**THE NEGATIVE EXISTENTIAL CYCLE IN CHADIC**

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Chadic languages, like languages of West and Central Africa more generally, are known to exhibit typologically rare negation strategies. Not only do many Chadic languages exhibit bi-partite negation, there is also a tendency for the second of these two verbal negators to occur after the verb, in contrast to a cross-linguistic preference for pre-verbal negation. This particular study examines the extent to which Croft’s (1991) Negative Existential Cycle (NEC) may be demonstrated across Chadic languages. Furthermore, the study explores the use of the NEC as an explanatory framework in determining sources and pathways of verbal negation in Chadic languages. An important implication of this study is that identification of the B~C stage of the NEC elucidates the relationship between verbal negation and negative existential predication, as well as the relationship between these domains and other domains of the grammar such as aspect.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

In this paper, I consider the applicability of the types and stages of Croft’s (1991) Negative Existential Cycle (henceforth NEC) to the Chadic language family - a family which already exhibits a cross-linguistically unusual negation system. In Croft’s framework, there are three types of languages, A, B, and C that form a diachronic cycle. The direction of change is A~B, B~C, and C-A, where a special negative existential form arises, subsequently comes to be used as a verbal negative, and is then supplemented by a positive existential so that it is restored to a regular negative + existential construction. In brief, these internally variable stages represent historical changes in process as negative existential predication comes to mark verbal negation. Croft’s types and stages are summarized here:

Type A: There is no special negative existential predicate. The affirmative existential predicate is negated by the ordinary verbal negator.

A~B: A special negative existential predicate is found in addition to the regular negative existential form.

Type B: There is a special negative existential marker that is distinct from the ordinary verbal negator.

B~C: The negative existential predicate begins to be used for ordinary verbal negation, but is restricted to specific contexts.

Type C: The negative existential predicate is identical in form and position to the verbal negator.

C~A: The negative-existential- cum-verbal-negator is in the process of being reanalyzed as only a negative marker and a regular positive existential verb begins to be used with it in negative existential constructions.

I find examples of most – though not all - of these types and stages in the Chadic family. However, while some languages fit neatly into given stages, this work follows previous scholarship (e.g. Veselinova 2016) in suggesting that languages sometimes exhibit overlap between types or stages. Beyond identification of the NEC in Chadic, a goal of this paper is to suggest that an exploration of the NEC is illuminative in identifying sources of verbal negation, taking the Chadic family as an example. In Chadic, there is great variation in the expression of negation in terms of phonological and morphological form as well as the number of markers used in negative constructions. Existential predication appears to be one pathway through which new forms come to serve as verbal negators.

All data included in this paper comes from published grammars. According to Glottolog (Hammarström et al. 2018), there are roughly 200 Chadic languages. These are spoken across Northern Nigeria, Southern Niger, Southern Chad, the Central African Republic, and parts of Northern Cameroon. Of these, there exist an approximate 60 published grammars or grammatical sketches. Following Newman 2000, these languages can be divided into four subgroups: Western, Central, Eastern, and Masa. There is an unequal distribution of languages across the family with the largest numbers belonging to the Western and Central subfamilies and a mere ten languages belonging to Masa. Scholarship has largely favored Western and Central languages and these comprise the majority of languages presented in this paper. The languages included herein were selected primarily through convenience. Upon perusal of the approximate 30 grammars available to me, I was able to determine evidence of the cycle in 12 of these languages, three from the Western branch, eight from Central, one from East, and none from Masa. Some grammars were published several decades ago, meaning the level of description and inclusion of evidence fell below contemporary standards; namely, some grammars include glossless examples with little to no accompanying contextual information. In cases where there are no glosses, I have reconstructed them myself.

The organization of the paper is as follows. I begin with a brief introduction of interesting issues within the Chadic negation system. This is followed by a presentation of examples of languages within each of the types and stages of the NEC. I then submit some examples of languages that do not fit neatly into any one type or stage. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of the data as a whole. In the final section, I propose common sources for verbal negators in Chadic and discuss the merits of including existential predication as one of these sources.

**2.** **NEGATION IN CHADIC LANGUAGES**

Before addressing the NEC, it should be acknowledged that the verbal negation system itself is quite unusual in Chadic. In a study on the distribution of negative word order, Dryer (2009) finds that VO&VNEG languages – those where the negative marker follows the verb - are a typological phenomenon unique to Central Africa (Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, and Chadic) and, to a lesser extent, to New Guinea. Though there are isolated cases of VO&VNEG languages around the world, there is nowhere with such a concentration of examples as is found in these two regions. It has been observed as early as Jespersen (1917) that there is a cross-linguistic preference for negators to occur directly before the verb, yet in Chadic languages, which are primarily SVO, the negative marker occurs not only after the verb, but in the final position of the phrase. In the great majority of cases, the verb may be followed only by time adverbials and interrogatives.

Additionally, many Chadic languages employ bi-partite negation markers, though Proto-Chadic negation appears to have been single-marked in clause-final position (Newman 1977). In his classic study of negation, Dahl (1979) finds that where there is bi-partite negation in his sample, the two negators nearly always surround the verb. He takes this to suggest a general tendency for negatives to occur as close to the finite element of the phrase as possible. Yet this rarely what happens for Chadic, as the first negator in Chadic often occurs before the subject and the second negator often occurs after the object where the dominant word order is SVO. Indeed, Dahl (1979) cites West African languages as typologically unusual among his sample.

There is still much to be discovered regarding negation in Chadic, including the sources and pathways behind the various forms that occur.

**3. THE NEGATIVE EXISTENTIAL CYCLE ACROSS CHADIC LANGUAGES**

In Chadic languages, given the sparsity of resources and examples provided in grammars on individual languages, it is difficult to get a sense of language change over a long period of time. Thus, rather than focusing on the evolution of negation within individual languages, the focus of this study is on evidence of the stages of NEC across the Chadic language family. .

The NEC, as an explanatory framework, illuminates the relationship between the domain of negative existentials and of verbal negation. Negative existential predicators differ from verbal negators by virtue of the fact that they indicate a state rather than an action or a process; they serve to indicate the absence of an entity and to pragmatically remove a referent from the scene (Veselinova 2013). Verbal negation, on the other hand, refers to the negation of declarative phrase with a verbal predicate in the sense of Dahl (2010) and Miestamo (2005). Given the differing functions, these domains are constantly distinguished, though also interact closely. In this section, I present examples of Chadic languages that fit each of the types and stages of the NEC.

**3.1 Type A**

In Type A languages there is no special negative existential predicator, but the negation of the affirmative existential is performed by the verbal negator. This is common in Chadic languages. In Pa’anci, a West Chadic language, the affirmative existential *ani* occurs with the regular verbal negator *wa* to negate existence as in (1a). The negator *wa* also occurs in final position in utterances with verbs and is post-posed only by a sentence-level emphatic particle *na* as in (1b)*.* Skinner (1979: 102) notes that *ani* is derived from a “locative verb feature bundle” *ánà,* followed by an associative preposition *i.* (1c) is an example of an affirmative existential utterance.

(1)Pa’anci

1. ***ani***  *ambi*  ***wa***

one.CONT.ASSC water NEG

‘There is no water.’[[1]](#footnote-1) (Skinner 1979: 102)

b. *ná munde na dava* ***wa***  *na*

3SG say 3SG come NEG EMPH

‘He said he didn’t come.’ (Skinner 1979: 150)

c. ***ani***  *aci aɦari pangwa*

one.CONT.ASSC guinea-corn inside corn-bin

‘There is guinea corn in the bin.’ (Skinner 1979: 102)

It should be noted that *ani* and *wa* occur at opposite ends of the phrase. The distance of the verbal negator from the existential predicate suggests the separate functional domains of negation and existential predication, making the frequency of Type A understandable.

In Gidar, a Central Chadic language, the affirmative existential verb *tɑ̀* (from the copula) must co-occur with the verbal negator *ɓà* in order to mark negative existence as in (2a). The marker *tà* is purely existential and does not code existence in a location. All negative clauses in Gidar are marked by the clause final particle *ɓà* as in (2b). (2c) is an example of an affirmative existential utterance.

(2) Gidar

1. *ɗə́f*  ***tà****-y    án        də̀-dàw            kàyí-t* ***ɓà***  
   man    be-3M    REL    3M-D.PROG    want-3F    NEG  
   ‘There is no man who wants her.’ (Frajzyngier 2008: 208)

b. *mə́ɓlìy    də̀-dàw        dáw    sá* ***ɓà***

chief    3M-D.PROG    walk    even   NEG

‘The chief didn’t even walk.’ (Frajzyngier 2008: 261)

c. *ɗíi* ***tà****-N        də́-dà(w)            káí-tə́-nì*  
 men    be-3PL     3M-D.PROG        want-3F-PL   
 ‘There are many men who desire her.’ (Frajzyngier 2008: 208)

As there is no special negative existential form in Gidar, it is clearly a Type A language.

**3.2 A~B**

In this synchronically variable stage, there is a special negative existential form in addition to the regular negative existential form. Croft (1991: 7) describes the special negative existential as “usually but not always a contraction or fusion of the verbal negator and the positive existential form”.

In Hausa, a West Chadic language, there are two negative existential forms, *bâ* and *bābù,* shown in (3a), which are distinct in quantity and tone from the verbal negators *bà…ba* used in tense, aspects, and moods other than continuous and subjunctive, as in (3b). In negative continuous utterances, the verbal negator is *bā*. Generally, the two negative existentials may be used interchangeably, though the former occurs more frequently when there is a nominal predicate. When there is no overt object, only *bābù* can be used. The word *bābù* is also sometimes used colloquially to mean ‘no’, often as an elliptical response or as a sign of disagreement. The affirmative existentials in Hausa, *àkwai* and *dà*, as in (3c) and (3d) bear no resemblance to the negative existentials nor to the verbal negators. However, like the negative existential predicator, both occur in phrase-initial position.[[2]](#footnote-2)

(3) Hausa

1. ***bābù/ bâ*** *sauran àbinci*

NEG.EX other food

‘There is no food remaining.’[[3]](#footnote-3) (Newman 2000: 179)

b. ***bà***  *zā mù biyā sù* ***ba***

NEG FUT 3PL pay 3PL NEG

‘We will not pay them.’ (Newman 2000: 357)

***c. àkwai*** *wani bā̀kō à kōfā̀*

EXIST INDEF stranger PREP door

‘There is a stranger at the door.’ (Newman 2000: 178)

d. ***dà***  *kuɗɪ*

EXIST money

‘There is money.’ (Newman 2000: 178)

In Hausa, then, there is a second negative existential form, but there is no evidence that this is the result of fusion with an affirmative existential. Newman (2000) addresses the dispute regarding the relation between *bābù* and *bâ*. Some, such as Eulenberg (1971) take *bābù* as the original and *bâ* to be a phonologically reduced form. Newman (1971), however, proposes that the source for this alternate form *bābù* is a fusion *bâ* *‘*NEG*’ + ābù* ‘thing’, a change attested in other Chadic languages as well. As evidence against *bābù* as basic, he cites the fact that it takes independent rather than object pronouns as its complement. Additionally, Newman notes that *bâ* might have been borrowed from Kanuri, as the negative existential therein is of the same shape.

It is possible that *bâ* is losing its distinction as a negative existential, given its resemblance to the clause-initial verbal negator *bà,* lending to the fusion of a new form *bābù* to be preferred in certain areas of the grammar as a solution to ambiguity. Evidence for this lays in the use of *bābù* in emphatic utterances, as in dispute and disagreement. Croft (1991) discusses the “close diachronic association” between negative existentials, negative interjections and verbal negators in connection with this stage. Hausa is of A~B because there is a second negative existential form which has some restricted uses.

In Lele, an East Chadic language, the locative anaphora, *màní[[4]](#footnote-5),* used to mark affirmative existence, as in (4a) and (4b). This form can be negated by the verbal negator, *ɗé*, as in (4c), in accordance with Type A. Additionally, there is a form *wíléŋ* ‘lack’ which serves as a negative existential, as in (4d).

(4) Lele

1. *kùmnó* ***màní***

God    there

   'God exists' (Frajzyngier 2001: 196)

b. *ɗíglè    káŋ    kàsà* ***màní***

    year    DEM    corn    there

   'there is corn this year' (Frajzyngier 2001: 196)

c. *kùmnó* ***màní******ɗé***

    God    exist    NEG

    'God does not exist' (Frajzyngier 2001: 196)

d. *kùmnó* ***wíléŋ***

    God    not exist

    'God does not exist' (Frajzyngier 2001: 196)

Given that the form *màní…ɗé* can be substituted for *wíléŋ* in the same utterance, there does not appear to be restriction of these forms.

**3.3 Type B**

In Type B there is a special negative existential marker which is distinct from the verbal negator. Muyang, a Central Chadic language, is exemplary of this type. Here, the negative existential *bī* differs from the affirmative existential, as in (5a), and the existential *bù*, as in (5b) differs from the verbal negator *dò*, as in (5c)*.*

(5) Muyang

1. *ā-****bī***

3SG-NEGEX

‘He/she is not there.’ or ‘there isn’t any.’ (Smith & Gravina 2010: 118)

b. *ā-****bù***

3SG-EXIST

‘He/she is there.’ or ‘there is some.’ (Smith & Gravina 2010: 118)

c. *kā-ɮāx* ***dò***

2SG-roar  NEG

‘You do not cry out.’ (Smith & Gravina 2010: 27)

A perhaps less obvious example of a language belonging to Type B is Mina, a Central Chadic language where the negative existential construction appears to be diachronically young. Verbal negation in Mina is marked by a clause final particle *skù* as in (6a). The verbal negator has scope over the entity immediately preceding it. The affirmative existential *ɗáhà* (often shortened to *ɗá*) must co-occur with the verbal negator *skù* to create a negative existential predicate as in (6b). 6c

(6) Mina

1. *á    tì-y-á-h        hà    nék* ***skù***

3SG    see-GO-2SG      2SG    good    NEG

‘He does not see you as a good person.’ (Frajzyngier & Johnston 2005: 234)

b. *kó        mə̀    lə́ɓ-yíì* ***ɗá    skù***

    QUANT    REL    wet-PL       EXIST  NEG

    ‘Not even one [page] was wet.’ (Frajzyngier & Johnston 2005: 79)

c

*tèbéŋ        tə́    ndìr*  ***ɗáhà***

    granary    GEN    sorghum    EXIST

    ‘There is a granary of sorghum’ (Frajzyngier & Johnston 2005: 55)

d.

(Frajzyngier & Johnston 2005: 269)

It appears from the available data that *ɗá skù* is coming to serve as its own lexical unit. Evidence for this is provided by (6d) where *ɗá skù* can constitute a complete clause. Haspelmath (1997) finds that it is not uncommon for negative existentials to perform the function of indefinite pronouns in many Oceanic languages.

Though the negative existential form here is transparent, it appears to be stable.

**3.4 B~C**

Croft (1991: 9) calls this synchronic variable stage “the most important step in support of our hypothesis” and it certainly seems to generate the most interesting questions. Here, the negative existential predicator begins to be used for ordinary verbal negation. The negative existential may compete with the verbal negator, sometimes being used instead of it.

Hdi, a Central Chadic language, is probably the best example of this stage. Here, verbal negation is typically marked by *á …**wà/wù* as in (7a). The forms *wà* and *wù* are free variants though some speakers show preference for one or the other. The affirmative existential is *màmú* (sometimes reduced to *màá)* and cannot occur with the verbal negator, as in (7b). In order to negate existence, the form *xàɗú*‘lack’ is used with a single negative marker at the end of the clause, as in (7c).

7d7e

(7) Hdi

1. *ɗvà* ***‘á*** *xdí-xà tá l’école* ***wù****, ká-’á*

like neg Hdi-pl obj school (Fr.) neg comp-3sg

‘Hdi do not like school,” he said.’ (Frajzyngier & Shay 2002: 458)

b. *índà    dimanche        ná* ***màmú****marriage    ndánà*

        every    Sunday (Fr.)    comp    EXIST   marriage    now

        ‘Every Sunday there is a marriage now.’ (Frajzyngier & Shay 2002: 476)

c. ***xàɗú****ìmí* ***wà***

        lack    water   neg

        ‘There are no rains.’ (Frajzyngier & Shay 2002: 71)

d. ***xàɗ****-ká kà      ǹghá    tsá****wà***

        lack-2sg    seq    look    def    neg

 ‘You should not look at it.’ (Frajzyngier & Shay 2002: 124)

e. ***xàɗ****xə̀ŋ    tà       ksá-f-tà        dágálá* ***wà***

        lack    3pl    impf   catch-up-ref    many    neg

        ‘they do not catch many.’ (Frajzyngier & Shay 2002: 194)

There may be something similar beginning to happen in Wandala, though this is underdeveloped. Wandala is a Central Chadic language where verbal negation is marked by *k* (clause-internally) or *kà* (when in phrase final position). The negator is placed after the verb and before the nominal subject or object as in (8a). Only when the verb is not followed by an argument does the negative particle occur clause finally. Negative existential clauses are formed through the use of *ɓákà* or *ɓáakà* in clause-initial or clause-final position, depending on whether the information presented is old or new, as in (8b).

8c8d

(8) Wandala

1. *tsà-n-á*  ***k*** *nábbà*

stop-3SG-GO NEG Nabba

‘He did not stop Nabba.’ (Frajzyngier 2012: 208)

b. *á yà-wá əә́lvà-á-rwà* ***ɓákà***

well 1SG-COM word-GEN-1SG NEGEX

‘Well, I have no words.’ (Frajzyngier 2012: 327)

c. *ŋán kínì sé à hàyà bà dó nə̀ ŋánnà*

3SG C.FOC only 3SG like FOC man DEM DEF

‘She, she likes only the man that’

***ɓákà*** *péɗà-á-r nà* ***kà***

NEG.EX means-GEN-3SG DEM NEG

‘does not have any means.’ [or ‘only useless men’] (Frajzyngier 2012: 464)

d. ***ɓákà***  *ùrà tà tàttàyà à j-ú g-íyà* ***ɓákà***

NEG.EX person 3PL search 3SG surpass-VENT TO-1SG NEG.EX

‘One does not look for a person to surpass me.’ (Frajzyngier 2012: 583)

The important question that emerges from the data from Hdi (and, to a lesser extent, from Wandala) is what purpose is served by the enforcement of the verbal negator by the negative existential.

**3.5 Type C**

In this type, the negative existential is identical in form and position to the verbal negator, demonstrating “polysemy between negative existential meaning and verbal negation” (Croft 1991: 12). This occurs rarely in Chadic languages, but appears in Gude, a Central Chadic language.

In all TAM in Gude, the verbal negator, *pooshi,* exactly resembles the negative existential, *pooshi*, as exhibited by the negated verbal phrase in (9a) and the negative existential utterance in (9b). 9c

(9) Gude

1. ***pooshi***  *Musa kii     faara*

NEG    Musa threw   stone

‘Musa did not throw a stone.’ (Hoskison 1983: 90)

**b. *pooshi*** *nwanwu də Gyala*

NEG.EX chief at Gyala

‘There is a no chief at Gyala.’ (Hoskison 1983: 71)

c. ***ma****-ka-****mə***  *Musa faara*

NEG-throw-NEG Musa stone

‘Musa did not throw a stone.’ (Hoskison 1983: 91)

This negative completive strategy is rare and exists alongside the more typical strategy of marking verbal negation through use of the negative existential.

**3.6 C~ A**

I do not have strong evidence for a synchronically variable C~A stage in Chadic where the negative-existential-cum-verbal-operator comes to be reanalyzed as an ordinary verbal negator and begins to occur with the affirmative existential in negative existential clauses. As noted by Croft (1991: 19), this is perhaps unsurprising given that Type C is relatively unstable and typologically uncommon. He reasons that the lack of an existential predicate is anomalous in the minds of speakers, leading to the introduction of a positive existential relatively quickly, thus returning a given language to Type A.

**4. OVERLAP BETWEEN TYPES AND STAGES**

Veselinova (2016) has pointed out that overlap between types occurs to a greater extent than perhaps conceded by Croft (1991). In this section, I consider a few examples of Chadic languages where the data available does not warrant easy placement in any one type or stage.

**4.1 Overlap of Type A and Type B**

As mentioned early in the paper, in Chadic it is common for there to exist two options to negate existence within the same language. In the first, a negative existential predicate is formed through a positive existential and a verbal negator (Type A). In the second, there is a distinct negative existential predicator (Type B). Often these forms of negation are used interchangeably, though sometimes the negative existential serves additional functions. The presence of additional functions suggests that the negative existential in these languages is newer than the verbal negator. However, it is not the case in all languages that a clear line can be drawn between what functions are performed by each of these types.

In Ngizim, a West Chadic language, the negative existential *góo* as in (10a) differs from the verbal negator *bái* as in (10b). Consistent with Type B, the two may not co-occur. The form *góo* can additionally mean ‘without’, but is not limited to this meaning.[[5]](#footnote-6) 10c

(10) Ngizim

1. *zaaman Mai Maadi dá-bənci* ***goo*** *ža*

time king Madi STAT-PASS without war

‘The time of King Madi passed without war.’[[6]](#footnote-7) (Schuh 1972: 455)

b. *dee ii Ngwajin* ***bai***

3SG LOC Ngwajin NEG

‘He didn’t come to Ngwajin.’ (Schuh 1972: 455)

c. ***naa***  *mərak* ***bai***

EXIST oil NEG

‘There is no oil.’ (Schuh 1972: 84)

In Makary Kotoko, a Central Chadic language, the negative existential *ɗalá* in (11a) differs from the verbal negator *wa* in (11b) and the two may not co-occur, consistent with Type B. The negative existential occurs in the same position of the phrase as the verbal negator. 11c

(11) Makary Kotoko

1. *nyi ro m-ú gə re əl*  ***ɗalá***

thing:ABSTR MOD:F IRR-1SG say 2PL:IO NEUT:3SG:F not.exist

‘I don’t have anything to say to you.’ (lit. thing that I say to you doesn’t exist) (Allison 2012: 357)

b. *n-gə̀-dan         dó        he* ***wa***

MOD:M-POSS-3PL     DET:F       L.P.     NEG

‘His father was sick.’ (lit. he didn’t attend his father’s sickness) (Allison 2012: 363)

c. *wáādə* ***nda***  *lə* ***wa*** *ɗe halâs*

trust be.at:M PRO NEG S.R. okay

‘If you don’t trust me then okay (never mind)’ (Allison 2012: 21)

It is unclear whether these languages should belong to the A~B stage. An argument against including them there is that there is no evidence that the special negative existential forms are contextually restricted.

**4.2 A~B and B~C**

Buwal, a central Chadic language, does not fit neatly into any one variable stage. Viljoen (2013: 293) is the only Chadic author to directly address the NEC, noting that Buwal is somewhere between Type A and Type C.

In Buwal, the verbal negator is *kʷáw* as in (12a)and the affirmative existential marker is *akā* as in (12b). These two forms have fused to create the negative existential *áskʷāw/ ákʷāw* in (12c). The combination *aká skʷāw[[7]](#footnote-10)* is still found with the same meaning as *áskʷāw/ ákʷāw*, but the former occurs with less frequency than the latter. The emergence of this special negative existential form is consistent with the stage A~B.

12d. Viljoen (2013: 293) notes that Buwal is clearly not a Type C language as she has 22 examples of a 765 example corpus of verbal clauses demonstrating that the combination *aká skʷāw* can also be used for verbal negation, as in (12e).

(12) Buwal

1. *sā- ndā āká á dámāw* ***kʷáw***

1SG.SBJ- go ACC PREP1 bush NEG

‘I didn’t come back from the bush.’ (Viljoen 2013: 167)

b. *béɮē nxʷā-jé*  ***ákā***

enclosure goat-PL EXIST

‘…there is a goat enclosure.’ (Viljoen 2013: 454)

c. *fāgʷālākʷ  zēnéj* ***ákʷāw***

leprosy again NEG.EXIST

‘There is no more leprosy (lit. Leprosy again didn’t exist)’ (Viljoen 2013: 490)

d. *sā-ká-zàm wdā* ***ákʷāw***

1SG.SBJ-PFV-eat food NEG.EXIST

‘I haven’t eaten food.’ [The speaker does not want food] (Viljoen 2013: 477)

e. *á-kā-ndā. á dámāw* ***ákwāw***

3SG.SBJ- IPFV-go to bush NEG.EX

‘She is **not** going to the bush.’ (Viljoen 2013: 293)

**5. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this paper are summarized in Table 1.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Language | Affirmative Existential | Verbal negator | Negative existential(s) | Type or Stage |
| Pa’anci [pqa-NGA] | ani | wa | ani…wa | Type A |
| Gidar [gid-CMR] | tɑ̀ | ɓà | tɑ̀ …ɓà | Type A |
| Hausa [hau-NGA] | àkwai/ dà | bà…ba, bā | bâ and bābù | A~B |
| Lele [lln – TCD] | màní | ɗé | màní … ɗé /wíléŋ | A~B |
| Mina [hna-CMR] | ɗáhà/ɗá | skù | ɗá …skù | Type B |
| Muyang [muy-CMR] | bù | bī | dò | Type B |
| Hdi [xed-CMR] | màmú/ màá | á …wù; xàɗú | xàɗú | B~C |
| Wandala [mfi-CMR] | áŋkwè/ áŋk | kà/k | ɓákà | B~C |
| Gude [gde-NGA] | tə'i | pooshi | pooshi | Type C |
| Ngizim [ngi-CMR] | naa | bai | naa…bai and goo | A and B |
| Makary Kotoko  [mpi-CMR] | nda | wa | ɗalá | A and B |
| Buwal [bhs-CMR] | akā | kʷáw | áskʷāw/ ákʷāw | A~B and B~C |

*Table 1. The NEC cycle forms in Chadic*

I have noted in this paper that Type A languages are common in Chadic; indeed, there are a fair number of examples of Type A languages beyond those included herein. Languages of this type are likely to exist for a considerable period of time due to the high level of productivity where the verbal negator applies to the existential predicate in a similar manner as it applies in negating other features of a clause. Because of the period of time that this stage is likely to endure, it is understandable that there are several examples of this type. There are also a number of examples of Type B, some of which (as in Mina) appear to be diachronically young. Due to the continued presence of a positive existential predicate, it is difficult to find languages that are purely Type B, as the Type A strategy endures.

Given constraints on time and resources, I have not addressed every Chadic language, but from the available evidence, Type C certainly appears to be uncommon. Croft (1991: 18) observes that the rarity of this type “is due to the special status of the existential situation as a 'nonverbal' predication, and to the association of negation and emphasis.” Where this type does appear, it is unlikely to endure for long before a distinct existential form crops up alongside the negative existential-cum-verbal negator.

Generally, it is more common to find evidence of variable stages in Chadic languages than non-variable stages, which is unsurprising given that languages are not restricted to any one stage of the NEC at a given time; as new methods for negating existential predicates emerge, old forms are not necessarily lost, though often become restricted to certain domains of speech. The B~C stage is perhaps the most interesting in that it sheds the most light on the functions of negation and negative existential predicates, particularly the issue of which domains of the grammar begin to make use of the negative existential to perform verbal functions. Among the languages included in this paper, relevant domains include pragmatic dependence and aspect. For instance, in Hdi, the negative existential is beginning to be used to code negative subjunctive in imperfective as well as negative imperfective in the indicative mood. In Gude, though a Type C language, the negative existential performs negation in all aspects, but completive aspect has an alternative strategy in the negative. Miestamo and van der Auwera (2011) find that the restriction of aspectual categories under negation is especially apparent in African languages, most notably those grouped in Nigeria (Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan and Chadic). Additional cross-linguistic evidence suggests that certain aspects, such as perfective, are less compatible with negation (e.g. Schmid 1980; Matthews 1990, though see Miestamo and van der Auwera 2011 for counter evidence). The question of the relationship between negation and aspect, as well as the role of pragmatic dependence, merits future study in Chadic.

**6. EXISTENTIALS AS A SOURCE FOR VERBAL NEGATION**

Finally, an exploration of a synchronic and diachronic cycle such as the NEC has additional merit in identifying sources of verbal negators. Newman (1977) reconstructs the Proto-Chadic negative marker as \*wa in phrase final position. The verbal negative particles of many Chadic languages differ significantly from this proto-form. Some forms are predictable through regular sound change, whereas other forms seem to have come about through different pathways.

In this section, I address some potential sources of Chadic verbal negators.

Cross-linguistically, negation and interrogatives are known to share a close relationship. Interrogatives are far less direct than negation and provide a face-saving strategy with which to express negation. In Daba, a Central Chadic language, for instance, one strategy of coding negation is through the use of the interrogative *vú* as in (13). In Mina too negation may be coded by the aspectually dependent habitual marker *ra* and the interrogative *vù* in clause final position as in (14). Here, not only is negation coded, but also the emotional state of the speaker, such as displeasure or astonishment.

(13) Daba

*dàlà ɗà* ***vú***

money 1SG Q

‘Je n’ai pas d’argent’ (Lit: ‘Est-ce qu’il y a d’argent’) (Lienhard & Giger1975: 86)

(14) Mina

*ngùl ǹə́ zə̀m skə̀n ǹə́* ***r******vù***

husband 1SG eat thing 1SG D.HAB Q

‘My husband, he does not eat my food!’ (Frajzyngier & Johnston 2005: 242)

Table 2 presents similarities between the form of the verbal negator and the form of the interrogative within the same language.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Language | Verbal Negator | Interrogative form |
| Pévé | tsú… mi | mi and su |
| Goemai | môu | Mmoe |
| Buwal | kʷaw / skāw | kwá/skwá |
| Pero | á …m | Á |

*Table 2. Verbal negators and interrogative forms*

An additional source for negation, the lexical item ‘thing’, was noted earlier in this paper with Hausa. This lexical item often combines with a lesser used negative form to create an emphatic negative form. Often, these forms may be used as independent expressions and need not be followed by an object or a complement. These are represented in Table 3.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Language | Verbal Negator | Lexical item ‘thing’ |
| Daba | ɗakun/kun | kə́n |
| Gude | pooshi | Ooshi |
| Mina | skù | skə̀n |
| Kanakuru | woi…u | Wói |
| Ngizim | bai | Bài |

*Table 3. Verbal negators and ‘thing’*

The fusion of a negator and ‘thing’ can lead to a negative existential or to a verbal negator, though if a verbal negator, it has likely become semantically bleached. An examination of the processes involved in the NEC is informative regarding the relationship of these ‘nothing’ forms to negative existence.

There remain several negative markers unaccounted for by these findings. Some of these appear to come from existential sources. In Wandala, the negative existential *ɓákà* has come to occur in the same clause final position as the verbal negator which is *kà.* It may well be that *kà* is a clipped form of *ɓákà.* In Buwal, there is a clear relationship between the affirmative existential *akā*, the verbal negator *kʷáw,* and the negative existential predicator *áskʷāw/ ákʷāw.*

Many existential forms – both positive and negative – also contain d(v) particles which occur in mostly bisyllabic form. Table 4 lists some examples.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Language | Verbal negator | Negative existential |
| Daba | ɗakun/kun | ɗaha |
| Zoɗi | ɗi:….ndi | ɑɗɑ |
| Baraїn | dō | Díjò |

*Table 4. Verbal negators and negative existentials*

In Daba, the negative existential is *ɗaha,* which is nearly identical in form to the affirmative existential in the neighboring language, Mina, which is *ɗáhà.* Lamang, which is to the West of these languages, has the existential form *hà/ xà* and Wandala to the Northeast has the affirmative existential *xàɗú.* It may be that this h(v) or x(v) form is related to the stative locative/general locative form *á* that is attested in so many languages (Uldeme, Gidar, South Giziga, Makary Kotoko, Zaar, Hona, etc.). This d(v) form, which frequently surfaces in East Chadic and some Central Chadic languages as verbal negators, is not entirely clear, but may have been borrowed from outside the family. In any case, verbal negative forms are found in affirmative existentials which supports the notion in NEC that existential forms come to take on and lose negative functions in a cyclical manner.

**7. CONCLUSION**

In this paper I have identified most of the types and stages of Croft’s (1991) Negative Existential Cycle in Chadic languages. Additionally, I have followed Veselinova (2016) in observing that not all languages fit neatly into a type or a stage and therefore it is also useful to consider overlap of types and stages. I have found that negative existentials may sometimes be sources of verbal negators in Chadic, though interrogatives and the lexical item ‘thing’ appear more often to provide pathways to verbal negators in this particular family. I suggest that Croft’s (1991) framework – especially identification of the B~C stages - sheds light on processes of negation and the relationship between negation and negative existential predication, as well as their relationship to other domains in the grammar. In Chadic, two domains of interest are aspect (especially imperfective and perfective) and pragmatic dependence.

ISO 693-3 codes for languages included

Mina hna-CMR

Pa'anci pqa-NGA

Gidar gid-CMR

Ngizim ngi-CMR

Makary Kotoko mpi-CMR

Hausa hau-NGA

Lele lln – TCD

Muyang muy-CMR

South Giziga giz-CMR

Buwal bhs-CMR

Hdi xed-CMR

Wandala mfi-CMR

Gude gde-NGA

Pévé lme-TCD

Goemai ank-NGA

Pero pip-NGA

Daba dbq-CMR

Kanakuru kna-NGA

Zoɗi dot-NGA

Baraїn bva-TCD

**ABBREVIATIONS**

1 First person

2 Second person

3 Third person

ABSTR Abstract

ACC Accomplishment

ASSC Associative

C.FOC Focus

COMP Complementizer

CONT Continuous

D Dependent (aspect)

DEF Definite marker

DEM Demonstrative

DET Determiner

D.PROG Dependent progressive

EE End of event marker

EMPH Emphatic

EXIST Affirmative existential

F Feminine

FUT Future

GEN Marker of modification

GO Goal orientation

HAB Habitual

IMPF Imperfective

INDEF Indefinite particle

IO Indirect object

IRR Irrealis

LOC Locative

L.P. Locative particle

M Masculine

MOD Non noun modification marker

NEG Negative

NEG.EX Negative existential

NEUT Neutral aspect

OBJ Object

PASS Passive

PFV Perfective

PL Plural marker

POSS Possessive

PREP Preposition

PRO Non-human/ locative pronoun

Q Question

QUANT Quantifier

REF Referential

REL Relative marker

SBJ Subject

SEQ Sequential

SG Singular

S.R. Switch reference marker

STAT Stative

TO Destinative preposition ‘to’

UP Verbal extension indicating movement upward

VENT Ventive

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1. All Pa’anci glosses were constructed by the author [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *dà* shares the same morpheme as the preposition ‘with’. While *dà* is only followed by an independent, *àkwai* makes use of weak object pronouns. Furthermore, *dà*, unlike *àkwai* , can never be stranded unless it is followed by *àkwai*; indeed, in some dialects, *dàkwai* has fused into a single word. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. All Hausa glosses have been constructed by the author [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. It should be noted that the primary role of *màní* is locative anaphora, though it is used on occasion to mark affirmative existence as in the examples given. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. It is quite common for negative existentials to have an additional ‘without’ meaning (Veselinova 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. All Ngizim glosses constructed by the author [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. The form *aká kʷāw* is never found [↑](#footnote-ref-10)