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A grammar of Kumzari : a mixed Perso-Arabian language of Oman

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10 Negation

The negative particle in Kumzari is *na*. Normally it follows the constituent being negated.

10.1 Verb negation

10.1.1 Post-constituent negation

When the verb is negated, the negative particle follows the verb in every aspect, mood, and mirativity:

(647) G992

xānaḡ-ō y'=ā... qētil-ē. sā ḥubbō yē tumr-a **na** ā?
 house -the DEM =SUB deadly-a now grandmother 3s die:IMPF-3s NEG INTERR
 'This house, it's deadly. Now **won't** his grandmother die?'

The following pair of examples contrasts positive and negative, from the same section of text:

(648) B275

bap-ō kōr wābur.
 father -the blind become:3sREAL
 'The father became blind.'

(649) B281

mām-ō kōr bur **na**.
 mother -the blind become:3sREAL NEG
 'The mother did **not** become blind.'

Arabic and Iranian languages have pre-constituent negation. Post-constituent negation occurs in Shihhi and in the South Arabian languages Mehri, Jibbali, Harsusi, Bathari, and Hobbyot. Watson and Eades (2012:3) note that this word order has been suggested as an innovation in the South Arabian languages, and that it is "an issue of typological interest for research on grammaticalisation and negation."

In Kumzari, the object is not negated when the verb is negated:

(650) S105

šū tāt-um **na**.
 husband want:IMPF-1s NEG
 'I **don't** want a **husband**.'

Even complex objects as full nouns (not pronouns) do not take the negative particle:

(651) R1388

mā **brār** xō jīr-im **na**.
 1p brother REFL see:REAL-1p NEG
 'We **didn't** see **our brother**.'

However, when the object is a pronoun and not a whole noun, it follows the verb, and the negative particle then follows the object pronoun as it is part of the verb phrase⁹⁶:

(652) P503

mēš-um yē na wa bass.
 see:IMPER-1s 3s NEG and finished
 ‘May I **not** see **him**, ever.’

(653) P630

tēl-ī mē na!
 leave:IMPF-2s 1s NEG
 ‘You’re **not** leaving **me**!’

This is also the case with compound verbs. Preverbs are not negated; rather, compound verbs are treated as a whole, taking the negative particle once:

(654) R864

bard gid-iš yē na.
 stone do:REAL-3s 3s NEG
 ‘He **didn’t** turn him into stone.’

(655) S293

sā ḥasa ēnar gis-in na.
 now yet henna do:PERF-3p NEG
 ‘Now they **hadn’t** put henna on yet.’

The following pair of examples contrasts negated clauses with a full noun object and a pronoun object, from the same section of text:

(656) S771

dar-ō twākš-um na.
 door –the open:IMPF-1s NEG
 ‘I will **not** open **the door**.’

(657) S775

twākš-um yē na.
 open:IMPF-1s 3s NEG
 ‘I will **not** open **it**.’

This rule includes relative and interrogative pronouns:

(658) A281

baḡa muxx **kas** dān-a yē kī na.
 without head PERS know:IMPF-3s 3s who NEG
 ‘Without a head **no one** knew **who he** was.’

⁹⁶ Note that this is the regular syntax of verb phrases; the full noun precedes the verb and the pronoun follows the verb (see similar syntax in Mehri: Rubin 2010:265). Thus the rule for negation is no different; the negative particle follows the verb phrase including its object. See §4.3.

(659) K315

dām gīya na!
 know:1sIMPF where NEG
 ‘I don’t know **where!**’

Mehri, a South Arabian language of Oman, also varies negation syntax depending on whether the subject is in the form of a noun or pronoun. In Mehri, pronoun subjects of nonverbal clauses take the negative particle *əl* before the item, and noun subjects take it after the negated constituent. As in Kumzari, “the result is that the nominal subject is essentially fronted” (Rubin 2010:265).

10.1.2 Double marking of negation

Because normative word order in Kumzari is verb-final, negation is obligatorily marked on each complement following a negated verb, including indirect objects, verb goals, modifiers, and post-posed nominal direct objects. Two contrasting examples below, from the same section of text, demonstrate this rule. In the first example, the direct object is post-posed to an unusual position after the verb, so it must be additionally negated. In the second example below, the direct object is in its usual place and is not negated, because it shares the negation of the verb:

(660) S511 [post-posed nominal direct object]

mē tāt-um na dit āmu xō na.
 1s want:IMPF -1s NEG daughter uncle (paternal) REFL NEG
 ‘As for me, I do **not** want [to marry] my uncle’s daughter.’

(661) S516 [nominal direct object in usual position]

mē dit āmu xō tāt-um na.
 1s daughter uncle (paternal) REFL want:IMPF -1s NEG
 ‘As for me, I do **not** want [to marry] my uncle’s daughter.’

Following are examples with double marked negation of complements:

(662) K117

mēy-ō fōšnīs-um ba šmā, jō’ar-ō fōšnīs-um na ba šmā na.
 fish –the sell:PERF-1s to 2p pearl –the sell:PERF-1s NEG to 2p NEG
 ‘I sold the fish to you; I did **not** sell the pearl to you.’

(663) B734

mē č-um na xāna na.
 1s go:IMPF-1s NEG marriage NEG
 ‘I am **not** going to marry.’

(664) B488

wana kardīd-ī yē na inda yē na, tumr-ī.
 if drop:REAL-2s 3s NEG in 3s NEG die:IMPF-2s
 ‘If you do **not** drop him into it, you will die.’

(665) R567

raft-ē **na** wā brār-an xō **na!**
 go:PERF-3s NEG with brother -PL REFL NEG
 ‘He hadn’t gone with his brothers!’

(666) B900

mē dit xō dō-um **na** ba yē **na.**
 1s daughter REFL give:IMPF-1s NEG to 3s NEG
 ‘I am **not** giving my daughter to him.’

Multiple complements of a negated verb must also be additionally negated:

(667) G389

raft **na** muzgit **na** āntē **na.**
 go:3sREAL NEG mosque NEG there NEG
 ‘He didn’t go there to the mosque.’

(668) P419

sā tany-um **na** wā tō **na** xān tō **na.**
 now stay:IMPF-1s NEG with 2s NEG house 2s NEG
 ‘Now I will not stay with you in your house.’

In Persian and Arabic, negation is only marked once per clause. However, cases of double-marked negation are attested in Oman’s South Arabian languages Mehri, Jibbali, and Hobyo; the grammatical context for these is yet unclear (Rubin 2010:32, 129, 134; Simeone-Senelle 1997:406-7,414). Miestamo (2007:555) lists typological studies of non-circumfixal double negation.

10.1.3 Negative interrogative

In negative questions, the interrogative clitic *ā* follows the negative particle:

(669) R173

dān-ē mē **na** ā?
 know:IMPF-2p 1s NEG INTERR
 ‘Don’t you know me?’

10.1.4 Prohibitive (negative imperative)

Prohibitive is not morphologically distinct from the negated Imperative, so it is formed the same as Realis negation, with the negative particle after the verb:

(670) P891

tikš-a tō! inča gaw **na!**
 kill:IMPF-2s 2s like.this say:2sIMPER NEG
 ‘He will kill you! Don’t talk like that!’

As in realis negation, prohibitive must have the negative particle on each complement following the verb:

(671) P336

ūny-a **na** kwēt **na**.
 stay:IMPER-3s NEG Kuwait NEG
 ‘May he **not** stay in Kuwait.’

but not on objects preceding the verb:

(672) G937

lūmū mē k-ē **na**.
 blaming 1s do:IMPER-2p NEG
 ‘Don’t blame me.’

10.2 Verbless clause negation

10.2.1 Negation of existentials

Existential enclitics for all persons and numbers are negated in the same manner as are verbs; that is, they are followed by the negative particle *na*:

(673) P664

sā šmā kōī=ē ā, ēšīnan=**in** **na**.
 now 2p mountain.bedouin=EX:2p SUB these.ones=EX:3p NEG
 ‘Now you **are** mountain bedouins, these ones **are not**.’

(674) R117

tō wā šan=ī **na**.
 2s with 3p=EX:2s NEG
 ‘You **are not** with them.’

(675) B144

baẓẓa-ē=Ø **na**, šāḥar-ē=Ø.
 beggar-a=EX:3s NEG sorcerer-a=EX:3s
 ‘He **was not** a beggar; he **was** a sorcerer.’

(676) G538

mē xābr=**um** **na** ba yē na.
 1s in.the.know=EX:1s NEG of 3s NEG
 ‘I **am not** in the know about it.’

(677) K558

urtut-ē=Ø **na**. čō-ō jārī=Ø, ġēla aẓala=Ø.
 trace -a=EX:3s NEG well -the finished=EX:3s grain separated=EX:3s
 ‘There **was not** a trace. The well **was** finished, the grain **was** separated.’

(678) G325

ẓank-ō ā, xaykē rāṭī=Ø **na**. lakin martk-ō rāṭī=Ø.
 woman- -the SUB very agreeing=EX:3s NEG but man -the agreeing=EX:3s
 ‘The woman, she **was not** really in agreement, but the man **was** in agreement.’

This is the case whether existentials occur with predicate nominatives or predicate adjectives:

(679) U12

šēx=in na. ādī=in.

sheikh=EX:3p NEG normal=EX:3p

‘They **were not** royalty. They **were** commoners.’

(680) G102

ḥayzēna jwān=Ø na.

construction good=EX:3s NEG

‘[Its] construction **was not** good.’

Each complement following the existential additionally takes the negative:

(681) K408

tō bētar=ī na pi dit mē na.

2s better=2s NEG from daughter 1s NEG

‘You **are not** better than my daughter.’

(682) B698

rōk-ō xābr=Ø na ba yē na.

boy-the in.the.know=EX:3s NEG of 3s NEG

‘The boy **was not** in the know about it.’

10.2.2 Negation of possessive constructions

The possessive construction consisting of the preposition *wā* ‘with’ + the possessor noun is negated by inserting the negative particle clause-finally:

(683) U212

iś wā yē āw na. iś wā yē ikka na. iś wā yē kard na.

any with 3s water NEG any with 3s match NEG any with 3s knife NEG

‘He **didn’t have** any water. He **didn’t have** any matches. He **didn’t have** any knife.’

(684) B900

y’=ā īšā’it wā yē na.

3s=SUB means with 3s NEG

‘This one, he **does not have** means.’

10.3 Pre-posed negation

Certain grammatical functions move the negative particle to pre-constituent position.

10.3.1 Rejection

In rejection, the negative particle precedes its referent:

(685) P1195

tō āmad-ī na s’āl na jwāb.

2s come:REAL-2s NEG question NEG answer

‘You came [with] **neither** question **nor** answer.’

(686) K764

yā **na** xō ādamī ā?!
 DEM NEG REFL person INTERR
 ‘These are **no** humans, are they?!’

(687) B851

na bazzā wa **na** bīdar!
 NEG beggar and NEG peasant
 ‘**Neither** beggar **nor** peasant!’

Pre-posed, the negative particle differs from its meaning when following the verb, as illustrated by the following two examples:

(688) G100

na wa’b gid-iš
 NEG field make:REAL-3s
 ‘He made **no** field’

To say ‘He didn’t make a field’, the negative particle would follow the verb:

(689)

wa’b gid-iš **na**
 field make:REAL-3s NEG
 ‘He **didn’t** make a field’

For emphasis, the negative particle can be pre-posed for a meaning like ‘not at all.’ In one case, a woman with her face completely veiled coming from the port greeted a group of women who knew her, but a few didn’t recognise her because of the veil. One said:

(690)

na danus-um yē!
 NEG know:PERF-1s 3s
 ‘I **didn’t even** recognise her!’

10.3.2 Subject negation

As in the marked syntax of rejection, the negative particle is fronted when a subject is particularly emphasised as being negative:

(691) R1362

šmā **na** wās-ē mā. ar wās-ē mā, yēē.
 2p NEG bring:PERF-2p 1p that/which/who bring:PERF-3s 1p 3s.EMPH
 ‘It was **none** of you who brought us. The one who brought us was him.’

10.4 Negation compounds

10.4.1 Absolute existential negation iš na ‘there is no’

The occurrence of both an absolute quantifier (e.g. *iš* ‘any’) and a negative signals absolute existential negation, i.e. ‘there is no’:

(692) G139

iš **ḡēla** **na.**

any grain NEG

‘**There isn’t any** grain.’

(693) G12

mām, **bap,** **iš-ē** **na.**

mother father any -a NEG

‘Mother, father, he hadn’t [*lit.* **there weren’t**] **any**.’Qualifications following *iš* ‘any’ must also be negated:

(694) R25

xalafa **gid-iš** **aft** **tā** **kōrk-an.** **iš** **na** **ditk-an** **na.**

begetting do:REAL-3s seven COUNT boy -PL any NEG daughter -PL NEG

‘Seven sons he had. He hadn’t [*lit.* **there weren’t**] **any** daughters.’

A stated object can also take the quantifier *iš* ‘any’, in which case the verb is followed by the negative particle *na*:

(695) R291

iš **ḡāz** **tāt-um** **na.**

any money want:IMPF-1s NEG

‘I don’t want **any** money.’

10.4.2 Personal negation *kas na* ‘no one, not there’

The personal negative compound *kas na* uses the personal particle *kas* as a subject pronoun, with the negative particle *na* following the verb or existential:

(696) P800

kas=Ø **na.**

PERS=EX:3s NEG

‘There’s **no one**.’

(697) R458

kas **ḡār** **ka** **na.**

PERS making.noise do:3sIMPER NEG

‘**No one** should make noise.’

(698) R939

kas **nasaxa** **tk-a** **na.**

PERS breathing do:IMPF-3s NEG

‘**No one** was breathing.’

(699) R1523

kas-ē **ma’r-ē** **ba** **kūn** **yē** **na.**

PERS -a tattoo -a on bottom 3s NEG

‘**Not one** has a tattoo on his bottom.’

It can be specified by adding a full noun phrase subject:

(700) R1376

ān maxnit-ō **kas**=Ø **na**.
 3s.ANA gay.man -the PERS=EX:3s NEG
 ‘The gay one was **not there**.’

The rule of negating multiple complements following the verb applies in this case too:

(701) S162

kas xābr **na** ba yē **na** ġay bap-ō **na**.
 PERS in.the.know NEG of 3s NEG except father -the NEG
 ‘**No one** knew about her except the father.’

It is possible to combine negative compounds *iš* and *kas*:

(702) A198

kas **iš** dgō-a **na**.
 PERS any say:IMPF-3s NEG
 ‘**No one** was saying **anything**.’

10.5 Complex clause negation

10.5.1 Subordinate clause negation

In the case of a negated verb with an embedded clause, since the embedded clause falls after the verb, the whole embedded clause must be additionally negated by the negative particle following the whole embedded clause:

(703) R827

gaš **na** ba yē **na** brār-an mē wa
 say:3sREAL NEG to 3s NEG brother -PL 1s and

ditk-an tō inča gis-in **na**.
 daughter -PL 2s like.this do:PERF-3p NEG
 ‘He **didn’t** tell him, “My brothers and your daughters have done this”.’

(704) S673

sā ahla yē gnūnus-in **na** yē ẓank-ē wā yē **na**.
 now relatives 3s believe:PERF-3p NEG 3s woman- -a with 3s NEG
 ‘Now his relatives had **not** believed that he had a woman with him.’

A negated verb followed by a relative clause must also have the additional negative particle following the whole relative clause:

(705) K367

tō ajaba būs-ī **na** pi y’=ā
 2s amazed become:PERF-2s NEG from DEM=SUB

ar asp-an insī-an wās-ē **na** ā?
 that/which/who horse -PL humanlike -PL bring:PERF-3s NEG INTERR
 ‘You were **not** amazed at the one who brought the talking horses?’

However, a subordinate clause preceding a negated verb phrase does not take the negative particle:

(706) S517

yē ar č-um ba yē xāna ā, tāt-um yē **na**.
 3s that/which/who go:IMPF-1s with 3s marriage SUB want:IMPF-1s 3s NEG
 ‘The one whom I am to marry, I **don’t** want her.’

10.5.2 Auxiliary verb negation

Auxiliary verbs such as *rāy* ‘to be able to’ may act as the main verb, taking the negative particle themselves, while the second verb acts as a complement, also taking *na*:

(707) S191

rāy-in **na** ābaša yē tk-in **na**.
 can:IMPF-3p NEG catching 3s do:IMPF-3p NEG
 ‘They **cannot** catch it.’

(708) R1453

mē rāy-um **na** dug-um šan **na** ēšinan **na**. mē baḥḥa=um.
 1s can:IMPF-1s NEG take:IMPF-1s 3p NEG these.ones NEG 1s beggar =EX:1s
 ‘I **cannot** take them, these ones. I am a poor person.’

In other cases the verb *rāy* ‘to be able to’ and other preverbs act as auxiliary verbs, pairing with the main verb to form a verb phrase, which takes a single negative particle to encompass the whole phrase:

(709) R194

sātē rāyis-im raft-im **na**. ništ-im.
 now can:PERF-1p go:PERF-1p NEG sit:PERF-1p
 ‘We **haven’t** been able to go now. We have stayed.’

(710) A240

yē tāt-a tār-a yē bāla **na**.
 3s want:IMPF-3s bring:IMPF-3s 3s up NEG
 ‘He did **not** want to bring him up.’

(711) K687

wayda ād yē **na**.
 hold:2sIMPER give:2sIMPER 3s NEG
 ‘**Don’t** keep giving her!’

10.6 Evidential negation

Since evidentials occur before the verb and apply to the whole proposition, the evidential itself does not take the negative particle, but the proposition takes it, following rules as above:

(712) G533

martk-ē lawya nāṭ-ō! awa ā ō! martk-ē! ā! ēka ā
 man –a rolled up carpet –the REP SUB SURP man –a INTERR INF SUB

dgō-a **na.**

say:IMPF-3s NEG

‘A man is rolled up in the carpet! What?! It said that?! A man! What?! It **can’t** be saying that!’

(713) R540

ēka ā šmā kš-ī yē **na.**
 INF SUB 2p kill:IRR-2s 3s NEG

‘Obviously you have **not** killed him.’

(714) P1238

ēka ā čōt xāna **na.**
 INF SUB go:3sIRR marriage NEG

‘Obviously she wouldn’t marry.’

10.7 Negation in poetics

The mirror image property of the negative is exploited in Kumzari’s poetically-structured language. Several texts juxtapose negative and positive in successive lines, with the same grammatical structure and parallel semantics:

(715) P635

dgō ba yē, “hā, **tēl-ī mē na!**”

dgō ba yē, “sā tō! rēsīd-ī.

ḥasa **na** majma gid-ī,

wa ḥasa **na** šaw wābur,

wa ḥasa maxluq-an č-in wā= bāla,

wa ḥasa maxluq-an tā’-in wā= zēran.”

“**tēl-ī mē na!**”

She said to him, “Oh, **don’t leave me!**”

He said to her, “Now, you! You arrived!

Still **no** word have you spoken,

And still **no** night has come,

And still many people are going up there,

And still many people are coming down there!”

“**Don’t leave me!**”

In the text above from the tale *Pačaxčēō*, the prohibitive clause *tēl-ī mē na!* is repeated in the frame at the beginning and end. In the list section between the lines of the frame, the four lines beginning with *ḥasa* mirror each other, with two negative clauses and two positive clauses.

A different pattern using negative clauses occurs in this section of text from the tale *Bāḡ al-Mowz*:

(716) B7

yak-ē mardk-ē na,

yak-ē mardk-ē na,
ṣank-ē wā yē,
iš wā yē rōr na;
mardk-ē wā ṣank-ē bass.
tāt-a rōr-ē bīyār-a,
tāt-a rōr-ē bīyār-a,
iš wād-iš na.
bīyō, yak-ta ṣank-ē dgur gid-iš.
mād sāl-ē, di-sāl,
iš wād-iš na.
wa yak-ē dgur gid-iš.
lumrād, aft kas gid-iš.
af-ta ṣank-an,
iš wād-iš rōr na.
pē aft kas-an,
ēšīnan na,
aḷḷā iṣ dās-ē ba šan na.
 There was a certain man who,
 There was a certain man who had a wife,
He hadn't any children;
 A man had just a wife.
 He tried to have children,
 He tried to have children,
He didn't have any.
 So he went and married another wife.
 Time went by,
 One year, two years,
He didn't have any.
 Then he married another wife.
 In all, he married seven of them.
 Seven wives,
He didn't have any children.
 Even with all seven [wives],
 That are these ones,
God hadn't given them any.

In the text above, the pattern of positive-negative parallels its semantic content. A man makes repeated attempts, but then always experiences setbacks. In the text structure, this collocation is substantiated in two or three positive lines followed by a negative clause (highlighted above), with the pattern repeated five times.