

# AN EXPLORATION INTO THE SYNTAX OF NEGATION IN KÚRÀMÀ (ÁKÚRMÌ) LANGUAGE

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## Abstract

The work explored negation within the Kúràmà language, its patterns and behaviours as well as its interactions with selected syntactic domains. It also highlighted the negative markers used in the language and the environments they are used in. The discussion revolved around the relationship and interaction between negation and selected syntactic domains within the Kúràmà language. Findings from the study revealed negation to a large extent as mutually inclusive with most domains discussed except for the progressive tense where negation completely blocks progression and the perfect progressive tense where negation partially deletes the perfect progressive marker. The study postulates thus: Declarative and imperative sentences demonstrate a complex interaction between syntax and negation even without obvious morphological markers. Focusing, while lacking identifiable morphological markers too, influences the choice of negative markers, signifying the existence of structural adaptations. Negation and aspect interaction is complex, while simple and perfect aspects have a mutually inclusive relationship with negation. The progressive aspect is completely mutually exclusive with negation. Certain syntactic categories such as nouns, singular and plural verb forms, imperative and auxiliary verbs tend to co-occur with specific negative markers. Suggesting subtle grammatical variances in conveying negation.

**Keywords:** Negation, Kúràmà, Linguistics, Syntax, Language, Aspect

## Introduction

Communication through the use of language has been an integral part of human societies for centuries. It is viewed as a social

event. The spread of information through a group of people is one of the most important social events that can occur (Miller 1963). Thus, the growth and development of communities also led to the evolution of the language(s) spoken in those communities too. The crucial role of language played in the development of humans and human societies can still be seen today by the number of ways humans have come to use language on a global scale. Language beyond a means of communication has become a means of identification, fellowship and acceptance, imaginative release and emotional expression among a lot of other functions within the human societies.

Human language is an intricate structure of linked systems that allows a speaker to choose and use the best combination of lexemes or structures to produce the optimal description of the idea or intention in their mind. Words in human language interact in sentences in non-random ways and allow humans to construct an astronomic variety of sentences from a limited number of discrete units. This construction process is extremely fast and robust (Cancho & Solé 2001). Though language structures may differ depending on the language, certain language structures will be present in all natural languages, these structures are called “language universals”. Language universals are patterns or attributes of natural languages that will be present in all verbal human languages. These will include grammatical classes as nouns and verbs, or phonetic classifications as vowels and consonants.

According to Horn and Wansing (2015), negation is in the first place a phenomenon of semantic opposition. As such, negation relates an expression *e* to another expression with a meaning that is in some way opposed to the meaning of *e*. This relation may be realized syntactically and pragmatically in various ways. Negation can be broadly divided into two basic types, these are constituent and sentential negation.

Constituent negation is the kind of negation that negates a particular component of a construction. This can be a specific morpheme or phrase within the construction. Constituent negation is

usually achieved by the addition of a negative marker before or after the constituent to be negated or the morphological modification of the particular component to be negated. It is however necessary to state that the pattern or style of negation is very dependent on the language in consideration. For example, in the following examples, the constituents ‘Tare’ and ‘Boy’ are negated.

1. *Positive*Tare travelled to Kaduna
  - i. *Negative* It was not Tare that travelled to Kaduna
2. *Positive*Eniola is a boy
  - i. *Negative* Eniola is a girl

In the first example, the subject of the sentence ‘Tare’ is negated by the addition of the negative phrase before it in the sentence. In the second example however, a negative marker or phrase was not used, the constituent ‘Boy’ was changed to ‘girl’, semantically a polar opposite of the initial constituent. This demonstrates negation by the morphological modification of the target constituent.

It is difficult to negate an object argument using a negative marker because of the proximity of the object to the verb. When a negative marker is inserted between the verb and object, the verb seems to take the negation and thus negates the entire construction. Consider the sentences below, even though the negative marker ‘not’ is inserted before the object NP, the verb is the constituent to be negated.

1. Eniola is a boy  
Eniola is not a boy

On the other hand, sentential negation is a kind of negation that changes the meaning of the entire construction so that it contradicts the initial assertion of the construction. Sentential negation is widely achieved by the addition of the negative marker before or after the verb or verb phrase of the sentence. As mentioned earlier, the methods to achieving negation can be very specific to the language in focus. In the following examples, the semantic denotation of the sentences are negated by the use of a negative marker after the verb of the sentence.

The following sentences are entirely negated with the placement of the negative marker after the verb.

1. Tolu is a popular name
  - i. Tolu is not a popular name
2. Bolu's argument was sound
  - i. Bolu's argument was not sound

Aspect in grammar is a category that expresses how an action, event or state of a verb extends over a period. It expresses the temporal interpretation of the action, state or event of the verb within the construction. The combination of tense and aspect are what define time in natural languages. There are four kinds of aspect, these are: simple, perfect, progressive and perfect progressive aspect.

Negation, a language universal, is a semantic characteristic of languages that allows a formerly made statement to be refuted, denied or contradicted. It is a tool in languages that allows listeners or readers distinguish between a true assertion and a negative statement or sentence.

The study therefore delves into the exploration of negation in Kùràrà language, using minimalist framework as a theoretical basis. It aims at identifying and explaining negation in Kùràrà language as well as discussing the interaction between such it (negation) and some syntactic domains in the same Kùràrà language.

### **Statement of Problem**

The Kùràrà language, commonly referred to by locals as “ákùrmì”, is a minority language spoken in Nigeria with an argued 100,000 speakers (Nengel, 2014). The speakers are most commonly found in the middle belt geo-political zones including states as Kaduna, Bauchi, Abuja, Jos, Minna, Sokoto, Zaria, and Kano. It is a Benue Congo (Eastern Kainji) language. The language has received attention locally and internationally as well but has not been extensively documented. While there have been efforts to document the language,

the quality of the data collected has affected the excellence of the works developed from such data subsequently.

This study therefore seeks to explore the relationship between negation and selected syntactic aspects of the language and so far, no previous writings or publications on Negation concerning the Kúrámà language have been found.

### **Review of Related Works**

Negation, a fundamental linguistic device, has enjoyed a broad spectrum of scholarly interest across language families and theoretical frameworks. Delving into the deeper realms of historical linguistics, the evolution and transformation of negation constructs across time and space present compelling narratives of language change and development. Martine Robbeets (2014) offers a fascinating glimpse into the evolution of negative markers in Transeurasian languages. Her work charts the grammaticalization pathway from an independent negative verb to varying markers, depicting a rich tapestry of language progression. More contemporarily, Ambjörn Sjörs (2018) sheds light on the intricate historical changes observed within the negative expressions of Semitic languages. Sjörs's insights illuminate the pathways through which negation finds its various idiomatic expressions, and forms within this pivotal language group.

At the core of the semantics of negation, G. S. Keldiyorova (2021) noted the universal function of negation in the conversion of propositions to their semantic opposites. Furthermore, Keldiyorova (2021) expounds upon antonymy, artfully discussing how languages harness mutually contradictory statements to express complex relations and multifaceted aspects of reality. These contributions underscore the centrality of negation in the web of language semantics, enabling nuanced and sometimes contradictory facets of human discourse to coexist and be understood.

The syntactic fabric of negation is equally variegated and dynamic. Studies such as those pursued by Matti Miestamo and Eino

Koponen (2015) explore the intricacies of negation constructs within the realm of Skolt Saami's negative imperatives. They adeptly demonstrate the language's specialized forms and rules that govern the negation process. Meanwhile, Krasimira Chakarova and R. Koleva (2021) turn our gaze to a contrastive analysis of negation in Bulgarian and German, highlighting stark differences in expression and grammaticalization, which paint a broader picture of cross-linguistic diversity. Further expanding the canvas of negation's syntactic diversity, Immanuel N. Shatepa (2020) delineates the semantic and syntactic negation structures of Oshiwambo and English, inviting deeper contemplation on the distinctiveness of linguistic systems.

Children's acquisition of negation, as observed among Mayan languages by C. Pye, B. Pfeiler, and P. M. Pedro (2016), presents a microcosmic view of the subtle cognitive and developmental processes that underpin language learning. The perspective into how young learners navigate the complexities of negation in their native tongue broadens our understanding of the foundational pillars of language acquisition. Simultaneously, Paula Prescod (2018) engages in a detailed examination of Negative Concord in Vincentian Creole, bringing to light the structural dependencies and implications of such negation patterns within this unique linguistic context.

The intersection of sign languages with the principles of negation, explored by J. Quer (2020), brings forth a poignant realization of the universality of these linguistic constructs. Sign languages exemplify core grammatical properties aligned with spoken languages. The negation systems, while realized through manual signs, offer a compelling testament to the shared grammatical bedrock between visual-gestural and auditory-vocal language modalities. O. Malinka (2020) extends the scope to underscore negation as a salient discourse category, asserting its broad application and high frequency across languages, despite sociolinguistic and contextual variances.

The representation of expletive negation commands attention within the contemporary discourse. Yanwei Jin and Jean-Pierre Koenig

(2021) delve into this phenomenon, proposing a model to elucidate the patterns of its occurrence in various languages. Their inquiry shines a spotlight on the need for theoretical models that mirror language production processes, intricately interwoven with the fabric of expletive negation.

Stepping into the realm of decision-making, linguistic negation's role is pivotal, especially when confronting vague, uncertain, and ambiguous data. I. Truck, Nesrin Halouani, and Souhail Jebali (2016) delve into the significance of negation within linguistic representation models, underscoring the importance of effectively grappling with human-provided information fraught with ambivalence.

In the digital horizon of computational linguistics, negation plays a strategic role in the analytical process, particularly sentiment analysis. Rizkiana Amalia, M. Bijaksana, and Dhinta Darmantoro (2018) embark on deploying rule-based methods for handling negation within Indonesian text on Twitter. Their innovative approaches present improved metrics, offering advancement in the computational processing of linguistic data.

The dialogue between natural language and Boolean logic, as navigated by R. A. Shaikh, Li-Hao Yeh, Benjamin Rodatz, and B. Coecke (2021), casts light on the complexity of codifying the subtleties of linguistic negation within conversational contexts. Their pursuit for an encompassing framework addresses the multifaceted interplay between language, context, and logic.

Thus, the literature on negation across these diverse fields forms a comprehensive and intricate mosaic, emphasizing the profound significance of negation in the linguistic domain. Each contribution enriches our collective insight into this cornerstone of human communication, showcasing its omnipresent influence in shaping the very essence of language.

## Empirical Review of Related Literature

One of the primary gaps that this study on Kùràrà seeks to fill is the limited understanding of how negation operates within the syntax-semantics interface across different languages. Swart's work emphasizes the need for a comprehensive examination of negation's expression and interpretation, noting that cross-linguistic variation is crucial for understanding syntactic structures (Swart, 2010). The Kùràrà language, with its unique syntactic properties, can provide insights into how negation is structurally represented and how it interacts with other syntactic elements, thereby contributing to the typological studies of negation.

Moreover, the exploration of negative concord in Kùràrà can shed light on phenomena observed in other languages, such as those discussed by Jeretič and Iordăchioaia and Richter, who analyse the optionality and structural ambiguity of negative concord in Turkish and Romanian, respectively (Jeretič, 2022; Iordăchioaia & Richter, 2014). The Kùràrà language may exhibit similar or contrasting features, thus enriching the discourse on negative concord and its syntactic implications. This comparative approach can help linguists understand whether the patterns observed in Kùràrà align with or diverge from those in more extensively studied languages.

Additionally, the study of Kùràrà negation can contribute to the understanding of metalinguistic negation, as discussed by Martins, who argues for a syntactic perspective on what has traditionally been viewed as a pragmatic construct (Martins, 2014). By analysing how Kùràrà employs negation in metalinguistic contexts, researchers can explore whether similar syntactic strategies are employed in other languages, thereby expanding the theoretical framework surrounding metalinguistic negation.

The exploration of negation in the Kùràrà language has the potential to fill significant gaps in the existing literature by providing empirical data that can inform theoretical frameworks regarding the syntax-semantics interface, negative concord, and metalinguistic



negation. This study not only contributes to the understanding of Kùràrà but also enhances the broader field of linguistics by offering new perspectives on the universal and language-specific aspects of negation.

### **Methodology**

The data used was collected via the observation method of data collection from native speakers. The data collected will be the primary data source while sources as other publications, articles, journals and books whether in hard or soft copies will serve as supporting secondary sources of data.

Descriptive linguistics is the scientific endeavor to systematically describe the languages of the world in their diversity, based on the empirical observation of regular patterns in natural speech. (Alexandre et al. 2013). Descriptive analysis is often used in data analysis and demonstrations that do not necessarily need a linguistic framework to help with structural presentation and interpretation. This theory will be used primarily throughout the work to describe the relationship between negation and the syntactic domains that will be analyzed. This is primarily because the data presented in the study mostly does not require any further description.

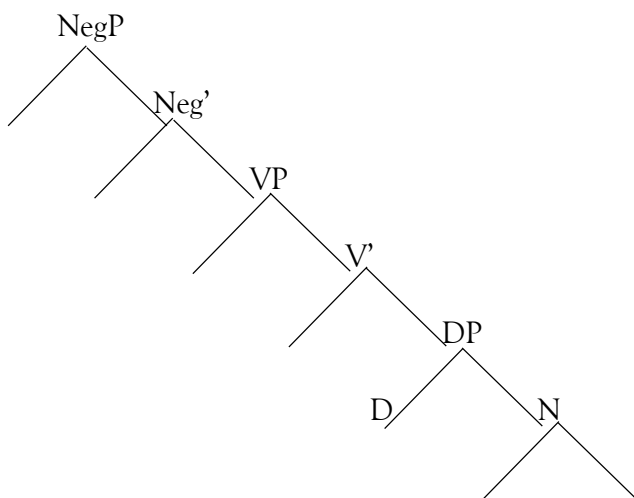
Similarly, the Minimalist program developed by Noam Chomsky in Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) based on the simple notion that theoretical analysis of syntactic structures should be minimal, that is, the analysis of syntactic structures should be kept as simple and straight to the point as possible is adopted in this study. Adopting the Minimalist framework, enables the researchers to provide a comprehensible and theoretically grounded analysis of negation, offering insights into the universal principles governing syntactic structures while acknowledging the linguistic diversity inherent in the Kùràrà language.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

## Negation and Kùràrà Language

Negation in Kùràrà language is a process profoundly influenced by the grammatical function of the constituent to be negated within the construction. Negative markers are usually placed before the constituent to be negated in the construction. The negative marker that is used is dependent not on the grammatical category of the constituent in isolation, but by the grammatical category that the constituent functions as in the sentence. This will mean that a nominalized constituent will use the negative marker of nouns and so will a denominalised constituent use the negative marker for verbs. Other factors that can influence the choice of the negative marker used in a construction are the gender of the constituent and the plurality of the constituent. However, there are negative markers that are neutral to the conditions of gender and number. These markers tend to be used more often.

Using the minimalist program, the structure of the sentences that make up the data used for the study display a largely similar structure as the tree shown below. While the Negative Phrase (NegP) and the following Negative Bar (Neg') serve as the primary nodes, the negative marker is allowed to move to the appropriate node depending on the sentence structure.



## Negation and Sentences in Kùràrà Language

This section will discuss the interaction between certain sentence types and negation in Kùràrà language.

### Declarative Sentences and Negation

Declarative sentences are sentences used to state an assertion, avow a fact, proffer explanation or just plainly pass information. They tend to be the most used types of sentences used and typically will not require a reply. In Kùràrà language, declarative sentences are negated by the addition of the negative marker before the particular constituent to be negated in the sentences. The negative markers used to negate the sentences is dependent on the function of the constituent in the sentence. Consider the following sentences:

- |    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Pìtím ùchùwé ìkùrféi<br>Pìtím steal money <i>the</i><br>Pìtím stole the money<br>money | Hára pìtím ùchùwé ìkùrféi<br>NEG pìtím steal money <i>the</i><br>Pìtím did not steal the<br>money |
| 2. | Ùrén ùzìbí<br>Ùrén beautiful<br>Ùrén is beautiful                                      | Ùrén ùnù zìbù<br>Ùrén NEG beautiful<br>Ùrén is not beautiful                                      |
| 3. | Ù yùwétí<br>He tall<br>He is tall  | Ùnù yùwétí<br>NEG tall<br>He is not tall  |

The negative marker used in the example is placed right before the subject argument in the first sentence and thus negates the subject without necessarily negating the verb in the sentence, a case of constituent negation. The second example's verb is negated and thus, the subject argument is still the argument in focus although the quality formerly ascribed to the subject has been refuted via negation, an example of sentential negation. The third example goes along the same vein with the second example, its subject remaining the topic but the feature formerly credited is contradicted through negation.

## Imperative Sentences and Negation

Imperative sentences are sentences that are used to issue direct commands, warning, instructions, requests or invitations. Imperative sentences usually do not have a subject and usually do not require a reply from the listener. Imperative sentences in Kurama language are negated by the addition of a specific negative marker before the imperative constituent to be negated. The ‘kati’ negative marker is used exclusively for imperatives within the language. Consider the following instances:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 4. Durá<br>Go<br>Go             | Kati b'dóre<br>NEG go<br>Don't go             |
| 5. Yane ihu<br>Do shout<br>Shout | Kati byane ihu<br>NEG do shout<br>Don't shout |
| 6. Nna<br>Sleep<br>Sleep         | Kati byane nna<br>NEG do sleep<br>don't sleep |

The negation pattern of imperatives within the language is easy to predict and identify. The negative marker ‘kati’ is simply added just before the imperative to negate it as seen in all the examples above.

## Focusing and Negation

Focus is the category in grammar that deals with the introduction or identification of contrastive information, new or non-derivable information in a discourse. Within a discourse, focus deals with how one information relates with another that precedes it. Focus is often marked prosodically by a high pitch on the focused constituent or syntactically by moving the constituent to be focused to a focus position in the sentence or sometimes by morphologically affixing focus elements to the constituent or phrase to be focused. The approaches used will depend on the language.

In Kùramà language, focusing often provokes an obvious variation in the negative markers used in the original sentences against the focused sentences. This is because the initial constituent that was being negated will be changed in the focused sentence. Because the language places negative markers just before the constituent to be negated, a change of negative markers may be necessary since the negative marker to be used mostly depends on the function of the constituent in the sentence.

Unfocused	Focused
7. Pìtím ùjáná ákpàkta Pìtím bought shoes Pìtím bought a pair of shoes	Ákpàktaa Pìtím ùjáná Shoes <i>the</i> Pìtím bought The shoes were bought by Pìtím
Neg: Pìtím ùdàkù ùjáná ákpàkta Pìtím NEG bought shoe Shoe Pìtím did not buy a pair of shoes	Ákpàkta hárá Pìtím ùjáná NEG Pìtím bought The shoes were not bought by Pìtím
8. Ùrén ùwunà ùrìgá ùvónòò Ùrén wear dress black Ùrén wore a black dress	Ùrìgá vónóó Ùrén ùwunà Dress black Ùrén wear the black dress was worn by Ùrén
Neg: Ùrén ùdùkù wunà ùrìgá ùvón óó Ùrén NEG wear dress black Ùrén did not wear a black dress	Ùrìgàù ùvónóó hárá ùrén ùwunà Dress <i>the</i> black NEG ùrén wear the black dress was not worn by Ùrén
9. Áyianè ániyá apùnìyà nù nìyì Children eat food in night The children ate in the night	Ánù nìyì áyianè ániyá apùnìyá In night children eat food It was in the night the children ate
Neg: Áyianè adáká niyá apùnìyà nìyì Children NEG eat food in night The children did not eat in the night.	Hará nìyì áyianè ániyá apùnìyá NEG night children eat food It was not in the night the children ate

The initial unfocussed sentences on the left row used negative markers to negate the verbs. This occurs because the verbs in those sentences were the constituents that needed to be negated to negate the sentences. However, when these sentences had their objects focused, the subjects

of the sentences where the constituents that needed to be negated and so the negative markers changed to those used to negate nouns to appropriately correspond.

### **Negation and Simple Aspect**

Simple aspect is the aspect that is used to state facts. It does not differentiate between continuous or habitual actions and complete ones. The simple aspect usually does not have an overt morphological or syntactic marker. In Kùràrà language, the simple aspect does not have any overt marker and is mutually inclusive with negation within a syntactic construction. Consider the following examples.

10. Pìtìm ùwózé ùtágyè	Pìtìm ùnù wázàù ùtágyé
Pìtìm wear cap	Pìtìm NEG wear cap
Pìtìm wears caps	Pìtìm does not wear caps

11. Ùrén ùtáré ákpáktá	Ùrén ùnù táraù ákpáktá
Ùrén love shoe	Ùrén NEG love shoe
Ùrén loves shoes	Ùrén does not like shoes

12. Áyíáná átáré ìvázó	Áyíáná áná tàrà ìvázó
Children like beans	Children NEG like beans
The children like beans	The children do not like beans

As the language does not have a marker for the simple aspect, there is only the negative marker to highlight in the sentences.

### **Negation and Perfect Aspect**

Perfect aspect is a grammatical category that is used to express an action, state or event that is complete as at the time of the statement. The perfect aspect usually focusses more on the result of the action than the action itself and thus may not describe the action most times but the result of the completed action instead. Thus, the perfect aspect allows a speaker to speak about a past complete event from the perspective of the present. The perfect aspect does not have an overt marker in Kùràrà language and is usually only seen by the tense of the verb in the construction. Consider these:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>13. Pìtìm ùwùnà ùtágìyé wòh<br/>Pìtìm wear cap his<br/>Pìtìm has worn his cap</p>                            | <p>Pìtìm ùdàkù wùnà ùtágìyé wòh<br/>Pìtìm NEG wear cap his<br/>Pìtìm has not worn his cap</p>                    |
| <p>14. Ùrén ùjàná ákpàkta<br/>Ùrén bought shoe<br/>Ùrén has bought the shoe</p>                                 | <p>Ùrén ùdùkù jàná ákpàktá<br/>Ùrén NEG buy shoe<br/>Ùrén has not bought the shoe</p>                            |
| <p>15. Áyíanaá àná niyá ívazò yáh<br/>Children have eat beans their<br/>The children have eaten their beans</p> | <p>Áyíanaá adàká niyá ívazò yáh<br/>Children NEG eat beans their<br/>The children have not eaten their beans</p> |

### Negation and Progressive Aspect

Progressive aspect is the grammatical category that is used to express an ongoing action, it allows the speaker to describe an action, or event while it is ongoing. Thus, progressive aspect is an aspect that allows the speaker to describe an action that is ongoing from the perspective of the present. In Kùràrà language, progressive aspect is marked by the /ùrénù/ marker in singular instances and /árénù/ in plural cases. However, negation and the progressive aspect are mutually exclusive. A sentence with continuous tense that is negated will automatically lose its progressive aspectual marker and is thus discontinued. Consider the following examples:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>16. Pìtìm ùrénù ùwózè ùtágìyé wòh<br/>Pìtìm CONT wearing cap his<br/>Pìtìm is wearing his cap</p>         | <p>Pìtìm unù wúzàù ùtágìyé wòh<br/>Pìtìm NEG wear cap his<br/>Pìtìm is not wearing his cap</p>             |
| <p>17. Ùrén ùrénù jánzàù ákpàktá<br/>Ùrén CONT buy shoe<br/>Ùrén is buying a shoe</p>                        | <p>Ùrén unù jánzàù ákpàktá<br/>Ùrén NEG buy shoe<br/>Ùrén is not buying a shoe</p>                         |
| <p>18. Áyíanaá arénù niyá wí ívazò<br/>Children CONT eat the beans<br/>The children are eating the beans</p> | <p>Áyíanaá àná niyá ívazòì<br/>Children NEG eat beans <i>their</i><br/>The children are not eating the</p> |

beans

Progressive aspect in the language involves the addition of a progressive aspectual marker ‘*urénu*’ in singular instances or ‘*arénu*’ in plural situations to the verb of the sentence. This is done by placing it just before the verb of the sentences. Negation however blocks progression and so the progressive aspectual markers are deleted and replaced by negative markers when the sentence is negated.

### Negation and Perfect Progressive Aspect

The perfect progressive aspect is a grammatical category that expresses the conclusion of a previously ongoing action. Thus a speaker can express a previously ongoing action that is now concluded from a present tense perspective. *Kuràmà* language marks the perfect progressive aspect by the addition of ‘*ukáké nu*’ just before the verb in the sentence. However, there is a partial deletion of the perfect progressive marker when negation is introduced.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>19. <i>Pìtìm ukáké nu kókàrí ùwònè utàgiyé</i><br/> <i>ùwònè utàgiyé</i><br/> <i>Pìtìm PERF. PRO. been try to wear cap</i><br/> <i>Pìtìm has been trying to wear a cap</i></p>  | <p><i>Pìtìm ùzáu nu kókàrí</i><br/> <i>ùwònè utàgiyé</i><br/> <i>Pìtìm NEG been try wear</i><br/> <i>cap</i><br/> <i>Pìtìm has not been trying</i><br/> <i>to wear a cap</i></p>   |
| <p>20. <i>Ùrén ukáké nu kókàrí ùjàná ákpaktáa</i><br/> <i>ákpaktá</i><br/> <i>Ùrén PERF. PRO. been try buy shoe</i><br/> <i>shoe</i><br/> <i>Ùrén has been trying to buy that shoe</i><br/> <i>to buy that shoe</i></p>  | <p><i>Ùrén ùzáù nu kókàrí ùjàná</i><br/> <i>ákpaktá</i><br/> <i>Ùrén NEG been try buy</i><br/> <i>shoe</i><br/> <i>Ùrén has not been trying</i><br/> <i>to buy that shoe</i></p>   |
| <p>21. <i>Áyíaná ákáké nu kókàrí ànèh ápùniyá tun nu sùwàmméke</i><br/> <i>Áyíaná ázá</i><br/> <i>nu kókàrí ànèh ápùniyá tun nu sùwàmméke</i><br/> <i>Children PERF. PRO. been try eat food since in morning</i><br/> <i>Children</i><br/> <i>NEG been try eat food since in morning</i></p> | <p><i>Áyíaná ákáké nu kókàrí ànèh ápùniyá tun nu sùwàmméke</i><br/> <i>Áyíaná ázá</i><br/> <i>nu kókàrí ànèh ápùniyá tun nu sùwàmméke</i><br/> <i>Children PERF. PRO. been try eat food since in morning</i><br/> <i>Children</i><br/> <i>NEG been try eat food since in morning</i></p> |



The children have been trying to eat all morning. The children have not been trying to eat all morning

The sentences uses ‘*ùkáké nù*’ in singular instances or ‘*ákáké nù*’ in plural cases to indicate continuous action or note an event in past tense. It can be easily seen however that when the negative marker is introduced, the negative marker only deletes the first of the two morphemes that make up the perfect progressive marker leaving the resultant sentence in past tense. It is obvious then that to an extent, negation and the perfect progressive tense are mutually exclusive.

## Conclusion

This study investigates into the interaction between different syntactic domains and negation in *Kùrà̀m̀* language. The research reveals that declarative and imperative sentences, even without obvious morphological markers, have a mutually inclusive relationship with negative markers in constructions. This indicates a complex interaction between syntax and negation. Similarly, focusing, although lacking identifiable morphological markers, influences the choice of negative markers, demonstrating the existence of structural alterations.

The study also examines the behaviour of simple, perfect, progressive, and perfect progressive aspects in relation to negation. The relationship between negation and the simple and perfect aspects is one of mutual inclusiveness, but the progressive aspect is completely mutually exclusive with negation. This highlights the intricate nature of aspectual interactions in the language. Moreover, the study identifies specific negative markers associated with different syntactic categories such as nouns, singular and plural verb forms, imperative verbs, and auxiliary verbs. This emphasises the subtle grammatical differences in conveying negation.

The analysis highlights how syntax and negation interact in *Kùrà̀m̀* language. It uncovers the underlying rules that govern linguistic expression and offers valuable insights into the nature of negation in language systems.

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