

NEGATIVE MARKERS IN ÀO AND STANDARD YORÙBÁ

Oyè Táíwò

Department of Linguistics and African Languages,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Negation is a universal phenomenon in that it is common to all languages. However, different languages express negation in different ways. Infact, within a language, it is possible for two dialects to express negation differently. This is the situation in standard Yorùbá (SY) and one of her dialects – Ào, where the two speech-forms have different ways of expressing negation. SY expresses negation with the use of distinct and separate lexical items as negative markers; Ào dialect does not have such lexical items. Rather it makes use of other functors such as tense markers, continuous aspect markers and the focus marker to express negation.

Apart from this, Ào dialect also has what we refer to as negative pronouns. These short subject pronouns are exclusively employed in negative sentences. SY does not have such pronouns. We shall do a comparative analysis of negative markers in SY and Ào dialect to bring out the differences outline above and to establish the similarities between the two speech forms.

La négation est un phénomène universel qui se manifeste dans toutes les langues. Toutefois chaque langue a une façon différente de l'exprimer. Il est même possible pour deux dialecte d'une même langue d'exprimer le négatif différemment. Il en est ainsi en yorùbá, où le dialecte ào l'exprime autrement que le dialecte standard (SY). Le SY exprime le négatif par moyen d'éléments lexicaux distincts et séparés; l'ào n'a aucun élément lexical de ce genre. Pour ce faire il utilise d'autres éléments tels que les marques de temps, de l'aspect continu et de focalisation.

De plus l'ào possède aussi ce que nous nommons des pronoms négatifs. Ces pronoms sujet courts s'utilisent exclusivement dans les phrases négatives. Le SY n'a aucun pronom de ce genre. Nous présentons une analyse comparative des marqueurs négatifs en SY et en ào pour faire ressortir les différences en question et pour indiquer les similarités entre ces deux parlars.

0. INTRODUCTION

The Ào dialect of Yorùbá does not have independent negative markers, unlike what obtains in standard Yorùbá (SY). Ào expresses negation with the aid of other functional categories such as tense markers, the continuous and the habitual aspect markers, the focus marker and the imperative marker. These functional categories have at least two forms each in the lexicon of Ào speakers. One form is employed in affirmative constructions while the other is used in negative sentences¹. Standard Yorùbá (SY), however, employs distinct negative markers that are different from other functional categories in the language.

In this paper, we shall do a comparative study of negative markers in standard Yorùbá and one of her dialects – Ào, with a view to seeing how the dialect differs from the standard form. As a dialect of a language, Ào shares some similarities with standard Yorùbá in expressing negation. These similarities are the negative bound morpheme, short subject pronouns and the negative polarity items (NPIS). We shall first discuss these similarities before discussing their differences.

¹ Ajo•ngo•lo• (2005) gives a detailed account of negation in the Ào dialect of Yorùbá. Ajo•ngo•lo• T.O. is a former name of Oyè Táíwò.

1. THREE FORMS OF NEGATION

1.1 THE NEGATIVE MORPHEME

Yorùbá employs àì-², the class-changing bound morpheme, to negate a lexical item in the language. This bound morpheme is common to both the standard form and the Ào dialect as the examples in (1) below reveal.

Standard Yoruba (SY)

- (1) a. àì- + sàṅ → àìsàṅ sickness
 be healed/well
- b. àì- + gboṣín → àìgboṣín lack of wisdom/foolish
 be wise
- c. àì- + sùn → àìsùn sleeplessness
 to sleep
- d. àì- + gboṣín → àìgboṣín disobedience
 to hear something/
 be obedient

The Ào counterparts of the examples in (1) are listed in (2).

- (2) a. àì- + rhàn → àìrhan sickness
 be healed/ well
- b. àì- + gboṣín → àìgboṣín lack of wisdom/foolish
 be wise
- c. àì- + rhùn → àìrhùn sleeplessness
 to sleep
- d. àì- + gboṣín → àìgboṣín disobedience
 to hear something/
 be obedient

As we have in the examples in (1) and (2) above, the prefix àì- is used to negate a word and to change the class of the word from a verb or a verb phrase to a noun.

² There are two schools of thought as to the status of àì- in standard Yorùbá. One school argues that àì- is a morpheme while the other is of the opinion that it comprises two morphemes. Oyè Táíwò (2004) argues that àì- is a morpheme. We take àì as one morpheme in this work following Oyè Táíwò (2004).

1.2 SHORT SUBJECT PRONOUNS

The short subject pronouns have different forms in different syntactic positions in Ào (Ajo•ngo•lo• 2005) and standard Yorùbá (Bámgbósé, 1966, 1967, 1990). These forms are stated below.

(3) a. Short subject pronouns in Standard Yorùbá

Person	Forms					
	I		II		III	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
1 st	mo	a	mò	à	mi	a
2 nd	o	e	o	e	o	e
3 rd	ó	wón	ó	wo	-	wo

- Forms:
- I short subject pronouns before verbs.
 - II short subject pronouns before the continuous aspect marker **ń**.
 - III short subject pronouns in negative sentences.

(3) b. Short subject pronouns in the Ào Dialect of Yorùbá

Person	F o r m s									
	I		II		III		IV		V	
	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL	SG	PL
1 st	mò	à	mo	a	mì	à	mi	a	mí	á
2 nd	wò	ìn	wo	in	wè	ìn	we	in	wé	ín
3 rd	ó	o	ó	o	e/é	o	é	o	é	o

- Forms:
- I short subject pronouns before high tone verbs.
 - II short subject pronouns before mid or low tone verbs.
 - III short subject pronouns before future tense and habitual aspect markers and as continuous aspect markers before high tone verbs.
 - IV short subject pronouns as continuous aspect markers before mid or low tone verbs.
 - V short subject pronouns in negative sentences.

(Ajo•ngo•lo• 2005:118)

A closer examination of the subject pronoun forms in (3a) reveals that only the first person singular pronoun has a different form in negative sentences in SY. This negative form is **mi**. The third person singular subject pronoun has no form in a negative sentence.

However, the pronoun forms in the *Ào* dialect display a different behaviour compared to the SY of (3a). As we have in (3b), the singular short subject pronouns have five distinct forms each except the third person singular short subject pronoun that has four forms. The plural short subject pronouns have three forms each.³

The short subject pronoun forms V in (3b) occur exclusively in negative sentences in the *Ào* dialect. This is quite different from the situation in SY because the short subject pronoun form III in (3a) can occur in both negative and affirmative sentences except the first person singular pronoun. Consider the SY sentences below.

- (4) a. **mo pa e□ran**
I kill animal
I killed an animal
- b. **mi ò pa e□ran**
I NEG kill animal
I did not kill an animal
- (5) a. **a je□ iyán**
we eat pounded-yam
We ate pounded-yam
- b. **a ò je□ iyán**
we NEG eat pounded-yam
We did not eat pounded-yam
- (6) a. **o jà ní ilé**
you(sg) fight in house
You(sg) fought at home
- b. **o ò jà ní ile**
you(sg) NEG fight in house
You (sg) did not fight at home
- (7) a. **e□ wó ilé náà**
you (pl.) demolish house the
You (pl.) demolished the house

³ Since our focus in the paper is on negation, we shall not go into the details of the differences between the short subject pronouns in SY and the *Ào* dialect. Oyè Táíwò (in prep). "The Pronoun in *Ào* and Standard Yorùbá" gives a vivid account of the behaviour of the pronoun in both *Ào* and SY. Ajo•ngo•lo• (2005) discusses subject pronouns in the *Ào* dialect of Yorùbá.

- b. **e** **ò** **wó** **ilé** **náà**⁴
 you(pl.) NEG demolish house the
 You(pl.) did not demolish the house
- (8) a. **ó** **gbo** **o** **ro** **mi**
 he hear word my
 He heard my word
- b. **kò** **gbo** **o** **ro** **mi**
 NEG hear word my
 He did not hear my word
- (9) a. **wo** **n** **rìn** **lo** **sí** **oko**
 they walk go to farm
 They walked/treked to the farm
- b. **wo** **n** **ò** **rìn** **lo** **sí** **oko**
 they NEG walk go to farm
 They did not walk/trek to the farm

The sentences in (4) - (9) above are both affirmative and negative sentences in standard Yorùbá. Those in (4a) – (9a) are affirmative sentences while the ones in (4b) – (9b) are their negative counterparts. We observe that only two out of the six subject pronouns in the above sentences have different forms in affirmative and negative sentences. These are the first person singular pronoun in (4) and the third person plural short pronoun. The third person singular short pronoun is not realized in the negative as we have in (8b).

The Ào dialect is quite different from SY in this regard in that it has separate short subject pronouns in negative sentences. In other words, none of the pronouns in (3b) form V can occur in affirmative sentences. The Ào counterparts of the sentences in (4) – (9) are given in (10) – (15) below.

- (10) a. **mo** **pa** **e** **ran**
 I kill animal
 I killed an animal
- b. **mí** **ì** **pa** **e** **ran**
 I PAST.NEG kill animal
 I did not kill an animal

⁴ The sentence in (7b) can have the variant below.

(i) **e** **è** **wó** **ilé** **náà**
 you(pl.) NEG demolish house the
 You (pl.) did not demolish the house

In (i), the negative marker is realized as **è** as a result of progressive assimilation where the subject pronoun **e** makes **ò**, the negative marker, to become **e**.

- (11) a. **a ze□ uyán**
 we eat pounded-yam
 We ate pounded-yam
- b. **á à ze□ uyán**
 we PAST.NEG eat pounded-yam
 We did not eat pounded-yam
- (12) a. **wo zà lí ulí**
 you(sg) fight at house
 You (sg) fought at home
- b. **wé è zà lí ulí**
 you(sg) PAST.NEG fight at house
 You (sg) did not fight at home
- (13) a. **ìn gʷó ulí tié•**
 you(pl) demolish house the
 You (pl) demolished the house
- b. **ín ìn gʷó ulí tié•**
 you(pl) PAST.NEG demolish house the
 You (pl) did not demolish the house
- (14) a. **ó⁵ gboṣ́ o□fò□ mi**
 he hear word my
 He heard my word
- b. **é é gboṣ́ o□foṣ́ mi**
 he PAST-NEG hear word my
 He did not hear my word
- (15) a. **o•n rìn jù oko**
 they walk go farm
 They walked/treked to the farm
- b. **ó□n oṣ́n rìn jù oko**
 they PAST.NEG walk go farm
 They did not walk/trek to the farm

⁵ Some scholars of Yorùbá linguistics have argued that the language does not have the third person short subject pronoun. See Awobuluyi (2001a & b), Ades•uyan (1991) among others. However, Ajo•ngo•lo• (2005) argues convincingly that the Ào dialect of Yorùbá has the said pronoun. Following the arguments in Ajo•ngo•lo• (2005), we take **ó** in (8a) and (14a) and **é** in (14b) as the third person short subject pronouns in Yorùbá.

The sentences in (10a) – (15a) are affirmative sentences while those in (10b) – (15b) are their negative counterparts. The pronouns in the subject positions in the affirmative sentences are quite different from those in the negative sentences. Note, however, that the negative sentences in (10b) – (15b) have negative markers apart from the negative short subject pronouns. Therefore, these negative pronouns are secondary negative markers in these sentences.

The Ào negative pronouns that occur with the low tone past tense negative marker can also occur with other negative markers such as the present and future tenses negative markers, the continuous and the habitual aspects negative markers. We have these occurrences in the negative sentences below.

- (16) a. **mì a ze• udò•n**
 I FUT eat meat
 I will eat a piece of meat
- b. **mí níí ze• udò•n**
 I FUT.NEG eat meat
 I will not eat a piece of meat
- (17) a. **à gbo□ aiyo wo•n**
 we hear noise their
 We hear/ heard their noise
- b. **á i gbo□ aiyo wo•n**
 we PRES.NEG hear noise their
 We do not hear their noise
- c. **á à gbo□ aiyo wo•n**
 we PAST.NEG hear noise their
 We did not hear their noise
- (18) a. **we⁶ rhùn**
 you(sg) sleep
 You are sleeping
- b. **we rhíû rhùn**
 you (sg) CONT.NEG sleep
 You are no longer sleeping
- (19) a. **in ya**
 you (pl) come
 You (pl) are coming
- b. **ín rhíû yá**

⁶ The subject pronoun doubles as the continuous aspect marker because the continuous aspect marker is not realized here. See Ajo•ngo•lo• (2005) for details.

you (pl) CONT.NEG come
 You (pl) are no longer coming

(20) a. **é ya**
 he come
 He is coming

b. **é rhîî yá**
 he CONT.NEG come
 He is no longer coming

(21) a. **ò•n áí jú oko**
 they HAB go farm
 They usually go to the farm

b. **ò•n ìî jú oko**
 they HAB.NEG go farm
 They do not usually go to the farm

Apart from the low tone past tense negative marker in (10b) – (15b), we identify other negative markers in the sentences in (16b) – (21b). These are the future tense negative marker in (16b), the present tense negative marker in (17b), and the continuous aspect negative marker in (18b), (19b) and (20b) and the habitual aspect negative marker in (21b).

The second person singular short subject pronoun has three forms in the sentences above. It is realized as **wo** in (12a) before a low tone verb, it is **we** in (18a) where it doubles as the continuous aspect marker and **wé** in (12b) and (18b) which are negative sentences. It is also realized as **wè** in the sentences in (22).

(22) a. **wè a zà ìî ulí**
 you (sg) FUT fight in house
 You (sg) will fight at home

b. **wè áí teṛó• pa**
 you (sg) HAB lie much
 You (sg) lie too much

The said pronoun can also be **wò** before high tone verbs as in (23).

(23) a. **wò yá ulî òzó**
 you (sg) come house Ojo
 You (sg) came to Ojo's house

b. **wò gbó• o•fò• wo•n**
 you (sg) hear word their
 You (sg) heard their word

It is clear from the sentences above that the form **wè**, **we** and **wé** of the second person singular short pronoun is not as a result of assimilation from **wò** or **wo**. If it is as a

result of assimilation, then one could ask how the said assimilation took place in (18a & b) as well as in (22a & b).

It could be argued as well that the third person singular short subject pronoun is not realized in Ào negative sentences just as we have in SY example in (8b) above. Scholars such as Awobuluyi (1992, 2001a & b), Stahlke (1974), Ades•uyan (1991) are of the view that the third person singular subject pronoun does not exist in the Yorùbá language. However, Ajo•ngo•lo (2005:91-96) argues for the existence of the said pronoun in Ào sentences (both affirmatives and negatives). Our discussion below follows that of Ajo•ngo•lo (2005) as we examine the following sentences in Ào.

- (24) a. **ò gbó• o•fò• win**
 he hear word your (pl)
 He heard your word/ He listened to you
- b. **e à gbó• o•fo□ win**
 he FUT hear word your (pl)
 He will hear your word/ He will listen to you
- c. **e áí gbó• o•fo□ win**
 he HAB hear word your (pl)
 He usually hears your word/ He usually listens to you
- d. **e gbó• o•fò• win**
 he hear word your (pl)
 He is hearing your word/ He is listening to you
- (25) a. **é è gbó• o•fo□ win**
 he PAST.NEG hear word your (pl)
 He did not hear your word/ He did not listen to you
- b. **é níí gbó• o•fo□ win**
 he FUT.NEG hear word your (pl)
 He will not hear your word/ He will not listen to you
- c. **é ìì gbó• o•fo□ win**
 he HAB.NEG hear word your (pl)
 He does not usually hear your word/ He does not usually listen to you
- d. **é rhíì gbó• o•fò• win**
 he CONT.NEG hear word your (pl)
 He is no longer hearing your word/He is no longer listening to you
- e. **é ì gbó• o•fo□ win**
 he PRES.NEG hear word your (pl)
 He is yet to hear your word/ He is yet to listen to you

The sentences in (24) are affirmative sentences while those in (25) are their negative counterparts. In these sentences, the third person singular short subject pronoun occurs as **ò** in (24a), **e** in (24b- d), and as **é** in (25a-e). We observe that this pronoun occurs before future tense markers (both affirmative in (24b) and negative in (25d), in continuous sentences in (24d) and (25d) and before the low tone past tense marker in (25a). The occurrence of the third person singular short subject pronoun in these sentences is contrary to what we have in Standard Yorùbá. This is because the said pronoun is zero before the future tense marker and in negative sentences in SY. This is the situation in the sentences below.

- (26) a. **á gbó• òrò yín**
 FUT hear word your (pl)
 He will hear your word/ He will listen to you
- b. **kò ní gbó• òrò yín**
 NEG FUT.NEG hear word your (pl)
 He will not hear your word/ He will not listen to you
- c. **kò gbó• òrò yín**
 NEG hear word your (pl)
 He did not hear your word/ He did not listen to you
- d. **kò gbó• òrò yín mó•n**
 NEG hear word your (pl) again
 He is no longer hearing your word/ He is no longer listening to you

The third person singular short subject pronoun is zero in SY examples in (26), but it is not zero in the Ào counterparts in (24) and (25).

Another observation about the sentences in (25) is the fact that both the tense and aspect markers are morphologically realized in Ào negative sentences. The past tense negative marker is the low tone as we have in (25a), the present tense negative marker is **ì** in (25e), **níí** is the future tense negative marker as in (25b), and the habitual aspect negative marker is **rhíû** in (25d).

To sum up, both SY and the Ào dialect have negative short subject pronouns. But while some of these pronouns in SY can also occur in affirmative sentences, those in the Ào dialect occur exclusively in negative sentences, none of them can occur in affirmative sentences.

1.3 NEGATIVE POLARITY ITEMS

Negative polarity items are lexical items that are inherently negative (Ajongolo 2005). The items that are inherently negative in SY are also inherently negative in Ào. Some of them are listed in (27).

(27) Negative Polarity Items

	Standard Yorùbá (SY)	Ào	English gloss
a.	rára	únùn	no
b.	beǎeǎ koǎ	e'è se eǎrín eǎn / únùn	not like that / no
c.	kò sí	é è rhí	not available
d.	ó ti	únùn	it is not so./ no
e.	àgbéti	àgbébàkùn	unable to carry/impossible

We can make the following observations with regard to the negative polarity items in SY and Ào. **Únùn** is frequently used in Ào where three items are employed in SY in (27a), (27b) and (27d). Ào alternatively employs a whole sentence in (27b) where SY employs a verb and a negator (**beǎeǎ koǎ**).

2. THE NEGATIVE MARKERS

There is a major difference between Ào dialect and SY in the use of primary negative markers⁷ in the expression of negation. While SY has distinct and separate lexical items in its lexicon to express negation, the Ào dialect has no such lexical items. Ào expresses negation with functors such as tense markers, continuous and habitual aspect markers, the focus marker and the imperative marker. The lexical items employed in SY to mark negation are listed in (28) while the negative markers in Ào are listed in (29).

(28) Negative markers in SY

- a. **kò/ò**
- b. **kì**
- c. **má**
- d. **koǎ**

(29) Negative markers in Ào

- a. **ìí**: present tense marker
- b. low tone: past tense marker
- c. **níí**: future tense
- d. **rhíí**: continuous aspect marker
- e. **íí**: habitual aspect marker
- f. **kí**: focus marker
- g. **moǎn oǎn**: imperative marker

⁷ Primary negative markers are those employed to negate a sentence or a construction. They are different from secondary negative markers whose occurrence is restricted to negative constructions that must contain a negator. The short subject pronouns discussed in section 1.2 above are secondary negative markers in this sense.

In the discussions that follows, we shall give sentences where the items in (28) occur and give their counterparts in Ào for us to be able to identify which of the negative markers in Ào, listed in (29), correspond to those in SY in (28).

2.1 THE NEGATIVE MARKER **kò/ò**

When the negative marker **kò/ò** is employed to negate a construction in SY, the present tense marker, the past tense marker, the future tense marker or the continuous aspect marker may be employed in the Ào dialect. The use of any of these tense and aspect markers depend on the tense or aspect expressed by the sentence in SY. The sentences below shed more light on our discussion.

- (30) a. o□mo□ náà ò gbo□ wa
 child the NEG hear us
 The child did not hear us
- b. o□mo□ tie□ e□⁸ gbo□ a
 child the PAST.NEG hear us
 The child did not hear us
- (31) a. èmi⁹ ò mo□
 I NEG know
 I did not know
- b. òmi ì mo□
 I PAST.NEG know
 I did not know

The sentences in (30a) and (31a) are SY sentences while those in (30b) and (31b) are their Ào counterparts. Where the negative sentence expresses an action or event in the past in SY, the past tense negative marker (the low tone) is employed in Ào. The past tense marker is not morphologically realized in SY, but it is expressed with a low tone in Ào, this low tone performs the role of the negator as well.

Where an action or event has not taken place but is expected to take place, SY uses **kò** together with the perfective aspect marker **tî**. The combination will give **kò tî** ‘has not taken place/yet to take place’. Only the present tense negative marker in Ào expresses an action or event like this. Witness the examples in (32) and (33) below.

⁸ The past tense is expressed with a low tone in negative sentences in Ào. Since this low tone is a suprasegmental element, the last vowel of the subject NP is lengthened to bear it. See Ajo□ngo□lo□ (2005) and Oyè Táíwò (2003a) for details.

⁹ **èmi/òmi** is a long pronoun in Yorùbá. It does not inflect for negation unlike the short pronoun. It is also known as a pronominal, an independent pronoun or an emphatic pronoun in the literature. See Ajo□ngo□lo□ (2005) for details.

- (32) a. **àwo**□**n** **ìjòyè** **ko** **tî** **yan** **o**□**ba** **tuntun**
 they chief NEG.PERF choose king new
 The chiefs have not selected/are yet to select the new king
- b. **ò**□**no**□**n** **ùzòjè** **ì** **yàn** **o**□**ba** **tito**□**n**
 they chief PRES.NEG choose king new
 The chiefs have not selected/are yet to select the new king
- (33) a. **o**□**mo**□**binrin** **náà** **kò** **ì** **tî**¹⁰ **bí** **o**□**mo**□
 child-girl the NEG.PERF bear child
 The young girl is yet to give birth (to a child)
- b. **o**□**mo**□**binrin** **tié**□ **ì** **bí** **o**□**mo**□
 child-girl the PRES.NEG bear child
 The young girl is yet to give birth (to a child)

(32a) and (33a) are SY sentences where **kò** (the negative marker) and the perfective marker **tî** / **ì tî** are used to express an action/event/ or situation that is expected to take place but has not taken place at the time of utterance. The sentences in (32b) and (33b) are the Ào counterparts of (32a) and (33a) respectively. In these two Ào sentences, **ì**, the present tense negative marker is employed to express an expected action/event, which has not taken place yet.

The sentences below have **kò** together with **ní**, the future tense marker in the negative, to express negation in SY.

- (34) a. **ìlú** **Ìbàdàn** **kò** **ní** **bàje**□
 town Ibadan NEG FUT spoil
 The city of Ibadan will not spoil
- b. **ùlì** **Ìbàdàn** **ní** **bàze**□
 town Ibadan FUT.NEG spoil
 The city of Ibadan will not spoil
- (35) a. **wo**□**n** **ò** **ní** **jà** **mo**□
 they NEG FUT fight again
 They will no longer fight
- b. **ó**□**n** **rhí** **ní** **zà**
 they CONT.NEG FUT.NEG fight
 They will no longer fight

¹⁰ The perfective marker in the negative in standard Yorùbá is **tî**. It can have the variants **ì** and **ì tî**. See Bámgbòsé (1967:31)

- (36) a. **iyá Adé kò wá mo**
 mother Ade NEG come again
 Ade's mother is no longer coming
- b. **ije Adé rhîñ yá**
 mother Ade CONT.NEG come
 Ade's mother is no longer coming
- (37) a. **o pe kò mo ílé mo**
 O pe NEG know house again
 O pe cannot identify the house again
- b. **o pé rhîñ mo ulí**
 O pé CONT.NEG know house
 O pé cannot identify the house again

The sentence in (34a) has **kò** and **ní** the future tense marker in the negative. The sentence in (34b) is the Ào counterpart of (34a). Here only the future tense negative marker, **nîí**, is used to negate the sentence. The sentence in (35a) has both **kò** and **ní** as in (34a), but it also has the adverb **mo** at the sentence-final position. The Ào counterpart of (35a) is (35b). It has two negative functors: the continuous aspect negative marker, **rhîñ** and the future tense negative marker, **nîí**. The sentences in (36a) and (37a) have **kò** the negator, and **mo**, to express negation. The two sentences denote actions/events or situations that have been going on before the time of speaking but at the time of speaking they have ceased to be. The Ào counterparts in (36b) and (37b) are expressed with the use of the continuous aspect in the negative.

2.2 THE NEGATIVE MARKER **kî**

The negative marker **kî** selects the future tense marker **yòò** or the continuous aspect marker **ñ** in a negative sentence in SY. The continuous aspect **ñ** can be realized **í** when it occurs after **kî** where it takes the features of the vowel of the negative marker in a regressive assimilation. Consider the sentences below where **kî** occur in the (a) sentences.

- (38) a. **èmi kî yòò lo**
 I NEG FUT go
 I will no longer go
- b. **òmi rhîñ nîñ jú**
 I CONT.NEG FUT.NEG go
 I will no longer go

- (39) a. **o mo dé kì ñ so be e**
 child NEG CONT say-so
 The child does not say so
- b. **o mo dé i¹¹ fe rìn**
 child PRES.NEG say-so
 The child does not say so
- (40) a. **o mo dé kì í bú àgbàlagbà**
 child NEG CONT abuse elder
 The child does not abuse the elderly
- b. **o mo dé i bú o wàre**
 child PRES.NEG abuse elder
 The child does not abuse the elderly
- (41) a. **òjo kì í ro ní os ù ke wàá**
 rain NEG CONT fall PREP month ten
 It does not usually rain in October
- b. **ezin íí ro lí osù ke g wàá**
 rain HAB.NEG fall PREP month ten
 It does not usually rain in October
- (42) a. **ebi kì ñ pa o mo o ba**
 hunger NEG CONT kill child king
 The prince is not usually hungry
- b. **ebi íí pa o mo o ba**
 hunger HAB.NEG kill child king
 The prince is not usually hungry

The sentences in (38a) – (42a) are negative sentences in SY while those in (38b) – (42b) are their Ào counterparts. Where the negator **kì** is employed together with **yóò**, the future tense marker, in SY as in (38a), Ào dialect employs the continuous aspect negative marker, **rhíû**, and the future tense negative marker, **nií**, in a combination that gives **rhíû nií** in (38b). The sentences in (39) and (40) denote a forbidden action. They are marked by **kì ñ /kìí** in SY in (39a) and (40a) and by the present tense negative marker, **i** in Ào in (39b) and (40b).

The sentences in (41) and (42) express situations or events that are not usually the norm, that is, they are not the normal situations. Situations or events that are habitual in the

¹¹ The present tense negative marker has two forms: **ì / i** in Ào as (29a) informs us. We came across **ì** in (31b) – (33b) above while **i** is in (39b) – (40b). We have discussed the semantics and distributions of the two present tense negative markers elsewhere. See Ajo-ngo-lo (2005) for this discussion and analysis. We shall not go into its full discussion here to avoid unnecessary digression.

negative. Situations like the ones described in (41) and (42) are expressed by **kì ñ / kì í** in SY while Ào dialect has a habitual aspect negative marker **íí** that it employs as in (41b) and (42b) above.

2.3 THE NEGATIVE MARKER **má**

The negative marker **má** is employed in imperative negative sentences in SY. Its Ào counterpart is **mó·n o`n**. The use of **má** and **mo`n o`n**, in SY and Ào respectively, is the same as the sentences below confirm.

- (43) a. **e□ má lo·**
 you(pl) NEG go
 (You(pl)) Do not go
- b. **ìn mo`n o`n jú**
 you(pl) IMP NEG go
 (You (pl)) Do not go

- (44) a. **má dáhùn**
 NEG answer
 Do not answer (him)
- b. **mo`n o`n dáhùn**
 IMP NEG answer
 Do not answer (him)

2.4 THE NEGATIVE MARKER **ko`**

The negative marker **ko`** is employed in a focus negative sentence in SY. It is selected immediately after the focused constituent and followed by the focus marker **ni**. The sentences below are examples of focus negative sentences.

- (45) a. **o□ba ko` ni ó gbo`.**
 king NEG FOC he hear
 It is not the king that heard
- b. **é è se o□ba kí ó gbo`.**
 it PAST.NEG be king FOC.NEG he hear
 It is not the king that heard
- (46) a. **iyá adé ko` ni ó je□ is□u**
 mother Ade NEG FOC she eat yam
 It is not Ade's mother that ate yam
- b. **é è se ije adé kí ó ze□ èrún**
 it PAST.NEG be mother Ade FOC.NEG she eat yam
 It is not Ade's mother that ate yam

The sentences in (45a) and (46a) are focus sentences in SY while those in (45b) and (46b) are their Ào counterparts. In the SY examples, **ko**, the negative marker and **ni**, the focus marker occur after the focus constituent. However, in the Ào examples, only the negative focus marker, **kí**, occur after the focused constituent, but there is a negative expression that occurs before the focused constituent in the Ào examples. This expression is **é è se** ‘It is not’. This negative expression is not part of the focus marker because it also occurs in other sentences in Ào as we have in (47b) below:

- (47) **é è se fí ije adé à yá**
 it NEG be COMP mother Ade FUT come
 It is not the case that Ade’s mother will come

In the sentence in (47), the negative expression **é è se** ‘It is not’, occurs in the same structural position as in (45b) and (46b) above. This confirms our submission that **é è se** ‘it is not’ is not a focus marker since the sentence in (47) is not a focus sentence.¹² The SY sentences in (45a) and (46a) above can have the variants in (48) below.

- (48) a. **kì í s[e o]ba ni ó gbo**
 NEG CONT be king FOC he hear
 It is not the king that heard
- b. **kì í s[e iyá] adé ni ó je is[u]**
 NEG CONT be mother Ade FOC he eat yam
 It is not Ade’s mother that ate the yam

The sentences in (48) have the same meaning with those in (45a) and (46a), but unlike them, they do not have **ko**, the negative marker. They have **kì í se** ‘it is not’ occurring before the focused constituents. This expression is the SY equivalent of the **é è se**, the negative expression in Ào dialect. This is because the Ào equivalents of the sentences in (48) are still those in (45b) and (46b) above.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined negative markers in standard Yorùbá (SY) and one of her dialects – Ào. It established that both SY and Ào dialects employ the negative morpheme **àì-**, a class-changing bound morpheme, to negate a word or a phrase. Another similarity between SY and Ào dialect is in the use negative polarity items (NPIS). Both SY and Ào dialect have NPIS that are employed in their utterances.

The differences between SY and Ào dialect begin to be clearly demonstrated in the use of short subject pronouns in negative sentences. Ào dialect has a set of pronouns that are exclusively employed in negative sentences; these are referred to as negative pronouns. On the other hand, SY employs its short subject pronouns in both affirmative and negative sentences with the exception of the first person singular and the third person plural pronouns that have different forms in affirmative and negative sentences. Another

¹² See Ajoṅgoṅlo (2005) for a full discussion on the role of **é è se** ‘it is not’ in Ào negative sentences.

difference is that SY does not have the third person singular short pronoun in negative sentences while Ào dialect has.

Another major difference between Ào dialect and SY in the expression of negation is in the use of negative markers. This work established that while SY has distinct and separate lexical items in its lexicon to express negation, Ào dialect expresses negation through the use of functors such as tense markers, continuous and habitual aspect markers, the imperative marker and the focus marker.

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