THE EXPRESSION OF NEGATION IN IGALA

By
Abdullahi Ahmad
Department of English and Literary Studies
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract
The paper discusses negative in Igala using Laster (1976:182) as the model of analysis. Apart from relying on his knowledge as a native speaker of Igala, the researcher also got data for the work from printed materials. Three major findings of this work include: (1) The n negator is not only pervasive but combines with other negative markers to form *sandwich negation.* (2) The paper also notes that some of the negators are complemented with body movements for the purpose of emphasis. (3) In serial verb constructions (SVCs), *ko*is placed immediately after the subject and negates all the verbs in the sentence. It will be worthwhile if scholars conduct more research in the areas of sandwich negation and proximity negation as discussed here.

Introduction

Negation in Igala is expressed by the placement of *n* at the end of the proposition that it negates. This pervasive negator also combines with others such as *ma,* $^{1\text{-}1}$ */ un-unl gbe-gbe-il*^{l}and *ehe* to negate the sentence in which they are used. When *kĺ*and *takpa* are used with *n,* positive sentences are realised. It is also noted that some of the negators do not require body movements when they are uttered. But for the sake of emphasis, others are complemented with the shaking of the head and raising of the index finger or the palm of the hand to indicate dissent when they are uttered. Finally, the paper looks at negation in several verb constructions.

Negation refers to a Construction in which some proposition is said to be false'. (Radford, 1998:517). Hurford(1997:133)holdsaview similar to Radford's whenhe writes that: 'a negative clause or sentence expresses the absence or non-existence of some state of affairs, or the falsity of some proposition.'

Crystal (1983:239) sees negation as: 'a process or construction in grammatical and semantic analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence's meaning'.Zeijlstra (2004:1) says that negation has proven to be one of the topics in syntactic and semantic theories because of the following reasons: (1) 'it is present in every language; (2) it exhibits a range of variation with respect to the way it is expressed or interpreted; (3) it interacts with many phenomena in natural languages; and (4) due to its central position in the functional domain, it sheds light on various syntactic and semantic mechanisms'.

Review of Literature

In English, the most common means of achieving negation is by the insertion of *not* or its contracted form *n 't*as in (2) below:

1. I can operate that computer.
2. I *cannot I can't* operate that computer.

In (2) above, the negative marker *not* comes between the operator and the predication. Where this is not so, the auxiliary *do* is introduced and this, like modal auxiliaries, is followed by the bare infinitive:

3. She sees me every week.
4. She *doesn 't*see me every week.
   (Quirk and Greenbaum, 2000:184).

Negation of infinitives and gerunds is done by putting *not* in front of the infinitive or gerund:

5. (a) We tried *not* to upset her.
   (b) I want you to think seriously about *not* going.

In negating imperatives, especially in official statements, instructions, publicnotices, etc, are not preceded by *do:*

6. (a) Do *not* fill in the part of the form.
   (b) Do *not* feed the animals now.
   (c) Do *not* exceed the stated *dose.*

The full form is also used to issue an emphatic imperative in spoken English:

(d) I will say it again- do *not* touch! *(Harrap's English Grammar,* pp. 159-160).

Other ways of representing negation in English include the introduction of prefixes such as *un*and *non* before positive words as in:

True	untrue
Standard	non-standard

Verbs like *deny, reject* and *refuse* and adverbs such as *seldom, rarely, scarcely, hardly* and *barely* (Klima 1964) are also used in English to indicate negation.

In Esan, a language spoken across four (4) local government areas in Edo State, Nigeria, negation is realised by *bha,* which occurs in constructions expressing only past temporal reference, and *ii* used for present or future temporal reference. (Ejele 1995:259).

In expressing negation in the past, an affirmative sentence such as (5o) can be turned into a negative one (in 5b) by the insertion of *bha*directly before the first verb of the sentence as given below:

7	(a)	*Izehi*	*le*	*ebae.*	
		Izehi	eat	food.	
		'Izehi ate',			
	(b)	*Izehi*	*bha*	*le*	*ebae.*
		Izehi	NEG	eat	food.
		'Izehi did not eat food'.			

In the simple present, negation in Esan is formed by the insertion of the negative marker *ii* directly before the verb of the sentence as indicated in (6b) below:

8	*(*a*)*	*Izehi*	*Oi*	*le*	*ebae.*
		Izehi	she	eat	food.
		'Izehi eats'.			
	(b)	*Izehi*	*ii*	*le*	*ebae.*
		Izehi	NEG	eat	food.
		'Izehi does not/is not eating.'			

Theoretical Framework

The placement of *not* to negate the sentence in which it occurs is governed by "not insertion rule". According to this rule, when the underlying statement contains a helping verb or the main verb *be, not* is inserted directly after the first verb. For example:

9. (a) I will *not* be able to come. (Modal).
   (b) He has *not* been feeling well. (Perfect).
   (c) Amade is *not* going. (Progressive).
   (d) He is not ready yet. (Main verb be).

However, when there are no helping verbs and the main verb is not *be, not* is placed between tense and the main verb; tense is separated from the following verb and the do insertion rule must apply. For example, the negative of (e) below is (f):

   (e) He saw the car.
   (f) He did *not* see the car. (Lester, 1976:182).

Negation in Igala Sentences

This section of the paper discusses eight (8) negator elements in Igala sentences.

The initial four (4) that will be handled are basically verbalised and they may not be accompanied with body movements. They are: *n, ma ... + n,Ko(+n).* and*takpa* (+ n*).*

The remaining four (4) that are uttered and complemented with gestures are: *e-e* (+n), *un - un (+ n), gbe/gbegbe* - ile *(+ n)* and *ehe (+n).*

Igala Negators that are not Accompanied with Gestures

Igala sentence negators that are verbalised and which may not be complemented with gestures are *n, ma ... n, ko (+n)* and *takpa (+n).*

The adverb *n* means 'not.' In its emphatic form, it is realised as *ni*or *noo.* It occupies postverbal position and serves as the complement of the proposition that it negates. Examples:

10 (a) *Oji wo mi n.*
   Head pain me NEG
   I have no headache,'

(b) *Unyi un gwulo n.*
   House his fall/pull down NEG
   'His house has not fallen.'

This negator is pervasive because as we shall see later it comes after other negative markers as a complement. In addition, *n* recurs at the end of the two clauses in conditional sentences.

Example:

11. *E ma wa ujeju n e ki*
   You NEG come meeting, NEG you aux
   kpe one n,
   send someone NEG.

If you are not coming to the meeting, do not bother to send a representative'.

The negative marker *ma,* an adverb, means 'not'. It comes immediately beforethe verb that it negates while *n* comes after. The combination of *ma* and *n* therebyputting the negated verbs or - proposition in between them is referred to as *sandwich negation,* henceforth referred to as SN. (cf. Ahmad, 2012).

Examples:

12(a)	*Ene*	*ki*	*ma*	*wa* [V]
	Whoever	that	NEG	come
	ukolo	*n,*	*ya*	*gba*
	work	NEG,	s/he	collect
	oko	*un*	*n.*	
	money	his/her	NEG.	

'If you do not go to your place of work, do not expect any pay or salaries',

b.	*Eneduu*	*ki*	*ma*	*ne* [V]	*oko-ogwu*
	Whoever	that	NEG	Carry/have	fare
	n	*ki*	*tane*	*kwo*	
	NEG,	aux	get down	leave	
	e/w*imoto*	*i.*			
	stomach	vehicle	this.		

'Passengers in this vehicle who do not have their fares ready should disembark.' Depending on usage, *ko*could be a verb or noun. It means 'refuse' or 'refusal' and comes before the verb that it negates.

When it takes *ehe* as a premodifier and takes *n* after the verb, an emphatic, positive sentence is realised. Examples:

13.	Q:	*E*	*ko*	*du*	*oko*	*wa?*
		You	refuse	carry	money	come?

'You refused to come along with some money?'

A:	*Ehe,*	*u*	*ko*	*e*	*du*
	No,	I	refuse	to	take
	oko	*wa*	*nool*		
	money	come	NEG.		

'No, I did not refuse to come along with some money'. *Takpa* is a verb that means 'finish'. As a negator (in 14a) it is an intransitive verb, but when it takes *n* (in 14b) a positive sentence is realised. Example:

14 (a)	*Obobo/Obo*	*mi*	*takpa.*	
	Soup	my	finish.	
	'My soup has been used up.'			
(b)	*Obobo*	*mi*	*takpa*	*ta*	*n.*
	Soup	my	finish	yet	NEG.
	'I am yet to finish eating my soup'.				

Negators that are Complemented with Body Movements

The negator elements that will be discussed here are complemented with gestures such as shaking of the head both ways, with the eyes widely open and raising of the forefinger - all to show disagreement or dissent.

E - *e*is an interjection that means 'no'. Its positive counterpart is either *e* - *e* or /-/, and it means yes. It is always an answer to a polar question which could come alone or combines with *n* to form SN. Example:

15.	Q:	*E*	*fu*	*eun*	*je*	*me?*
		You	aux	something	eat	yet?

'Have you eaten?'

A: *E-e,* *u* *feun* *ta* *n.*
No, I eat yet NEG
'No, I have not eaten.'

Un - un is an interjection that means 'no'. It is a reduplicate of the positive counterpart, that is, *un*which means yes. Like the immediate preceding negator, it is preverbal; it is a response to polar questions and does combine with *n* to realize SN. Example:

16. Q: *E* *fu* *alu* *gwe* *me?*
You aux mouth wash yet?
'Have you brushed your teeth?'

A: *Un-un,* *u* *gwe* *alu*
No, I wash mouth
ta *n.*
yet NEG.
'No, I am yet to brush my teeth,'

Gbe/Gbegbe-ile is an interjection; it means 'never.' It could come before or after the verb it negates. It admits *n* at the end of the sentence to realise SN. Example:

17. Q: *E* *gba* *ibe* *ene* *i?*
You accept idea/view/opinion someone this?
'Will you accept this person's opinion (on this matter)?'

A: (Preverbal): *Gbe,* *it* *gba*
Never, I accept
ibe *un* *n.*
idea with NEG
'I will never accept his opinion.'

(Post-verbal): *U* *gba* *ibe*
I accept idea
un *gbegbe-ile* *n.*
him never-world NEG
'I will never accept his opinion/

Ehe is an interjection that means 'no'. It is used to express flat denial when one is (wrongly) accused of being responsible for committing a bad act. It premodifies the proposition that it negates and combines with *n* to realise SN.

Example:

18. Q: *Ochedi* *uwe* *kpo* [SpV]
Ochedi, you break
[ege *ajuwe* *i]* [NP]
egg hen this
fo[SpV] i?
mix this ?

'Ochedi, are you the one responsible for breaking this chicken's egg(s)?'

A: *Ehe,* *i* *che* *omi*
No it do I
Kpo[$pV] *[ege* *ajuwe*
break egg hen
le][NP] fo[SpV] *noo,*

that mix NEG
Owo *mi* *do*
Hand my among
noo. NEG

'No, I did not break any chicken egg(s). I have no hand in that act.' Note that in 18 above, *kpofo* is a compound verb that has split into two halves. Hence, *kpo* and *fo*are bearing the SpV abbreviation. (See the first page). And for more clarification, the phrases sandwiched between parts of the verb are marked off in single square brackets. (See Ahmad, 2012).

Negation in Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs)
SVCs are strings consisting of verbs that stand next to each other without an overt connector. These verbs do not have their own individual subjects. Rather, they share a common subject. According to the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Serial Verb construction is a string of verbs or verb phrases within a single clause that express simultaneous or immediately consecutive actions, have a single grammatical subject, have no connective markings and are marked or understood as having the same grammatical categories such as aspect, modality, negativity or positivity, and tense. (SIL, as cited in Omachonu, 2006: 239)

Igala negative markers, as they apply to SVCs, can be categorised into three. One, *ko,* this time not pairing with w, negates other verbs that come after it in the sentence. This is exemplified below:

19. I *ko* *gba* *akpa*
He refuse pour maize
nyu *efu* *akpulu..*
into stomach sack..
'He has refused to pour the maize into the sack.'

The second category is that of *n* which negates only the verb that comes immediately before it. Example:

20. Audu *la* *akala* *du*
Audu buy bean cake take
wa *fe* *noo,*
come eat NEG
'Audu did not buy bean cake for consumption.' (Omachonu, 2006:242).

Since *n* negates the verb nearest to it, we will refer to this scenario as *proximity negation.* (PN).
The third category relates to the negators that combine with *n* to sandwich the verb phrase and negate the whole set of verbs. They include, *ma... n,e-e ... n, un - un ... n, gbe/gbegbe~ile ... n* and *ehe ... n.* Examples for each are given (in 21 a-e) below:

21 (a) *Ene* *ki* *ma*
Whoever that NEG
la *akala* *du* *wa*
buy bean cake take come
je *emi* *n,* *i*
eat here NEG, he
lia *gba* *el.*

come take this.
'Whoever has not bought cake for consumption here should come and take some.'

b. Q: *Uwe,* *iga* *e* du
You, net you take
Kpa *eja* *wa* *unyi?*
kill/catch *fish* *come* *home?*
'Did you catch the fish that you brought home with net ?'
A: *E-e,* *u* *du* *iga*
No I take net
kpa *eja* *wa* *unyi*
kill/catch fish come house
noo.
NEG
'No, I did not use net to catch fish for domestic consumption.'

c. Q: *Ma* *lia* *fu* *oje* *je* *me?*
They come aux food eat yet?
'Have they come to eat their food?'
A: *Un-un, ma* *wa,*
No, they come.
je *oje* *ta* *n.*
eat food yet NEG.
'No, they are yet to come and eat their food.'

d. Q: Ibo ki uwe kpai
those that you with
ama raro onale
them quarrel yesterday
che *wa* *gwa* we
do come greet you
unyi *we?*
house your?
'Have those with whom you had some misunderstanding yesterday cared to come and greet you in your house?'
A: *Gbe,* *ma* *neke* *na*
Never, they can stop-over
wa *gwa* *mi* *ge* *noo.*
come greet me again NEG
'Never, they dare not think of stopping over to greet me any longer.'

e. Q: *Ere* *ma* *le* *lo*
Leg they walk go
tu *Gbobe?*
to Gbobe?
'Did they go to Gbobe on foot?'
A: *Ehe,* *ma* *le* *ere*
No, they walk leg
lo *tu* *Gbobe* *noo.*

go to Gbobe NEG
'No, they did not go to Gbobe on foot.'

Conclusion

The paper has identified and discussed eight (8) negative markers in Igala. Out of the lot, *n* combines with the remaining seven (7) to form either positive or negative sentences. In looking at SVCs, the paper noted that *ko*takes its position immediately after the subject and negates all the verbs that come after it. In sentences that end in *n,* it is the verb that is nearest to it only, out of the string, that is negated. When *n* combines with other negative markers, whatever comes in between the pair is negated.

The paper has indentified and treated eight (8) negative markers in Igala. Out of the lot, n combines with others such as *ma* and *takpa* to either form negative markers such as *e - e/gbe/gbegbe-ile* are complemented with some body movements for the purpose of emphasis, especially when they are uttered by the speaker in a state of annoyance.

In looking at SVCs, the paper noted that *ko*takes its position immediately after the subject and negates all the verbs that come after it.

References

Ahmad, A. (2012).Splitting Verbs as Sandwich Complementation in Igala *AwkaJournal of English Language and Literary Studies (AJELLS)* 3:1, pp.209-225.

Crystal, D. (1983). *A First Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics.*London: AndreDeutsch Limited.

Ejele, P.E. (1995). The Semantics of Negation.In E. Nolue Emenanjo and Ozo-Mekuri Ndimele (Eds.).*Issues in African Languages and Linguistics:Essays in Honour of Kay Williamson.* Aba: National Institute for NigerianLanguages, pp. 258-265.

Harrap 's English Grammar (1989). Bromley, Kent: Harrap Books Limited. Hurford, J.R. (1997). *Grammar: A Student's Guide.* Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity Press.

Klima, E.S. (1964). Negation in English.In Fodor, J.A. and J.J. Katz (Eds.).*TheStructure of Language.*Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-HallInc.

Lester, M. (1976).*Introductory Transformational Grammar of English.*New York:Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Oke, D.O. (1982). On the Use of Verbal Group Negators in Yoniba. In A. Afolayan(ed.). *Yoruba Language and Literature.*Ife: Obafemi AwolowoUniversity Press Limited, pp. 247-63

Omachonu, G.S. (2006). Verb Serialization in Igala. In Ndimele, E O. andIkekeonwu, C.I. and Mbah, B.M, (eds.). *Language and EconomicReforms in Nigeria.*Port Harcourt: M. and J. Grand OrbitCommunications Limited and Emhai Press, pp. 237-246.

Quirk, R. and Greenbaum, S. (2000). *A University Grammar of English.*NewDelhi/Addison Wesley; Longman Private Limited.

Radford, A. (1998). *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English: A MinimalistApproach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zeijlstra, H.H. (2004). *Sentential Negation and Negative Concord.*Ph.D.Dissertation, University of Amsterdam.