Qur'an* 10:44)
'Allah is not unjust to people one bit; it is they who are unjust to themselves.'

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ"

A taxonomy for negativity: nonnegative, formally negative, and semantically negative

- Given these facts, we can conclude that while the NPI *šumr* is formally nonnegative, the NPI *lissah* and the -š segment of the negation morpheme are both formally negative. The negation marker *maa*, by contrast, is the locus of semantic negation. A summary is given in the table (21).

A taxonomy for negativity: nonnegative, formally negative, and semantically negative

21.	-š	<i>lissah</i>	<i>šumr</i>	<i>maa</i>
<i>Diachronic origin</i>	Noun used as an NPI: <i>šayʔ-an</i>	Probably from a negative marker	Noun meaning 'age/life': <i>šumr</i>	Negative morpheme: <i>maa</i>
<i>Compatibility with nonnegative contexts</i>	No	No	Yes	
<i>Occurrence as a fragment answer</i>	N/A	Yes	No	
<i>Negativity status</i>	Formal	Formal	Nonnegative	Semantic

Restating the -š puzzle

- Given Table (21), the puzzle of -š disappearance in CEA may be restated in the form of the descriptive generalization in (22).
22. Within a local domain, -š is not spelled-out in the presence of an NPI that is formally nonnegative; otherwise it is phonologically realized.
- I will not attempt to derive (22) in a principled manner here, but see Soltan (to appear) for an implementation.

Conclusions

- In this paper, I have argued for the following:
 1. An analysis of the distribution of negation patterns in CEA, whereby the key notions are morphological: affixality, hosting heads, and adjacency.
 2. Placing Neg above T in the clausal hierarchy allows us to account for attested patterns of negation that are problematic under a low-Neg analysis.
 3. Finally, by splitting Neg into Pol and Neg, we are able to formulate a rule to target -š for deletion in certain NPI contexts, but not in others.

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شكراً لحسن استماعكم

THANK YOU