

Long-Distance Negative Concord and Restructuring in Palestinian Arabic

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1 Negative Concord in Palestinian Arabic¹

In Palestinian Arabic (PA), negative concord occurs with noun phrases headed by the determiner **wəla** “(not) even one”:

- (1) *Negative concord*: The failure of a word or phrase that expresses negation in fragment answers to express negation in a sentence in which it co-occurs with another negation-expressing word or phrase (a.o. Watanabe 2004).

wəla-DPs are pronounced with strong focal stress, and are the most “emphatic” kind of NPI in PA. Less emphatic NPIs include **ħada** “anyone,” **iši** “anything, or **?aiy wa:ħad** “anyone” or **?aiy ši:** “anything.” Both **wəla**-DP and **?aiy**-NPs are *minimizers* in the sense of Vallduví (1994): I refer to **wəla**-DPs as *emphatic minimizers*.

“**wəla**-phrases” are interpreted as negative quantifiers (“NQ-**wəla**”) or as polarity-sensitive indefinites (“NPI-**wəla**”). The NQ-interpretation is available preceding the finite verb or verb complex in a clause (2-4) or in fragment answers (5-6):

- (2) **wəla** **ħada** fi-ħum šæ:f-ni.
not.even one.ms in-them saw.3ms-me
“Not even one of them saw me!”
- (3) **wəla** **yo:m** ma-ŷağabni l-əkil.
not.even day pleased.3ms-me the-food
“There wasn’t even one day the food pleased me!”
- (4) **wəla** **mtfit anu:θa** ŷind-ik.
not.even bit femininity at-you(fs)
“You don’t have the least bit of femininity!”
- (5) Q: šu **ħal-l-ak?** A: **wəla** **iši**.
what said.3ms-to-you not.even thing
“What did he say to you? Nothing at all.”

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- (6) Q: min šofti? A: **wəla** **su:š** ibn yome:n.
who saw.2fs not.even chick son two-days
“Who did you see? Nary a two-day old chick!”

A preverbal **wəla**-phrase preceding a sentential negation marker causes the sentence to have a double-negation reading (7: compare with 3):

- (7) **wəla** **yo:m** ma-ŷağabni l-əkil.
not.even day not-pleased.3ms-me the-food
“There wasn’t one day the food didn’t please me!”

NQ-**wəla** never occurs within the scope of negation but occurs in post-verbal positions which are not “thematically entailed” by the verb (8-9)²:

- (8) huwwa **wəla** **iši**!
he not.even thing
“He is nothing!”
- (9) hiyya mağru:ra ŷala **wəla** **iši**.
she conceited.fs upon not.even thing
“She is conceited for absolutely no reason!”

The NPI-interpretation is only available within the scope of antimorphic operators (Zwarts 1996) like sentential negation or **bidu:n** “without” (10-13):

- (10) tılıŷti **bidu:n-ma** tqu:li **wəla** **iši**.
left.2fs without-that say.2fs even thing
“You left without saying even one thing!”
- (11) ma-ħađt-iš maŷ-i **wəla** **iši**.
not-took.1s-neg with-me even thing
“I didn’t take a single thing with me.”
- (12) ma-ŷind-hæ **wəla** **mtfit** ħağal.
not-at-her even bit shame
“She doesn’t have the least bit of shame!”
- (13) la-s-senna ma-baŷti-ħum **wəla** **luħmi** əkil.
to-the-year not-give.1s-them even bite food
“For the [first] year I don’t give them even a bite of [solid] food.”

²Following (Herburger 2001), “thematically entailed” means that the meaning of the verb entails the existence of an entity filling the thematic role in question.

The NPI-interpretation is available with adverbial **wəla**-DPs as well as inside PP (14) and small-clause complements (15):

- (14) **ma-kaʕatt** [_{PP} ʒænɪb **wəla həda** fi:-həm].
not-sat.1s next-to even one in-them
 “I didn’t sit next to even one of them.”
- (15) ʕəmri ma-šuft-hæ [læ:bisi **wəla mtfit** həri:r].
ever-I not-saw1s-her wear:fs even bit silk
 “I have never seen her wearing even a bit of silk.”

More than one **wəla**-phrase can have the NPI-interpretation at a time:

- (16) ma-kəlt **wəla iʕi wəla la-hada** fi:-həm.
not-said.1s even thing even to-one in-them
 “I didn’t give anything at all to even one of them.”

NQ-**wəla** cannot license NPI-**wəla** (17):

- (17) ***wəla həda** ʕal-i **wəla kilmɪ**.
not.even one said.3ms-to-me even word

It follows from the distributions of NQ- and NPI-**wəla** that **wəla**-phrases are blocked from post-verbal argument positions which are thematically entailed and which are not within the scope of an antimorphic operator.

1.1 Negative Concord and Locality

PA negative concord is generally strictly local dependency: an NPI **wəla**-phrase must be contained within the smallest clause containing its licenser.

It cannot be separated from its licenser by the boundary of either a finite complement (19) or a non-finite/irrealis complement (18):

- (18) ***ma-waʕatt** eħki **wəla maʕ həda** fi:-həm.
not-promised.1s talk even with one in-them
- (19) ***batwaħkaʕ-iš** innhæ biħibb **wəla həda**.
believe.1s-neg that.3fs likes.3fs even one

Similar sentences with weaker NPIs such as **həda** or **?aiy həda** “anyone” are acceptable:

- (20) **ma-waʕatt** eħki maʕ (**?aiy**) **həda** fi:-həm.
not-promised.1s talk with any one in-them
 “I didn’t promise to talk with any of them.”
- (21) **batwaħkaʕ-iš** innhæ biħibb (**?aiy**) **həda**.
believe.1s-neg that.3fs likes.3fs any one
 “I don’t think that she likes ANY one.”

Likewise, negative concord fails if a **wəla**-DP is embedded inside another DP, while similar examples with **?aiy**-DPs are acceptable:

- (22) ***ma-həkert** maʕ [bint **wəla həda** fi:-həm].
not-talked.1s with girl even one in-them
- (23) **ma-həkert** maʕ [bint **?aiy wa:həd** fi:-həm].
not-talked.1s with girl any one in-them
 “I didn’t talk to the daughter of any one of them.”

(18-23) suggest that negative concord is a bounded dependency like agreement marking, thematic licensing, or reflexive binding.

However, there are exceptions to this generalization. “Long-distance” negative concord occurs with **wəla**-DPs inside the complements of a small class of verbs including subject control verbs like **bidd-** “want” (24), **hə:wal** “try” (29), **kıdır** “be able” (26), or **ʕırif** “know how to, be able to” (25) and object-control verbs like **ħalla** “allow” (28):

- (24) **ma-bıddna** [nħalli **wəla zəlami**].
not-want.1p leave.1p even fellow
 “We don’t want to leave even one man.”
- (25) **ma-ʕırif** [eħtib **wəla kilmɪ**].
not-knew.1s write.1s even word
 “I couldn’t write even one word.”
- (26) miš **ka:dir** [yıʔat?ıʔ **wəla mtfit** ıʔt?u:ʔa].
not able.ms bow.1s even bit bow
 “I can’t bow my head even a little bit.”
- (27) **ma-raħ tıħdar** [tağmaʕ **wəla ħe:ʔ**].
not-fut able.2ms gather.2ms even thread
 “You won’t be able to gather even a thread.”
- (28) **ma-ħallu:-ni:-š** [ištari **wəla iʕi**].
not-let.3mp-me-neg buy.1s even thing
 “They wouldn’t let me buy even one thing!”

The embedding can be recursive, provided that only verbs in this class are used (29).

- (29) **bıddi:-š** **aħa:wıl** eħki **wəla maʕ həda**.
want.1s-neg try.1s speak.1s even with one
 “I don’t want try to talk with anyone at all.”

These verbs correspond to verbs found in many other languages which trigger a process often referred to as *restructuring* or *clause union*. I follow (Aissen & Perlmutter 1983) in calling them *trigger verbs*. Restructuring involves the “stretching” of the domain of locality for certain kinds of bounded dependencies from the complement of a trigger verb to include the clause that it heads.

At present no other phenomena have been identified in PA which independently indicate restructuring. However, long-distance negative concord is identified as a restructuring phenomenon in several languages such as West Flemish (Haegeman & Zanuttini 1996, a.o.), Polish (Dziwirek 1998, a.o.), and Serbian (Progovac 2000, a.o.). As such, I hypothesize that long-distance negative concord in PA is a form of restructuring as well.

All PA trigger verbs take non-finite complements headed by the “y-imperfect” stem of a verb agreeing with the controlled subject. In addition, some of the verbs in question allow their complements to optionally include complementizers, even in negative concord sentences (30-31):

- (30) ma-baqdar [(**m-ni**) aqul-l-ak wela şeyy].
not-able.1s that-I say.1s-to-you even thing
“I can’t say to you anything at all.”
- (31) ma-ha:walt-iş [(**m-ni**) aḥki wela maḥ ḥada
not-tried.1s-neg that talk.1s even with one
fi:-hōm].
in-them
“I didn’t try to talk with even one of them.”

The complementizer **ʔinn-** “that” also appears in indicative complements (see 21 and 19 above). It hosts a pronoun clitic corresponding to the subject of the clause and precedes the negation marker:

- (32) ḥa:walt **mm-i** ma atkallam ʔan nafs-i .
try.perf.1s that-me not speak.1s about self-me
“I tried not to speak about myself.”

Other triggers verbs like **bidd-** “want” and **ḡalla** “let” exclude the complementizer:

- (33) ma-biddna (***in-na**) nḡalli wela zelami.
not-want.1p that-we leave.1p even man
“We don’t want to leave even one person.”
- (34) ma-ḡallu-ni-ş (***m-ni**) aḡu:l wela kılmi.
not-let.3mp-me-neg that-I say.1s even word
“They didn’t let me say even one word!”

Assuming that the presence of **ʔinn-** and of verbal agreement marking indicate different functional categories, (30-34) show that trigger verbs vary as to the kinds of complements they take.

Lastly, embedded **wela**-DPs can (although need not) be interpreted in-situ. For example, in (35) a pronoun within the **wela**-DP is bound by the NPI **ḥada** “anyone.” The NPI is interpreted within the scope of the complement clause, and therefore the **wela**-phrase must be as well.

- (35) b-aqdar-iş adfaḥ **ḥada** wela kırş min raḥib-u.
can.1s-neg pay.1s one.ms even cent from pay-his
“I can’t pay anyone_i even a penny of his_i salary.”

Similarly, (36) can be said by a pauper with grand plans for getting rich and who is speaking about money that exists in his or her desire worlds:

- (36) biddi:-ş adfaḥ **wela kırş** ḡaraḡıyb.
want-1s-neg pay.1s even penny taxes
“I don’t want to pay even a penny in taxes.”

This shows that **wela kırş** “even a penny” takes scope within the embedded clause.

In sum, negative concord in PA has the following properties:

- I **wela**-DPs within the scope of the verb and in thematically-entailed positions have only the NPI-interpretation and must be licensed by negation morphemes or **bidu:n** “without” (10-13, 14-15).

II Multiple **wela**-DPs can be licensed at once (16).

III Negative concord is generally clause-local (18-19)

IV Exceptions to III occur in sentences in which the matrix verb is one of a small set of verbs that allow a “long-distance” negative concord between a matrix negation and an embedded **wela**-DP (24-31).

V Long-distance negative concord is licensed inside recursive embeddings, provided that the embedding verbs all belong to the verb class described in IV (29).

VI The verbs which allow restructuring vary as to the size or category of the complements they take (30-34).

VII **wela** NPs in long-distance negative concord can be interpreted within the embedded clause (35-36).

2 Theoretical Implications

The data raise two theoretical questions about negative concord in PA: (i) What mechanisms license it? (ii) Why do restructuring verbs allow long-distance licensing? I address these questions by looking long-distance negative concord, as this reveals the most about the properties of both negative concord and restructuring in PA.

2.1 Implications of the Data

Based on properties IV-VII several formal aspects of negative concord in PA can be inferred which narrow down the number of theoretical options available for analyzing the data.

First, the NQ- and NPI-interpretations of **wela**-phrases arise from a lexical ambiguity between two homophonous morphemes. A theory which treated **wela**-phrases as being uniformly negative quantifiers or negative polarity items would rely on global licensing mechanisms, such as a semantic construal mechanism (Haegeman & Zanuttini 1996, de Swart & Sag 2002) or insertion of an “abstract negation,” and would incorrectly predict a sentence like (17) to be acceptable.

Second, negative concord is a purely syntactic phenomenon in PA. If it were a semantic process, long-distance negative concord would be predicted to be more generally available in embedded clauses. Instead, the availability of long-distance negative concord is a lexical idiosyncrasy of an otherwise heterogeneous set of verbs.

Third, negative concord licensing requires neither overt nor covert movement, as the **wela**-DP is pronounced and can be interpreted in its base position. This rules out approaches to negative concord according to which **wela**-DPs must raise to a local configuration their licensors (Haegeman & Zanuttini 1996, Watanabe 2004, Zeijlstra 2004).

If no movement is involved, then some other syntactic licensing mechanism must be.

Fourth, the availability of long-distance negative concord is not a matter of complement size. This excludes an analysis based Wurmbrand (2001), according to whom restructuring complements are bare VPs. Rather, PA trigger verbs take complements which include functional structure.

2.2 Negative Concord as Feature Matching

These properties suggest a parallel between long-distance negative concord in PA and long-distance agreement in Hindi as analyzed by Bhatt (2005). Long-distance agreement in Hindi consists of an object of an embedded verb determining the agreement form of both the matrix and embedded verb in clauses headed by one of a small set of control verbs which correspond closely to trigger verbs in languages like Spanish, Italian, etc:

- (37) Vivek-ne [**kitāb** parh̄nī] cāhī.
Vivek-erg book.fs read.inf.f wanted.fs
 “Vivek wanted to read the book.”

Bhatt argues that long-distance agreement does not correlate with movement because the object can be interpreted with narrow scope, as in (38):

- (38) Usha-ne [potluck keliye **dāl** banānī] cāhī.
Usha-erg potluck for daal.f make.f wanted.f
 “Usha wanted to make *daal* for the potluck.”

Likewise, Bhatt argues that the agreement marking on the embedded verb indicates functional structure in a restructuring complement and that long-distance agreement consists of a “parasitic” agreement relation in which the agreement form of the matrix verb is determined by the agreement form of the embedded verb.

PA long-distance negative concord and Hindi long-distance agreement share the following:

- (39) They involve a morphological matching relation;
 (40) The relation is bounded except in restructuring;
 (41) Long-distance licensing involves no movement;

Bhatt’s treats restructuring complements as lacking a PRO subject. The lack of a subject NP leaves the embedded T⁰ (Inf⁰ according to Bhatt) to enter an AGREE relation with the embedded object. The matrix T⁰ then enters an AGREE relation with the embedded T⁰³. As such, Hindi long-distance agreement does not actually involve a long-distance relation. Rather, it involves a chain of purely local AGREE relations.

³Bhatt modifies Chomsky’s (2001) Agree to disassociate case feature checking from ϕ -feature checking.

2.3 Analysis

I assume that long-distance negative concord involves a “polarity” feature [POL±]. To implement the interaction of uninterpretable and interpretable instances of the polarity feature, I assume Bhatt’s AGREE relation, but in order to emphasize that verb-argument agreement is not involved, I refer to it as ACCORD. Also, following Hiraiwa (2001), I assume that “multiple ACCORD” is possible, meaning that a Probe can simultaneously enter an ACCORD relation with multiple Goals with respect to a feature *F* provided that they have non-distinct values for *F*. This is essential for modeling examples like (16).

Following standard assumptions after Chomsky (2000), ACCORD is constrained by the Phase Impenetrability Condition, which blocks that ACCORD relations across phase boundaries.

I assume the following principles of grammar:

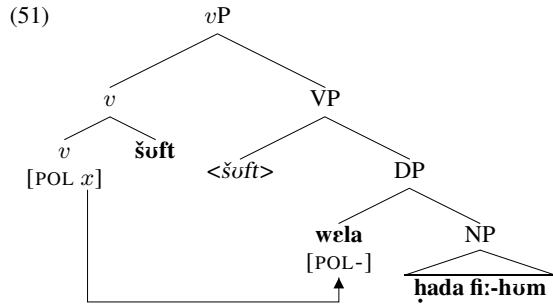
- (42) Uninterpretable features are unvalued, and must be provided a value (Chomsky 2000);
 (43) Selectional features are sets of feature specifications including category, mood, and polarity;
 (44) Root clauses must be [POL +] (the *root clause polarity condition*) after Dowty (1994);
 (45) *v*P, CP, and DP are phases.

(44) is a stipulation, but can be related to proposals by Progovac (2000) and Przepiórkowski & Kupść (1999) according to which the semantic reflex of a negative concord is the specification of a *negative event*, an event which fails to meet a certain description. If (44) reflects a requirement that a root clause must be interpreted as asserting the existence of an eventuality, a negative clause would assert the existence of an eventuality that doesn’t meet the description provided by the predicate.

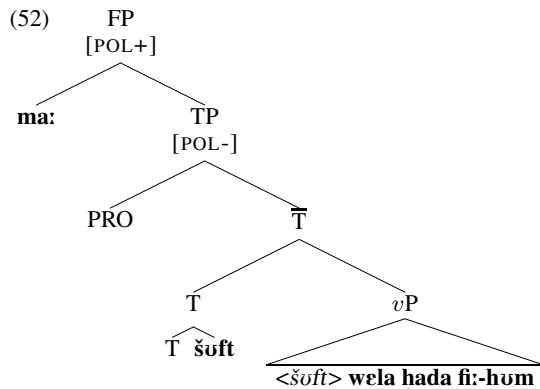
PA has the following lexical properties:

- (46) *v*⁰ has an unvalued polarity feature [POL *x*];
 (47) **wela** has an interpretable [POL-] feature;
 (48) The negation morpheme **ma**- includes a [POL-] feature among its selectional features, but projects a [POL +] feature;
 (49) Trigger verbs (along with auxiliary verbs) do not specify a polarity feature for their complements;
 (50) Non-trigger control verbs include a [POL+] feature among their selectional features.

The analysis for negative concord in a root clause is as follows: first, given the structure in (51), *v*⁰ has an unvalued [POL *x*] feature. It c-commands the **wela**-DP and so enters into ACCORD with the it, with the result that its unvalued polarity feature is valued as [POL-]:

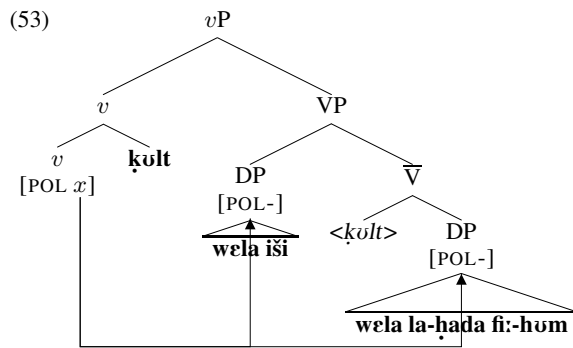


Further derivation builds an TP, which is then merged with **ma:-**, satisfying its selectional feature, and projecting an FP with a [POL+] feature:

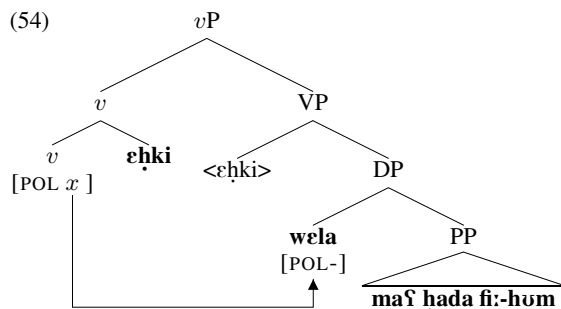


A clause with an unlicensed **wela** NP is ill-formed because it is rooted in a node with a [POL-] feature, violating the root clause polarity condition.

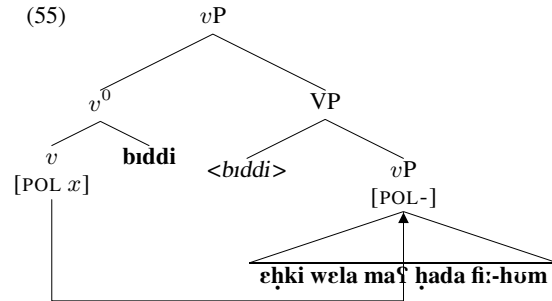
A clause with multiple **wela**-DPs (as in 16 above) is derived as before, except that v^0 enters into ACCORD with all of them simultaneously:



A sentence with long-distance negative concord is derived as follows: as in (51) and (53), v^0 enters into ACCORD with the **wela**-DP, so that its unvalued polarity feature is valued as [POL-]:



In the case of a restructuring complement lacking **ʔinn-**, the vP is merged with the trigger verb. The matrix v^0 has an unvalued feature, and c-commands the embedded vP . The c-command relation does not cross a phase boundary, and so an ACCORD relation is established between the matrix v^0 and the embedded v^0 :

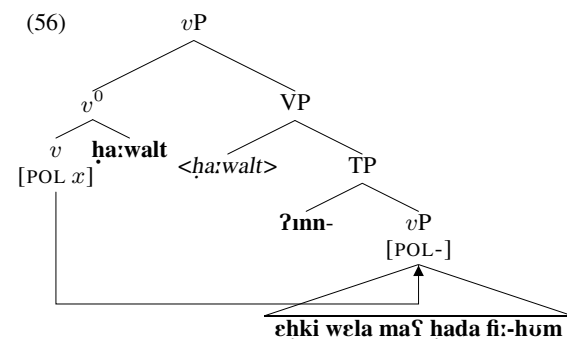


The derivation then proceeds as in (51).

In examples like (30-31), I assume that **ʔinn-** occupies T^0 rather than C^0 . Awad (1998) shows that **ʔinn-** in indicative complements affects the pragmatic interpretation of the clause. This effect is absent in control complements containing **ʔinn-**, suggesting that the **ʔinn-** in control complements (“nonfinite **ʔinn-**”) is homophonous with indicative **ʔinn-** but is a distinct morpheme.

Mitchell & al Hassan (1994, p. 38) note that the use of **ʔinn-** also indicates a shift a slightly more formal register of colloquial speech. Nonfinite **ʔinn-** may be a calque from the Classical Arabic particle **ʔan** which introduces subjective complements and is likely a T^0 morpheme. In Palestinian and other dialects, Classical **ʔann-** and **ʔan** have fallen together, so PA **ʔinn-** is the dialectal morpheme corresponding to Classical **ʔan**. Therefore, I suggest that **ʔinn-** spells out the head of T^0 .

This has important consequences for the analysis. Nonfinite **ʔinn-** projects a TP. TP is not a phase, and therefore does not block an ACCORD relation with the matrix vP . Therefore, the derivation of an example like (31) proceeds just like the derivation in (52), modulo the presence of a TP projection in the complement:



Capturing the failure of long-distance negative concord with non-trigger verbs like **wafad** “promise” in (18) requires an additional stipulation: T^0 has an unvalued [POL-] feature as well, such that merging T^0 with vP results in T^0 having its [uPOL] feature valued by v^0 . Accord to (50), non-trigger verbs select complements with a [POL+] feature. As such, long-distance negative concord in examples like (18) is blocked because this feature clashes with the [POL-] value that the embedded T^0 , blocking the derivation⁴.

Failure of negative concord with **wela**-DPs in DP-internal positions (22) follows directly from the Phase Impenetrability Condition, as DPs are phases and block the ACCORD relation.

3 Conclusion

I have presented an array of data describing long-distance negative concord in Palestinian Arabic. These data entail an analysis of negative concord and of restructuring which does not involve movement or reduced complements, and instead involves static feature matching.

A typological implication of this is the term “negative concord” as applied to PA is to be taken literally, where *concord* is understood as a class of feature-matching relationships of which subject-verb agreement is just one instance. This means that formal devices used to express feature matching must be defined in a general way rather than just in terms of subject-verb agreement.

The analysis captures the data, and may have interesting implications for how concord is modeled in the Minimalist Program. However, the analysis is largely a technical solution awaiting further phenomena to motivate it. Further research will consider additional factors, such as the roles that focus and prosody play in the locality restrictions on PA negative concord, and whether parallels can be drawn between negative concord and restructuring in PA on the one hand and comparable phenomena in other languages.

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⁴This analysis predicts that verbs which select for a [POL-] complement should license negative concord. Whether such verbs exist in PA and therefore whether they do license negative concord has yet to be determined.

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