NEGATION IN QIANG GRAMMAR

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ABSTRACT

In Qiang grammar, negation occurs both at the clause and the constituent level. Negation in indicative sentences is marked by the negative adverbial /mø-/ which is prefixed to verbal and adjectival predicates.Clauses can have more than one verb. However, the negative adverbial prefix almost always falls on the final verb in an independent clause. In sentences with more than one clause, this rule still holds true regardless of the order of the clauses in the sentence.

Negative imperative forms are created by prefixing the negative imperative /ʦi-/ to a verb. The semantic impact of these clauses can be weakened with mood markers resulting in an utterance that resembles a suggestion. A weaker imperative form occurs when the word /je/ 'can' is negated and the entire preceding sentence string is nominalized by the verbal suffix /-s/.

Qiang negative interrogative constructions are generated with the negative adverbial prefix /mø-/ and a sentence final /ʦiɔ/.

Constituent negation is a little used aspect of Qiang grammar. It materializes when a negated predicate is nominalized by the verbal suffix /-m/ . This is the only opportunity for a negative adverbial prefix to fall anywhere else in the sentence string than with the last verb in an independent clause.

Chinese loans have influenced everyday Qiang usage. This process has affected negation and it is described herein.

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This paper examines the negation of indicative, imperative and interrogative clauses, including a discussion of the negative adverbial prefix placement in multi-verb clauses. In addition, non-negative uses of the negative adverbial prefix and Chinese influence are reviewed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Qiang reside mainly in Wenchuan, Li, Mao, Songpan and Heishui counties in the northwestern region of Sichuan province. Genetically, the language is classified in the Sino-Tibetan phylum, the Tibeto-Burman family, the Qiangic branch. There are about 200,000 ethnic Qiang, roughly half of whom still speak one of the Qiang dialects. Qiang is an SOV language which has a rich segmental inventory.

Negation in Qiang is expressed by the negative adverbial prefix /mə-/ ([m~mə~me~mi~mo]) and the negative imperative prefix /tɕi-/ ([tɕə~tɕə~tɕə~tɕo]). This paper discusses how indicative and imperative clauses are negated and illustrates a borrowed negative form. Section two outlines negation, both verbal and adjectival, at the clause level; while section three describes constituent negation in Qiang. Section four presents the effects of Chinese on Qiang negation and section five summarizes the article.

2.0 CLAUSAL NEGATION

Various prefixes and suffixes can collocate with the negative adverbial prefix /mə-/ or the negative imperative /tɕi-/ Schematically represented in (1) are the directional (DIR), negative adverbial, negative imperative and continuative (CA) markers in the order that they precede the verb. The adverbial negative prefix (NEG) and the negative imperative prefix (NI), can occupy the same slot, but not simultaneously. Change of state aspect (CSA), person (P) and question marking (QM) suffixes are represented schematically in the sequence in which they follow the verb.

(1) Prefixes ➔ Verb ➙ Suffixes

DIR + (NEG,NI) + CA + VERB + CSA + P + QM

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2 The negative adverbial prefix /mə-/ and the negative imperative prefix /tɕi-/ are often subject to the feature spreading process commonly known as vowel harmony. The point of articulation of the verb’s vowel, as well as other factors, can influence the quality of the vowel in the negative prefix.

3 The presentation of affixes has been simplified somewhat to cover the examples in this paper. See Sun (1981), Huang (1997) and Liu (1998) for a complete discussion of Qiang verbs and their affixes. Abbreviations are defined at the end of the article.
The negative adverbial prefix /ma-/ also collocates with adjectives when they are occupying the predicate slot. Shown schematically in (2), it can precede the adjective and optionally follow the directional verbal prefix.

(2) Prefixes \(\rightarrow\) Adjective
   \(\text{DIR} + \text{NEG} + \text{ADJECTIVE}\)

2.1 NEGATIVE INDICATIVE AND INTERROGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

2.1.1 Adjectives

Adjectives usually assume the role of a postpositional modifier of nouns in indicative constructions, as /\( niq\h^h aq \)/ ‘black’ does in (3).

(3) suwu \( niq\h^h aq \) tse zvpu tsu\( \chi qu\)-la h\( \ae^\m \) dz\( \ae \).
cow black DM mountain backside-LOC Grass eat
‘The black cow is grazing there on the back side of the mountain.’

Adjectives functioning as modifiers cannot be negated. Adjectives are similar to verbs in that they can accept person marking (agreement) and serve as predicates without requiring a copula. They differ from verbs in that they can be nominalized by the definite and indefinite suffixes /le, te, ke/, and accept the postpositive adverb /-qde/ ‘very’. Example (4) illustrates a negated adjective.

(4) \( th\( \ae \) \( \uu \) s\( \ae \) t\( \s\o qu \) ma-b\( \ae^\h \).
that walnut tree that-CL NEG-big
‘That walnut tree is not big.’

If the negated adjective is moved to another position in the clause it becomes ungrammatical as shown in (5), with the exception of nominalized negated adjectives. This condition is manifest when the nominal suffix /-m/ meaning ‘the one who...’ is added to the adjective. This is discussed in section 3.0 under constituent negation.

(5) \( *th\( \ae \) \( \uu \) s\( \ae \) ma-b\( \ae^\h \). t\( \s\o qu \) f\( \u \).*
that walnut tree NEG-big that MW be
‘Ungrammatical’
Table 1 lists some adjectives and their negative counterparts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive form</th>
<th>Negative form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kʰue</td>
<td>me-kʰue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>məpa</td>
<td>mə-mba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>də</td>
<td>mə-də</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qʰa</td>
<td>mə-qʰa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certain Qiang adjectives can also accept directional prefixes. In this context, the negative prefix follows the directional prefix and precedes the adjective as seen in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Form</th>
<th>Negative Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʰesí</td>
<td>ʰe-me-ší</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʰexsi</td>
<td>ʰe-me-xsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʰegi</td>
<td>ʰe-me-ći</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʰam</td>
<td>ʰa-mə-m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʰoqu</td>
<td>ʰo-mə-qui</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2 Verbs

Indicative clauses are negated when the negative verbal prefix /mə-/ is affixed to a verb. This rule holds true regardless of the role structure of the verb.

(6) qa-tɕ sīhũwe zḏzi-jy.
1PS-GEN stomach ache-CSA
'My stomach aches.'

Negating the clause in (6) simply requires the addition of the negative adverbial prefix /me-/ to the verbal predicate as shown below in (7).

(7) qa-tɕ sīhũwe me-zḏzi-jy.
1PS-GEN stomach NEG-ache-CSA
'My stomach does not ache.'

An example of an intransitive clause and its negated form are seen in (8) and (9).