Negation in Ewe (Tongugbe) agent nominalization

Selikem Gotah
New York University
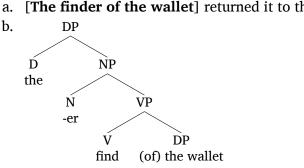Soo-Hwan Lee
New York University

Abstract Baker & Vinokurova (2009) claim that agent nominalization does not project extended verbal projections such as NegP. We show that NegP is realized in Ewe (Tongugbe) agentive nominals. This paper draws evidence from the scope patterns and the availability of NPI-licensing of the negative marker *ma-* realized inside Ewe nominal structures. We conclude that agentive nominals accommodate sentential negation, which poses a challenge to Baker & Vinokurova's assumption. The implication of this work is that agent nominalization can be more verbal-like than what has been previously reported in the literature. We further examine where the agentive suffix *-la* resides in syntax based on the argument structure of the verbs realized in agentive nominals.

Keywords: agent nominalization; negation; scope; NPI licensing; Ewe (Tongugbe)
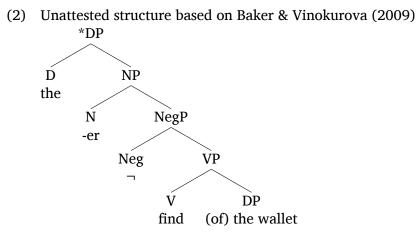
1   Introduction

Baker & Vinokurova (2009) claim that agent nominalization does not contain verbal or clausal elements such as adverbs, negation, *et cetera*. Based on a survey of some languages, they conclude that this finding is universal . If Baker & Vinokurova's generalization is on the right track, we would not expect NegP inside agentive nominals. (1) and (2) provide Baker & Vinokurova's take on this issue. Note that agentive nominals are derived using *-er* in English.[1]

(1)   Attested structure based on Baker & Vinokurova (2009)

a. [**The finder of the wallet**] returned it to the front desk.

b.

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              DP
          ┌────┴─────┐
          D          NP
         the     ┌────┴────┐
                 N         VP
                -er     ┌───┴────┐
                        V        DP
                       find  (of) the wallet
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[1] Section 2 briefly discusses the non-agentive use of *-er* in English.

(2)   Unattested structure based on Baker & Vinokurova (2009)

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                    *DP
                   /    \
                  D      NP
                 the    /  \
                       N    NegP
                      -er   /   \
                          Neg    VP
                           ¬     /  \
                                V    DP
                              find  (of) the wallet
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This raises the question as to whether the structure posited to be unattested in (2) holds in all languages. We, therefore, investigate whether agentive nominals can be more articulated in structure than a bare verb phrase. Ewe (Tongugbe) provides an ideal testing ground for addressing this question. Contrary to Baker & Vinokurova's assumption, we show that NegP can be realized in Ewe agentive nominals. Collecting evidence from (i) scope patterns and (ii) NPI licensing, we argue that agent nominalization can be more verbal-like than what has been previously known in the literature.
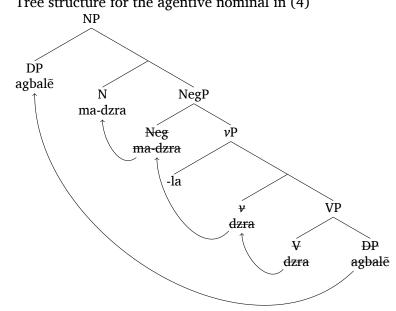
Prior to delving into our main inquiry, we lay out the basic patterns of Ewe syntax. Ewe (Kwa, Niger-Congo) is a member of the Gbe cluster of languages spoken in Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Ewe is an SVO language, allowing SOV in some constructions (e.g. progressive). This is demonstrated in (3).

(3)   a.   Kofi **ŋlɔ̃**   **agbalẽ**.
           Kofi write letter
           'Kofi wrote a letter.'

      b.   Kofi le **agbalẽ ŋlɔ̃**.
           Kofi be letter   write.PROG
           'Kofi is writing a letter.'

Unless otherwise specified, the data for this work are drawn from Tongugbe, a south-western dialect of Ewe spoken in Ghana.

This paper provides evidence that sentential negation is possible in Ewe agent nominalization. In (4), we see that the agentive suffix *-la* is realized together with the negation morpheme *ma-* inside the agentive nominal *agbalẽ-ma-dzra-la* 'the non-seller of books'. We will show that this poses a challenge to Baker & Vinokurova's analysis. While section 5 provides a fuller elaboration on how (5) is derived, here we wish to emphasize that *ma-* projects NegP.

(4)   [agbalẽ-**ma**-dzra-**la**] le giyɛ.
      book-NEG-sell-LA   be here
      'The non-seller of books is here.'

(5) Tree structure for the agentive nominal in (4)

Furthermore, we investigate the syntactic locus of the agentive suffix *-la* in Ewe. We do so by referring to the argument structure of the verbs participating in agentive nominals.

The layout of this paper is as follows: section 2 provides evidence for the presence of negation inside (agentive) nominalization in Ewe. In order to verify whether *ma-* induces sentential negation instead of non-sentential negation, we focus on the scope interaction between *ma-* and numeral quantifiers in section 3. We further examine Negative Polarity Item (NPI)-licensing using *ma-* in section 4. Section 5 provides our analysis on deriving negated agentive nominals. Section 6 explores the possibility of Ewe agent nominalization involving an additional functional projection, namely TP. Section 7 presents cases where *-la* is used in non-agentive contexts. Section 8 concludes.

2 (Agent) nominalization & negation

Nominalization in Ewe often involves verbal reduplication or verbal reduplication with object shift(Clements 1975; Fabb 1992). Nominalized intransitive verbs require reduplication. (6) illustrates this point. The intransitive verb *va* 'to come' shown in (6a) undergoes reduplication when nominalization takes place. The form *va-va* surfaces inside the nominal *nu-fiɛ-la wo va-va* 'the teacher's coming', as shown in (6b).

(6) a. nu-fiɛ-la **va**.
   thing-teach-LA come
   'The teacher came.'

   b. [nu-fiɛ-la   wo **va-va**]   do   dzidzɔ   ne mí.
   thing-teach-LA POSS come-come plant happiness for us
   'The teacher's coming made us happy.'

Nominalization of transitive verbs requires the reduplication of the verb and object shift (Clements 1975; Dorgbetor 2016; Duthie 1996; among others). This is demonstrated in

(7). In (7a), which is a simple transitive sentence, the verb *fo* 'to play' precedes the object *sanku* 'the keyboard'. In (7b), *fo* 'to play' undergoes reduplication (*fo-fo*) and the object *sanku* 'the keyboard' undergoes object shift (*sanku-fo-fo*) in order to derive a nominal.[2]

(7) a. ama **fo**-ɔ   sanku.
         ama play-HAB keyboard
         'Ama plays the keyboard.'

   b. [**sanku-fo-fo**]   vivi-ɛ   ne Ama.
         keyboard-play-play sweet-HAB for Ama
         'Ama enjoys playing the keyboard.'

(6) and (7) are similar in that reduplication is associated with nominalization. They differ with respect to whether object shift is at play or not. The transitivity of the verb, in this respect, determines whether object shift is employed in the derivation.

When negation is applied inside nominalization, reduplication targets both the verb and the negative morpheme *ma-*, as shown in (8). (8a) shows that the negated verb *me-va ɔ* 'to not come' is used in a simple intransitive sentence. (8b) shows that reduplication targets the negated verb as a whole (*ma-va-ma-va*).[3]

(8) a. nu-fiɛ-la   **me-va ɔ**.
         thing-teach-LA NEG-come NEG
         'The teacher did not come.'

   b. [nu-fiɛ-la   wo **ma-va-ma-va**]   do   dziku ne mí.
         thing-teach-LA POSS NEG-come-NEG-come plant anger for us
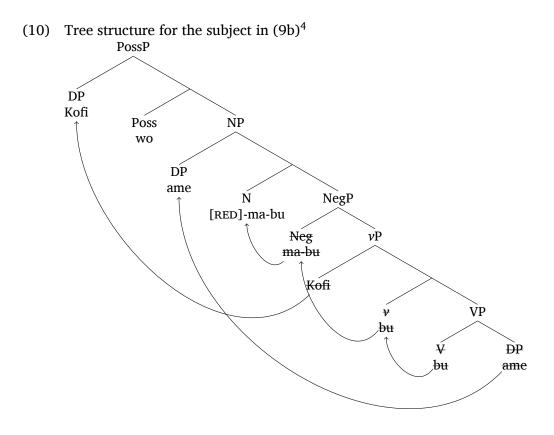   'The teacher's not coming made us angry.'

A similar derivation holds in (9). One difference between (8) and (9) is the transitivity of the verb and whether object shift takes place or not.

(9) a. Kofi **me-bu**-ɔ   ame   ɔ
         Kofi NEG-respect-HAB person NEG
         'Kofi does not respect people.'

   b. [Kofi wo ame-**ma-bu-ma-bu**]   wɔ   nuku   ne mí.
         Kofi POSS person-NEG-respect-NEG-respect make surprise for us.
         'Kofi's disrespecting people surprised us.'

So far we have seen that nominalization is possible only in the presence of reduplication. We posit that reduplication triggers nominalization and that a reduplication feature ([RED]) is hosted by N of NP. We have also observed that *ma-* is subject to reduplication. We assume that *ma-* and the verb undergo head movement to N, where reduplication is applied. With regards to object shift, we posit that the object moves to Spec,NP. This gives rise to the correct word order. (10) provides the derivation for the noun phrase *Kofi wo ame-ma-bu-ma-bu* 'Kofi's disrespecting people' in (9b).

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[2] Reduplication does not target -ɔ. Presumably, this would require a verbal projection other than NegP inside the nominal structure, which we argue not to be the case (see section 6).

[3] Ewe (Tongugbe) exhibits bipartite negation (*me- ... ɔ/o*) in clausal syntax. Collins et al. (2018) argue that the Neg marker ɔ (or *o*) is realized in C of CP. Arguably, the lack of CPs in agentive nominals accounts for the absence of -ɔ (or *o*) in (8b).

(10)   Tree structure for the subject in (9b)[4]

Agent nominalization requires an additional component to the general structure of nominalization in Ewe. This additional component is the agentive suffix *-la*.[5] Unlike the English suffix *-er*, *-la* does not have an instrumental use, since the suffix *-nu* is designated for the expression of instruments. In (11), the Ewe counterpart for *can opener*, which has an instrumental use, involves *-nu* instead of *-la* (*ganugoe-vu-nu* 'a can opener'). The same holds for (12): the Ewe counterpart for *dish washer* involves using *-nu* instead of *-la* (*agba-klɔ-nu* 'a dishwasher'):

(11)   a. can open-er (instrumental)

      b. ganugoe-ʋu-**nu**
         can-open-thing
         'a can opener'

      c. *ganugoe-ʋu-**la**
         can-open-LA
         Intended: 'a can opener'

(12)   a. dishwash-er (instrumental)

      b. agba-klɔ-**nu**
         plate-wash-thing
         'a dishwasher'

      c. *agba-klɔ-**la**
         plate-wash-LA
         Intended: 'a dishwasher' (not a person who does the dishes)

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[4] The movement of the subject DP (*Kofi* in this case) will be justified in sections 3 and 4.

[5] In section 7, we discuss cases where *-la* is realized with non-agentive verbs.

Inside agentive nominals, transitive and intransitive verbs pattern quite differently with respect to reduplication. Transitive verbs, unlike intransitive verbs, do not allow reduplication, as shown in (13)[6].

(13)   a. Kofi va   zu   **dzo-dzo**-la.
           Kofi come become jump-jump-LA
           'Kofi became a jumper.'
       b. *Kofi va   zu   ʋu-**ku-ku**-la.
           Kofi   come become car-drive-drive-LA
           Intended: 'Kofi became a driver (of a car).'

Instead, object shift applies to transitive verbs, as shown in (14a). Note that *ma-* can be realized with *-la*, as in (14b):

(14)   a. Kofi nye **ʋu-ku-la**.
           Kofi be   car-drive-LA
           'Kofi is a driver (of a car).'
       b. Kofi nye **ʋu-ma-ku-la**.
           Kofi be   car-NEG-drive-LA
           'Kofi is a non-driver of a car.'

In the following sections, we examine whether or not *ma-* qualifies as sentential negation. This will further support our claim that negation inside Ewe agentive nominals is associated with NegP.

3 Scope ambiguity

Baker & Vinokurova (2009) claim that NegP is absent inside agentive nominals. In order to question their argument, it is crucial that *ma-* is associated with sentential negation associated with NegP. If *ma-* is associated with non-sentential negation as is the case for *in-*, *un-*, and *non-* in English, our evidence would not pose a challenge to their generalization.[7] This is because non-sentential negation can arguably be realized in the absence of NegP. In (15), for instance, the realization of *in-* and *un-* is not sensitive to the realization of the sentential negation *not* in English. In other words, *in-* and *un-* are independently motivated.

(15)   a. John is (**not**) **in**different.
       b. John is (**not**) **un**comfortable.

For our argument to go through, we must verify the status of *ma-* using diagnostics that can distinguish the two types of negation. Here, we test scope ambiguity using a

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[6] It seems to be the case that a transitive verb stem can only reduplicate when it is not followed by another morpheme. A similar observation is made in progressive constructions involving transitive verbs, where the occurrence of the progressive morpheme blocks reduplication. We leave this issue for further research.

[7] English *non-* does not behave like Ewe *ma-*. Unlike *ma-*, *non-* merges with nouns, but not with verbs:

   (1)   a. a non-runner (N), a non-teacher (N), a non-issue (N)
         b. *non-run (V), *non-teach (V)

This suggests that *non-* is realized only after the noun category is derived. Hence, English *non-* does not pose a challenge to Baker & Vinokurova's (2009) claim. Simply put, *non-* does not participate in agent nominalization.

quantifier and negation in the same context. Sentential negation induces scope ambiguity, whereas non-sentential negation does not. (16), which displays sentential negation, shows that the universal quantifier ($\forall$) can either scope over or below negation ($\neg$), whereas (17), which displays non-sentential negation, shows that the universal quantifier must scope over negation.

(16)   Everyone's not having come to the party surprised me.
    a. No one went to the party   ($\forall > \neg$)
    b. It is not the case that everyone went to the party   ($\neg > \forall$)

(17)   Everyone's ineligibility surprised me.
    a. No one is eligible   ($\forall > \neg$)
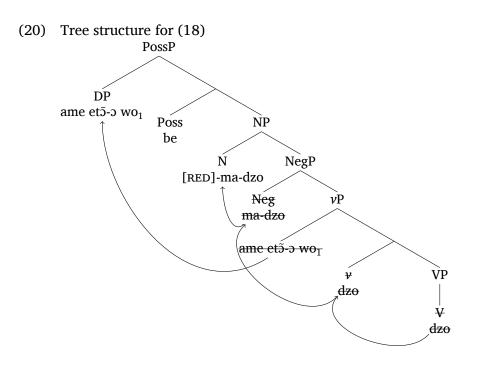   b. *It is not the case that everyone is eligible   (*$\neg > \forall$)

If *ma-* induces syntactic negation, scope ambiguity would result, as in (16). If *ma-* induces non-sentential negation, scope ambiguity would not result, as in (17). (18) and (19) show that scope ambiguity is possible with *ma-* in the presence of a numeral quantifier.[8] There are two possible readings for (18): (i) 'no one among the three people jumped' ($3 > \neg$) and (ii) 'not all three people jumped' ($\neg > 3$). Likewise, (19) is ambiguous between the following readings: (i) 'no one among the three children crawled' ($3 > \neg$) and (ii) 'not all three children crawled' ($\neg > 3$). Both examples suggest that *ma-* is associated with sentential negation.

(18)   [ame **etɔ̃-ɔ**   wo be   **ma**-dzo-**ma**-dzo]   wɔ   nuku   nũ.
    person three-DEF PL   POSS NEG-jump-NEG-jump make surprise for.1SG
    'The three people's not jumping surprised me.'   ($3 > \neg$; $\neg > 3$)

(19)   [ɖevi woame **etɔ̃-ɔ**   wo be   **ma**-ta-**ma**-ta]   wɔ   nuku   nũ.
    child CLF   three-DEF PL   POSS NEG-crawl-NEG-crawl make surprise for.1SG
    'The three children's not crawling surprised me.'   ($3 > \neg$; $\neg > 3$)

The derivation for the subject in (18) is provided in (20). First, reduplication (RED) targets *ma-* and the verb *dzo* 'to jump' after V-to-N movement. The phonological content is spelled out as *ma-dzo-ma-dzo* 'to not jump'. Second, the subject externally merged in Spec,*v*P moves to Spec,PossP (Possessor Phrase) which is structurally higher than NegP. This induces scope ambiguity since the higher copy is interpreted above Neg ($3 > \neg$) whereas the lower copy is interpreted below Neg ($\neg > 3$).

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[8] The universal quantifier *amesiame* 'everyone' in Ewe does not induce scope ambiguity. Negation can take scope over *amesiame* ($\neg > \forall$), but not vice versa. *Amealeke* 'no one' (NPI) is used instead to indicate the other scope reading ($\forall > \neg$). For current purposes, we abstract away from using *amesiame* in testing out scope interpretations. In section (4) where we deal with NPI-licensing, however, the distinction between the two will come in handy.

(20)   Tree structure for (18)

Now we are in a position to address the issue as to whether *ma-* inside agentive nominals behaves like sentential negation. (21) provides empirical evidence that *ma-* projects NegP in the presence of the agentive suffix *-la*. Crucially, negation takes scope over the numeral quantifier in all three examples provided in (21). This is expected if *ma-* induces sentential negation.[9] Note that this is not possible with non-sentential negation as shown in (17).

(21)   a.   agbalẽ-**eve-ma**-ŋlɔ̃-la-ɔ   le giyɛ.
            book-two-NEG-write-LA-PL be here
            'Those who did not write two books (but only one) are here.'   ($\neg > 2$)

       b.   evu-**eve-ma**-ʃle-la-ɔ   dzo.
            car-two-NEG-buy-LA-PL leave
            'Those who did not buy two cars (but only one) left.'   ($\neg > 2$)

       c.   dɔ-**etɔ̃-ma**-wɔ-la-ɔ   kpe ta.
            work-three-NEG-do-LA-PL meet head
            'Those who are not doing three tasks (but only one or two) have met.' ($\neg > 3$)

The empirical picture put forward in this section shows that *ma-* is associated with sentential negation even in cases where it is realized inside agentive nominals. This in turn suggests that Baker & Vinokurova's analysis does not hold for Ewe (Tongugbe). In the following section, we provide additional evidence highlighting the status of *ma-*.

4   NPI licensing

The syntactic status of *ma-* can be further verified using Negative Polarity Item (NPI) licensing. Note that NPI licensing is possible with sentential negation. The English NPI *any* can be licensed by *not* as in (22a), but not by *un-* as indicated in (22b).

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[9] It is not clear whether the quantifiers in (21) may take scope over negation. In this work, we set this issue aside. What is important, however, is that negation takes wide scope, which is a defining property of sentential negation.

(22) a. John didn't lock any of the doors.   (✓ NPI licensing)

      b. *John unlocked any of the doors.   (✗ NPI licensing)

Collins et al. (2018) argue that NPI licensing is possible in Ewe clausal syntax. (23) and (24) show that NPI licensing takes place in the presence of sentential negation in plain sentences: the NPIs *naneke* 'nothing (NPI)' in (23a) and *aleke* 'no (NPI)' in (24a) are licensed by negation. According to Collins et al. (2018), these NPIs, referred to as *ké-*NPIs, obligatorily require negation. In the absence of negation, the non-NPI counterparts *nusianu* 'everything' and *katã* 'all' surface instead as in (23b) and (24b).

(23) a. Kofi **me-**nya   **naneke-ɔ**.
          Kofi NEG-know nothing.NPI-NEG
          'Kofi doesn't know anything.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

      b. Kofi nya   **nusianu**(/*naneke).
          Kofi know everything
          'Kofi knows everything.'

(24) a. Kofi **me-**wɔ dɔ   **aleke** ɔ.
          Kofi NEG-do work no.NPI NEG
          'Kofi didn't do any work.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

      b. Kofi wɔ dɔ   wo **katã**(/*aleke)
          Kofi did work 3PL all.
          'Kofi did all the work.'

Note that the NPI *naneke* 'nothing (NPI)' is licensed even though it is the subject of a sentence as shown in (25).

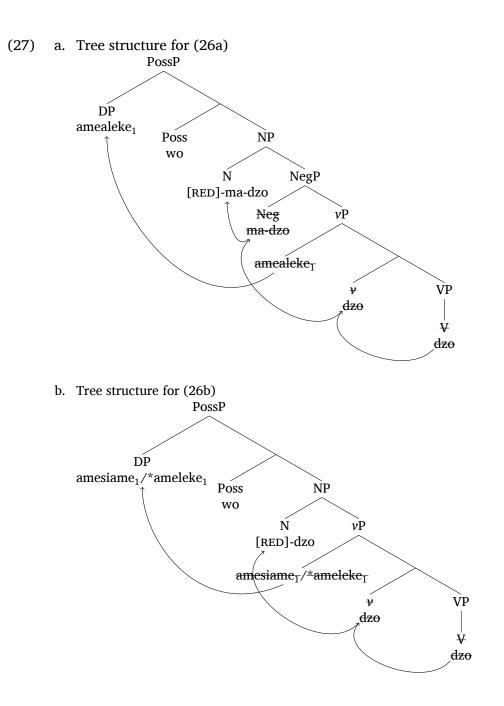(25) **naneke**(/*nusianu)   **me-**le   **o**.
      nothing.NPI(/*everything) NEG-exist NEG
      'There isn't anything.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

Examining whether NPI licensing is possible inside a nominal is crucial for our analysis. (26a) shows that *ma-* licenses *ameleke* 'no one (NPI)'. (26b) shows that the non-NPI *amesiame* 'everyone' has to be realized in the absence of *ma-*. *Ameleke* 'no one (NPI)' is not possible in this context.

(26) a. [**ameleke** wo **ma-**dzo-**ma-**dzo]   wɔ   nuku   nũ.
          nobody.NPI POSS NEG-jump-NEG-jump make surprise for.1SG
          'No one's jumping surprised me.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

      b. [**amesiame**(/*ameleke) wo dzo-dzo] wɔ   nuku   nũ
          everyone(/*nobody.NPI) POSS jump-jump make surprise for.1.SG
          'Everyone's jumping surprised me.'   (✗ NPI licensing)

The derivation for the subjects in (26a) and (26b) are given in (27a) and (27b), respectively. Aside from head movement, (27a) shows that Neg c-commands *amealeke* 'no one (NPI)' in Spec,*v*P before it moves to Spec,PossP. Under this analysis, NPI-licensing is possible because *ma-* projects NegP. In the absence of NegP, however, NPI-licensing is not permitted as shown in (27b). Hence, *ma-* induces sentential negation which is consistent with our findings from section 3.

(27)   a. Tree structure for (26a)

        b. Tree structure for (26b)

The same pattern holds for NPIs inside agentive nominals. (28) illustrates this point. In the presence of the agentive suffix *-la,* the NPIs, *naneke* 'nothing (NPI)' in (28a) and (28b) as well as *aleke* 'no (NPI)' in (28c), are licensed by *ma-*.[10]

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[10] The examples in (28) are not relative clauses (RCs). Agentive nominals are derived differently from RCs in Ewe. For instance, the agentive morpheme *-la* has to be realized in agentive nominals, whereas the relativizer *yɛ* has to be realized in RCs. The RC counterparts to (28) are given in (1) below.

(1)   a. [ame **yɛ-ɔ**   me-dzra naneke-ɔ]   wo-le gama.
           person REL-PL NEG-sell nothing-NEG PL-be there
           'Those who did not sell anything are there.'

       b. [ame **yɛ-ɔ**   me-ŋlɔ̃   naneke-ɔ]   wo-le gama.
           person REL-PL NEG-write nothing-NEG PL-be there
           'Those who did not sell anything are there.'

(28) a. [**naneke-ma**-dzra-la-ɔ] le gama.
          nothing-NEG-sell-LA-PL be there
          'Those who did not sell anything are there.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

      b. [**naneke-ma**-ŋlɔ̃-la-ɔ]   le gama.
          nothing-NEG-write-LA-PL be there
          'Those who did not write anything are there.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

      c. [dɔ-**aleke-ma**-wɔ-la-ɔ] le aƒeme.
          work-no-NEG-do-LA-PL be home
          'The unemployed are home.'   (✓ NPI licensing)

The empirical facts mentioned so far suggest that *ma-* exhibits properties of sentential negation. In this regard, Ewe agentive nominals pose a challenge to Baker & Vinokurova's proposal. Our findings suggest agentive nominals can embed NegP, which makes them more verbal-like than what has been previously reported in the literature.

5   Putting the pieces together

Evidence from (i) scope (see section 3) and (ii) NPI licensing (see section 4) suggests that *ma-* is associated with NegP (see also Agbedor 1994; Collins et al. 2018). We have also seen that agent nominalization derived via *-la* can be realized with *ma-*. Taken together, we argue that Ewe (Tongugbe) allows NegP inside agent nominalization contrary to Baker & Vinokurova.

 Another point of departure relates to where *-la* originates in the syntax. Baker & Vinokurova assume that the English agentive morpheme *-er* is realized in N as shown in (1). This, however, does not capture the precise argument structure of a given verb. We posit that the agentive morpheme *-la* is introduced in Spec,*v*P as an external argument.[11] This is essentially in line with Collins' (2006) analysis that derivational suffixes such as *-er* are verbal arguments. Fábregas (2012) adds weight to this view by showing that the agentive morpheme *-dor* in Spanish is in complementary distribution with agentive DPs inside nominals. This is demonstrated in (29). In fact, the same pattern holds in English (30) and Ewe (31).

(29) a. María limpia suelos de madera.
          María cleans floors of wood
          'María cleans wooden floors'

      b. #La limpia**dor**a de **María**
          the cleaner   of María
          'the cleaner of María'

      c. La limpia**dor**a de suelos de madera
          the cleaner   of floors of wood
          'the cleaner of wooden floors'   (Fábregas 2012: 68)
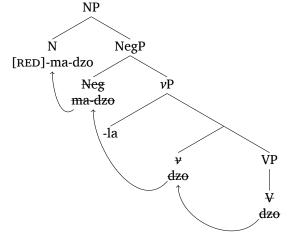
(30) a. John cleans wooden floors.

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      c. [ame **yɛ-ɔ**   me-wɔ dɔ   aleke-ɔ] wo-le aƒeme.
          person REL-PL NEG-do work no-NEG PL-be home
          'Those who did not do any work are home.'

[11] *v*P in our analysis is compatible with VoiceP (Kratzer 1996). Under the VoiceP analysis, *-la* is introduced in Spec,VoiceP.
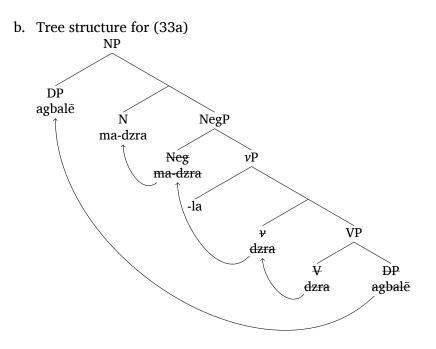
    b. #the clean**er** of **John** / #**John**'s clean**er** of wooden floors

    c. the clean**er** of wooden floors

(31)   a. Kofi tutu-ɔ   anyigba
        Kofi clean-HAB floor
        'Kofi cleans floors'

       b. ***Kofi** tutu-**la**
        Kofi   clean-LA
        Intended: 'the cleaner of Kofi'

       c. anyigba-tutu-la
        floor-clean-LA
        'the cleaner of floors'

The tree structures for the negated agent nominals in (32a) and (33a) are provided in (32b) and (33b), respectively. We assume that V-to-N movement takes place as in the other derivations involving nominalization. *Ma-* participates in this operation as it is realized as a head (Neg). The agentive suffix *-la* is base-generated in Spec,*v*P and thus does not participate in V-to-N movement. This correctly predicts that the reduplication feature [RED] on N does not target *-la* as it is not a part of the complex head. (33a), unlike (32a), does not involve reduplication since the verb is transitive. Instead, (33a) involves object shift: the object *agbalẽ* 'a book' moves to the initial position of the noun phrase.

(32)   a. [**ma-dzo-ma-dzo-la**]   le aƒeme.
        NEG-jump-NEG-jump-LA be home
        'The non-jumper is home.'

       b. Tree structure for (32a)

(33)   a. [**agbalẽ-ma-dzra-la**] le giyɛ.
        book-NEG-sell-LA   be here
        'The non-seller of books is here.'

b. Tree structure for (33a)

The hierarchical position of NegP in (32b) and (33b) is compatible with the empirical data provided in (21) and (28). Hence, it accounts for the scope and NPI-licensing facts in Ewe. One implication we emphasize here is that agentive nominals can be more extensive in size than just a bare VP.

6 Temporal adverbs & aspectual marking

We have seen that NegP can be projected above *v*P in Ewe agentive nominals. In this section, we examine whether these agentive nominals can host a functional projection other than NegP. We focus on whether or not temporal adverbs and tense-associated aspectual marking can be realized inside *-la*-bearing nominals. This will demonstrate whether TP can participate in agent nominalization. Note that tense marking is not a prominent feature of Ewe, as Ewe is considered to be an aspect-heavy language which draws on aspectual morphemes in encoding events (see Ameka 2008 and Essegbey 2008). Hence, temporal adverbs such as *etsɔ* 'yesterday, tomorrow' are often used to indicate particular points in time, as illustrated in (34a) and (34b). (34c) shows an event that is expressed in the present progressive using *ɖ̃u* 'eat (progressive)':

(34) a. Kofi ɖu mɔlu **etsɔ**.
      Kofi eat rice   yesterday
      'Kofi ate rice yesterday.'

   b. Kofi **la**   ɖu mɔlu **etsɔ**.
      Kofi POT eat rice   tomorrow
      'Kofi will eat rice tomorrow.'

   c. Kofi le mɔlu **ɖ̃u**.
      Kofi be rice   eat.PROG

'Kofi is eating rice.'

Temporal adverbs along with other tense-related marking cannot be embedded inside agentive nominals. (35) illustrates this point using *etsɔ* 'yesterday, tomorrow'.
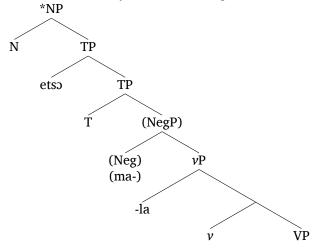
(35) a. *__etsɔ__-dɔ-wɔ-__la__
          yesterday-work-do-LA
          Intended: 'the person who worked yesterday'

      b. *__etsɔ__-agbalẽ-dzra-__la__
          yesterday-book-sell-LA
          Intended: 'the person who sold books yesterday'

      c. *__etsɔ__-dɔ__la__-wɔ-la
          tomorrow-work-POT-do-LA
          Intended: 'the person who will work tomorrow'

The same can be said about agentive nominals hosting *ma-* as in (36).

(36) a. *__etsɔ__-dɔ-__ma__-wɔ-__la__
          yesterday-work-NEG-do-LA
          Intended: 'the person who did not work yesterday'

      b. *__etsɔ__-(a)gbalẽ-__ma__-dzra-__la__
          yesterday-book-NEG-sell-LA
          Intended: 'the person who did not sell books yesterday'

      c. *__etsɔ__-dɔ-__ma-la__-wɔ-la
          tomorrow-work-NEG-POT-do-LA
          Intended: 'the person who will not work tomorrow'

The illicit structure provided in (37) is based on the ill-formed noun phrases provided in (35) and (36). The unavailability of a temporal adverb inside a *-la*-bearing NP suggests that TPs cannot participate in agent nominalization. Based on this assumption, we conclude that Ewe (Tongugbe) agentive nominals do not contain TPs.

(37) The unavailability of TP inside agentive nominals

We additionally examine whether tense-associated aspectual marking is possible. The (b) examples in (38)-(41) show that the prospective aspectual morpheme *-ge,* which encodes future tense, is incompatible with agentive nominals.

(38) a. Kofi le dzo-dzo   **ge**.
          Kofi be jump-jump PROSP
          'Kofi will jump.'

      b. *(ma-)dzo-**ge**-la
          (NEG-)jump-PROSP-LA
          Intended: 'the person who will/will not jump'

(39) a. Kofi le dɔ   wɔ **ge**.
          Kofi be work do PROSP
          'Kofi will work.'

      b. *dɔ-(ma-)wɔ-**ge**-la
          work-(NEG-)do-PROSP-LA
          Intended: 'the person who will/will not work'

(40) a. Ama le agbalẽ dzra **ge**.
          Ame be book   sell PROSP
          'Ama will sell a book.'

      b. *agbalẽ-(ma-)dzra-**ge**-la
          book-(NEG-)sell-PROSP-LA
          Intended: 'the person who will/will not sell books'

(41) a. Ama le ʋu fle   **ge**.
          Ama be car buy PROSP
          'Ama will buy a car.'

      b. *ʋu-(ma-)fle-**ge**-la
          car(-NEG)-buy-PROSP-LA
          Intended: 'those who will buy/will not buy cars'

Our findings based on temporal adverbs and tense-associated marking suggest that Ewe (Tongugbe) agentive nominals do not bear TPs.

7   Non-agentive interpretations

In the preceding sections, we have dealt with *-la*-bearing NPs that are only agentive. In this section, we discuss some issues regarding the 'agentivity' of *-la*. In some cases, *-la* can be associated with verbs that do not require an agent, but rather an experiencer. Consider (42) in which the verb *se* 'to hear' arguably assigns an experiencer theta role to *-la*.[12]

(42) nya-se-la
      word-hear-LA
      '(unintentional) hearer'

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[12] The verb *se* can be used to mean 'to hear (unintentionally)'. Hence, *se* can be used with a non-agentive subject as shown below.

(1) Kofi se   flui   be   Ama kpli Adzo wo le nu   fõ.
     Kofi hear unintentionally COMP Ama and Adzo PL be mouth talk.PROG
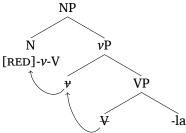   'Kofi unintentionally overheard Ama and Adzo talking.'

This state of affairs goes to show that, like lexical subjects, *-la* can be assigned different theta roles depending on the nature of the predicate. While our discussion is restricted to *-la* that induces an agentive reading, we acknowledge that the non-agentive use of *-la* have structural consequences, especially when we consider nominalization involving unaccusatives. The reduplication pattern observed in (32a) for unergative nominalization is obtained in (43) which hosts unaccusative verbs.

(43)   a. ku-ku-la
           die-die-LA
           'dier'
       b. ge-ge-la
           fall-fall-LA
           'faller'

We posit that the externally merged positions of *-la* in these nominals differ from the externally merged position of *-la* in agentive nominals. While *-la* is base-generated in Spec, *v*P in nominals derived from unergative and transitive verbs, *-la* in nominals involving unaccusative verbs is base-generated in the complement position of V as is the standard analysis for internal arguments. (44) illustrates this point.

(44)   Tree structure for *-la*-bearing nominals derived from unaccusative verbs

   However, we reiterate that *-la* inside an agentive nominal behaves like regular lexical subjects with regards to theta-assignment. This provides a theoretical support to our claim that in agent nominalization, *-la* is base-generated in Spec,*v*P following Collins (2005) (see Fábregas (2012) and Ntelitheos (2012) for similar analyses).

8   Conclusion

In this paper, we have shown that Ewe (Tongugbe) allows NegP inside agentive nominals. Focusing on the scope and NPI licensing facts, we have confirmed that *ma-* is associated with sentential negation. Our findings from Ewe (Togugbe) pose a challenge to Baker & Vinokurova's 2009 claim that NegP cannot be realized inside agentive nominals. In this regard, agentive nominals can be more verbal-like than previously assumed. In order to flesh out the precise argument structure of the verbs participating in agent nominalization, we have emphasized that *-la* is externally merged in Spec,*v*P. We acknowledge, however, that *-la* can be base-generated elsewhere in the structure when the verb does not imply an agentive action.

A Appendix

A.1 *More examples of agentive nominals with NEG*

(45) a. azɔ̃li-zɔ-la
          walk-walk-LA
          'walker'

      b. azɔ̃li-**ma**-zɔ-**la**
          walk-NEG-walk-LA
          'non-walker'

(46) a. dzo-dzo-la
          leave-leave-LA
          'leaver'

      b. **ma**-dzo-**ma**-dzo-**la**
          NEG-leave-NEG-leave-LA
          'non-leaver'

(47) a. nu-ƒo-la
          mouth-beat-LA
          'talker'

      b. nu-**ma**-ƒo-**la**
          mouth-NEG-beat-LA
          'non-talker/quiet person'

Abbreviations

DEF: definite; HAB: habitual NEG: negation; POSS: possessive; POT: potential PL: plural; PROG: progressive; SG: singular

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