

Negative Concord in Modern Standard Arabic

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Abstract

This study examines negative concord (NC) constructions in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The study shows that MSA is a strict NC language with n-words that must co-occur with a negative expression yielding only one logical negation to the semantics in spite of the fact that they can contribute negation on their own in fragment answers. I argue that an analysis of NC in MSA as syntactic agreement whereby n-words are assumed be non-negative indefinites with a formal negative feature that needs to be checked and deleted against semantic negation can better capture the distribution of n-words in the language than other approaches that take n-words to be either negative polarity items (NPIs) or negative quantifiers.

Keywords: Negation, Negative concord, Modern standard Arabic, Agree.

• قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة مؤتة.

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ظاهرة انسجام النفي في اللغة العربية الفصيحة المعاصرة

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ملخص

تركز الدراسة على ظاهرة انسجام النفي في اللغة العربية الفصيحة المعاصرة حيث تبين الدراسة أن اللغة العربية الفصيحة المعاصرة تتضمن ظاهرة انسجام النفي التام حيث تحتوي هذه اللغة على كلمات نافية تتطلب وجود أدوات نافية أخرى في الجملة منتجة نفي واحد من حيث المعنى على الرغم من أن هذه الكلمات يمكن أن تفيد معنى النفي عندما تستخدم كإجابات مختصرة. تبين الدراسة أيضا أن نظرية الانسجام النحوي تفوق غيرها من النظريات في تفسير ظاهرة انسجام النفي في اللغة العربية الفصيحة المعاصرة من مثل النظرية التي تتعامل مع الكلمات النافية على أنها كلمات ملازمة للنفي والنظرية التي تتعامل مع الكلمات النافية على أنها محددات نافية.

الكلمات الدالة: النفي، انسجام النفي، اللغة العربية الفصيحة المعاصرة، الانسجام النحو.

Introduction:

NC refers to grammatical contexts where multiple occurrences of negative constituents contribute only one negation to the semantics (Giannakidou 2006; Watanabe 2004; Zeijlstra 2004, 2008; Penka 2010). NC is observed in many languages and has received a lot of attention in the literature (see Laka (1990) and Herburger (2001) for Spanish, Zanuttini (1991) for Italian, Rowlett (1998) for French, Giannakidou (1998) for Greek, Brown (1999) for Russian, Błaszczak (2001) for Polish. The phenomenon of NC in general is discussed in Giannakidou (2006) and Zeijlstra (2004). Consider example (1) below from Italian.

- (1) Maria non ha visto nessuno.
Maria NEG has seen nobody
'Maria hasn't seen anybody.'

The sentence involves two negative expressions: the sentential negative marker *non* and the indefinite pronoun *nessuno*; however, the interpretation involves only one instance of negation. Only the negative marker *non* seems to have contributed negation to the semantics in the sentence. The indefinite pronoun *nessuno* seems to have failed to contribute negation to the semantics in spite of the fact that it can contribute negation on its own in other contexts such as fragment answers (2).

- (2) A: Chi hai visto?
who have.2SG seen
'Who have you seen?'
- B: Nessuno.
nobody
'Nobody.'

NC poses a serious challenge for Davidson's (1967) Principle of Compositionality which states that the meaning of a sentence should reflect the meaning of its individual words. That is, for examples like (1) above, if the indefinite pronoun *nessuno* does really have some inherent negative force, why does the sentence fail to express a meaning with double negation as it involves both the sentential negative marker *non* and the indefinite pronoun *nessuno*?

Problematic expressions like *nessuno* in Italian have widely been referred to as n-words, the term first introduced by Laka (1990) and intended as a neutral assumption on the negative status of these expressions. For ease of reference, I follow Giannakidou's (2006: 328) definition of n-words stated in (3) below.

(3) N-word:

An expression α is an n-word iff:

- (a) α can be used in structures containing sentential negation or another α expression yielding a reading equivalent to one logical negation; and
- (b) α can provide a negative fragment answer.

Two varieties of NC have been identified in the literature. On one hand, there are languages in which n-words must always co-occur with a negative marker. Polish is one such language as illustrated in (4) below. On the other hand, there are languages in which postverbal n-words must co-occur with a negative marker whereas preverbal n-words must not. Italian is one such language as illustrated in (5) below.

- (4) a. *(nie) wyjechało żadne dziecko na wakacje. (Błaszczak 2001, p. 217)
 NEG went N-DET child on holiday
 'No child went on holiday.'

b. Żadne dziecko *(nie) wyjechało na wakacje (Błaszczak 2001, p. 217)
N-DET child NEG went on holiday

'No child went on holiday.'

(5) a. *(non) ho visto nessuno. (Zanuttini 1991, p. 108)

NEG have.2SG seen N-PERSON

'I haven't seen anybody.'

b. Nessuno] (*non) ha visto Mario. (Zanuttini 1991, p. 111)

N-PERSON NEG has seen Mario.

'Nobody saw Mario.'

In fact, the co-occurrence of a preverbal n-word and a negative marker is not totally excluded in languages like Italian. A preverbal n-word and a negative marker co-occurring in the same clause in languages like Italian can be grammatical with a double negation reading, but never a concordant reading as shown in (6) below.

(6) a. Nessuno non ha mangiato. (Penka 2011, p. 19)

N-PERSON NEG has eaten

'Nobody didn't eat.' (= 'Everyone ate'.)

* 'Nobody ate.'

Languages like Polish in which n-words must co-occur with a negative marker regardless of their position in a clause under a concordant reading, but never a double negation reading are referred to as strict NC-languages by Giannakidou (1998, 2000); whereas languages like Italian in which only postverbal n-words must co-occur with a negative marker under a concordant reading are referred to as non-strict NC-languages by Giannakidou (1998, 2000).

2. NC in Modern Standard Arabic

MSA has a number of expressions that meet the criteria of n-words. These expressions include the indefinite adverbs *ʔabadan* ((n)ever, by any/no means, (not) at all) (7), *muṭlaqan* ((n)ever, by any/no means, (not) at all) (8), *bataatan* ((n)ever, by any/no means, (not) at all) (9), *qaṭṭʕyyan* ((n)ever, by any/no means, (not) at all) (10), *nihaaʔiyyan* ((n)ever, by any/no means, (not) at all) (11), *qaṭṭu* (never) (12), and *baʕdu* (not yet) (13).

(7) a. Maryam-u *(la) taʔkulu t-tufaaḥ-a ʔabadan.
 Mary-NOM NEG.PRES eat.3SF.IMPERF the-apples-ACC N-TIME
 'Mary does not eat apples at all.'

b. A: hal taʔrabu l-xamr-a?
 Q drink.2SM.IMPERF the-wine-ACC
 'Do you drink wine?'

B: ʔabadan.
 N-TIME
 'Not at all.'

(8) a. Kariim-un *(la) yatahaddaṯu l-iṅgiliiziyyat-a muṭlaqan.
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PRES speak.3SM.IMPERF the-English-ACC N-TIME
 'Kareem does not speak English at all.'

b. A: hal tuḥibu l-ḥaliib-a?
 Q like.2SM.IMPERF the-milk-ACC
 'Do you like milk?'

B: muṭlaqan.
 N-TIME
 'Not at all.'

(9) a. ʔaṭ-ṭulaab-u *(la) yuḥibuuna l-imtiḥaan-aat-i bataatan.
the-students-NOM NEG.PRES like.3PM.IMPERF the-exam-PL-ACC
N-TIME

'Students do not like exams at all.'

b. A: hal tudaxxinu?

Q smoke.2SM.IMPERF

'Do you smoke?'

B: bataatan.

N-TIME

'Not at all.'

(10) a. Yuusuf-u *(lam) yazur l-batraa?-a qaṭṣiyyan.
Joseph-NOM NEG.PAST visit.3SM.IMPERF the-Petra-ACC N-TIME

'Joseph has not visited Petra at all.'

b. A: hal tastaṭiisu s-sibaahat-a?

Q can.2SM.IMPERF the-swimming-ACC

'Can you swim?'

B:qaṭṣiyyan.

N-TIME

'Not at all.'

- (11) a. Raami *(lam) yuʒib ʕala l-ʔasilat-i nihaaʔiyyan.
 Rami NEG.PAS answer.3SM.IMPERF on the-questions-GEN N-TIME
 'Rami did not answer the questions at all.'

- b. A: Hal taʔkulu l-laħm-a?
 Q eat.3SM.IMPERF the-meat-ACC
 'Do you eat meat?'

B: nihaaʔiyyan.
 N-TIME
 'Not at all.'

- (12) a. Saami *(lam) yaltaqi ʔab-aa-hu qaṭṭu.
 Sami NEG.PAST meet.3SM.IMPERF father-ACC-his N-TIME
 'Sami never met his father.'

- b. A: hal raʔayyta ʔasad-an min qabl?
 Q see.2SM.PERF lion-ACC from before
 'Have you seen a lion before?'

B: qaṭṭu.
 N-TIME
 'Not at all.'

(13) a. *(lam) ʔara Rabaab-a baʕdu.
 NEG.PAST see.1S.IMPERF Rabaab-ACC N-TIME
 'I have not seen Rabaab yet.'

b. A: hal waʕala l-qitaar-u?
 Q arrive.3SM.PERF the-train-NOM
 'Has the train arrived?'

B: baʕdu.
 N-TIME
 'Not yet.'

These examples clearly show that the indefinite adverbs ʔabadan, muṭlaqan, bataatan, qaṭṭiyyan, nihaaʔiyyan, qaṭṭu and baʕdu are n-words in MSA as they can co-occur with a sentential negative marker yielding one logical negation in spite of the fact that they can provide predicate negation on their own in fragment answers.

Adverbial n-words in MSA are not restricted to postverbal clause-final position. Rather, n-words in MSA can appear in different positions in a clause as illustrated in (14) below. Note that n-words in MSA must co-occur with a negative marker in a postverbal position as well as a preverbal position and thus they exhibit strict NC rather than non-strict NC.

(14) (ʔabadan) Maryam-u (ʔabadan) *(la) taʔkulu (ʔabadan)
 N-TIME Mary-NOM N-TIME NEG.PRES eat.3SF.IMPERF N-TIME
 t-tuʔaaḥ-a (ʔabadan).
 the-apples-ACC N-TIME
 'Mary does not eat apples at all.'

c.*lan	yaşila	l-qiṭaar-u	başdu.
NEG.FUT	arrive.3SM.IMPERF	the-train-NOM	N-TIME
Lit. 'The train will not arrive yet.'			

In spite of the fact that adverbial n-words in MSA have a strong tendency to appear in negative contexts, they can occasionally appear in non-negative contexts as illustrated in (17) for ḥabadan below.

(17) sa-ḥabqa uḥibbu-ka ḥabad-an.

FUT-stay.1S.IMPERF	love.1S.IMPERF-you	eternity-ADV
'I will love you forever.'		

Instead of arguing for an ambiguity analysis where n-words might be analyzed as homophonous items with a polarity sensitive reading (i.e. the n-word reading) and a non-polarity sensitive reading (i.e. the forever reading for, for example, ḥabadan in (17) above), I follow Hoeksema's (1994) assumption that polarity sensitive items might undergo a process of grammaticalization whereby they become restricted to negative contexts and hence change from regular expressions to negative sensitive expressions. Hoeksema discusses the grammaticalization of NPIs and argues that some NPIs are semi-NPIs that can occasionally occur in non-negative contexts as opposed to strict NPIs that can only appear in negative contexts. Hoeksema proposes that the fact that some NPIs can still appear in non-negative contexts is a natural consequence of the process of 'layering' whereby a grammaticalized expression does not disappear altogether but usually stays around. Following Hoeksema, I argue that n-words that can occasionally appear in non-negative contexts in MSA are semi-n-words undergoing grammaticalization.

3- Theories of NC:

Four different approaches have been proposed on the negative status of n-words. The first approach suggests that n-words are NPIs that need to be licensed by an antiveridical operator (Giannakidou 1998, 2000, 2006). The

second approach considers all n-words to be negative quantifiers and suggests a semantic process whereby the negative meaning of n-words is absorbed (Zanuttini 1991; Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991, 1996; Haegeman 1995). The third approach takes n-words to be ambiguous between a negative quantifier reading and a non-negative NPI reading (Herburger 2001). The fourth approach considers n-words to be neither negative quantifiers nor non-negative NPIs; rather, it suggests that n-words are non-negative indefinites that function as markers of sentential negation and that NC is a reflection of a process of syntactic agreement with respect to sentential negation (Zeijlstra 2004, 2008).

This study mainly aims at providing an analysis of NC in MSA in the light of previous approaches to the phenomenon. NC in Arabic with its different varieties has received little attention in the literature. Notable exceptions are Hoyt (2010), Lucas (2009, 2013), Al-Sarayreh (2012), Al-Anazi (2013), and Ouali and Sultan (2014). Among these studies, Lucas (2009, 2013) and Al-Anazi (2013) focus on NC in standard Arabic. Al-Anazi identifies the expressions *ʔabadan*, *muṭlaqan*, *bataatan*, and *baʕdu* as n-words in MSA and does not make any specific claim as to the negative status of these expressions in the language. However, he assumes an ellipsis analysis of n-words in non-sentential utterances whereby the negative meaning associated with such utterances is argued to be a property of a negative marker that has undergone deletion under ellipsis implying thus an analysis of n-words as non-negative expressions. Lucas identifies only the adverbial indefinite *ʔabadan* as an n-word in MSA ignoring other expressions that have been shown to behave like *ʔabadan* and thus function as n-words in the language. As for the negative status of n-words in MSA, Lucas argues that *ʔabadan* is a semi-NPI with no negative force. Instead of positing a global analysis for n-words in non-sentential utterances like the ellipsis analysis of Al-Anazi, Lucas postulates that languages vary with regard to the contexts where they might allow certain non-negative expressions to appear in non-sentential utterances that lack a negative marker but can still be interpreted as negative. For him, MSA allows this to happen only for indefinites that occur predominantly in negative contexts. We will see in the following section that neither Al-Anazi's nor Lucas' analysis is empirically adequate as both analyses predict genuine NPIs in MSA to be acceptable as negative fragment answers, contrary to fact. Those analyses are also empirically

inadequate as they do not capture some important distributional differences between n-words and NPIs in MSA discussed below.

3.1 The Negative Polarity Items Analysis:

One important approach to NC equates n-words with NPIs. This approach faces the problem of accounting for some important distributional differences between n-words and expressions that function as genuine NPIs. Genuine NPIs such as the indefinite determiner *ʔayy* 'any' in MSA are expressions that are restricted in their distribution to affective (i.e. negative and negative-like) contexts such as sentential negation (18), without-clauses (19), before-clauses (20), adversative predicates (21), questions (22), the protasis of conditionals (23), and the restrictor of universal quantifiers (24), among others.

(18) Maryam-u *(lam) taʔkul ʔayy-a tufaaḥat-in.
Mary-NOM NEG.PAST eat.3SF.IMPERF any-ACC apple-GEN
'Mary did not eat any apple.'

(19) Maryam-u xaraḏat duuna ʔan taʔkula ʔayy-a tufaaḥat-in.
Mary-NOM leave.3SF.PERF without that eat.3SF.IMPERF any-ACC apple-GEN
'Mary left without eating any apple.'

(20) ʔaṭ-ṭifl-u maata qabla ʔan yaraa ʔayy-a aḥad-in.
the-baby-NOM die.3SM.PERF before that see.3SM.IMPERF any-ACC one-GEN
'The baby died before seeing anyone.'

(21) ʔal-muʕalim-u rafaḏa ʔan yuʔažžila ʔayy-a imtiḥaan-in.
the-teacher-NOM refuse.3SM.PERF that postpone.3SM.IMPERF any-ACC exam-GEN
'The teacher refused to postpone any exam.'

- (22) hal raʔayta ʔayy-a walad-in fi-l-bayt-i.
 Q see.2SM.PERF any-ACC boy-GEN in-the-house-GEN
 'Did you see any boy in the house?'
- (23) ʔiḏa aʒabta ʔayy-a suʔaal-in, sawfa tanʒahu.
 If answer.2SM.PERF any-ACC question-GEN FUT pass.2SM.IMPERF
 'If you answer any question, you will pass.'
- (24) kul-u ʔaalib-in ʔaʒaba ʔayy-a suʔaal-in sawaf
 every-NOM student-GEN answer.3SM.PERF any-ACC question-GEN FUT
 yanʒahu.
 pass.3SM.IMPERF
 'Every student who answered any question will pass.'

N-words are not allowed in all contexts that tolerate NPIs. Rather, n-words can occur only in a subset of the contexts that allow NPIs, namely sentential negation (25), without-clauses (26), before-clauses (27), and adversative predicates (28). N-words are not licit in other contexts that allow NPIs such as questions (29), the protasis of conditionals (30), and the restrictor of universal quantifiers (31).

- (25) Maryam-u *(la) taʔkulu t-tufaaḥ-a ʔabadan.
 Mary-NOM NEG.PRES eat.3SF.IMPERF the-apples-ACC N-TIME
 'Mary does not eat apples at all.'
- (26) Maryam-u xaraʒat duuna ʔan tuḥaddiḥa-ni ʔabadan.
 Mary-NOM leave.3SF.PERF without that speak.3SF.IMPERF-me N-TIME
 'Mary left without talking to me at all.'

(27) ?al-walad-u maata qabla ?an yaraa ?ab-aa-h ?abadan.
the-boy-NOM die.3SM.PERF before that see.3SM.IMPERF father-ACC-his N-TIME
'The boy died before seeing his father at all.'

(28) ?al-mu?alim-u rafaða ?an yu?ažžila l-imi?haan-a ?abadan.
the-teacher-NOM refuse.3SM.PERF that postpone.3SM.IMPERF the-test-ACC N-TIME
'The teacher refused to postpone the test at all.'

(29) *Hal tum?iru fi-s-sayf-i ?abadan?
Q rain.3SF.IMPERF in-the-summer-GEN N-TIME
'Does it rain in summer at all?'

(30) *?iða darasta ?abadan, sawfa tanža?u.
if study.2SM.PERF N-TIME FUT pass.2SM.IMPERF
'If you study at all, you will pass.'

(31) *kul-u ?aalib-in ?azaaba s-su?aal-a ?abadan, sawaf
every-NOM student-GEN answer.3SM.PERF the-question-A CC N-TIME FUT
yanža?u.
pass.3SM.IMPERF
'Every student who answered the question at all will pass.'

Giannakidou (2008, 2010) proposes an analysis for the distributional differences between n-words and NPIs that is based on the semantic notion of (non)veridicality. She argues that n-words form a subclass of NPIs whose distribution is highly tied to the presence of an antiveridical operator in contrast to genuine NPIs whose distribution is tied to the presence of a nonveridical operator. Giannakidou (2011: 1673) expresses the basic idea of the notion of (non)veridicality in the definitions in (32) below.

(32) (Non)veridicality for propositional operators:

- a. A propositional operator F is veridical iff Fp entails or presupposes that p is true in some individual's epistemic model $M_E(x)$; otherwise F is nonveridical.
- b. A nonveridical operator F is antiveridical iff Fp entails that NOT p in some individual's epistemic model: $Fp \rightarrow \neg p$ in some $M_E(x)$.

It follows then that NPIs are allowed with sentential negation, without-clauses, before-clauses, adversative predicates, questions, the protasis of conditionals, and the restrictor of universal quantifiers as these contexts are nonveridical. Among these contexts, only sentential negation, without-clauses, before-clauses, and adversative predicates are antiveridical and thus can tolerate n-words.

An account of n-words as NPIs also faces the question of why can n-words provide predicate negation on their own in fragment answers (33), whereas NPIs cannot do so (34). If both n-words and NPIs are inherently non-negative, they should both be illicit as negative fragment answers, contrary to fact.

(33) A: hal taʃrabu l-xamr-a?

Q drink.3SM.IMPERF the-wine-ACC

'Do you drink wine?'

B: ʔabadan.

N-TIME

'Not at all.'

(34) A: man raʔayta fi-l-bayt-i?

who see.2SM.PERF in-the-house-GEN

'Who did you see in the house?'

B: *ʔayy-a aħad-in.

any-ACC one-GEN

'No one.'

Giannakidou argues that the negative meaning associated with n-words in fragment answers is not a property of n-words themselves, but rather a property of a negative marker that has undergone deletion under ellipsis. Giannakidou adopts Merchant's (2004) movement-based analysis of fragments which claims that fragments move to a left-peripheral position of the clause (namely, SpecFP) followed by PF deletion of the constituent out of which they have moved. The movement-based analysis of fragments assigns the fragment answer in (34B) the structure in (35).

- (35) [FP?abada_i [TP \bar{t}_a — \bar{a} frabu — \bar{t}_i xamr a — \bar{t}_i]]
 N-TIME NEG.PRES drink.1S.IMPERF the-wine-ACC

Giannakidou further argues that the movement-based analysis of fragments explains the observation that only n-words in Greek can provide fragment answers whereas NPIs cannot do so. According to Giannakidou, NPIs in Greek cannot provide fragment answers because, in contrast to n-words, they cannot be topicalized and thus they can never appear in a preverbal left-peripheral position (36). Note that the expression *kanenan* 'anybody' can function as an n-word and as an NPI at the same time in Greek albeit with an emphatic stress indicated with uppercase letters as an n-word in the language.

- (36) KANENAN/*kanenan dhen idha. (Giannakidou 1998, p. 160-161)
 any not saw.1SG
 'I saw nobody.'

This analysis predicts that NPIs in MSA that can be topicalized and appear in a preverbal left-peripheral position can provide negative fragment answers. This prediction is not borne out. Some NPIs in MSA can be topicalized and appear in a preverbal position as we can see for idiomatic minimizer expressions (36); however, they still cannot provide fragment answers in the language (38).

- (37) (qiid-a ʔanmulat-in) *(lam) ʔabrah makaan-i
 amount-ACC fingertip-GEN NEG.PAST leave.1S.IMPERF place-my
 (qiid-a ʔanmulat-in).
 amount-ACC fingertip-GEN
 'I did not budge an inch from my place.'

- (38) A: kam rakaḏta l-yawm-a?
 How run.2SM.PERF the-day-ACC
 'How much did you run today?'

- B: *qiid-a ʔanmulat-in.
 amount-ACC fingertip-GEN
 'Not an inch.'

Another question for Giannakidou's analysis is to account for the fact that the licensing of n-words is clause-bound whereas the licensing of genuine NPIs is not. An NPI in a subordinate clause can be licensed by a negative marker in the main clause (39), whereas an n-word in a subordinate clause cannot be licensed by a negative marker in the main clause (40).

- (39) Kariim-un *(lam) yaqul ʔinna Rabaab-a ʃtarat
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERFthat Rabaab-ACC buy.3SF.PERF
 ʔayy-a kitaab-in.
 any-ACC book-GEN
 'Kareem did not say that Rabaab bought any book.'

- (40) Kariim-un *(lam) yaqul ʔinna Rabaab-a ʃtarat l-kitaab-a
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERF that Rabaab-AC buy.3SF.PERF the-
 book-ACC

muṭlaqan.

N-TIME

Lit.'Kareem did not say at all that Rabaab bought the book.'

Lit.*'Kareem did not say that Rabaab bought at all the book.'

Note that (40) can be grammatical only with a reading where the n-word muṭlaqan modifies the verb in the root clause but not the verb in the subordinate clause, a fact that can only be explained if we assume that the licensing of n-words is clause-bound. Complex sentences with adverbials in final position in MSA are usually ambiguous between a reading where the adverbial modifies the verb in the root clause and another reading where the adverbial modifies the verb in the subordinate clause (41).

- (41) Saarat-u qaalat ?inna Kariim-an safara ?ilaa amriika
Sarah-NOM say.3SF.PERF that Kareem-ACC travel.3SM .PERF toAmerica
l-barihat-a.
the-yesterday-ACC
Lit.'Sarah said yesterday that Kareem travelled to America.'
Lit.'Sarah said that Kareem travelled yesterday to America.'

This ambiguity can be resolved by placing the adverbial in a position that immediately follows the verb it modifies. For example, the adverbial in (42) can modify only the verb in the root clause, and the adverbial in (43) can modify only the verb in the subordinate clause.

- (42) Saarat-u qaalat l-barihat-a ?inna Kariim-an safara
Sarah-NOM say.3SF.PERF the-yesterday-ACC that Kareem-ACC travel.3SM.PERF
?ilaa amriika.
to America
Lit.'Sarah said yesterday that Kareem travelled to America.'

- (43) Saara-u qaalat ?inna Kariim-an safara l-barihah-a
 Sarah-NOM say.3SF.PERF that Kareem-ACC travel.3SM.PERF the-
 yesterday-ACC
 ?ilaa amriika.
 To America
 Lit. 'Sarah said that Kareem travelled yesterday to America.'

In contrast to other adverbials in MSA, n-words occurring in complex sentences in the language and that are accompanied by a sentential negative marker in the root clause can only immediately follow the verb in the root clause (44) but not the verb in the subordinate clause (45), thus supporting the assumption that the licensing of n-words is clause-bound. The idea is that the n-word *muṭlaqan*, for example, can adjoin to the verb of the root clause in (44) as it can be licensed by a local negative marker, but it cannot adjoin to the verb in the subordinate clause in (45) as it cannot be licensed by a non-local negative marker. We are going to see later in this study that this locality restriction on the licensing of n-words holds for subordinate indicative clauses but not subordinate subjunctive clauses.

- (44) Kariim-un *(lam) yaqul muṭlaqan ?inna Rabaab-a ftarat
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERF N-TIME that
 Rabaab-ACC buy.3SF.PERF
 l-kitaab-a.
 the-book-ACC
 Lit. 'Kareem did not say at all that Rabaab bought the book.'
- (45) *Kariim-un lam yaqul ?inna Rabaab-a ftarat muṭlaqan
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERF that
 Rabaab-ACC buy.3SF.PERF N-TIME l-kitaab-a.
 the-book-ACC
 Lit. 'Kareem did not say that Rabaab bought at all the book.'

Giannakidou argues that the locality asymmetry in the distribution of NPIs and n-words follows from the nature of the former as existential quantifiers and the latter as universal quantifiers. She follows Reinhart's (1976) assumption that the scope of existential quantifiers is not clause-bound, whereas the scope of universal quantifiers is clause-bound. She also follows Dahl's (1970) and Horn's (1972) assumption that only universal quantifiers are compatible with adverbs like almost (i.e. the almost-test) and shows that only n-words in Greek can be accompanied by the adverb *sxedhon* 'almost' in the language as shown in (46) below.

(46) *Dhen idha sxedhon KANENAN/*kanenan* (Giannakidou 1998, p. 62-64)

not saw.1SG almost anybody

'I saw almost nobody.'

The facts from MSA pose a serious challenge for the analysis of NPIs as existential quantifiers and n-words as universal quantifiers. Both NPIs and n-words in MSA are not compatible with the adverb *taqriiban* 'almost' in the language as shown in (47) and (48) respectively below. Therefore, an account of NPIs as existential quantifiers and of n-words as universal quantifiers falls short of capturing the distributional differences between these two sets of items in the language.

(47) **Maryam-u lam ta?kul taqriiban ?ayy-a tuffa?at-in.*

Mary-NOM NEG.PAST eat.3SF.IMPERF almost
any-ACC apple-GEN

Lit. 'Mary did not eat almost any apple.'

(48) **Maryam-u lam ta?kul tuffa?ah-an taqriiban mu?tlaqan.*

Mary-NOM NEG.PAST eat.3SF.IMPERF apple-ACC almost N-TIME

Lit. 'Mary did not eat apples almost at all.'

3.2 The Negative Quantifier Analysis:

Zanuttini (1991), Haegeman and Zanuttini (1991, 1996), and Haegeman (1995) assume that n-words are negative quantifiers rather than non-negative NPIs. This would explain why n-words can express predicate negation on their own in fragment questions. For the licensing question (i.e. why do n-words need to be accompanied by sentential negation?), they postulate that n-words need to be in a Spec-head configuration with an X^0 [NEG]. Haegeman (1995:134) proposes that this requirement follows from a principle of well-formedness known as the NEG-Criterion reproduced in (49) below.

(49) The NEG-Criterion:

- a. A NEG-operator must be in a Spec-head configuration with an X^0 [NEG];
- b. An X^0 [NEG] must be in a Spec-head configuration with a NEG-operator.

For the compositionality question (i.e. why do n-words fail to contribute semantic negation to the interpretation in NC constructions?), Haegeman and Zanuttini (1996: 139) stipulate a rule of negative factorization, reproduced in (50) below, whereby the negative meaning associated with a negative marker and the negative meaning associated with an n-word melt together contributing one instance of negation to the semantics.

(50) Neg-factorization:

$$[\forall x \neg][\neg] = [\forall x] \neg$$

MSA lacks lexicalized negative quantifiers. MSA forms negative quantifiers by means of combining the constituent negator *laa* with a noun or pronoun. These expressions are not n-words as the co-occurrence of these expressions with sentential negation does not yield a reading with one semantic negation. In fact, negative quantifiers in MSA that are

accompanied with sentential negation yield double negation (51). In addition, negative quantifiers in MSA can appear in preverbal subject position but not postverbal subject position (52).

(51) laa aḥad-a lam yaʔti.
NEG one-ACC NEG.PAST come.3SM.IMPERF
'No one did not come.' (= 'everyone came.')

(52) a. laa aḥad-a ʔata.
 NEG one-ACC come.3SM.PERF
'No one came.'

 b. *ʔata laa aḥad-a.
 come.3SM.PERF NEG one-ACC
'No one came.'

The analysis of NC as factorization of negative quantifiers falls short of accounting for the fact that n-words in MSA are sensitive to negation whereas genuine negative quantifiers in the language are not. If n-words are really negative quantifiers, it is not clear then why they most often need to co-occur with a licensing negative marker in contrast to genuine negative quantifiers. It is also not clear under this analysis why n-words in MSA can appear in both a preverbal and a postverbal position whereas genuine negative quantifiers in the language are restricted to preverbal subject position.

Moreover, n-words are licensed in contexts that do not involve an overt negative marker such as the complement clauses of prepositions like *duuna* 'without' and *qabla* 'before' and the complement clauses of adversative predicates like *yarfudh* 'refuse'. These contexts constitute a problem for the NEG-Criterion because they do not involve an overt negative marker with which n-words can enter into a Spec-head agreement. We will see later in this study that an analysis of prepositions such as *duuna* and *qabla* and of adversative predicates like *yarfudh* as expressions that are not only intuitively negative but also formally negative is possible.

3.3 The Ambiguity Analysis:

Herburger (2001) proposes a lexical ambiguity account of NC in non-strict NC-languages. She assumes that n-words in non-strict NC-languages are ambiguous between a negative quantifier reading and a non-negative existential reading (i.e. an NPI reading). Consider sentence (53) from Spanish below.

- (53) Nadie miraba a nadie. (Herburger 2001, p. 290)
 N-BODY looked at N-BODY
 'Nobody looked at anybody.'

Herburger accounts for the meaning of this sentence by assuming that the preverbal n-word *nadie* is a negative quantifier whereas the postverbal n-word *nadie* is an NPI.

Herburger cites as supporting evidence for the lexical ambiguity analysis of n-words the fact that both readings of an n-word (i.e. the negative quantifier reading and the NPI reading) are not completely in complementary distribution but rather can sometimes be available in the same construction as shown in (54) below.

- (54) Nadie nunca volvió a Cuba. (Herburger 2001, p. 306)
 N-PERSONN-TIME returned to Cuba
 a. 'Nobody ever returned to Cuba.'
 b. 'Nobody never returned to Cuba.'

This example shows that the n-word *nunca* is ambiguous between a non-negative NPI reading and a negative quantifier reading, a fact that Herburger takes to strongly suggest an ambiguity approach to n-words.

If n-words in Spanish are ambiguous between a non-negative NPI reading and a negative quantifier reading, then what prevents both readings from being always available? Why do preverbal n-words in Spanish only have a negative quantifier reading, but not a non-negative NPI reading?; and

why do post-verbal n-words in Spanish only have a non-negative NPI reading, but not a negative quantifier reading?

As for the inability of preverbal n-words in Spanish to have a non-negative NPI reading, Herburger proposes that this is because NPIs in Spanish, whether an n-word or a genuine NPI, are excluded from this position in the language. That is to say, assuming that n-words in Spanish are NPIs, they should pattern with other items in the language that function as genuine NPIs. Since genuine NPIs are excluded from preverbal position in Spanish, non-negative n-words should also be excluded from this position.

As for the inability of post-verbal n-words in Spanish to have a negative quantifier reading, Herburger argues that post-verbal n-words can, in fact, occur with a negative quantifier reading in post-verbal position, but under very restricted conditions as shown in (55) below.

- (55) Temen que el bebé sea autista. Se pasa
el tiempo (Herburger 2001, p. 302)
Fear.3PL that the baby is.SUBJ autistic.CL spends the time
mirando a nada. looking at N-THING
'They fear the baby is autistic. He spends his time looking at nothing.'

Herburger argues that the negative quantifier in sentences like (55) above does not scope over the existential quantifier that binds the event variable introduced by the verb, thus yielding an LF such as (56) below.

- (56) $\exists e$ [AGENT (baby, e) & $\neg \exists x$ [thing (x) & THEME (x, e) & look(e)]]
(Penka 2011, p. 44)

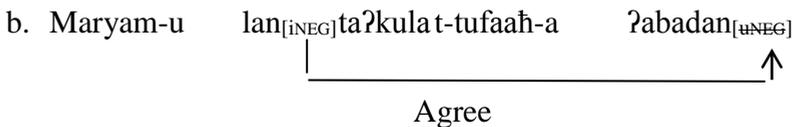
The sentence in (55) asserts that an event of looking takes place and that the baby is an agent on the event, but it fails to assert a theme on the event. Such sentences where not all participants of an event are asserted are very rare and can only be informative under very limited contexts.

For the differences between strict and non-strict NC-languages, Herburger assumes that while non-strict NC-languages occupy an intermediate stage in the Jespersen Cycle where n-words are still ambiguous between an NPI reading and a negative quantifier reading, strict NC-languages occupy a stage where n-words are unambiguously NPIs. Since MSA patterns with strict NC-languages rather than non-strict NC-language, Herburger would take n-words in MSA to be unambiguously NPIs and thus her analysis will inherit all of the problems with the NPIs approach to NC discussed in section 3.1 above.

3.4 The Syntactic Agreement Analysis

Zeijlstra (2004, 2008) argues that NC is a manifestation of syntactic agreement between an n-word and a semantic negation in the clause, where syntactic agreement is defined in terms of feature checking following recent assumptions within Minimalism (Chomsky 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001). N-words are assumed to be non-negative indefinites bearing an uninterpretable negative feature [uNEG] that needs to be checked and eliminated against a matching interpretable negative feature [iNEG] under Agree. The feature [iNEG] is assigned to elements interpreted as negation (i.e. elements that are semantically negative). Consider the example (57) from MSA:

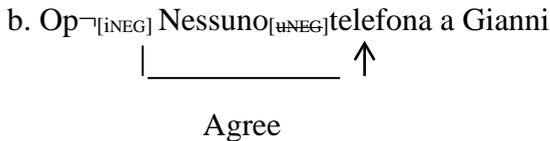
- (57) a. Maryam-u *(lan) taʔkula t-tufaah-a ʔabadan.
 Mary-NOM NEG.FUT eat.3SF.IMPERF the-apples-ACC N-TIME
 'Mary will not eat apples at all.'



The n-word *ʔabadan* in (57a) is assumed to have no intrinsic negative force. However, it is assumed to have an [uNEG]-feature that needs to be checked against an [iNEG]-feature in order for the derivation not to crash. Since the negative marker *lan*, interpreted as semantic negation and thus bearing an [iNEG]-feature, is present and c-commands the n-word, the [uNEG]-feature on *ʔabadan* is checked and deleted, as shown in (57b).

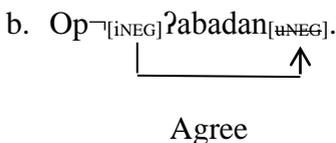
Zeijlstra assumes that the licensing negation does not always need to be overt. Rather, he argues that n-words can be licensed by an abstract negative operator Op_{\neg} . Op_{\neg} is assumed to bear an [iNEG]-feature and thus it can enter an Agree relation with an n-word. Op_{\neg} is invoked to account for the licensing of n-words that are not combined with any overt negative marker such as preverbal n-words in non-strict NC-languages as shown in (58) from Italian and n-words in fragment answers as shown in (59) from MSA.

- (58) a. **Nessuno** telefona a Gianni.
 N-PERSON call to Gianni
 'Nobody calls Gianni.'



- (59) a. A: *hal taʔrabu* l-xamr-a?
 Q drink.3SM .IMPERF the-wine-ACC
 'Do you drink wine?'

B: *ʔabadan*.
 N-TIME
 'Not at all.'



The insertion of Op_{\neg} is subject to an economy condition: an Op_{\neg} is only inserted when the derivation involves an element with an [uNEG]-feature that would remain unchecked otherwise. That is to say, Op_{\neg} cannot be inserted into the derivation unless its presence is marked by overt material such as the presence of an unlicensed n-word. This amounts to saying that n-words function as markers of sentential negation: n-words serve to mark the existence of a negative operator which might be covert in the clause just like the tense morphology on the verb which serves to mark the existence of a covert tense operator in the clause. The economy condition on Op_{\neg} is invoked to ensure that sentences like (60a) below cannot tolerate the insertion of Op_{\neg} as shown in (60b) since such sentences do not involve any element that bears an [uNEG]-feature that needs to be checked and deleted in order for the derivation not to crash.

- (60) a. John came.
 b. * Op_{\neg} John came. (= John did not come.)

For the distinction between non-strict NC-languages and strict NC-languages, Zeijlstra argues that this distinction follows from the different negativity features of their negative markers: negative markers in non-strict NC-languages are assumed to be semantically negative and thus bear an [iNEG]-feature; whereas negative markers in strict NC-languages are assumed to be semantically non-negative and thus bear a [uNEG]-feature.

Accordingly, n-words in non-strict NC-languages like Italian check their [uNEG]-feature under agree against the [iNEG]-feature of a c-commanding negative marker in postverbal position (61) and against the [iNEG]-feature of a c-commanding Op_{\neg} in preverbal position (62).

- (61) a. Gianni non telefona a nessuno. (Penka 2011, p. 48)
 Gianni NEG call to N-PERSON
 'Gianni does not call anybody.'

b. Gianni non_[iNEG] telefona a nessuno_[uNEG]



Agree

(62) a. Nessuno ha mangiato. (Penka 2011, p. 53)

N-PERSON has eaten

'Nobody did not eat.'

b. Op[¬]_[iNEG] Nessuno_[uNEG] ha mangiato



Agree

Strict NC-languages, on the other hand, are assumed to exhibit negative markers that are semantically non-negative. Negative markers in strict NC-languages are assumed to pattern with n-words in the sense that they are argued to bear a [uNEG]-feature that needs to be checked and deleted against an [iNEG]-feature of a semantic negation in the clause. Negative markers in strict NC-languages are assumed to check their [uNEG]-feature against the [iNEG]-feature of Op[¬] as shown in (63) for Polish.

(63) a. Jan nie pojechał do Warszawy. (Błaszczak 2001, p. 140)

Jan NEG go.3SG.PAST toWarsaw

'Jan did not go to Warsaw.'

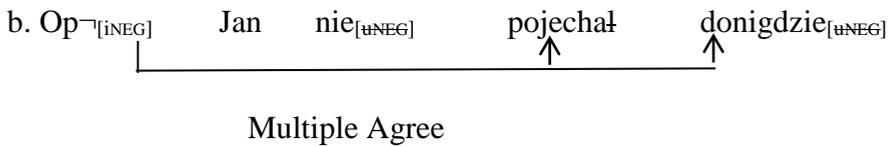
b. Op[¬]_[iNEG] Jan nie_[uNEG] pojechał do Warszawy



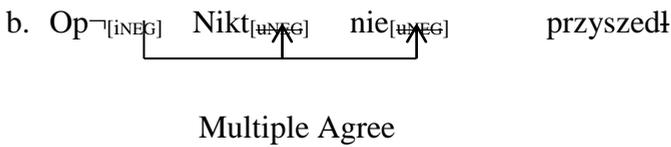
Agree

The [uNEG]-feature on both negative markers and n-words in NC constructions in strict NC-languages are assumed to be checked against the [iNEG]-feature of Op^{-} via Multiple Agree under c-command in the sense of Ura (1996) and Hiraiwa (2001) whereby one interpretable feature can enter into an Agree relation with several uninterpretable features at the same time. This multiple agree operation is assumed to hold regardless of whether n-words appear in a postverbal position or preverbal position as shown in (64) and (65) for Polish respectively below.

- (64) a. Jan nie pojechał do nigdzie.
 Jan NEG go.3SG.PAST to N-PLACE
 'Jan did not go anywhere.'



- (65) a. Nikt nie przyszedł.
 N-PERSON NEG came
 'Nobody came.'



The analysis presented here assumes that n-words can function as markers of sentential negation: the presence of an n-word in a given sentence is sufficient to trigger the presence of an abstract negative operator that expresses sentential negation. Thus, this analysis predicts that negative markers should be redundant in NC-constructions. This prediction is not borne out. In fact, the presence of a negative marker is obligatory with postverbal n-words in non-strict NC-languages and with both postverbal and preverbal n-words in strict NC-languages.

Zeijlstra addresses this problem by arguing that the obligatory presence of negative markers in NC-constructions follows from the nature of n-words as indefinite items in the sense of Heim (1982), where indefinites are considered to denote free variables that need to be bound by some operator. Zeijlstra shows that the indefinite nature of n-words can explain the asymmetry between postverbal and preverbal n-words in non-strict NC-languages. Following Herburger (2001), he shows that a postverbal n-word not accompanied by a negative marker cannot express a meaning with sentential negation, but only a meaning with negation taking scope below the quantifier binding the event variable introduced by the verb. He ascribes this to the status of n-words as non-quantificational indefinites. N-words are assumed to lack quantificational force. Therefore, postverbal n-words that are not accompanied by a negative marker are assumed to be licensed in situ by the insertion of Op_{\neg} in a position within VP resulting in a reading which asserts that the event took place, but one of its thematic roles is not realized. For a reading with sentential negation, a preverbal negative marker needs to be present with postverbal n-words as this is the only way for negation to take scope from a position outside VP. In contrast, preverbal n-words are licensed by an abstract negative operator Op_{\neg} in a position outside VP and thus they are sufficient to express sentential negation on their own.

Penka (2011: 54) points out one major problem with this explanation. She shows that it does not extend to preverbal n-words in strict NC-languages and thus a different explanation is in need:

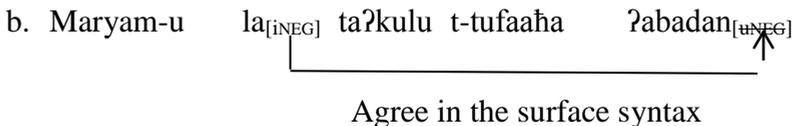
'Note also that Zeijlstra's explanation as it stands only applies to post-verbal NIs [negative indefinites (i.e. n-words)]. It has nothing to say about the question why preverbal NIs in strict NC-languages also have to be accompanied by a negative marker on the verb. Surely, a preverbal NI should be sufficient for the purposes of marking the scope of the negation. Thus, the obligatory presence of a negative marker in certain cases cannot be reduced to NIs being indefinite expressions and a different explanation is needed.'

According to Penka, Zeijlstra's analysis predicts that, like preverbal n-words in non-strict NC-languages, preverbal n-words in strict NC-languages like MSA should be capable of expressing sentential negation on their own, which is not the case as shown in (66) below.

- (66) * (ʔabadan) Maryam-u (ʔabadan)n taʔkulu t-tufaah-a. N-TIME
 Mary-NOM N-TIME eat.3SF.IMPERF the-apples-ACC
 'Mary does not eat apples at all.'

An alternative explanation would be to assume that negative markers are semantically negative and thus bear an [iNEG]-feature in both non-strict as well as strict NC-languages. Such an explanation will avoid the redundancy problem of the negative marker that we have noticed with Zeijlstra's analysis. We are going to see here that such an alternative analysis can work for MSA which functions as a strict NC-language. Let us assume that sentential negative markers in MSA are semantically negative and thus bear an [iNEG]-feature that can check the [uNEG]-feature on n-words. Then, the licensing of n-words in the language proceeds as follows. The [uNEG]-feature on postverbal n-words in MSA is checked under agree in the surface syntax by the [iNEG]-feature of a c-commanding negative marker (67), whereas the [uNEG]-feature on preverbal n-words in MSA is checked under agree at LF by the [iNEG]-feature of a c-commanding negative marker (68).

- (67) a. Maryam-u *(la) taʔkulu t-tufaah-a ʔabadan.
 Mary-NOM NEG.PRES eat.3SF.IMPERF the-apples-ACC N-TIME
 'Mary does not eat apples at all.'



(68) a. ʔabadan Maryam-u *(la) taʔkulu t-tufaaḥ-a.
 N-TIME Mary-NOM NEG.PRES eat.3SF.IMPERF
 the-apples-ACC

'Mary does not eat apples at all.'

b. $[_{FP} \text{ʔabadan}_{[uNEG]} [_{XP} \text{Maryam-u la}_{[iNEG]} \text{taʔkulu t-tufaaḥ } \text{ʔabadan}_{[uNEG]}]]$
 Agree at LF

This analysis assumes that preposed preverbal n-words in MSA are in an A'-position, presumably the specifier position of a Focus Phrase (FP), and that they move to that position from an A-position inside the sentence that involves them. The analysis predicts that preposed preverbal n-words in MSA should display reconstruction effects. This prediction is borne out. For example, preposed preverbal n-words in MSA obey the Adjunct Island Constraint (69), the Complex NP Constraint (70), and the Wh-Island Constraint (71). This supports the assumption that preverbal n-words in MSA are derived by movement rather than base-generation, and that they reconstruct to their base position at LF where they can check their [uNEG]-feature against the [iNEG]-feature of a c-commanding negative marker as shown in (68b) above.

(69) * ʔabadan_i Salaam-u rasabat liʔann-ha lam tadrus
 N-TIME Salaam-NOM fail.3SM.PERF because-her NEG.PAST
 study.3SF.IMPERF ~~ʔabadan_i~~ .

N-TIME

'Salaam failed because she did not study at all.'

(70) * ʔabadan_i Maryam-u taqraʔu l-kitaba laḏi laa uḥibbu-hu
 N-TIME Mary-NOM read.3SF.IMPERF the-bookthat
 NEG.PRES like.1S.IMPERF-it ~~ʔabadan_i~~ .

N-TIME

'Mary is reading the book that I do not like at all.'

- (71) *ʔabadan_i Kareem-un yaʕlamu ʔayy-a ʔ-tulaab-i lam
 N-TIME Kareem-NOM know.3SM.IMPERF which-ACC
 the-students-GEN NEG.PAST
 yaʕtari l-kitaab-a ʔabadan_i.
 buy.3SM.IMPERF the-book-ACC N-TIME
 'Kareem knows which students have not bought the book at all.'

The discussion of the syntactic agreement approach shows that this approach fares better than all previous approaches. In particular, this approach does not face the problem of accounting for the differences between n-words and NPIs or negative quantifiers as this approach considers n-words to be neither NPIs nor negative quantifiers but rather non-negative indefinites that serve as markers of sentential negation. This approach is also superior as it provides straightforward answers to the locality constraints on the licensing of n-words and the distribution of n-words in negative-like contexts.

The analysis of NC as syntactic agreement provides a straightforward answer to the clause-boundedness of the phenomenon. Ann-word cannot establish an agreement relation with a negation in a higher clause because Agree as a syntactic operation is clause-bound. This analysis is supported by the fact that subordinate n-words in MSA can be licensed by a negative marker in a higher clause only when they occur in a subjunctive clause (72) but not in an indicative clause (73).

- (72) Kareem-un *(lam)yurid ʔan taʕrab-a Rabaab-u
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST want.3SM.IMPERF that
 drink.3SF.IMPERF-SUBJ Rabaab-NOM l-haliibmuṭlaqaan.
 the-milk-ACC N-TIME
 Lit.'Kareem did not want at all Rabaab to drink milk.'
 Lit.'Kareem did not want Rabaab to drink at all milk.'

- (73) Kariim-un *(lam) yaqul ?inna Rabaab-a taḡrab-u
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERFthat Rabaab-
 ACC drink.3SF.IMPERF-IND
 l-ḡaliib-a muṡḡaqan.
 the-milk -ACC N-TIME
 Lit. 'Kareem did not say at all that Rabaabdrink milk.'
 Lit. *'Kareem did not say that Rabaabdrink at all milk.'

Note that in (72) the adverbial n-word muṡḡaqan can modify the verb in the root clause as well as the verb in the subordinate clause. Note also that the adverbial n-word muṡḡaqan in (73) can modify the verb in the root clause but not the verb in the subordinate clause. It has already been observed that the ambiguity that might result from sentence-final adverbials in complex sentences in MSA can be resolved by placing the sentence-final adverb in a position that immediately follows the verb that it modifies. This observation predicts that the n-word in the subjunctive complement clause in (72) can immediately follow the verb in both the root clause and the subordinate clause whereas the n-word in the indicative complement clause in (73) can only immediately follow the verb in the root clause but not the verb in the subordinate clause. This predication is borne out as shown in (74) and (75) respectively below.

- (74) a. Kariim-un*(lam) yurid muṡḡaqan ?an taḡrab-a
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST want.3SM.IMPERF
 N-TIME that drink.3SF.IMPERF-SUBJ
 Rabaab-u l-ḡaliib-a.
 Rabaab-NOM the-milk-ACC
 Lit. 'Kareem did not want at all Rabaab to drink milk.'
- b. Kariim-un *(lam) yurid ?an taḡrab-a muṡḡaqan
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST want.3SM.IMPERF that drink.3SF.IMPERF-
 SUBJ N-TIME
 Rabaab-u l-ḡaliib-a. Rabaab-NOM the-milk-ACC
 Lit. 'Kareem did not want Rabaab to drink at all milk.'

(75) a. Kariim-un *(lam) yaqul muṭlaqan ʔinna Rabaab-a
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERF N-TIME
 that Rabaab-ACC taṣrab-u l-ḥaliib-a.

drink.3SF.IMPERF-IND the-milk-ACC

Lit. 'Kareem did not say at all that Rabaab drink milk.'

b. *Kariim-un lam yaqul ʔinna Rabaab-a taṣrab-u
 Kareem-NOM NEG.PAST say.3SM.IMPERF that
 Rabaab-ACC drink.3SF.IMPERF-IND muṭlaqan l-ḥaliib-a.
 N-TIME the-milk-ACC

Lit. 'Kareem did not say that Rabaab drink at all milk.'

The observation that subordinate n-words can be licensed long-distance by a negative marker in a higher clause only in subjunctive complement clauses but not in indicative complement clauses follows from the nature of the former but not the latter as being transparent to long-distance syntactic dependencies (Zeijlstra 2004, 2008; Penka 2011).

It remains to be established how the syntactic agreement approach accounts for the licensing of n-words in negative-like contexts that do not include an overt sentential negative operator such as the complement clauses of prepositions like *duuna* 'without' and *qabla* 'before', and the complement clauses of adversative predicates like *yarfuḏ* 'refuse'. Zeijlstra argues that prepositions like *duuna* and *qabla*, and adversative predicates like *yarfuḏ* are not only intuitively negative but also formally negative. He argues that such elements can be lexically decomposed into a negative element and a non-negative element. For example, the adversative predicate *yarfuḏ* can be decomposed into *not agree*. The negative element that is assumed to be involved in the composition of prepositions such as *duuna* and *qabla* and in the composition of adversative predicates such as *yarfuḏ* provides the [INEG]-feature against which n-words can check their [uNEG]-feature.

It is important to note at this point that the licensing of n-words in the complement clauses of prepositions like *duuna* and *qabla* and the complement clauses of adversative predicates like *yarfuḏ* involves a subordinate n-word that is licensed by an element in a higher clause. It is

also important to note that the licensing of n-words in these constructions is grammatical only when the n-word is part of a subjunctive complement clause as shown in (76) and (77) below.

- (76) Maryam-u xaražat duuna ?an tuħaddiθ-a-ni muṭlaqan.
Mary-NOM leave.3SF.PERF without-ACC that
speak.3SF.IMPERF-SUBJ-me N-TIME
'Mary left without talking to me at all.'

- (77) ?al-walad-u xaraža qabla ?an ya?kul-a muṭlaqan.
the-boy-NOM leave.3SM.PERF before-ACC that
see.3SM.IMPERF-SUBJ N-TIME
"The boy left without eating at all."

These facts support that assumption that the licensing of n-words is syntactic agreement. That is, a subordinate n-word can be licensed by a negative marker in a higher clause only when the n-word is part of a subjunctive complement clause but not an indicative complement clause. This is most evident in the contrast of the licensing of n-words in the complement clause of adversative predicates like *yarfuḏ* 'refuse' and *yunkir* 'deny' in MSA. In spite of the fact that both *yarfuḏ* and *yunkir* are assumed to have a formal negative feature, only the former can license an n-word in its complement clause because it selects for a complement clause in the subjunctive mood (78), whereas the latter cannot license an n-word in its complement clause because it selects for a complement clause in the indicative mood (79).

- (78) ?al-muṣalim-u rafaða ?an yu?ažžil-a l-imiṭiħan-a the-teacher-
NOM refuse.3SM.PERF that postpone.3SM.IMPERF-SUBJ
the-test -ACC muṭlaqan.

N-TIME

Lit. "The teacher refused at all to postpone the test."

Lit. "The teacher refused to postpone at all the test."

- (79) ?al-liṣṣ-u ?ankara?anna-hu yasriq-u s-sayyaara-at-i
 the-thief-NOM deny.3SM.PERFthat-him steal.3SM.IMPERF-
 INDthe-car-PL-ACC
 muṭlaqan.
 N-TIME
 Lit. 'The thief denied at all that he steals cars.'
 Lit. *'The thief denied that he steals at all cars.'

As has already been noted for n-words in complex sentences in MSA, we predict the n-word in (78) to be felicitous when it immediately follows either the verb in the root clause or the verb in the subordinate clause. We also predict the n-word in (79) to be felicitous only when the n-word immediately follows the verb in the root clause but not the verb in the subordinate clause. These predications are borne out as shown in (80) and (81) respectively below.

- (80) a. ?al-muṣalim-u rafaḏa muṭlaqan ?an yu?ažžil-a
 the-teacher-NOM refuse.3SM.PERF N-TIME that
 postpone.3SM.IMPERF-SUBJ
 l-imiṭḥan-a.the-test -ACC
 Lit. "The teacher refused at all to postpone the test."
- b. ?al-muṣalim-u rafaḏa ?an yu?ažžil-a muṭlaqan
 the-teacher-NOM refuse.3SM.PERF N-TIME that
 postpone.3SM.IMPERF-SUBJ N-TIME
 l-imiṭḥan-a.
 the-test-ACC
 Lit. "The teacher refused to postpone at all the test."

(81) a. ʔal-liṣṣ-u ʔankara muṭlaqan ʔanna-hu yasriq-u
the-thief-NOM deny.3SM.PERF N-TIME that-him
steal.3SM.IMPERF-IND

s-sayyaara-at-i.

the-car-PL-ACC

Lit. 'The thief denied at all that he steals cars.'

b. *ʔal-liṣṣ-u ʔankara ʔanna-hu yasriq-u muṭlaqan
the-thief-NOM deny.3SM.PERF that-him
steal.3SM.IMPERF-IND N-TIME

s-sayyaara-at-i.

the-car-PL-ACC

Lit. 'The thief denied that he steals at all cars.'

4- Conclusion:

The study has shown that MSA is a strict NC language with n-words that must co-occur with a negative expression yielding only one logical negation to the interpretation in spite of the fact that those n-words can contribute negation on their own in negative fragment answers. The distribution of n-words in MSA has been examined in the light of previous accounts to NC including the negative polarity items analysis, the negative quantifier analysis, the ambiguity analysis, and the syntactic agreement analysis. The study has shown that the syntactic agreement analysis can better capture the distribution of n-words in MSA than the other three approaches. The syntactic agreement approach posits that n-words are non-negative indefinites that serve as markers of sentential negation. N-words are assumed to be neither NPIs nor negative quantifiers. Rather, n-words are assumed to be only formally negative with a [uNEG]-feature that needs to be checked and deleted against a matching interpretable negative feature [iNEG] under Agree. Consequently, this analysis does not face the problem of accounting for the distributional differences between n-words and genuine NPIs or genuine negative quantifiers in MSA which have been proven to be a problem for the other approaches. In addition, the syntactic agreement

analysis is superior as it provides a straightforward answer to the locality restriction on the licensing of n-words. N-words can only be licensed by a local negative marker because Agree as a syntactic operation is clause-bound. The syntactic agreement analysis is also superior because it provides a straightforward answer to licensing contexts that do not involve an overt negative marker such as the complement clauses of prepositions like *duuna* 'without' and *qablaa* 'before' and the complement clauses of adversative predicates like *yarfuḏ* 'refuse'. Prepositions like *duuna* and *qabla* and adversative predicates like *yarfuḏ* are assumed to be not only intuitively negative but also formally negative with an [iNEG]-feature against which n-words can check their [uNEG]-feature.

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