

NEGATION IN IBIBIO:  
A SYNTACTIC-PHONOLOGICAL PROCESS

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This paper is an investigation into negation in Ibibio. Although negation has been defined semantically (cf. Lyons 1977 and Stockwell 1977) as a denial of a positive proposition, or a predication that a proposition is untrue, it is asserted here that in Ibibio, negation is a complex process both formally and semantically. Formally, it is a very complex process combining syntax in a way that is uncommon for other grammatical categories in the language.

Syntactically, it involves complex affixation processes determined partly by syllable structure and partly by sentence types. Phonologically, it involves vowel harmony, vowel 'diffusization', vowel clision and tone raising.

Even semantically, it is asserted that for Ibibio the definition is inadequate, since modality and emphasis, as distinct from the propositional content of the sentence, can also be negated. Besides, negation is not always a matter of simple denial.

Cette étude constitue une enquête sur la négation en Ibibio. Bien que la négation a été définie comme étant le reniement d'une proposition affirmative, ou comme une affirmation qu'une proposition est fausse (cf. Lyons 1977 et Stockwell 1977) il est soutenu ici qu'en Ibibio la négation est un processus complexe, soit sur le plan formel ou sur le plan sémantique.

En syntaxe, elle comporte des processus complexes d'affixation déterminés par la structure syllabique et aussi par le genre de phrase. En phonologie, elle comporte l'harmonie vocalique, l'élision vocalique, la diffusion vocalique, et aussi l'augmentation tonale.

Même dans le domaine sémantique, il est soutenu qu'en Ibibio la définition traditionnelle est inadéquate, puisque la modalité et l'emphase, à part le contenu propositionnel de la phrase, peuvent être aussi niés. En outre, la négation n'est pas toujours une affaire de reniement simple.

## O. INTRODUCTION

A review of literature on negation will not be attempted here. Schaefer and Masagbor (1984) have made a fine job of that. From a random selection of definitions of negation, this linguistic phenomenon has been defined semantically as a denial of a positive proposition (Lyons 1977:771), or a predication that a proposition is untrue (Stockwell 1977:40).

An in-depth study of negation in Ibibio, however, reveals that semantically and formally, negation is a very complex process. In Ibibio, as in English, as pointed out by Palmer (1979:24-26) both propositions (or what he prefers to call events) and modality can be negated. In addition, in sentences with emphasis, such emphasis, as distinct from the propositional content of the sentence, can be negated. It is therefore inadequate, even semantically, to define negation simply as a denial of a proposition, at least for some languages like Ibibio and English, since modality or emphasis, as distinct from the propositional content of the sentence can be negated. Indeed Schaefer and Masagbor's review of recent literature on negation also indicates that it is not simply a matter of denial of a proposition, semantically.

Formally, negation in Ibibio is an even more complex process in which syntax and phonology are inseparable, demonstrating once again the futility of rigidly seeking to separate grammar (in the sense of syntax and morphology) from phonology (cf. Hyman 1975:76-78). Furthermore, syntactically, it relates to other categories such as tense and aspect in some interesting ways.

For a detailed description and analysis of negation in Ibibio, we will examine this process in various sentence types, since negation is essentially a sentential constituent, though at the surface level, the negative affixes are invariably attached to the verb.

It is true that there is word negation<sup>1</sup> in Ibibio, as evidenced in the examples in (1) below, where *ndòmò* 'none', which must occur in conjunction with *kèèd* 'one', is used to negate *áwó* 'someone'.

(1a) *Áwó á-mă-dí<sup>2</sup>*

Someone C<sup>3</sup>-Past-come = 'Someone came'

(1b) *Áwó ndòmò kèèd í-kí-dí-ghe*

Someone none one C-Past-come-Neg  
'Someone did not come (i.e. nobody came)'

Even so, the entire sentence containing *áwó ndòmò kèèd*: 'Nobody' is subject to negation as (1c) below shows:

(1c) *Áwó í-kí-dí-ghe*

Someone C-Page-come-Neg = 'Nobody came'

The difference between (1b) and (1c) lies in emphasis: (1b) is emphatic but (1c) is not. Indeed the former is best glossed as 'nobody, not even one, came'.

## 1. NEGATION

Before we describe the various forms and functions of the negative markers we present a chart below which in some way summarizes what we are going to say.

	NEG PREFIX	NEG CONCORD + TONE RAISING	NEGATIVE ALLOMORPH	NEG SUFFIXES	NEG CONJ	TONE RSNG
Imperative	kû-					/
Simple		i-/u- <sup>1</sup>		-CV, -XV, -ke		/
Relative	mé- <sup>2</sup>	i-/u-				
Serial		i-/u-		-CV, -XV, -ke	3	
Concessional	mé-	i-/u-				
Conditional	mé- <sup>4</sup>	i-/u-		-CV, -XV, -ke		
Result	dí-				mbààk	
Reduplication		i-/u-		-CV, -XV, ke <sup>5</sup>		
Tense			ma → ke- me → ø- ya → di-			
Inceptive		i-/u-	di → tónó	-CV, -XV, -ke		
Modals		i-/u-		-CV, -XV, -ke <sup>6</sup>		

(1) [u-] is restricted to only 2nd person singular as a negative concord marker.

(2) The vowel of me- is elided when followed immediately by the negative concord except first person singular.

(3) Coordinate Conjunction nyãñ functions as first verb in serial construction.

(4) Conditional prefix kpe- deleted except in negative hypothetical cases.

(5) Occurs in the middle of reduplicated form.

(6) Occurs on the modal - like first of serial verbs.

## 1.1 NEGATION IN IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

We begin with imperative sentences because they are the shortest and simplest sentences structurally. According to Essien (forthcoming <sup>a</sup>), at this level of analysis, such sentences generally consist of just verbs with no overt subject, as in English. In the positive singular, such verbs bear no affix at all. In morphological analysis, the singular positive imperative constitutes the root of the verb, according to Essien (forthcoming <sup>a</sup>).

### 1.1.1 Negative Imperative Form

The form of the negative imperative is /kû-/ . It characteristically bears a falling tone though in fast and excited speech the contour falling tone can be reduced to a level tone.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the negative suffixes, which will be considered later /kû-/ is invariant in form regardless of the root of the verb to which it is attached as a prefix, as the following examples show:

- |      |         |                     |
|------|---------|---------------------|
| (2a) | Dúúńó   | 'investigate'       |
| (2b) | Kúduúńó | 'don't investigate' |
| (3a) | Kpé     | 'pay'               |
| (3b) | Kúkúkpé | 'don't pay'         |

The plural of the imperatives is marked by the vowel prefix /è/ or /í/ (depending on dialects), which precedes the negative prefix /kû-/ as the following examples show:

- |      |                   |                     |
|------|-------------------|---------------------|
| (4a) | Èduúńó/íduúńó     | 'investigte'        |
| (4b) | Èkúduúńó/íkúduúńó | 'don't investigate' |
| (5a) | Èkpé/íkpe         | 'pay'               |
| (5b) | Èkúkpé/íkúkpé     | 'don't pay'         |

### 1.1.2 Functions

Morphologically, /kû-/ functions as a prefix as we have already pointed out and is preceded by another prefix /è/ or /í/, if the verb is plural. Semantically, /kû-/ functions as a counter-command by which a situation is not allowed to commence, as in (6a) or to continue, if it has already started, as in (6b), respectively below:

- |      |                  |                                |
|------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| (6a) | Kúdep ùredìò     | 'don't buy a radio'            |
| (6b) | Kúdep ùredìò adà | 'don't buy a radio any longer' |

So the semantic function of /kû-/ is similar to the function of what Schaefer and Masagbor (ibid: 36) call prohibitive morpheme in North Ibie.

## 1.2 TONE PATTERNING ON NEGATIVE IMPERATIVES

Although syntactically negating an imperative seems simple, tonally, it is far from simple. Tone patterning depends on the syllable structure of the root of the verb. For the purposes of this paper, we identify three root syllable structures: CVC, CV and CVCV. The last consists of more than one syllable.

The prefix /kû-/ , as already pointed out in 1.1.1, characteristically bears a falling tone. This falling tone can influence the inherent tone of the root of the verb, depending on the syllable structure of the root.

If the root is CVC, then its inherent tone is raised to a high tone, if the former were low, but its inherent tone remains high, if it were already high. Consider the following examples:

- |      |              |              |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| (7a) | <b>Dép</b>   | 'buy'        |
| (7b) | <b>Kûdép</b> | 'don't buy'  |
| (8a) | <b>Dèp</b>   | 'rain'       |
| (8b) | <b>Kûdép</b> | 'don't rain' |

Observe that in the negative both **dép** 'buy' with a high tone, and **dèp** 'rain' with a low tone become completely homophonous under the influence of /kû-/.

To explain the operation of tone on negative imperatives with a CVC root, we hypothesize that there is a tone raising rule after /kû-/. Such a rule applies vacuously if the inherent tone of the root is already high.

In CV monosyllabic roots, however, the tone raising rule operates differently. If the roots have a high or rising tone, then the rule applies vacuously, as in CVC syllable structure changing nothing, as the following examples show:

- |       |             |              |
|-------|-------------|--------------|
| (9a)  | <b>Dí</b>   | 'come'       |
| (9b)  | <b>Kûdí</b> | 'don't come' |
| (10a) | <b>Kǎ</b>   | 'go'         |
| (10b) | <b>Kûkǎ</b> | 'don't go'   |

If, however, the root tone is low, such a tone is raised to rising, as the following examples show:

- |       |             |                   |
|-------|-------------|-------------------|
| (11a) | <b>Nò</b>   | 'give'            |
| (11b) | <b>Kûnò</b> | 'don't give'      |
| (12a) | <b>Wà</b>   | 'sacrifice'       |
| (12b) | <b>Kûwà</b> | 'don't sacrifice' |

Incidentally, there appears to be no verb root in Ibibio, at least in my dialect, with a falling tone.

The tone raising rule does not apply in roots of more than one syllable, as the following examples show:

- |       |                |                   |
|-------|----------------|-------------------|
| (13a) | <b>Fèghé</b>   | 'run'             |
| (13b) | <b>Kûfèghé</b> | 'don't run'       |
| (14a) | <b>Dàkká</b>   | 'move away'       |
| (14b) | <b>Kûdàkká</b> | 'don't move away' |

It should be noted that even in the simplest negation operation at the sentential level, there is an important phonological rule, a rule which can be ignored if one sees negation as a purely syntactic or grammatical affair.

## 2. NEGATION IN NON-IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

While negation in imperative sentences makes use of a regular prefix /kû-/, the same process in non-imperative sentences is more complicated syntactically. But as in the case of imperative sentences, it involves phonological processes as well.

### 2.1 NEGATION IN DECLARATIVE SENTENCES

In sentences other than imperative and embedded concessional clauses, which we shall discuss later, negation involves not just affixation and its accompanying vowel harmony, as we shall see presently. As observed by Essien (forthcoming <sup>a</sup>), it also involves the modification of the concord prefix, a modification which Kaufman (1968:217) sees in terms of reduction of personal contrasts.

Unlike the negative process in imperative sentences, which involves prefixation, negation in declarative sentences involves suffixation.

#### 2.1.1 Negative Forms in Declarative Sentences

The formation of the negative suffixes in declarative sentences is complicated, leading to the various forms of the same morpheme. The form of the suffix depends on the three categories of the syllable structure of verb roots namely CVC, CV and CVCV.

##### 2.1.1.1 Verbs With CVC Root Structure

With verbs of CVC root, the form of the negative suffix is -CV with a high tone. It is formed by geminating the final consonant and harmonizing the vowel of the suffix with the vowel of the root, as the following examples show:

(15a) (Àmí) ñ-nèk únék  
I C<sup>3</sup>-dance dance = 'I am dancing'

(15b) (Àmí) ñ-nék-ké únék  
I C<sup>3</sup>-dance-Neg dance = 'I am not dancing'

(16a) (Ànyé) á-wàt ìmótò  
He C<sup>3</sup>-drive car = 'He is driving a car'

(16b) (Ànyé) í-wàt-tá ìmótò  
He NC<sup>3</sup>-drive-Neg car = 'He is not driving a car'

The roots of the verb in (15) and (16) are *nék* 'dance' and *wàt* 'drive', respectively. In (15b) the final consonant of the root *nék* is geminated to derive the negative from *ínékké* 'I have not danced'. At the same time, the vowel of the suffix is harmonized with the vowel of the root. Similarly, in (16b), the final consonant of the root *wàt* 'drive' is geminated and the vowel of the suffix harmonized with the root to derive the negative from *íwàttá* 'he/she is not driving'.

On the face of it, it looks as if the vowel harmony triggered off by negation is a matter of copying the vowel of the root onto the suffix syllable peak. However, the following examples show that the matter is not as simple as that.

- (17a) (Àmì) ñ-dí-pé  
I C-hide-Neg = 'I have not hidden'
- (17b) (Àmì) ñ nók-kó  
I C-push-Neg = 'I have not pushed'
- (18a) (Àmì) ñ-kùùk-kó  
I C-wipe-Neg = 'I have not wiped off'
- (18b) (Àmì) ñ-bàk-kó  
I C-report-Neg = 'I have not reported'

The harmonic features in Ibibio are those of height as well as those of the front-back behavior of the tongue. Details of these are discussed in Essien (1984:50-51) and forthcoming <sup>a</sup>. The following are the harmonic sets.

Roots	Negative Suffixes
i , i̇ , e	e
ii 0, u, u̇, ə	0
iii ^	^ or 0
iv 0 (phonetically ɔ)	0
v a	a

#### 2.1.1.2 Verbs With CV Root Structure

With CV roots, the form of the negative suffix is -XV or ɔV again with a high tone. In the Ibibio orthography [x] is represented by 'h' while [ɔ] is represented by 'gh'. As in the CVC roots, the vowel of the suffix must harmonize with the vowel of the root, as the following examples show:

- (18a) (Àmì) ñ-me-kpa  
I C-Pres-die = 'I am dead'
- (18b) (Àmì) ñ-kpá-há  
I C-die-Neg = 'I am not dead'
- (19a) (Ànyé) á-tò dó  
He C-come from there = 'He comes from there'
- (19b) (Ànyé) í-tó-hó dó  
He NC-come-Neg from there = 'He does not come from there'
- (20a) (Nnyìn) ì-mé-dí  
We C-Im past-come = 'We have come'
- (20b) (Nnyìn) í-dí-ghé  
We C-come-Neg = 'We have not come'

#### 2.1.1.3 Verbs With Polysyllabic Roots/Stems

This category of verbs forms its negative by adding the suffix /-ké/ (also with a high tone) to the root. Observe that unlike the negative prefix /kú/, the negative suffixes are influenced by the roots phonologically, except in tones. As the examples in 15-20 above and 21-22 below show, the tones on the three categories of suffixes are consistently high. Consider the following examples:

- (21a) **Áwó á-mǎ-fèghé**  
Somebody C-Past-run = 'Somebody ran'
- (21b) **Áwó í-kí-fèghé-ké**  
Somebody NC-Past-run-Neg = 'Somebody did not run (i.e. nobody ran)'
- (22a) **(Àmì) n̄-yǎ-dàkká**  
I C-Fut-leave = 'I will leave'
- (22b) **(Àmì) n̄-dí-dàkká-ké**  
I C-Fut-leave-Neg = 'I will not leave'

The roots of the verb in (21) and (22) are **fèghé** and **dàkká**, respectively, both of which are bi-syllabic.

### 2.1.2 Modification of the Concord Prefix

In **Ibibio**, all verbs in non-imperative moods bear personal prefixes reflecting agreement with the subject. In the examples in (23) below, **àmì**, **áfò**, **ányé**, **hnyìn**, **ndufò** and **ám̄ò** are the independent pronouns, the verb root is **sé** while the prefixes are /**N̄**, **à**, **á**, **ì**, **è**, **é**/ representing the 1st person singular, 2nd person singular, 3rd person singular, 1st person plural, 2nd person plural, and 3rd person plural, respectively. We refer to these prefixes as personal or concord markers. The first person concord marker is homorganic syllabic nasal and that is why we represent it phonemically as /**N̄**/, while others, as can be clearly seen in (23), are vowels.

- (23a) **(Àmì) n̄-sè ñkpó**  
I C-look at something = 'I am looking at something'
- (23b) **(Àfò) à-sè ñkpó**  
You C-look at something = 'You are looking at something'
- (23c) **(Ànyé) á-sè ñkpó**  
He C-look at something = 'He is looking at something'
- (23d) **(Nnyìn) ì-sè ñkpó**  
We C-look at something = 'We are looking at something'
- (23e) **(Ndufò) è-sè ñkpó**  
You C-look at something = 'You are looking at something'
- (23f) **(Ám̄ò) é-sè ñkpó**  
They C-look at something = 'They are looking at something'

In the negative sentences, however, the vowel prefixes, except in the case of the first person plural are modified to high vowels front or back, as the following examples show:

- |       |                      |                            |
|-------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| (24a) | <b>(Àmì) n̄séhé</b>  | 'I am not looking at'      |
| (24b) | <b>(Àfò) úséhé</b>   | 'You are not looking at'   |
| (24c) | <b>(Ànyé) íséhé</b>  | 'He/She is not looking at' |
| (24d) | <b>(Nnyìn) íséhé</b> | 'We are not looking at'    |
| (24e) | <b>(Ndufò) íséhé</b> | 'You are not looking at'   |
| (24f) | <b>(Ám̄ò) íséhé</b>  | 'They are not looking at'  |



It is clear from (24) that the vowel prefixes become automatically diffuse as a result of negation. Since the first person plural is already [+ diffuse], then the morphophonemic rule that changes all the vowels to [i], except in the case of the second person singular, which becomes [u], applies vacuously, in the case of the first person plural. The first person singular, which is represented by a syllabic nasal does not change under negation as the various examples above show.

Tonally, first, we observe that all the six persons bear a high tone in the negative, as we have already pointed out, whereas in the positive, three persons bear a high tone, while the other three bear a low tone. So clearly, the tone raising rule applies, except in this case it affects the prefix tone, rather than the root tone (cf. 1.2). The inherent tone of the root of the verb is unaffected by negation in declarative sentences, as the following examples show, where the root *sé* and *wèt* bear a high tone and a low tone, respectively.

(24a) *Ímá íséhé ànyé* 'Ima is not looking at him/her'

(24) *Ímá íwètté ànyé* 'Ima has not written him/her'

Again, the tone raising rule applies vacuously in those instances in which the tone is already high. So the tone raising rule that we observed in 1.2 is not just an ad hoc rule, it has a wider application than we observed in that section.

Secondly, we also observe that the negative suffix characteristically bears a high tone, regardless of the syllable structure of the root as well as the tone or tones of this root.

In summary, negation in simple declarative set of sentences involves suffixation as well as vowel harmony, a fairly common feature of African language, tone raising and what may be called vowel 'diffusization'.

### 2.1.3 Function

Semantically, negation in declarative sentences denies the proposition of the sentence. It is in simple declarative sentences of the kind we have seen in 2.1.1-2.1.2, that Lyons's and Stockwell's definitions of negation are adequate.

## 2.2 NEGATION IN EMBEDDED SENTENCES

Interesting syntactic facts emerge from consideration of negation in embedded sentences. We shall examine four kinds of embedded sentences which appear to reveal these interesting facts.

### 2.2.1 Negation in Relative Clauses

Relative suffixes in the verb are exactly the same in form as the negative markers. The verbs undergo relative suffixation in the following ways:

- (a) Verbs with CVC roots form their suffixes by the gemination of the final consonant and harmonization of the vowel of the suffix, which constitute a syllable itself, to the vowel of the root, i.e. the form is CV.
- (b) Verbs with CV roots introduce a velar fricative and harmonize the vowel of the suffix to the vowel of the root. That is the form in this case is XV or V.
- (c) Verbs with more than one syllable attract the /ké/ marker as a relative suffix.

As already pointed out, this is exactly how negative suffixes are formed, as we saw in 2.1.1.1-2.1.1.3. Let us now consider examples of positive and negative relative clauses:

- (25a) Àdíkpééb á-dān-nò m̀l̀ ákèrè Èté Ùmò  
Teacher C-live-SA here C-call Mr. Umo  
= 'The teacher who lives here is called Mr. Umo'
- (25b) Àdíkpééb mé-i-dān-nò m̀l̀ a-kèrè Èté Ùmò  
Teacher NA-NC-live-SA here C-call Mr. Umo  
= 'The teacher who does not live here is called Mr. Umo'
- (26a) M̀má áfò à-ké-má-há á-ké-di  
Lady you C-Past-love-SA C-Past-come  
= 'The lady that you loved came'
- (26b) M̀má áfò mé-u-ku-ma-ha a-ke-di  
Lady you NA-NC-Past-love-SA C-Past-came  
= 'The lady that you did not love came'
- (27a) M̀-ńá-kíd áwó â-ké-sínné-ké àbúbít áfòñ  
C-Past-see someone C-Past-wear-SA dark clothes  
= 'I saw someone who wore dark clothes'
- (27b) M̀-ńá-kíd áwó mé-i-ki-sínné-ke àbúbít áfòñ  
C-Past-see someone NA-NC-Past-wear-SA dark clothes  
= 'I saw someone who did not wear dark clothes'

It appears that because the relative or subordination suffixes and negative suffixes are exactly alike in form, only one of them is required in relative clauses. But to distinguish a positive relative clause from a negative one, a negative prefix whose underlying form is /me-/ is added to the verb, as can be seen in (25b), (26b) and (27b). It should be observed that the usual modification of the concord prefix in declarative sentences still applies. As we have already pointed out, such prefix or vowel modification introduces either [i] or [u-] (cf. 2.1.2). With the replacement of the regular or positive concord prefix with the negative prefix [i-] or [u-], the vowel of the negative prefix is elided. Thus negation in relative clauses introduces another phonological rule, this time, vowel elision, which is also a common rule in the Ibibio language. Evidence for the underlying form of the negative prefix in negative relative sentences as /mé-/ comes from examples with the negative concord as a nasal, not as a vowel, as the following example shows:

- (28) Àmí mé-ń-sùà-hà ànyé ń-kpé-ká  
 I NA-NC-hate SA him C-mood-go  
 'I who do not hate him should go'

Observe that in (28) above where the negative prefix /mé-/ is followed by a nasal consonant [n-], a first person concord prefix (unlike 25b, for example), the vowel of /me-/ is not elided. In this regard the derived or surface form of /mé-/ is [m'], after the vowel deletion. The implication of the non-elision of the vowel of /mé-/ when immediately followed by a nasal is that the vowel of /me-/ is elided in all cases except where the immediate following negative concord marker represents the first person singular, which is invariably marked by a nasal segment.

In summary, then, in relative clauses, because the relative and negative suffixes are identical in form, a negative prefix of the form /mé-/ is introduced to distinguish positive relative clauses from negative ones. The vowel of such a prefix, which precedes the negative concord marker, is elided if it is followed immediately by another vowel prefix which in the negative context is either [i-] or [u-]. Structurally, then, the verb of a negative relative clause can be represented like this at least at the surface level: NA-NC-Tense-Root-SA where NA stands for the negative prefix, NC, the negative concord and SA, the subordination marker, which all verbs of relative clauses must bear.

### 2.2.2 Negation in Concessional Clauses

Like relative clauses, concessional clauses have subordination markers, which we represent as SA. Secondly, like relative clauses concessional clauses are negated by the use of the negative prefix /me-/ whose vowel is also elided in the environment of an immediately following vowel as in the case of the relative clause. Thus as in relative clauses, the ultimate form of /mé-/ in sentences after the vowel deletion is [m'], where such a deletion is necessary. The vowel of /mé-/ is, however, not elided when it is immediately followed by a non-vowel, again as in the case of relative clause.

Let us now consider examples of sentences with positive and negative concessional clauses.

- (29a) Ñkóm àmì ń-dó-hó áyákà ámò, í-m-ma-ha  
 Although I C-is-SA relation his NC-me-like-Neg  
 'Although I am a relation of his, he does not like me'
- (29b) Ñkóm me-n-do-ho ayakà ámò á-m-ma  
 Although NA-NC-is-SA relation his, he-me-like  
 'Although I am not a relation of his, he likes me'
- (30a) Ñkóm Ùmó á-ké-nie-he àkák, í-kí-bọp-pọ ufọk  
 Although Umo C-Past-have-SA money, NC-Past build-Neg  
 house.  
 'Although Umo had money, he did not build a house'

- (30b) **Ìkóm Ùmó mé-i-ki-nie-he àkák, á-mǎ-bóp úfòk**  
 Although Umo NA-NC-Past-have-SA money, C-Past-build a  
 house.  
 'Although Umo did not have money, he built a house'

In (30b) the vowel /mé-/ is to be elided because it is immediately followed by the negative concord marker [i-]. In that case (30b) is pronounced like (31) below:

- (31) **Ìkóm Ùmó ñkínfèhé àkák, ámbóp úfòk**  
 'Although Umo did not have money, he built a house'

### 2.2.3 Negation In Conditional Clauses

As in English, conditional clauses in Ibibio "state the dependence of one circumstance or set of circumstances" (Quirk and Greenbaum 1973:323). As can be seen from the examples in (32) below, the negation of a conditional clause involves both the usual negation suffixation and the use of the negative prefix /mé-/, which now appears to characterize negation in embedded sentences. Observe that unlike relative and concessional clauses, conditional clauses do not require the subordination marker. Negative conditional clauses therefore occur conveniently with negative suffixes, which are themselves identical in form with the subordination markers. It appears to be the case, therefore, that in a sentence which should require both markers, only one or the other actually occurs (cf. the examples in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

In addition to the use of the negative prefix /mé/, which is also subject to the elision condition already explained in 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, and negative suffixes, the conditional marker /kpé-/ is also deleted in conditional negative sentences. Let us now consider actual examples of conditional sentences before we make further comments.

- (32a) **Ìnì á-kpé-biyò ùdómó, nám páátì nò ànyé**  
 Ini C-if-pass exam, make party for him/her  
 'If Ini passes the exam, make a party for him/her'
- (32b) **Ìnì mé-ì-biyó-ké ùdómó, dòp úyô**  
 Ini NA-NC-pass-Neg exam, keep quiet  
 'If Ini does not pass the exam, keep quiet'

Observe that the negative prefix /mé-/ must lose its vowel under vowel elision in (32b) so as to derive the ultimate surface form in (33).

- (33) **Ìnì ñbíyóké ùdómó, dòp úyô**  
 'If Ini does not the exam, keep quiet'

Although the conditional marker /kpé-/ is deleted in negative conditional clauses the same marker is not deleted if the conditional clause states a hypothetical case, as (34) below shows:

- (34) **Ìnì ñkápíbiyóké ùdómó, ñkpá yát ésít**  
 'If Ini did not pass the exam, I would be angry'

This, of course, implies that Ini passed the exam. Moreover, (32b) is an instance of proposition negation while (34) appears to be one of modality negation. We shall return to the distinction between proposition negation and modality negation in 3.3.

#### 2.2.4 Clauses of Result

These are embedded clauses which state the result of a situation contained in a matrix or independent clause.

One thing that distinguishes this kind of embedded clause, from the other embedded clauses so far discussed, is that the positive result clause is introduced by one linking word *nnám* 'in order that', while the negative is introduced by another linking word *mbàak* 'in order not'. Another is that the negative prefix is of the form /dí/. This prefix is not influenced phonologically unlike /mé-/ which is, as we have already observed. The following examples illustrate what we have discussed above:

- (35a) *Ùdémé ákâ do nnám áyat ìnì ésî̂t*  
'Udeme has gone there in order to annoy Ini'
- (35b) *Ùdémé ákâ dó mbàak àdíyát ìnì ésî̂t*  
'Udeme has gone there in order not to annoy Ini'
- (36a) *Dí nnám nnèm ésî̂t*  
'Come so that I may be happy'
- (36b) *Dí mbàak ndíyát ésî̂t*  
'Come so that I may not be angry'

So the negative conjunction *mbàak* and the negative prefix /dí-/ together function syntactically to negate "result" clauses. Observe that verbs of such clauses do not require the negative suffixes.

Semantically these elements do not deny the existence of a situation as such, rather they prevent it from fulfillment. We may therefore say that in result clauses negation performs a "preventive" function.

### 2.3 NEGATION IN SERIAL CONSTRUCTION

Serial construction involves the use of a double verb in what is otherwise a simple clause. In Ibibio, the first constituent of the double verb bears the brunt of the negation. As coordination of sentences, negation of sentences with the inceptive aspect, and certain modal constructions involve the use of serial construction, we shall treat these three phenomena as part of serial construction.

#### 2.3.1 Ordinary Serial Construction

In ordinary serial verbs, the first constituent verb in the construction (e.g. *sāñá* 'move' in (37) below) is fully negated. That means it carries the negative concord as well as the negative suffixes in accordance with the negative suffixation principles explained in 2.1.1.1-2.1.1.3. Thus *sāñá* in the serial verb *sāñá kpèrè* 'move near' becomes *ísāñáké*, being a two-syllable root verb. The second constituent verb *kpèrè* 'near/towards' is partially affected by having only its positive concord prefix changed to a

negative one. It does not require the negative suffix. Thus *kpèrè* in *sàñá kpèrè* in (37a) becomes simply *íkpèrè* in (37b) in the negative serial construction *ísàñáké íkpèrè* 'does not move near'. Let us now consider the examples in (37) which illustrate the points we have made above.

- (37a) *Ùmó àsáñà ákpèrè ídîm*  
 Umo C-move C-near stream  
 'Umo is moving towards the stream'
- (37b) *Ùmó í-sàñá-ké í-kpèrè ídîm*  
 Umo NC-walk-Neg NC-near stream  
 'Umo is not moving towards the stream'

Semantically, since the serial construction forms a semantic unity, negation of it also affects the entire serial construction. Thus in (37b) the speaker is not only denying the fact of moving but also of nearness.

### 2.3.2 Coordinate Sentences

Coordination in Ibibio is performed by a verbal element *nyàn* which is inflected for number, person and even tense. It functions as first verb in what is in fact a serial construction. Like the first constituent of a serial construction it bears the brunt of the negation in the second conjunct while the following constituent of the same construction is only partially affected by bearing just the negative concord. (38a) and (38b) are examples of positive and negative serial constructions, respectively.

- (38a) *Ínèm á-má-kòp á-nyàn á-dí*  
 Inem C-Past-hear C-and C-come  
 'Inem heard it and came'
- (38b) *Ínèm í-kí-kòp-pó í-nyàn-ñọ́ í-dí*  
 Inem NC-Past-hear-Neg NC-and-Neg NC-come  
 'Inem did not hear it and did not come'

In (38a), the first conjunct is *ínèm ámákpòp* 'Inem heard it' while the second conjunct involving the serial construction is *ányàn ádí* 'and came', which has become *inyànnó ídí* 'and did not come'.

Unlike negation in complex structures, negation in coordinate structures requires that both of the conjuncts be negated. Thus (39) are ungrammatical.

- (39a) \**Inem amakop inyannọ́ idi*  
 'Inem heard and did not come'
- (39b) \**Inem ikoppo anyàn ádí*  
 'Inem did not hear it and came'

### 2.3.3 Inceptive Aspect

As already observed by Essien (1985) the inceptive marker *dí* does not occur in negative sentences. Instead, there is a switch from the /*dí*/ positive prefix to a serial construction involving the free morpheme *tóńó* 'begin'. Thus (40a) cannot be negated as (40b) but as (40c).

- (40a) Ìní á-dí-wèt ñkpó ntè àwèt ñwèd  
 Ini C-incept<sup>3</sup>-write something like an author  
 'Ini has started to write like an author'
- (40b) \*Ini idiwette ñkpọ nte awet ñwèd  
 'Ini has not started to write like an author'
- (40c) Ìní -í-toñ o-ké í-wèt ñkpó ntè àwèt ñwèd  
 Ini NC-begin-Neg NC-write something like an author  
 'Ini has not started to write like an author'

#### 2.3.4 Modal Negation

Some modalities like ability and obligation are expressed by serial construction or serial-like construction.<sup>5</sup> The ability modality is expressed by a pure serial construction (cf. Essien forthcoming<sup>b</sup>) such as *kàn fèhé* 'be able to run' in (41) below. As usual with the negation of such verbs, the first constituent of the verb, in this case *kàn*, bears both the negative concord (NC) and the negative suffix. However, unlike the negation of the other verbs we have already seen, the negation of a modal serial construction does not affect the form of the second constituent - such as *fèhé* 'run' (in 41) of the construction. In other words it is only the modal component of the construction which is affected in negation. Thus in (41), for example, below, the form of the second verb is *ífèhé* in both the positive and negative sentences.

- (41a) Ìní ákán ífèhé itok 'Ini can run'  
 (41b) Ìní íkànná ífèhé ìtok 'Ini cannot run'

To express obligation in Ibibio, a serial-like construction<sup>5</sup> is used. As in the case of ability modality, the first constituent bears the entire brunt of the negation. Thus *ánám*, for example, the second verb in (42) remains the same in form, regardless of whether the sentence is positive or negative:

- (42a) Ìní áná ánám útóm 'Ini must work'  
 (42b) Ìní ìnáhá ánám útóm 'Ini must not work'

The examples in (41) and (42) clearly show that in negation, the main verbs such as *fèhé* 'run' and *nam* 'do' in the serial constructions that express the modalities of ability and obligation remain unaffected syntactically.

The syntactic observation we have just made above has a semantic implication. In (41b) and (42b), it is the rather than the proposition or what Palmer (1979:25-26) calls "event" which is negated. In (41b), for example, it is the ability to run, not running itself, which is denied. Similarly, in (42b), it is the duty or obligation, not working itself, which is denied. The sentence is best translated as 'it is not the duty of Ini (it is for someone else) to work'. It may be recalled that we observed a similar distinction between the negation of a proposition and that of a modality in 2.2.3.

## 2.4 NEGATION OF REDUPLICATED VERBS

Reduplication in Ibibio consists of doubling the verb root and modifying the derived verb phonologically, if the root has a CVC syllable structure, by deleting the final consonant of the root. Thus in (43), the doubling of the root *dép* 'buy' produces *dépdép* which becomes *dédép*, after the deletion of the final consonant of the root.

However, to negate a reduplicated verb, the final consonant of the root like *dép* in (43) is not deleted. Rather, such a consonant is geminated as in ordinary non-reduplicated case, then the root of the verb is reduplicated to yield, for example, *ñkédeppe dep* in (43b). Let us now consider (43).

- (43a) *ñ-ké-dé-dép*  
 C-Past-buy-Redupl  
 'I bought it (it was not a gift)'
- (43b) *ñ-ké-dep-pe-dep*  
 C-Past-buy-Neg-Redupl  
 'I didn't buy it (it was a gift)'

With CV root verbs, the root is also negated in accordance with the negation of such verbs discussed in 2.1.1.2 and reduplicated, as the following examples show:

- (44a) *ñ-ká-ka*  
 C-go-Redupl  
 'I'm going (rather than returning)'
- (44b) *ñ-kà-há-kâ*  
 C-go-Neg-Redupl  
 'I am not going (whatever happens)'

Similarly, with polysyllabic roots, the root is negated as well as reduplicated, as the following examples show:

- (45a) *ñ-dî-fé-féghè*  
 C-Fut run Redupl  
 'I will be running (instead of walking)'
- (45b) *ñ-dî-fèghé-ké-féghè*  
 C-Fut-run-Neg-Redupl  
 'I will not be running (rather I will be walking)'

Observe that while *fèghé* is modified when reduplicated in positive sentences, it is not modified phonologically in the negative, as in the case of CVC roots.

## 3. NEGATION AND OTHER CATEGORIES

We have already considered negation and categories such as aspect and mood in the section on serial construction (cf. 2.3.3 and 2.3.4). In this section, we want to consider negation in relation to tense and some forms of emphasis:



### 3.1 NEGATION AND TENSE

Essien (1982) has shown that negation (like mood, question, and emphasis) influences the forms of the tense morphemes in Ibibio. In this regard, ordinary positive non-emphatic, non-modal sentences that contain certain simple affirmation make use of one set of tense affixes while negative sentences make use of another set of tense affixes (like sentences with mood, emphasis or wh-question, cf. Essien 1982 for more details). The forms used by the two sets of sentences are given below:

	Positive	Negative
Past tense	ma	ke
Present tense	me	∅
Future tense	ya	di

The examples in 46-48 illustrate the differences:

- (46a) Ìnì á-mǎ-dàkká úfòk  
Ini C-Past-leave home  
'Ini left for home'
- (46b) Ìnì í-kí-dàkká-ké úfòk  
Ini NC-Past-leave-Neg home  
'Ini did not leave for home'
- (47a) M-mé-yàiyá  
C-Pres-pretty  
'I am pretty'
- (47b) N-yàiyá-ké  
NC-pretty-Neg  
'I am not pretty'
- (48a) Ìnì á-yǎ-bét  
Ini C-Fut-wait  
'Ini will wait'
- (48b) Ìnì í-dî-bét-té  
Ini NC-Fut-wait-Neg  
'Ini will not wait'

So negation and tense interact in such a way that the tense affixes in negative sentences differ from those of positive sentences<sup>6</sup>, as the examples in (46-48) have shown.

### 3.2 NEGATION AND CONTRASTIVE EMPHASIS

Contrastive emphasis according to Harris-Delisle "is used by a speaker to mark a constituent as being in contrast with another strictly identical constituent". As Essien (1983b) has analysed emphasis as a constituent of either NP or VP, negation of contrastive emphasis, especially that of NP, may not constitute sentence negation as such. In this regard negation of contrastive emphasis involving NPs does not affect the propositional content of the sentence.

Formally to negate a NP that has been contrastively emphasized, a form of the verb to be dó 'be' is introduced and then negated in the usual way that a verb with a CV root is negated. In the

examples that follow, we shall use the emphatic phrase **ké ídém** + Possessive Determiner and reduplication to illustrate negation in relation to contrastive emphasis (Essien 1983b has discussed four devices by which a sentence constituent can be contrastively emphasized).

- (49a) **Ìnì ké ídém ámò á-ké-duuño**  
 Ini on self his C-Past-investigate  
 'Ini himself (not someone else) investigated it'
- (49b) **Í-dó-hó ìnì ké ídém ámò á-ké-dúúño'**  
 NC-be-Neg Ini on self his C-Past-investigate  
 'It is not Ini himself (it was someone else) who investigated it'
- (50a) **Èkà èkà á-sé áyín ó-fôn**  
 Mother mother C-look after children C-well  
 'Only mothers look after their children well'
- (50b) **Ídohó èkà èkà ésé áyín ó-fôn**  
 'It is not only mothers who look after children well (other people do as well)'

Observe that as in the case of modal negation, the main verb remains unaffected by negation syntactically or morphologically.

Semantically, in (49a) Ini is contrasted emphatically with someone else who could have done the investigation. In (49b) the denial is not of the main proposition as such but of the emphasis that it was Ini. It is implied strongly that someone else did. Observe that the denial is as emphatic as the assertion that Ini investigated it.

Similarly, in (50a), it is emphasized in contrast with other individuals, that it is only mothers that look after children well. By contrast, it is that emphasis on 'only mothers' that is denied, rather than the predication in (50b). It is implied that other individuals as well can look after children. Observe that in either case the NP in emphatic contrast is the subject of the sentence. So this kind of negation may be referred to as topic negation. But topicalization in Essien (1983b) is treated as part of contrastive emphasis.

It is, however, possible to negate the proposition in (49a) and (50a), as the following examples show:

- (51) **Ìnì ké ídém ámò íkíduuñoke**  
 'Ini himself did not investigate it'
- (52) **Èkà èkà íséhé áyín ófôn**  
 'Mothers alone do not take good care of children (they need help)'

Observe that semantically, there are differences between (49b) and (51) and (50b) and (52) respectively, as can be discerned even from the English translations.

## 4. CONCLUSION

To summarize, negation is a very complex phenomenon that combines, in a way very unusual for other grammatical categories in the language, grammatical and phonological processes involving prefixation, suffixation, vowel harmony, vowel elision, vowel diffusization, tone raising as well as some intercategory constraints.

Semantically it is not only a denial of a proposition, as it is commonly defined, it can be a denial of modality or emphasis. Sometimes it is not merely a denial, it is also prohibitive or preventive in function.

Given the complex affixation and phonological processes that we have observed above, Kaufman (1968:217) could not have been serious when she dismissed negation in Ibibio thus.

The negative affix has the shape *ke*  
It occurs as a prefix with the hortative  
construction and as a suffix elsewhere.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Essien (1983<sup>a</sup>) considered forms such as *kʌppó* 'uncork/remove', *ʌkkó* 'uncover' and *kʌppó* 'release from prison' and treated them as embodying reversiveness and word formation rather than negation as such.

<sup>2</sup>A downstepped tone is unmarked.

<sup>3</sup>The following abbreviations are used in the body of this paper:

C	=	Concord
Past	=	Past Tense
Im. Past	=	Immediate Past
Pres	=	Present Tense
Fut	=	Future Tense
NC	=	Negative Concord
NA	=	Negative Affix (prefix)
Neg	=	Negative Suffix
SA	=	Subordination Affix
Incept	=	Inceptive Aspect
Redupl	=	Reduplication

<sup>4</sup>This appears to be the normal tone in Efik, which is very closely related to Ibibio, or sometimes treated as a dialect of Ibibio.

<sup>5</sup>Essien (forthcoming<sup>b</sup>) has distinguished the use of a modal auxiliary from modal serial construction. It is the modal auxiliary that we refer to as serial-like construction in this paper.

<sup>6</sup>Bamgbose (1983:2) has indicated that in Yoruba, the future tense has a set of markers for positive sentences and another set for negative sentences. Yoruba, according to him, could be said to have two tenses: Future and non-future.

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