

Negation in Ekwulobia Igbo

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Abstract: The category ‘Negation’ is universal. Though universal, its operation varies in different languages. In the Igbo language, it is a rich morpho-syntactic process and equally varies from one dialect of Igbo to another. Adopting a descriptive frame work, the researcher, observes the operation of the category ‘NEG’ in the Ekwulobia Igbo in relation to standard Igbo and other Igbo dialects, where necessary. It is observed that the tonal behaviour of negation in Ekwulobia, is quite same with that of the standard Igbo. The difference is observed in the negation marking suffix. In the Ekwulobia Igbo, the standard form of negation is the suffixation of the negation marking suffix ‘-hv’ (where v harmonizes strictly to the vowel of the verb root) and the harmonizing open vowel prefix ‘a-/e-’ when the accompanying NP is a noun or 3pl pronominal. Some negation marking suffix like: ‘-ha’, suffixed to an aux. ‘na’, ‘-he’, suffixed to an aux. ‘jè’, the suffix ‘-bèhè’ are used for other forms of negation, while a periphrastic negation marker ‘mehè’ is observed in constituent negation. All these negation marking suffixes in the Ekwulobia Igbo differ from that of the standard Igbo and other Igbo dialects.

Keywords: Ekwulobia Igbo, Standard Igbo, Negation,

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the Igbo language, negation is a rich morpho-syntactic process. The expression of negation in Igbo differs from one dialect to the other. This study therefore considers negation in the Ekwulobia Igbo as it relates to the standard Igbo and other dialects of Igbo, where necessary. The standard negation markers as well as other forms of negation markers within the indicative verb form, progressive verb form, habitual verb form, future verb form, perfective verb form, and simple imperative verb form shall be considered and noted.

1.1 Ekwulobia Igbo (Background Information)

Igbo is one of the three major languages spoken in Nigeria within the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. It is also spoken in Anioma and Aniocha divisions of the present Delta States and also in the neighbouring States of Rivers and Akwa Ibom (Anyanwu 2007:27). Igbo is a language with many varieties. Ekwulobia Igbo happens to be one. It is a variety spoken in Ekwulobia, in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. The people exist in the nine villages that make up the town.

II. NEGATION: A UNIVERSAL PHENOMENON

It is a general assumption that negation is a category obtained in all human language, a core feature relevant in every system of human communication. It is therefore a universal phenomenon (cf. Horn 1989, De Swart 2010). Though universal, its mode of expression differs from language to language. Each human language has a standard negation marker and other forms of negation markers peculiar to it.

The concept ‘negation’ is not limited to linguists alone. It is also extended to the philosophers, logicians etc, who might have a different nomenclature for it. For the logicians for instance, it is also called ‘functor’.

In the field of linguistics, some scholars have given diverse definitions of negation. For Crystal (2003:310), Negation is “a process of construction in grammatical and semantic analyses which typically expresses contradiction of some or all of a sentence’s meaning.” Negation has also been defined as a grammatical category employed to deny the actuality of an event or some proportion thereof (Whaley 1997). Mgbemena (1982) has simply defined negation as a grammatical process by which affirmative sentences are converted into negatives. For, Cruz Díaz and Maña López (2019) “its most obvious function is to a proposition into its opposite”

Attempts have been made by scholars to classify ‘negation’ into different types. For some, negation can be classified into: constituent (or local) negation and clausal (or sentential) negation (Klima 1964 in Cruz Díaz

and Maña López (2019), symmetric and asymmetric, (Miestamo 2005, 2007, Bonds 2006), morphological and syntactic (Dahl 1979), lexical and grammatical negation (Mgbemena 1982).

In symmetric negation, the structure of the negative is identical to the structure of the affirmative but for the presence of the negative marker “(s)”, while in asymmetric negation, structural differences in comparison to the corresponding affirmative constructions are exhibited (Miestamo 2007). In line with this, Bonds (2006) defines asymmetric negative as a construction involving the negative marker and other such processes as the reduction of the finiteness verbal elements, word order change, modification on TAM (tense, aspect, mood), person and number etc. Examples can be found in languages like Dutch, German, Ket, Meithei, and some African languages (symmetric negation) and Korean and some African languages (asymmetric negation).

Example of Symmetric Negation from Esan (simple negation in the past)

Izèhì lé ébaè ‘Izèhi ate’
(----- eat food)

Izèhì bhá lé ébaè ‘Izèhi did not’
(----- Neg eat food)

Adapted from: Ejele (1995:259)

Example of Symmetric Negation from German

ich singe	ich singe nicht
1sg sing	1sg sing neg
‘I sing’	‘I don’t sing’
ich sang	ich sang nicht
1sg sang	ich sing+pst neg
I sang	‘I did not sing’
ich habe gesungen	ich habe nicht gesungen
1sg have sung	1sg have neg sing+perf
I have sung	‘I have not sung’

Adapted from (Miestamo 2007)

Morphological negation according to Dahl (1979) involves prefixes, suffixes, circumfixes, prosodic and reduplicative features, where prosodic and reduplicative negative strategies are not very common. In contrast, syntactic negation employs the use of a negative marker which can be an uninflected particle, auxiliary verb etc (Miestamo 2007). A major distinction can be made by observing the lexical verb. In morphological negation, the lexical verb is modified morphologically (Dahl 1979). This is the case of some of the African languages as exemplified in Igbo (Emenanjo 1987, Ndimele 2006), Eleme (Bonds 2006), Ikwere (Weje and Alerechi 2010:4).

Distinction is often made between what may be called ‘standard negation’ and other forms of negation. The term ‘standard’ negation is believed to originate from Payne (1985). According to him, standard negation is the type of negation applied to the most minimal and basic sentences. “A SN (standard negation) construction is a construction whose function is to modify a verbal declarative main clause expressing a proposition p in such a way that the modified clause expresses the proposition with the opposite truth value to p i.e. -p...” (Miestamo 2005:42). For Bonds (2007), standard negation acts as a starting point in studies in negation. Ndimele’s (2006:940) use of ‘general negative marker’ falls in line with the form ‘standard negation’

III. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive frame work is adopted for this study. Data used for this study especially for the Ekwulobia Igbo and the Standard Igbo are researcher-oriented. Data from other sources are also adapted and acknowledged. All data used for analysis in this work are represented orthographically. The tone marking convention of Green and Igwe (1963) is adopted; the downstep and the low tones are marked while the high tone is left unmarked.

IV. NEGATION IN THE IGBO LANGUAGE

Bonds (2007) defines negation as a “super ordinate grammatical category that models a direct contrast between a state of affairs in some unrealized world (the concept(s) expressed by a counterpart affirmative) in relation to the real world, projected as a perception or belief of the speaker” For him, the super ordinate grammatical category as used above, depicts that negation in its most sense, refers to any expression of negation in language whether it is of a predicate or another constituent. This falls in line with Ndimele’s (2006:953) acknowledgement of two main strategies of marking negation in Igbo. In his words, “there are two main

strategies of marking negation in Igbo. The first strategy is to negate the whole sentence, i.e. ‘predicate negation’ while the second is to negate a particular constituent of a sentence, i.e. ‘constituent negation’”. Buttressing this fact, (Klima, 1964) in Cruz Díaz and Maña López (2019) made similar distinction between constituent (or local) negation and clausal (or sentential) negation. According to them, a clausal negation negates an entire proposition (e.g., he does not have money) while a constituent negation is associated with some constituent or clause (e.g., he has no money). Although their effects can be similar or identical, the latter is less common grammatically.

Negation marking is a rich morpho-syntactic process in Igbo and can be expressed in many ways (Ndimele 2006: 940). He further outlined the morpho-syntactic characteristics of negation. Negation in Igbo may involve the use of:

- Negative inflected affixes
- Inherently negative auxiliary verbs
- Tonal alternation
- Contrastive focus

Emenanjo (1987) in addition to these listed characteristics, referred to ATR harmony in his analysis of negative constructions.

We shall therefore be considering the two strategies of negation as outlined by Ndimele (2006:953). Firstly, let us consider the ‘predicate negation’

4.1 Standard Form of Negation in Igbo

The standard form for expressing negation in Igbo is through the use of negative inflectional affixes (mainly suffixes) which are attached to the root of lexical or auxiliary verbs. In standard Igbo, this negative inflectional suffix is primarily, the harmonizing negation marker ‘-ghi / -ghị’ which is suffixed to the root/base of the lexical or auxiliary verb. Again, a harmonizing open vowel prefix ‘a- / e-’ is also prefixed to the root of the verb or the aux, marking negation, when the accompanying NP is a noun.

According to Ndimele (2006:941), this common suffix ‘-ghi / -ghị’ is used with all tense, aspect and moods, and when compared to other negation marker in standard Igbo, it has the widest distribution and can co-occur with either an aux verb, a stative or non-stative verb. This is line and typically, illustrates the standard form of negation as earlier mentioned. We can therefore say that the standard form of negation in standard Igbo is the suffixation of the negative marker suffix ‘-ghi / -ghị’ to the root of the lexical verb or the auxiliary verb and the prefixation of a harmonizing open vowel prefix ‘a-/e-’ to the root of the verb or aux marking negation when the accompanying NP is a noun or 3pl pronominal.

Table 1a: Indicative Verb Form in Standard Igbo

Stative verb Form	
Affirmative	Negative
Òbí màrà mmā Obi-be-st-handsome ‘Obi is handsome’	Òbí amāghī mmā Obi-pr-be-neg-handsome ‘Obi is not handsome’
Òbí bì be ānyī Obi-lives-house-1pl ‘Obi lives in our house’	Òbí ebīghī be ānyī Obi-pr-live-neg-house 1pl ‘Obi does not live in our house’
Ọ dị mmā It-be-good ‘It is good’	Ọ dīghī mmā It-be-neg-good ‘It is not good’
Factative Form	
Ọ siri nri 3sg-cook-fact-food ‘S/he cooked’	Ọ sighī nri 3sg-cook-neg-food ‘S/he did not cook’
Ọ gbàrà ọsọ 3sg-run-fact-race ‘S/he ran’	Ọ gbaghī ọsọ 3sg-run-neg-race ‘S/he did not run’
Àda gūrù egwu Ada-sing-fact-song ‘Ada sang’	Àda agūghī egwu Ada-pr-sing-neg-song ‘Ada did not sing’
Ha bèrè akwa 3pl-cry-fact-cry ‘They cried’	Ha ebēghī akwa 3sg-pr-cry-neg-cry ‘They did not cry’

V. NEGATION IN EKWULOBIA IGBO

For an indebt understanding of negation in Ekwulobia, it shall be discussed alongside the standard Igbo and other lects of Igbo where necessary. Having established the standard form of negation in the Igbo language, let us consider the Ekwulobia Igbo to see what happens there. The examples shall be given alongside standard Igbo. In doing this, the five morpho-syntactic characteristics of negation as earlier stated shall form the guideline for analysis of data. Again, some of the verb forms obtained in Emenanjo (1987) shall mostly be adapted for illustration in this study.

Table 1b: Indicative Verb Form in Ekwulobia Igbo

Stative verb form	
Affirmative	Negative
Òbí màrà mmā	Òbí amāhā mmā
Obi-be-st-handsome	Obi-pr-be-neg-handsome
‘Obi is handsome’	‘Obi is not handsome’
Òbí bù be ānyī	Òbí ebūhū be ānyī
Obi-lives-house-1pl	Obi-pr-live-neg-house 1pl
‘Obi lives in our house’	‘Obi does not live in our house’
Ọ dù mmā	Ọ òhū mmā
It-be-good	It-be-neg-good
‘It is good’	‘It is not good’
Factative Form	
Ọ siri nni	Ò sihi nni
3sg-cook-fact-food	3sg-cook-neg-food
‘S/he cooked’	‘S/he did not cook’
Ọ gbàrà ọsọ	Ò gbahā ọsọ
3sg-run-fact-race	3sg-run-neg-race
‘S/he ran’	‘S/he did not run’
Àda gùrù egwu	Àda agūhū egwu
Ada-sing-fact-song	Ada-pr-sing-neg-song
‘Ada sang’	‘Ada did not sing’
Ha bèrè akwa	Ha ebēhē akwa
3pl-cry-fact-cry	3sg-pr-cry-neg-cry
‘They cried’	‘They did not cry’

Notice from the above Ekwulobia data, that the activities of tone are quite same with the standard Igbo. Again, the harmonizing open vowel prefix is affixed to the negating verb root when the accompanying NP is a noun or 3pl pronominal. The difference is seen in the negation marking suffix. Unlike in the standard Igbo, the negation marking suffix is a constant –h and a harmonizing vowel. In this case, it is not just an ATR harmony, but a strict reduplication of the vowel obtainable in the root. Thus, the negation marking suffix is –hv. The rv suffix of the verb root in the affirmative is lost and replaced by the negative marking suffix. Let us consider the different realizations of the standard form of negation or the different realizations of the general negation suffix in some Igbolects.

Table 2: Standard Form of Negation in some Igbolects

Lects	The General Negative Suffix
Ọnicha	-rọ
Ọhụhụ	-ghị
Owere	-hụ
Igbouzo	-shọ/-họ
Nnewi	-ho(harmonizing)
**Standard Igbo	-ghi/-ghị
Echie	-v(harmonizing)
**Ekwulobia	-h(v)harmonizing

Culled from Ndimale (2006: 942) but for **

5.1 Other Forms of Negation Marking

Table 3: Progressive Normal Verb Form and Habitual Verb Form

Standard Igbo

Affirmative	Negative
Ọ nà-èsi nrī 3sg-aux-pr-cook-food 'S/he is cooking/S/he is a cook'	Ọ naghī èsi nrī 3sg-aux-neg-pr-cook-food 'S/he is not cooking/ S/he is not a cook'
Ọ nà- àkwa akwà 3sg-aux-pr-sew-clothes S/he is sewing/S/he is a seamstress/tailor	Ọ naghī àkwa akwà 3sg-aux-neg-pr-sew-clothes 'S/he is not sewing/S/he is not a seamstress/tailor'
Àda/Ha nà- àzụ ahīā Ada/3pl-aux-pr-buy-market 'Ada/They is/are (a) trader(s)'	Àda/Ha anāghī àzụ ahīā Ada/3pl-pr-aux-neg-pr-buy-market 'Ada/They is/are not (a) trader(s)'

Ekwulobia Igbo

Affirmative	Negative
Ọ nà-èsi nnī 3sg-aux-pr-cook-food 'S/he is cooking/S/he is a cook'	Ọ nahā èsi nnī 3sg-aux-neg-pr-cook-food 'S/he is not cooking/ S/he is not a cook'
Ọ nà- àkwa akwà 3sg-aux-pr-sew-clothes 'S/he is sewing/S/he is a seamstress/tailor'	Ọ nahā àkwa akwà 3sg-aux-neg-pr-sew-clothes 'S/he is not sewing/S/he is not a seamstress/tailor'
Àda/Ha nà-àzụ abhhīā Ada/3pl-aux-pr-buy-market 'Ada/They is/are (a) trader(s)'	Àda/Ha anāhā àzụ abhhīā Ada/3pl-pr-aux-neg-pr-buy-market 'Ada/They is/are not (a) trader(s)'

Notice from the both data, that the negation marking suffix and the open vowel prefix where applicable are affixed to the aux and not to the participle. Unlike the indicative form, the negation marking suffix in standard Igbo is just '-ghī' and an open vowel prefix 'a-' when the subject NP is a noun or 3pl pronominal. This is also the case of Ekwulobia Igbo, where the negation marking suffix is '-hā' and also an open vowel prefix 'a-' when the subject NP is a noun or 3pl pronominal.

In tonal quality, the tone marks are retained except for the 3sg pronominal subject which changes from high in the affirmative to low in the negative and the aux which changes from low to high when preceded by the 3sg pronominal subject, and downstep when preceded by the open vowel prefix. The negation marking suffix bears a step tone.

Let us also consider the negative habitual verb form in some Igbo lects.

Table 4: Negative Habitual Verb Form in some Igbo lects

Lects	Negative Habitual Marker
Ọnicha	na (aux) usually accompanied by tonal change
Ọhụhụ	na - ghī
Owere	ji - la
Igbouzo	na (aux) usually accompanied by tonal change
Nnewi	na (aux) usually accompanied by tonal change
Standard Igbo	na - ghī
Echie	na - a
**Ekwulobia	na - ha

Culled from Ndimiele (2006:947) but for **

Table 5: Future – Simple Affirmative

Standard Igbo

Affirmative	Negative
Ọ gà-àga 3sg-aux(fut)-pr-go 'S/he will go'	Ọ gaghī āgā 3sg-aux(fut)-neg-pr-go 'S/he will not go'
Àda/Ha gà-àbja Ada/3pl-aux(fut)-pr-come 'Ada/They will come'	Àda/Ha agāghī ābīā Ada/3pl-pr-aux(fut)-neg-pr-come 'Ada/They will not come'

Ekwulobia Igbo

O jè-èje 3sg-aux(fut)-pr-go 'S/he will go' Àda/Ha jè-àbija Ada/3pl-aux(fut)-pr-come 'Ada/They will come'	Ò jehē ējē 3sg-aux(fut)-neg-pr-go 'S/he will not go' Àda/Ha ejēhē ābīā Ada/3pl-pr-aux(fut)-neg-pr-come 'Ada/They will not come'
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In standard Igbo, 'ga' is the aux. marking future, but in Ekwulobia 'je' is the aux marking future. In each case, a harmonizing negation suffix -ghì / -he and ovp 'a-' and 'e-' respectively (when necessary) are used for marking negation. The participles are altered to downsteps. The 3sg pronominal subject at the negative form also takes a low tone.

Perfective Verb Form

In standard Igbo, the perf verb form is marked with the suffix -bèghì while in Ekwulobia Igbo, it is marked with '-behe'. As rightly stated by Ndimele (2006:942), this is hosted by any lexical verb particularly, the non-stative ones. He further points out that the neg perf verb is not only disyllabic but bi-morphemic, in that the first half expresses perfectivity, while the second is the negation.

Table 6: Perfective Form**Standard Igbo**

Affirmative	Negative
O sīēlā nrī 3sg-cook-ovs-perf-food 'S/he has cooked'	Ò sibèghì nri 3sg-cook-perf-neg-food 'S/he has not cooked'
Ọ sūōlā akwà 3sg-wash-ovs-perf-food 'S/he has washed clothes'	Ò sùbèghì akwà 3sg-wash-perf-neg-food 'S/he has not washed clothes'
Àda/Ha āgbāālā egwū Ada/3pl-pr-dance-ovs-perf-dance 'Ada/They has/have danced'	Àda/Ha agbābèghì egwu Ada/3pl-pr-dance-perf-neg-dance 'Ada/They has/have not danced'

Ekwulobia Igbo

Affirmative	Negative
O sīēnē nnī 3sg-cook-ovs-perf-food 'S/he has cooked'	Ò sibèhè nni 3sg-cook-perf-neg-food 'S/he has not cooked'
Ọ sūōnā akwa 3sg-wash-ovs-perf-food 'S/he has washed clothes'	Ò sùbèhè akwà 3sg-wash-perf-neg-food 'S/he has not washed clothes'
Àda/Ha āgbāānā egwū Ada/3pl-pr-dance-ovs-perf-dance 'Ada/They has/have danced'	Àda/Ha agbābèhè egwu Ada/3pl-pr-dance-perf-neg-dance 'Ada/They has/have not danced'

Notice that the inflectional suffix of the verb root at the affirmative is lost and is replaced by the perfective negative marker suffix at the negative construction. Again, the negative marker takes a low tone in all instances. As has been the trend, the pronominal clitic at the negative construction, also takes a low tone.

Simple Imperative Form

This is sometimes referred to as prohibitive. It is marked by '-la' and a harmonizing ovp 'a-/e-' in standard Igbo or '-na' and '-le' in some lects of Igbo (Emenango 1987:193, Ndimele 2006:948). In Ekwulobia Igbo, the negative simple imperative form, is marked by a harmonizing imperative negation suffix '-na or -ne' and a harmonizing ovp 'e- /a-'

Table 7: Simple Imperative Form

Standard Igbo	
Affirmative	Negative
Sie nrī cook-ovs-food 'S/he has cooked'	Esīlā n̄rī pr-cook-proh-food 'Don't cook food'
Sùọ akwà wash-ovs-clothes 'Wash clothes'	Asūlā akwà pr-wash-proh-clothes 'Don't wash clothes'
Zàa ùlọ sweep-ovs-house 'Sweep the house'	Azàlā ùlọ pr-sweep-proh-house 'Don't sweep the house'
Ekwulobia Igbo	
Affirmative	Negative
Sie nnī cook-ovs-food 'Cook food'	Esīnē n̄nī pr-cook-proh-food 'Don't cook food'
Sùọ akwà wash-ovs-clothes 'Wash clothes'	Asūnā akwà pr-wash-proh-clothes 'Don't wash clothes'
Zàa unò sweep-ovs-house 'Sweep the house'	Azànā unò pr-sweep-proh-house 'Don't sweep the house'

It is worthy to point out here, the similarity between the Ekwulobia simple negative imperative verb form construction and that of Echie lect. In Echie, the prohibitive suffix is '-la/-le' (subject to ATR harmony). It can be realized as '-na/-ne' (subject to ATR harmony) if it is immediately preceded by a nasal or nasalized segments. (Ndimele 2006:949). In the case of Ekwulobia as earlier mentioned, the prohibitive suffix '-na/-ne' (subject to ATR harmony) is used in all cases.

Table 8: Example from Echie**Negative**

- 1a. Nụ azàlā ùlọ!
2pl pr-sweep-proh. house
'You people should not sweep the house'
- b. Nụ ejhēle ahja !
2pl pr-go-proh. market
'You people should not go to the market'
- c. Enōne ya!
pr-swallow-proh. 3s
'Don't swallow it'

Culled from Ndimele (2006:949)

5.2. Constituent Negation

All along, we have been considering one of the main strategies of negation marking in Igbo, the 'predicate negation. Let us briefly consider the next strategy, the 'constituent negation'

According to Watters (2000:205) in Ndimele (2006:954), In Igbo, as in many African languages, constituent negation is signaled through the use of "a cleft- like construction of the shape 'it is not x who/which did it' as in 'it is not Ina who became Chief' For Ndimele (1995:112), constituent negation involves word order re-arrangement, so that the constituent that is to be negated is moved into the relevant position known as the "focal point" "The nature of focus involved in constituent negation is contrastive focus, because its purpose is to correct false information" (Ndimele 1995:111). In line with this, Bonds (2007), defines a direct contrast in constituent negation as "distinction of meaning in opposition..."

Let us briefly illustrate the both strategies of negation as exemplified by Ndimele (2006:954) using the Owere Igbo and the Echie Igboid Lect. We shall in this case provide Ekwulobia data to see if it is also applicable.

Owere Igbo

- 3a. Ngozi riri azụ {Affirmative}
pr.N eat-FT fish
'Ngozi ate fish'
- b. Ngozi erihu azụ {Predicate Negation}
pr.N pr-eat-Neg fish
'Ngozi did not eat fish'
- c. Ngozi o - rīi azụ o-riri {constituent Negation}
pr.N it-be-Neg fish 3scl-eat-FT
'As of Ngozi, it was not fish that she ate.'
- d. Ngozi o – nwēe azụ o-riri {constituent Negation}
pr.N it-be-Neg fish 3scl-eat-FT
'As of Ngozi, it was not fish that she ate.'

Culled from: (Ndimele: 2006:954)**Echie Igboid Lect**

- 3a. Eze riri ji Factative Aspect
(- eat-Fact yam)
'Eze ate some yam'
- b. E[↓]ze a[↓]dij rie[↓]ji. 'Eze did not eat yam'
- c. Eze[↓]i[↓]o[↓] di-[↓]i[↓]ji[↓] o[↓]i[↓]riri[↓] t[↓]. 'Eze did not eat yam'
- d. [↓]O di-[↓]i[↓]ji[↓] E[↓]ze[↓] riri[↓] t[↓]. 'Eze did not eat yam'
- 4a. Eze riele[↓]ji. [Perfect Aspect]
(--- eat-OVS-Perf yam)
'Eze has eaten some yam'
- b. E[↓]ze e[↓]ribee[↓]ji. 'Eze has not (yet) eaten yam'
- (--- pf-eat-Incep-NEG yam)
- c. E[↓]ze a[↓]dij ri[↓]bee[↓]ji. 'Eze has not (yet) eaten yam'
- 5a. Eze ga i[↓]ri[↓]ji. [Future]
(--- Fut to-eat some yam)
'Eze will eat some yam'
- b. E[↓]ze e[↓]mee[↓]rie[↓]ji. 'Eze will not eat yam'
- Pf-Aux-NEG
- c. [↓]O dij[↓]ji[↓] E[↓]ze ga i[↓]ri-[↓]n[↓]i[↓] t[↓]. 'Eze will not eat yam'

Culled from: (Ndimele: 1995:110-111)**Ekwulobia Igbo**

- 6a. Eze riri ji 'Eze ate fish' [Affirmative (Indicative Verb Form)]
b. Eze erih[↓]j[↓] 'Eze did not eat fish' [Predicate Negation]
c. Eze, o meh[↓]j[↓] o riri 'Eze, there is no yam he ate' [Constituent Negation]
d. Omeh[↓]j[↓] Eze riri 'There is no yam eze ate' [Constituent Negation]
(Eze did not eat yam)
- 7a. Eze eriene j[↓] 'Eze has eaten yam' [Affirmative (Perf. Verb Form)]
b. Eze eribeh[↓]j[↓] 'Eze has not eaten yam' [Predicate Negation]
c. Eze, omeh[↓]b[↓]eh[↓]j[↓] o riri 'Eze there isn't yam he has eaten' [Constituent Negation]
d. Omeh[↓]b[↓]eh[↓]j[↓] Eze riene[↓] 'There isn't yam Eze has eaten' [Constituent Negation]
(Eze has not eaten yam)
- 8a. Eze j[↓]e-[↓]eri[↓]j[↓] 'Eze will eat yam' [Affirmative (Future Verb Form)]
b. Eze ej[↓]eh[↓]eri[↓]j[↓] 'Eze will not eat yam' [Predicate Negation]
c. Eze, omeh[↓]j[↓] o j[↓]e-[↓]eri[↓] 'Eze there is no yam he will eat' [Constituent Negation]
d. Omeh[↓]j[↓] Eze j[↓]e-[↓]eri[↓] 'There is no yam Eze will eat' [Constituent Negation]
(Eze will not eat yam)

For Ekwulobia Igbo, observe that the negative construction in constituent negation is introduced by the periphrastic negative element 'omeh[↓]' in the indicative and future verbal constructions , and omeh[↓]b[↓]eh[↓] in the

perfective form. Here, a constituent (particularly the object of the verb in the affirmative) is moved to the immediate right of the periphrastic negation marker. This position, according to Ndimele (1995:112) is described as the focal point. In his analysis of the Echie data above, the movement of the object to the focal point results in an empty category (i.e. a trace) at the original extraction of the moved constituent. "In the spirit of GB Syntax, the trace in the extraction domain is properly governed by its operator now at the landing site" This is also applicable to the Ekwulobia constituent negation data.

This constituent negation differs from the predicate negation, in that, in predicate negation, the whole affirmative sentence is negated while in constituent negation, word order re-arrangement is involved so that the constituent to be negated is moved into the relevant position known as the focal point (Ndimele 1995:134).

VI. CONCLUSION

This research work, having looked into the category 'NEG' in the Ekwulobia Igbo in relation to standard Igbo and other Igbo lects, where necessary, observed that the tonal behaviour of negation in Ekwulobia, is quite same with that of the standard Igbo. The difference is therefore observed in the negation marking suffix.

In the Ekwulobia Igbo, the standard form of negation is the suffixation of the negative marker suffix '-hv' (where v harmonizes strictly to the vowel of the verb root) and the harmonizing open vowel prefix 'a-/e-' when the accompanying NP is a noun or 3pl pronominal.

For other forms, such negation marking suffixes like: '-ha', suffixed to an aux. 'na', '-he', suffixed to an aux. 'jè', the suffix '-bèhè' and the periphrastic negative marker 'omehē' and 'òmebèhè', observed in constituent negation were observed and noted.

While the tonal behaviour observed in the Ekwulobia Igbo is quite same with standard Igbo negation, the negation marking suffixes in the Ekwulobia Igbo differ from that of the standard Igbo and other Igbo lects.

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Abbreviations

NEG.	→	Negative
-hv	→	Glottal fricative + vowel (suffix)
AT	→	Advance Tongue Root
1sg	→	First person singular pronoun
1pl	→	First person plural pronoun
3pl	→	Third person plural Pronoun
3sg	→	Third person singular Pronoun
NP	→	Noun Phrase
OVP	→	Open vowel prefix
OVS	→	Open vowel suffix
Perf.	→	Perfective
Aux.	→	Auxiliary Verb
rv	→	Alveolar Trill +Vowel (suffix)
pr	→	Prefix
proh	→	Prohibitive
fact.	→	Factative
st.	→	Stative

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