

The Development of a Finiteness Contrast in Negation Morphology

Contact language varieties can develop an obligatory morphological finite/non-finite contrast, where no such contrast was previously present. This is exemplified by the ubiquity of infinitives, participles, and contrastive (finite/non-finite) negation morphology in Sri Lankan Malay (SLM). How and why would a contact language incorporate a clausal asymmetry that appears at face value as morphosyntactic noise, offering little communicative advantage? We will see that straightforward calquing did not play a role in this process.

In the Sri Lankan Muslim Tamil variety Sonam (the early model language for SLM) and in SLM itself, overt contrastive tense morphology is suppressed under negation, and non-finite complement clauses and adjunct clauses must display distinctive non-finite negation morphology. In Sonam, verbs in adjunct clauses are negated using the affix *-aamee*, which also appears on nouns with the abessive sense 'without', preceded by the auxiliary *illē*. The SLM construction closely approximates the Sonam construction in nominal contexts, however exact or even close morphosyntactic replication is unnecessary in the language change process that this example demonstrates. We would like to understand whether such a modelling process is simply an artefact of intensive contact, or whether it is functionally motivated by some pragmatic advantage.

NOMINAL CONTEXT

Riyasa Kirinde-kku p̄oo-naa, [sor-ill-aamee.] SONAM
 Riyasa Kirinda-DAT go-PAST rice-EXIST-ABE
 "Riyasa went to Kirinda, without rice."

CLAUSAL CONTEXT

Riyasa Kirinde-kku [sor tind-aamee] p̄oo-naa. SONAM
 Riyasa Kirinda-DAT rice eat-ABE go-PAST
 "Riyasa went to Kirinda, not having eaten rice."

In SLM, non-finite negation morphology is also affixed to a lexical verb, albeit pre-verbally, rather than post-verbally. SLM has creatively extended the functional scope of a single existing negative imperative marker in Malay to include all non-finite negation contexts, including participles in adjunct clauses and infinitival complement clauses. In the negation of verbs, SLM has *not* employed its own equivalent of 'without', the complex postposition *tra-na(ng)* that is reserved for non-clausal nominal constituents, as seen in the following contrasting examples.

NOMINAL CONTEXT

Miflal Kirinde na si-pi, [nasi tra-na.] SLM
 Miflal Kirinda P TNS-go rice NEG.EXIST-DAT
 "Miflal went to Kirinda without rice."

CLAUSAL CONTEXT

Miflal Kirinde na si-pi, [nasi jang-makan na.] SLM
 Miflal Kirinda P TNS-go rice NEG.NONFIN-eat to
 "Miflal went to Kirinda, not having eaten rice."

The choice of functional elements underlined in the preceding SLM examples reflect the strict contrast between the categorial status of non-finite verbs, which retain the argument structure of ordinary verbs, and the categorial status of ordinary nouns. A morphosyntactic process, the finiteness contrast in verbal negation, was replicated by SLM without either borrowing or calquing the analogous Tamil (Sonam) non-finite negation morpheme. Instead, the functional scope of the nearest analogue in Malay, a negative imperative marker, was expanded.

In response to the question of pragmatic advantage, I claim that the discourse culture associated with the Sri Lankan *sprachbund*, as interpreted by speakers of SLM, requires focusing in the right periphery of a sentence, not just of nominal constituents, but of clauses. The clause containing the most recent event normally appears in this position as the (tensed) matrix clause. Non-matrix clauses need to be marked as explicitly non-finite. This is partly motivated by the need to contrastively focus such clauses, by extraposition to the right periphery of a sentence, while continuing to mark the tense of the most recent event, expressed by the clause containing a tensed finite verb. The development of morphology that renders these clausal asymmetries explicit obviates the need for prosody to mediate the interaction between temporal sequence and focus.