On the right peripheral typing morphemes: The case of negation in Gbe (Kwa)

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Under Aboh (1999), the Gbe (Kwa) languages of West Africa provide empirical evidence for Rizzi's (1997) hypothesis that the complementizer system consists of a series of distinct slots that host fronted elements, such as, focus and topic. In this regard, the Gbe languages display discrete free morphemes that mark topicalized and focused constituents and could be thought as the manifestations of such slots (1). In other words, the topic and focus markers encode different functional heads that project to the left edge as components of the complementizer system.

(1)   Kòfí_k   **yà**   [Lésì   Gúkɔ́mè   tɔ̀n]_i   **wɛ̀**   [_{IP} é_k   yì   xɔ̀   t_i

      Kofi   Top   rice   Gukome   Poss   Foc   3sg   go   buy

      'We went to buy the RICE FROM GUKOME'

However, these markers may occur to the right edge, when they take scope over the proposition. In (2), for instance, the focus and insistence markers cluster to the right because they take scope over the proposition. Accordingly, the Gbe markers may occur to the left or right periphery depending on their scope properties. Left peripheral elements take scope over a constituent that is attracted to the relevant specifier position within the complementizer system. Right edge elements, however, take scope over the proposition, which is attracted to a specifier position within the complementizer system, in a sort of predicate fronting (Aboh 2002).

(2)   [_{IP} Kòfí   yì   xɔ̀   lésì   Gúkɔ́mè   tɔ̀n]_i   **wɛ̀**   **lá**   t_i

      Kofi   go   buy   rice   Gukome   Poss   Foc   Ins

      'KOFI WENT TO BUY THE RICE FROM GUKOME!'

Granting this analysis, the question arises how the Gbe right peripheral negation marker fits in the system. The Gbe languages express sentential negation in three ways.

1. The Gungbe-type languages display a preverbal marker *má*−similar to French *ne*, or Italian *non*.

(3)   Kɔ̀jó   **má**   xɔ̀   kátìkátì   lɔ́   [Gungbe]

      Kojo   Neg   buy   kite   Det

      'Kojo did not buy the kite'

2. The Fongbe-type languages resort to the Gungbe-type preverbal marker *má* (4a), or a sentence-final marker *ǎ*−the equivalent of French *pas* (4b).

(4)   a.   Kɔ̀kú   **má**   ná   xɔ̀   àsɔ́n   ɔ́   [Fongbe]

           Koku   Neg   Fut   buy   crab   Det

           'Koku will not buy the specific crab'

      b.   Kɔ̀kú   ná   xɔ̀   àsɔ́n   ɔ́   **ǎ**

           Koku   Fut   buy   crab   Det   Neg

           'Koku will not buy the specific crab'

3. The Ewegbe-type languages require the simultaneous occurrence of the preverbal and sentence-final negative markers (5).

(5) a. Kòfí   *(mú) ɖù   nú   *(ò)   [Gengbe]
         Kofi   Neg   eat   thing Neg
         'Kofi did not eat'

These facts lead me to conclude that Gbe languages involve both a preverbal and sentential-final position for encoding sentential negation. Following Pollock 1989, Ouhalla 1990, Haegeman 1995, Zanuttini 1997, I propose that the negation markers *má/mú* encode the negative functional Neg°, within the inflectional system. On the other hand, the sentence-final negative elements manifest the complementizer system. Unlike the French adverbial negative element *pas*, the Gbe elements *ǎ/ò* express a negative head Neg°$_{[C]}$ that is located within the complementizer system. Like other left peripheral markers, the negative marker surfaces to the right edge because it takes wide scope over the proposition. Granting the proposed analysis for the right edge markers of the complementizer system, I assume that Neg°$_{[C]}$ attracts in its specifier, the proposition containing the narrow scope taking preverbal negative *má/mú*, as shown in (7).

(7)   [$_{CP}$... [$_{NegP[C]}$ [$_{Neg[ǎ/ò]}$]...[$_{IP}$... [$_{NegP}$ [$_{Neg[má/mú]}$...]]]]]]

This analysis of negative sentences as peripheral leads to a fine characterization of the architecture of complementizer system and sheds a new light on the interactions between negative constructions and certain A'-movements (i.e., fronting rules) that involve focus-, wh-, or topic-phrases.

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