

## NEGATIVE MARKERS IN THE SPANISH ARABIC DIALECT

Marina Marugán

*University of Madrid*

Among Semitic languages, negation presents a wide range of dissimilarities, not only on account of the diversity of markers and of their position in the sentence, but also of their treatment.

With regard to the use of different markers, in certain languages the particle varies according to the kind of sentence (nominal or verbal) it denies, while in other, more syncretic languages, like Aramaic, Syriac (Costaz 1964:195-7) or Talmudic Babilonic, one and the same particle, *lā*, *lo* and *la(w)* respectively, denies any constituent of the sentence and any type of sentence.<sup>1</sup>

The languages also differ in the position of the negative marker, which usually precedes the predicate, although it may come after it, such as the particle *lā* in South Arabic dialects when denying a quality or a situation, or the expression *aydolam* in nominal sentences in Amharic. A negative marker can also be prefixed to the predicate; this is the case of the Ethiopic 'r, its commonest particle, which may be prefixed to a single word, a noun phrase, a verbal phrase or even to the head of the sentence (Dillmann 1974:380-1, 508-13).

Another dissimilarity is evident in the use of one or more negative markers; we can observe the use of one negative particle, one negative particle plus a secondary marker or two negative particles. I shall not go into the first case in detail since it is the usual and simplest way of denying. The use of a secondary marker suffixed to the verb in order to reinforce the preceding particle is habitual in many North Arabic dialects with *mā + V + š(i)*, in Tigrinya with *ay + V + n*, and in Amharic with *'al + V + m*. Furthermore, in modern Arabic dialects *mā + V + š(i)* is so common, that in the dialect of Oman, for example, the particle *mā* disappears and *-š(i)* becomes a full-fledged negative marker (>*huwa-šī sekrān* < "He is not drunk"). Reciprocal reinforcement occurs in Arabic, Hebrew (Joüon 1974:488-95), Ethiopic and Neosyriac.

I shall finish this short review of some of the features of negation in the Semitic languages by pointing out two interesting negative constructions: prohibition and non-existence. First, the different aspect of the verb used to express prohibition; while Arabic and Hebrew use the jussive after *lā* and *'al* respectively, Ethiopic expresses it with 'r plus the subjunctive and Akkadian with *lā* plus the present (Soden 1952:177-82). Second, the coincident use of certain idioms in order to express non-existence, like in Arabic *laysa* (Wright 1896-98: II, 302), in Hebrew *'en* and *'ayin*, in Mehri *leh*, in Soqotri *bišī*, in Ethiopic *'albo*, in Amharic *yallam* or in Assyrian *yānu*.

Although this brief survey is not intended to be a thorough investigation of negation in Classical Arabic and its dialects, I would like to highlight, with regard to the diversity of negative particles extant in Classical Arabic, and the subsequent study of the Spanish Arabic dialect, the process of simplification which has taken place. In these dialects, negation is limited to only two particles, *mā* and *lā*, and the secondary

<sup>1</sup> See Brockelmann:1908-13, II, 111-5, 182-6, 664-5.

marker  $\text{-š(i)}$ , and their use depends on the dialect. For instance, while in South Arabic dialects  $\text{lā}$  is the commonest marker and, as I have mentioned before, is usually placed after the predicate, North Arabic dialects employ  $\text{mā}$  and the use of  $\text{lā}$  is limited to double negative sentences.

This simplification process also occurred in the Spanish Arabic dialect, although not so rapidly as in other dialects of the Western group. Negation was achieved by means of the aforementioned  $\text{lā}$ ,  $\text{mā}$  and  $\text{-š(i)}$ , and a new range of negative markers such as  $\text{la/is}$ ,  $\text{lš}$ ,  $\text{lš}$  and  $\text{lš}$  (Corriente 1977).

Before dealing with the central theme of this paper, I should like to comment on certain remarks about the chronology of the texts and their geographical and stylistic differences.

The texts studied herein belong to different epochs, from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, they will, therefore, enable us to take a diachronical approach to the process that took place in the Andalusí dialect. The earliest work is Ibn Quzmān's poetry (Corriente 1980), dated in the eleventh century; followed by Ibn Hišām al-Laḥmī<sup>2</sup> with his *al-Madhāl 'ilā taqwīm al-lisān wa-ta'līm al-bayān*, and some Mozarabic documents from the twelfth century. Then az-Zaḡḡālī's proverb collection (Bencherifa 1971) and the *Vocabulista in Arabico* (Corriente 1989) and finally, Ibn 'Āšim's proverbs and the *Lexicon of Pedro de Alcalá* from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively. I shall concentrate on Ibn 'Āšim's dialectal proverbs since their linguistic analysis is my current field of work.

It should be noted that when we refer to Spanish Arabic dialect or Andalusí dialect, we mean not only a single one, but a bundle of dialects resulting from the interaction of the Arabic dialects brought to Spain in the eighth century by the Arabs, and the interference by the Romance substratum. Therefore, the texts reflect the dialect of Granada, Cordoba or Valencia.

Apart from these characteristics, we should consider the variety of registers and styles. On the one hand we have strophic poetry, the *azḡāl* of Ibn Quzmān, the proverbs of az-Zaḡḡālī and Ibn 'Āšim and the *Lexicon* of Pedro de Alcalá (Corriente 1988), all of them very popular and written in low register. On the other hand, we have the *Lexicon* of the *Vocabulista* and the work of Ibn Hišām, written in a higher style due to their pedagogic nature.

When I began this work, I decided to study negative markers on the basis of their appearance in the texts rather than the type of sentence denied or the aspect of the verb. I shall therefore deal first with the particles  $\text{lā}$ ,  $\text{mā}$  and the classicizing  $\text{lām}$ .

### /lā/

In view of its wide use in Old Arabic,  $\text{lā}$  is less frequent in Spanish Arabic. It appears in Ibn Quzmān denying imperfectives 9/6/3 *wa-r-raḡīb lā yuḥáf wa-lā yabqá* "The spy will not be feared and he will not stay"; perfectives 5/4/1 *lā wazár illá abán 'ubáda* "Nobody discharged the ministry properly except Aban 'Ubáda"; nominal sentences 11/2/1 *sá'a dún šuráyba lā šakál wa-lá maláḡa* "An hour without a drink, neither beauty nor fairness"; as an absolute negative marker 35/6/4 *lā karím illá abū ishāq* "Only 'Abū Ishāq is generous"; and also as a double negative

<sup>2</sup> Studied by Pérez Lázaro (1990).

and negation adverb "no". We must note the emphatic use of *walá* without concatenation 20/7/1 *kállī ma tasmá wa-lá hárfī min háqq* "Of all you are hearing not even one letter is true".

There is little of interest in *az-Zaǧǧālī* and Ibn Hišām, save the common use of *lá* plus 'an in the proverbs of *az-Zaǧǧālī* to convey optative and jussive nuances, e.g. 193: *allá tabqá ad-dúnya bilá walád húrta* "May the world not be left without honest people".

Surprisingly, in Ibn 'Āšim's proverbs *lá* is the commonest particle, despite being considered rather rare in Spanish Arabic. It is used with perfectives having the same optative meaning of Classical Arabic 530: *man máṭ min šáb'a lá aqámu alláh minha* "May God not resuscitate whoever died from overeating", and also in imperfectives 58: *idá Kín má'ak ġār latf addá'í ila alláh an lá yizúl* "If you have a nice neighbour, pray to God he does not disappear", 350: *táwb al-'áyra lá yudúm wa-la yidaffi* "Lent clothes do not last nor warm up". But the most widespread use of *lá* in Ibn 'Āšim is to express prohibition, 47: *idá ráyt himáراك yamšī la tazidu mánhas* "If you see your donkey is walking do not spur it", or 57: *idá hábbak al-qamar lá tubáli ban-nuǧúm* "If the moon loves you, do not care about the stars". It also denies nominal sentences and single words; it is the negation adverb, the absolute negation and the particle used in double negatives.

However, *lá* is not common in the *Lexicon* of Pedro de Alcalá of the sixteenth century, although its compound *bilá* was the standard adjectival negation: *bilé muéddeb* "uneducated", *bilé muádel* "decomposed", etc.

#### /má/

Unlike the rest of the dialects of the Western group, the use of *má* in the Spanish Arabic is not so frequent. In Ibn Quzmán, although less frequent than *lá* or *lás*, it has emphatic nuances with imperfectives and perfectives, e.g. 19/6/4 *má naǧhád* "I do not deny" or 13/5/2 *má fatáht al-báb hattá laqáytu* "As soon as I opened the door, I met him". In *az-Zaǧǧālī* it is rarely used with imperfectives, while in Ibn 'Āšim and Pedro de Alcalá it appears more frequently.

In Ibn 'Āšim's proverbs *má* denies perfectives 487: *law zuwwǧ al-kálbī má nabáh* "If they got the dog married, he would not bark"; imperfectives 611: *má yudrá qimat aš-šáyy hattá yuqád* "One does not know the value of something until one loses it"; in conditional sentences 490: *law kán fa-l-búm háyr má klyyaslam 'ala š-šayyáda* "If there were something good in the owl, it would not be safe from hunters", and nominal sentences 154: *az-záltī má lu muríwwa* "Poverty does not accept magnificence".

#### /lam/

The negative marker *lam* is quite common in certain texts, and much less so in others.

In Ibn Quzmán *lam* usually appears with imperfectives 21/16/1 *lam qáttu yanbáh li-ǧár* "He never barks at neighbours". I should stress the use of the negative reinforcer *qát(t)* with imperfectives and even jussives, which may be a classicism or a hypercorrection.

*lam* with perfective appears in Ibn Quzmán 23/5/3 *in lam alqá qális alqá ǧulǧál* "If he does not wear a bonnet, he wears jingle bells", and also with nominal

sentences 93/9/4 *lam támma zağğāl an yaqúl dá t-tis'a aštār* "There is no zağal composer who can say these nine lines". The appearance of *lam* in the proverbs of Ibn ʿĀšim is rather rare, and all such examples are constructed with imperfectives.

*/laysa/*

One of the most noteworthy features of Spanish Arabic negation is the transformation of the particle *laysa*.

This negative marker appears in the texts as *lás* or *lls*, depending on the register, and it may take third person suffixes, such as *lássu*, feminine *lássí* or plural *lássum*.

This transformation was common in Ibn Quzmān where we have: 1/4/3 *lás akfá* "It was not enough", 4/1/2 *lás li má'u wa'ád* "I do not have an appointment with him", 9/18/3 *lássu kađák* "It is not like that", and 2/0/2 *lls nağrí nusammih* "I dare not name him". These particles can rule imperfectives, perfectives and nominal sentences. Occasionally the particle 'an is inserted as in 88/2/2 *lissánhu wáqt i'ád* "It is not visiting time" or 83/14/2 *strat al-ihsán ya lasánha sra* "The habit of being good to others is not a habit any longer". The gender and number distinction seems to be optional.

In the proverbs of az-Zağğālī and Ibn ʿĀšim, the particle is always *lls* and is used only with imperfectives and nominal sentences. Its use seems more and more infrequent, as we can observe in the only two examples extant in the work of Ibn ʿĀšim, where imperfectives are accompanied by the hybrid form *lls*.

In other texts of higher register like some Mozarabic documents of Toledo, we have *lays* and its conjugated forms.

*/lš/*

The origin of this negative marker can be found in the interrogative *áš* "what" which became negative, as happened in Old Arabic with the particle *mā*, in Hebrew with 'en, in Ethiopic with 'r or in Tigré with *tū*.<sup>3</sup> In the case of the Spanish Arabic marker, the negative *lš* was differentiated from the interrogative *áš* by means of a second degree 'imāla.

Its use is commoner in the later forms of the dialect. Therefore, we find *lš* in Ibn Quzmān and az-Zağğālī with perfectives, imperfectives and nominal sentences, but not so frequently as in Ibn ʿĀšim's proverbs or in the *Lexicon* of Pedro de Alcalá. In Ibn ʿĀšim we find *lš* with perfectives 100: *lš u'mil as-sir ill l-abnā al-halāl* "The wall was only built for honest people", imperfectives 155: *al-kālb al-ğawwīl lš yakkūl min 'izām dāru* "The wandering dog does not eat bones from its house", to express prohibition 384: *hūd wš tagđal* "Take and do not put", with the verb *kān* plus eventual 493: *taw darā s-sāriq ma yadr šāhib ad-dār lš klyyaqdār lu aħād* "If the thief knew what the owner of the house knows, nobody could do anything against him", and with nominal sentences 373: *hūt aš-šimīl lš lu šāwka* "[Imported] Northern fish does not have bones". The marker *lš* appears in the same proverb with the particle *lá*, as in proverb 540: *man lá má'u ráħa lš má'u tiğāra* "Whoever does not have rest, does not make business".

<sup>3</sup> See n. 1.

One peculiar construction which occurs in the dialect of Granada is the particle *lš* suffixed to the conditional marker *'in* plus the verb *kán* with *'imāla*, the resulting *ikkInlš* meaning "although", 291: *baḥāl šúqra ikkInlš tatkallám tihúzzl rásak* "Like a mother-in-law, although you do not speak, you move your head".

This particle *lš* and the above mentioned *lš* from *laysa* have produced two hybrid forms: *lš* and *lš*. *lš*, which appears occasionally in Ibn Quzmān, was used, as we have already seen, to deny imperfectives, as for example 433: *zámir qarḥyya lš yulh* "The flautist of one's village is not fun". In contrast, according to the available information, the particle *lš* seems to have been more common in the area of Valencia.

Lastly, and besides those particles, in the proverb collection of Ibn 'Āšim we find the secondary marker *-š(i)*, so common in modern Western dialects but rather rare in Spanish Arabic. There is only one example, 783: *lš tablt-šl* "You will not stay overnight".<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, I should like to mention the simplification process that happened in the case of the Spanish Arabic negative markers, in particular the increasing use of the particles *má* and *lš* instead of *lá*, the almost complete disappearance of *lam* and the peculiar transformations of *laysa*.

As for Ibn 'Āšim's proverb collection, its variety of particles is not very representative of negation in the late period, since we have to take into account the fact that, in any language, proverbs pass from one generation to another, repeating earlier structures, even when these have become obsolete and people no longer understand them.

#### REFERENCES

- Bencherifa, M. 1971. *'Amṭāl al-'awām ft-l-'Andalus li-'Abī Yahyā 'Ubaydallāh az-Zaḡgālī*. 2 vols. Rabat: Publications du Ministère d'Etat chargé des affaires culturelles et de l'enseignement originel.
- Brockelmann, Carl. 1908-13. *Grundriß der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*. 2 vols. Berlin.
- Costaz, Louis. 1964. *Grammaire Syriaque*. Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique.
- Corriente, Federico. 1977. *A Grammatical Sketch of the Spanish Arabic Dialect Bundle*. Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura.
- . 1980. *Gramática, métrica y texto del cancionero hispanoárabe de Abán Quzmán*. Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura.
- . 1988. *El léxico árabe andalusí según Pedro de Alcalá*. Madrid.
- . 1989. *El léxico árabe andalusí según el Vocabulista in Arábico*. Madrid.
- Dillmann, August. 1974. *Ethiopic Grammar*. Amsterdam: Philo Press.
- Joüon, Paul. 1974. *Grammaire de l'Hébreu Biblique*. Roma: Institut Biblique Pontifical.

<sup>4</sup> This secondary marker is documented in two authors: aš-Šuštārī in 238 >lš tanqasim-šl < "you are not divided", and in three 'azḡāl of Ibn Zamrak, 5/3/2, 8/7/1 and 13/1/1; perhaps this imported marker was beginning to be used among the lowest registers of the dialect of Granada.

- Pérez Lázaro, José. 1990. *al-Madhāl 'ilā taqwīm al-lisān wa-tā'lūm al-bayān li-Ibn Hišām al-Laḥmī*. Madrid.: C.S.I.C.
- Soden, Wolfram von. 1952. *Grundriß der Akkadischen Grammatik*. Analecta Orientalia 33. Roma.
- Wright, William. 1896-98. *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*. 2 vols. 3rd ed. revised by Robertson Smith and M.J. de Goeje. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. (Reissued 1933, 1955, 1964.)