

## Patterns of Negation in Ọrọ: A Morphosyntactic Analysis

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to analyse ‘one-word’ sentence negation patterns as well as sentential negation in Ọrọ, spoken in Akwa-Ibom state of Nigeria, within the principle and parameters framework. Negation which is a phenomenon in every language occurs when an affirmative sentence is reversed or negated. Cross linguistically, reversing the truth-value of a proposition requires the presence of a negative marker in the form of an affix or full word. For example, while English uses not to negate, negation in Ọrọ is achieved when negative morphemes are simultaneously prefixed and suffixed to the root verb predicate just like the French ‘Ne...pas’. However, the suffixed enclitics in the form of /ou/, /ou/, /oo/, and /au/ are a necessary part of the negation process and they are movement sensitive and depend on preceding vowel sound which at times are copied and suffixed through the processes of circumfixation. Interestingly, the subject is left out before negation begins. Fourteen negative operators observed during this research are described. Data for the study were collected from primary and secondary sources in addition to the researcher’s intuitive knowledge of the language. Data analysed involves the present, past, future and imperative sentence forms. The study briefly compares patterns of negation of two other related languages, namely - Efik and Ibibio.

**Keywords:** *Ọrọ language, circumfixation, prefix, suffix, sentential negation*

### **Introduction**

Negation is a grammatical process which involves reversing the truth value of a proposition or an affirmative sentence. It is a universal phenomenon in all languages. But while in some languages negation is expressed through negation morphemes preceding verbal predicates or verb stems, others like English and French make use of different negative polarity items. The English auxiliary verbs, not, do not or its contracted form didn’t are used as free morphemes to negate an affirmation. English has other means of negating a phrase or sentence such as using prefixes like un-(like in unfaithful, unnatural, unsteady, unreliable, unavailable etc) and non- (like in non-stop, nonsense, non-nuclear, non-cooperation, non-destructive, non-metal etc or verbs (like deny, reject, refuse, regret etc.). In Tiv, the suffix -ga is used to negate (dooga ‘not good’; myavga ‘I am not sleeping’) In Igbo, the negative marker –ghi is used to negate a phrase. French’s ne...pas are used simultaneously as both prefix and suffix to the verb stem in order to negate. Tense markers, aspectual markers, and mood are often used by various languages to achieve negation. (Klima 1964, Quirk and Greenbaum 1973, Crystal2001, Ejele1995)

### **Research Questions**

This research makes the following research questions:

- Does negation play any role in the construction of Ọrọ grammar?
- To what extent does sentential negation differ from one-word negative pattern?
- What role does tone play a role in negation in Ọrọ?
- How do tense and aspectual markers differ when negating?

### Theoretical Framework

This paper assumes the Principle and Parameter Theory (PPT) with particular emphasis on Pollock's (1989) postulation to 'Split-Infl' as its theoretical framework.

Two proposals were made by Pollock in his hypothesis. The first proposal assumes that adverbs, negation morphemes and any other property ascribable to an auxiliary system have their own functional category and are generated at different positions in the Deep (D-) Structure. That implies that functional categories, tense and negation project TP and Tense (T) nodes, Negative Phrase (NEGP) and NEG have different nodes respectively. The second assumption postulates that adverbial elements are not allowed whereas; verbs have the freedom of moving from one position to another. In the same vein, an agreement phrase (AGRP) is postulated with the (AGR) head occupying a higher position than the T head (Pollock, 1989; Belletti, 1990; Chomsky, 1993). Generally, PPT recognizes dependency relations which often exist between two or more syntactic positions. For example, a noun phrase can be associated with two positions. In other words, an item could be pronounced in places other than their original extraction position. When a change in position of this nature happens, it is called movement. A constituent that moves naturally leaves behind its copy which could be deleted. An important condition constraining movement is what Chomsky (1995) termed Minimal Link Condition (MLC) in which the moving element moves to the nearest relevant positions. In this case, heads move to head positions and maximal projections move to specifier position (Ngonyani, 1999).

Thus we can say that PPT's basic assumption is based on the fact that the human language is made up of a set of fixed invariant independent universal principles. These result in similarities that exist among human languages and a set of finite number of values or dimensions along which variations can emerge (parameters). The theory is of the assumption that while children are born with innate principles to master any language of their immediate environment, the learning of language involves parameter setting. The goal of PPT is to identify the various parameters and how they can be set in every language to match the universal principles on which these languages are derived from. Chomsky 1995:169-171; Tanda & Neba 2005).

### Fourteen negative operators in Ọrọ

Negation in Ọrọ varies, depending on the tense of the construction and if it is on the first, second or third person. One prominent feature of negation in Ọrọ is the prefixation and suffixation of the negative morphemes on the verb root of a construction. Additionally, the negation processes are unpredictable. Most often, it is influenced by the preceding tone. In other cases, it requires intuitive knowledge of the language to negate. However, at least one of the enclitics: /ou/, /ou/, /oo/, or /au/ must be suffixed in order to negate fully. In other words, there must be e...ou, a...au, e...au etc. as suffix at the verb root of a construction before negation can take place. The following are the fourteen negative operators identified in the course of this research. It is made up of mostly one-word sentences and their negators.

#### Pattern 1

The a...au negating pattern

##### Affirmative

- 1a. M fāk  
1sg-know 'I know'

##### Negative

- b. ǎ- m fāk- àù  
neg-1sg-know-neg 'I don't know'

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| c. $\acute{M}$ máí<br>1sg- beat ‘I beat’         | d. $\check{a}$ - m máí-âù<br>Neg-1sg-beat-neg ‘I did not beat’       |
| e. $\acute{M}$ biád<br>1sg- spoil ‘I spoiled it’ | f. $\check{a}$ - m biád-âù<br>Neg-1sg-spoil neg ‘I did not spoil it’ |

All the examples given above are in the first person. Though they appear simple and predictable, however, not all first person constructions that starts with /  $\acute{m}$ / can take this form of the *a...au* negation pattern. We have noticed that this negator is sensitive to the speaker in the clause. That is, it forms a kind of “agreement” with the subject of the sentence. That kind of agreement is “person” sensitive. For example:

- $\acute{M}$ mō (I have seen - ommo-ou = I have not seen),
- $\acute{N}$ kere (I have finished – enkere-ou = I have not finished)
- $\acute{N}$ kek (I kicked – enkek-eu = I did not kick)
- $\acute{M}$ mo (I have seen – ommo-ou = I did not see)
- $\acute{N}$ wéré (I rolled – ènwéré-eu = I did not roll)

There seems to be a tacit agreement to copy the vowel sound of the segment at which point they are prefixed and suffixed to negate an affirmation. In other words, ‘whatever vowel sound I give you, you give me at the beginning and end of a segment to negate’. This seems to work perfectly well when we have /  $\acute{m}$ / and /  $\acute{n}$ / morphemes at the beginning of a segment. But shown in pattern 2 it is not always so in every situation. This is where it requires the intuitive knowledge of native speakers to negate some affirmation.

The rule for the above operation is:

NEG-B (a-pref) + sgt + (-au suffix) NEG-E =CN.

*This means, NEG-B - Negation Begins before the segment using the prefix a-. Sgt. stands for segment. NEG-E means Negation End using au as prefix.*

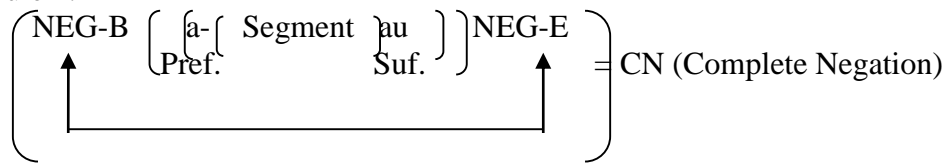
That means the full segment comes in-between the beginning and end of the affixes in the form of circumfixation to give us a Complete Negation (CN). Using the data above:

*a- Is the prefix;  $\acute{M}$  biád - is the segment (= I spoil); -au is - the suffix*

The segment is negated. ‘I did not spoil it’ There is nothing to indicate ‘it’ or the something spoilt in the grammar above. Since one must spoil something, ‘it’ is added to complete the sense of it. Grammatically, the expression is: ‘i spoil’ and often expressed in the past it becomes ‘I spoiled’ it. The full expression is *ami mbiad* – ‘I am the one who spoil’ it. Most often, what is spoilt is given a full name. *Ami mbiad moto onu* = I spoil that motor

It is worthy to note that in *Orọ* /  $\acute{m}$ / and /  $\acute{n}$ / with a high tone are used to indicate the first person singular ‘I’. However, the high tone in /  $\acute{m}$ / or /  $\acute{n}$ / ceases to exist during the negation processes. That is why *biad* means ‘spoil it’ while *mbiad* denotes ‘I spoil it’. *Yémé* means ‘agree’ and *Ńyémé* means ‘I agreed’. When negating these expressions, the high tones are dropped. E.g. *O-nyeme-ou*. (See an example in pattern 5 below)

Rule 1.



## Pattern 2

The e...ou negating pattern

### Affirmative

2a. Peter okowu ebiribre ofu  
Peter kill PST black goat  
Peter killed the black goat'

c. Ulap oyo mmọ ka alaha isang  
Young man PROG. ASP. Start journey  
'The young man is starting his journey'

e. Onyi a-kaa ufọknwid  
He/She PST go house book  
'He/she has gone to school'

g. Akan-enwa akakàá ukọr  
Old woman PPT go farm  
'The old woman had gone to the farm'

### Negative

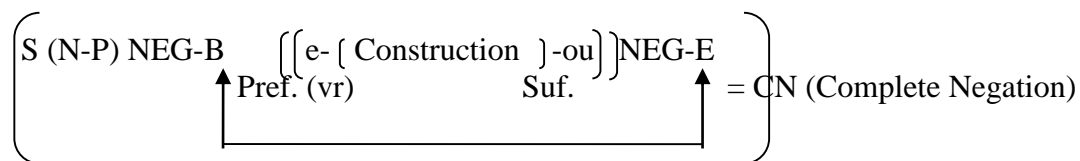
b. Peter ekewu ebiribre ofu-ou  
Peter Neg-B Kill PST black goat Neg E.  
Peter did not kill the black goat'

d. Ulap oyo elaha isang ou  
The young man NEG-B PROG. ASP start journey NEG-E.  
'The young man is not starting journey'

f. Onyi eke kaa ufọknwid-ou  
He/she NEG. B-PST go house book NEG-E  
'He/she did not go to school'

h. Akan-enwa ekekàá ukọr-ou  
Old woman NEG-B PPT go farmNEG-E  
'The old woman did not go to the farm'

All the examples above 2a–h are based on sentential negation. A careful observation shows that the subject is excluded in the course of negation. That means in Oro, the subject of the construction is never negated, it comes in before negation processes begin. Moreover, the verb *kă* meaning 'go' is also written as *kàá* without the diacritics indicating the rising tone. The rule for this type of negation is: S (N-P) +NEG-B(e) vr Const.+ NEG-E (-ou)=CN. The whole of these representation means that negation begins after the Subject which is usually a Noun or Pronoun. The negation in this regard begins with the prefix /e-/ at the verb root of the construction and ends with the suffixed -ou at which point Complete Negation (CN) is achieved. This could further be represented thus:



Application of the rule:

In all the instances cited above, the subject is never negated. For example, in 2g - Akan-enwa aka kaa ukọr. The Subject of this construction is Akan-enwa- 'old woman'. Negation started from the past participle aka 'had' before kaa – (go+ppt = gone ) ukọr – 'had gone to the farm' and ends with –ou as suffix. The negator changed the morpheme /a-/ in all the instances above to /e-/. In other words, the grammar of Oro does not allow these items to be realized contiguously unlike the first pattern. It is deleted. Another morphological form precisely /e-/ is licensed after the first segment of the negative affix. Additionally, as

observed in 2a and b above, the verb wu ‘kill’ remains the same in both the negative and affirmative form of it but the verb root changes from oko- to indicate PAST to eke to indicate both PAST and NEGATIVE respectively.

**Pattern 3**

The e...ou negating pattern

**Affirmative**

3a. ɔfɔ  
‘It is good’

c. ebɔhɔ  
They pl. take ‘They have collected’

e. \*ɔdiɔk  
‘it is bad’

**Negative**

b. e-fɔ-ou  
‘It is not good’

d. ẽ- bɔhɔ-òù  
NEG pl-B take NEG-E ‘They have not collected’

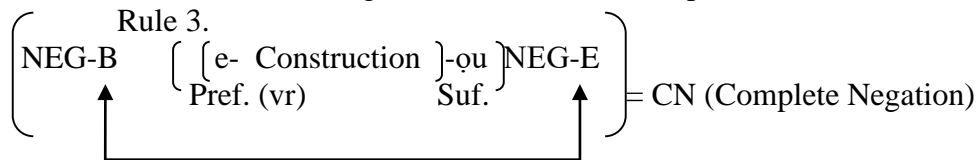
3f. e-diok-ou  
‘It is not bad’

Negation in example 3 shows 3a and 3e as taking the form of neuter gender while 3c takes the plural form. Even though the /e/ is retained in word initial in 3b, negation has already taken place as the tone of the plural indicator /e-/ is combined with prefixed /e-/ to play a dual role as prefix and plural.

*The rule is: NEG-B (e-pref) + sgt + (-ou suffix) NEG-E = CN*

NEG-B indicates that negation is beginning while NEG-E shows negation as Ending. It is worthy to note that in 3e the affirmative is actually the negative (it is bad) while the negative (it is not bad) is the affirmative. The negators have been prefix and suffixed on the negative 3f to affirmate the construction. 3f is actually the standard affirmation ‘not bad’ often used in response to ‘how are you?’ in Ọrọ ( ile ovu-oo?).

The rule for this negation could further be represented thus:



Using example 3a above, the verb root changes from ɔfɔ in the affirmative to eɔfɔ- and end with the suffix ou.

**Pattern 4**

The e...au negating pattern

**Affirmative**

4a. akpa  
‘It, or s/he is dead’

c. amang  
‘it is soured’

e. amana  
‘he or she laughed’

**Negative**

b. e-kpa-au  
‘it, or s/he is not dead’

d. e-mang-au  
‘it is not sour’

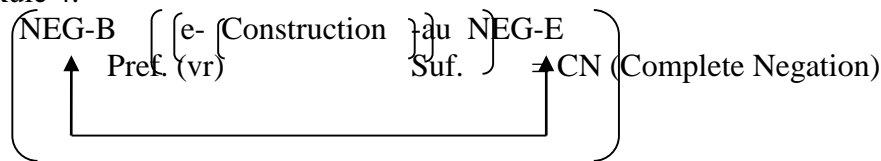
f. e-mana-au  
‘he or she did not laugh’

In the e...au negating pattern above, the /a-/ is the subject pronoun of third person singular pronoun which changes to the /e-/ prefix to start off the negating process. The suffixed /-au/ completes the negation. The examples in 2 above are mostly for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular or neuter gender. The rule for the above operation is: NEG-B (e -pref) + sgt + (-au suffix) NEG-E =CN.

The same explanation as in rule three with little modification is observed

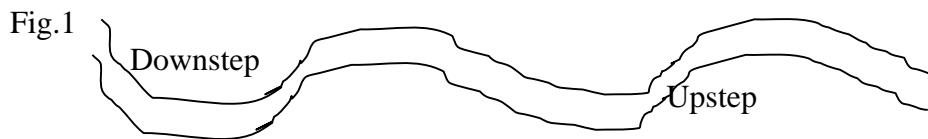
This could further be represented thus:

Rule 4.



Using 4e as an example, the root of word amana changes to /e/ to make it emana. But negation is complete when the last vowel sound /a/ is copied to form the suffix. Thus we have emana-au-‘he or she did not laugh’. Without the suffix negator, emana could equally mean ‘they should laugh’.

It seems logical to note at this point that Oꝛo marks its Downstep (DS) tones mostly at the periphrastic verb of negative constructions while the Upstep tone (US) at the end of the construction. And it also seems logical that the suffixed /âù/, /ôù/, /ôù/ and /ôð/ which often end the negating processes and always in the rising falling pattern in accordance to Pike’s (1948) description is actually an upstep tone in Oꝛo. Further research will be done on this. That means the pattern of negative utterances in Oꝛo will flow in this wavelike format:



We shall now mark examples 5-7 to demonstrate the presence both DS and US tones.

The rule for this negation could further be represented thus:

**Pattern 5**

The o ...ou negating pattern

Affirmative

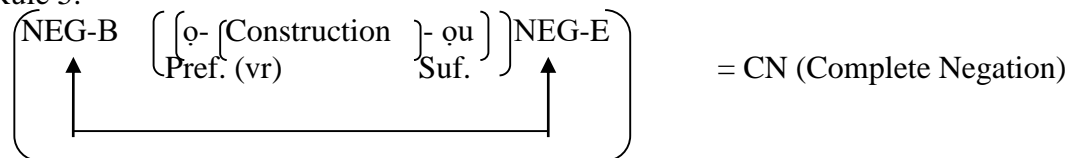
5a.            ñ k e i    ‘I’ve heard’  
                  |    | |  
                  H   LH H

                 Negative  
 b.            o- n k e i    -o u    ‘I did not hear’  
                  |        | |    | |  
                  LH ↓    M HL HL↑ L

- c. Affirmative  
 ñ b e i 'I have carry' or carried  
 ↓  
 H
- d. Negative  
 ɔ-m b e i - o u 'I have not carried'  
 |    ✓    |    |  
 LH ↓    H    HL ↑ L

In 5b and d above, the presence of a Downstep (DS) is indicated with the down arrow (↓), while that of the Upstep (US) is indicated with the up arrow (↑). Bilabial nasal /m/, alveolar nasal /n/ and velar nasa /ŋ/ represented with /ñ/ are allophones of first person singular in Ọrọ if they carry a high tone. See 5a, c and 6a. The same rule as in pattern 4 is applied, with minimal adjustment. It can be represented thus:

Rule 5.



The e ...oo negating pattern

.....Pattern 6

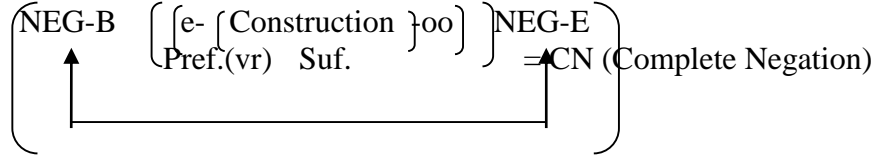
- 6a. Affirmative  
 ñ wid 'I write or I have written'  
 |    |  
 H    M
- b. Negative  
 e-nwid-o o 'I did not write'  
 |    |    |    |  
 LH ↓    M    HL ↑ L

- c. Affirmative  
 ekpod 'they cause disturbance; (or are noisy: ekpod uyom)  
 |    |  
 H    L
- d. Negative  
 e- kpod -o o 'they did not cause disturbance;  
 |    |    |    |  
 LH ↓    L    HL ↑ L

Here we also see the presence of both the DS and US tones at the negative as represented with the down and up arrows respectively. 'Ñwid' can mean 'I write' with a high tone on the velar nasa /ñ/ or 'nwid' - 'book' without the high tone. With the same

morphological representation, it can mean a verb and a noun. That is why tone marking is very important to specify the intended meaning. The enclitic /oo/ follows after /d/ voiced alveolar plosive due to the fact that the preceding vowel sound was neither /a/ nor /o/. Same rule with little modification is represented:

Rule 6.



The o...ou negating pattern

.....Pattern 7

7a. Affirmative  
 m̄ b̄oh̄o 'I have collected'  
 | |  
 H L

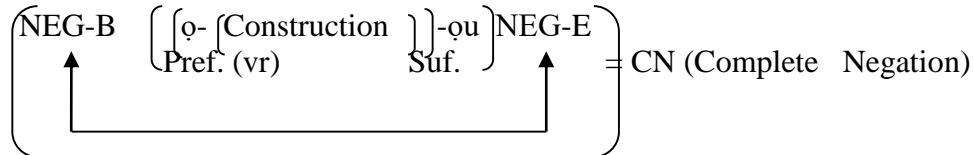
b. Negative  
 o- mb̄oh̄o -o u 'I have not collected'  
 | | | |  
 LH ↓ H HL ↑ L

c. Affirmative  
 n̄ te ñkpo 'I am cooking'  
 | | |  
 H L H  
 (I cook something)

d. Negative  
 o nte ñkpo -o u 'I am not cooking'  
 | | | |  
 LH ↓ L H HL ↑ L  
 (NEG-B I cook something NEG-E)

7b and d also shows the presence of DS and US as prefix and suffix thus causing wave-like movement in the utterances of speakers. All the examples above are on the first person singular with /m̄/ and /n̄/ indicating 'I'. As explained earlier under pattern 1, the high tone loses its highness when negating. The same rule with minimal modification is represented thus:

Rule 7.





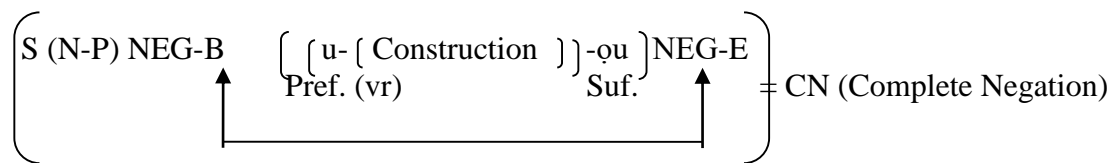
The u...ou negating pattern

Pattern 8

- 8a. Affirmative  
ovù ọkọ bọhọ (ọkọ ọbọhọ → ọkọ bọhọ)  
'you had collected'
- b. Negative  
ovù ǔ↓kú bọhọ -ọ↑u  
'you DS NEG-B PST collect NEG-E'  
'you had not collected'

Example 8 is on the second person singular. It is also a sentential negation. Here we see evidence of a downstep and upstep phenomenon at the negative construction. However the downstep phenomenon is not the typical phenomenon with two level tones - High and Low like in Efik and Ibibio. Ọrọ is blessed with rich inventory of tones including High, Low, Mid, Downstep and Upstep. There are also combinations of rising and falling tones. The rule for this negating pattern is: S (N-P) +NEG-B (u-) vr Const.+ NEG-E (-ou)=CN. The whole of these representation means that negtion begins after the subject which usually a noun or pronoun. The negation in this regard begins with the prefix u- at the verb root of the construction and Ends with -ou which is the suffix before Complete Negation (CN) is achieved. This could further be represented thus:

Rule 8.

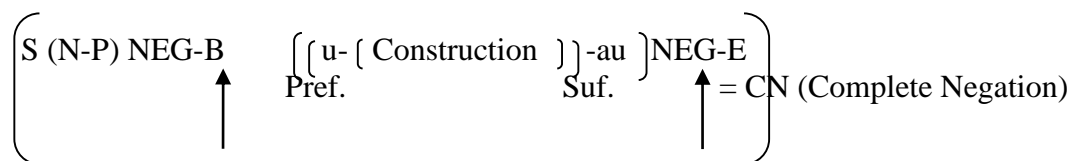


- S = Subject
- (N-P) = Noun or Pronoun
- NEG-B = Negation Begins
- Pref. = Prefix
- Vr = verbroot
- Suf. = Suffix
- u = where the Negation begins
- ou = where the Negation End
- CN = Complete Negation

3.9 The u...au negating pattern Pattern 9

- |      |   |      |  |
|------|---|------|--|
| 9 a. | Affirmative<br>ovu abiad<br>'you spoilt it' | 9 b. | Negative<br>ovu u-biad-au<br>'you did not spoilt it' |
| 9 c. | Affirmative<br>ovu abiak<br>'you run'       | 9 d. | Negative<br>ovu u-biak-au<br>'you did not run'       |

Rule 9.

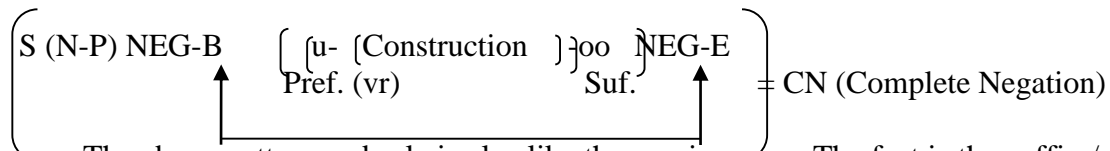


The rule above has the same pattern with the rule 8, however, with little modification. It consist of second person singular ‘ovu’ – you. As the subject, ovu come first before negation begins. Usually, it occurs at the verb root of the construction and ends with the suffixed au.

3.10 The u...oo negating pattern .....Pattern 10

10 a.	Affirmative ovu owid ‘you wrote it’	b.	Negative ovu u-wid-oo ‘you did not write it’
c.	Affirmative ovu okid d. ‘you have seen’		Negative vu u-kid-oo ‘you have not seen’

Rule 10.



The above pattern and rule is also like the previous one. The fact is the suffix /oo/ is much more difficult to perceive with just the auditory and the articulatory impressions. But the rule is, words ending with /d/, /k/, /m/, /n/ /e/ when the preceding vowel sound is neither /a/ nor /o/ takes up the /oo/ suffix. See 10b, 10d, 6b, 6c, 14b. See the contrast in 9b, 9d etc. However there is a beautiful exchange between /oo/ and /ou/ suffixes when the preceding vowel sound ends in /e/. This is where the intuitive knowledge of the language plays a part. See 4b, d, 11b

The i...ou negating pattern	Pattern 11
11 a.	Affirmative Enyin itire ‘we have stopped’
b.	Negative Enyin i-tire-òù ‘we have not stopped’

The i...ou negating pattern	Pattern 12
12 a.	Affirmative <sup>1</sup> Enyin íkpuho ‘we have changed (it)’
b.	Negative Enyin i-kpuho-ou ‘we have not changed (it)’

The i...au negating pattern	Pattern 13
13 a.	Affirmative Enyin igi inwàm ‘we provided help’
b.	Negative Enyin i-gi inwàm -âù ‘we did not provide help’

3.14 The i...oo negating pattern	Pattern 14
14 a.	Affirmative Enyin ibre ‘we have played’
b.	Negative Enyin i-bre-ôo ‘we have not played’

<sup>1</sup> Enyin – ‘we or us’ is first person plural with subscript at the initia /e/ vowel or Inyin is used without any subscript

Examples 11 to 14 are clear cases of first person plural ‘we’. Most of the negating here are in the past and past perfect tense. And as in 8- 10, 11-14 have the same rule except with little modifications. And just as in the aforementioned cases, the subject comes first before negation begins. (See table 1 for use of past tense).

### Sentential Negation in Ọrọ

In sentential negation of this nature, we shall be seeing how negation is achieved in sentence construction. Most of the examples we have used are on ‘one word’ sentence structure in Ọrọ. Our primary target is the use of tenses: past, present and future. It might be seen as the correspondence between the form of the verb and our concept of time. Tense is mainly used to relate to the time when certain events, action or state of affairs occur in the real world. Time as a continuum is divided into Present vs. past tense, Future vs. non-future tense.

### Negation and Present Tense

Present tense is used to denote action that is ongoing or in the present. Unlike other tenses, negation of utterances in the present tense is achieved by negating the verb root of the construction right away. That means negation is not marked by any morpheme in Ọrọ, at least segmentally, in the present tense. For example:

- 15 a.    Uso                    mọ    ko            o-di  
           Your father   AUX. V.   PROG.ASP. come  
           ‘Your father is coming’
- 15 b.    Uso(ese)e↓ di-oo  
           Your father (not yet) NEG-B .DS come NEG-E  
           ‘Your father is not coming’

In 15b (ese = not yet) is purposefully inserted, but still could not indicate if it is in the present time. Mọ in 15a indicate something that is ongoing, the present tens Thus *mọ ndi* means ‘I am coming’. PR.IND is the present indicative. There is no direct word or morpheme to negate the present tense in Ọrọ, except by circumlocution through the verb root of the construction.

### Negation and Past Tense

Past tense is used to denote actions or events that had already taken place in the past. Past tense is marked in Ọrọ by the use of *ńkú* as prefix to verbroot of the utterance if it is in the first person singular; *aka/oko* (depending on incoming verb) for second person singular; *eke* for second person plural and third person singular respectively. See table 1 below.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>16 a.    Affirmative<br/>                   ńkú       ń-   kǎ<br/>                   I INFIX PST AGR.M go<br/>                   ‘I had gone’</p> | <p>16 b.    Negative<br/>                   ǎ-nká    ǎ-nká-âù<br/>                   I PST AGR.M NEG-B go NEG-E<br/>                   ‘I did not go’</p> |
|--|---|

**Ku can equally function as infix and prefix**  
 Ọmi n-ku- nka ukor – ‘I went to the farm’ – (infix)  
 Ọmi ku-nka nwid - ‘I am going to school’ – (prefix)

Negation and Distant past

Affirmative

- 17 a. *Ńku řkei se ofu osuhu*  
 I PST heard what you said  
 “I have heard what you said”

Negative

- b. *Ńn kon-kei se ofu osuhu-ou*  
 I NEG-B DIS.P hear what you said NEG-E  
 “I did not hear what you said”

In *Ńn* *kon* is inserted at the verb root to indicate distant past in the negative. ‘*Ńn-kon di-oo*’ I did not come. Sometimes *obuks* inserted to emphasize the duration of time past. For example:

- 18 *Okodi úsonsok* – “S/he had come long ago”

**Table 1: Past tense using /ka/ ‘go’ and /di/ ‘come’ as an example**

	1 <sup>st</sup> person		2 <sup>nd</sup> Person		3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	
	AFF	NEG	AFF	NEG	AFF	NEG
Sg	(ami) <i>ńkú</i> (ka) (ami) <i>ńkú</i> (di)	( <i>om</i> i) anka verb (au) ( <i>om</i> i) onko verb (oo)	(ofu) a-ka (ka) (ofu) o-ko (di)	u-ku verb(au) u-ku verb (oo)	(onyi) aka (ka) (onyi) oko (di)	(onyi) eke ka-au (onyi) eke di-oo
Pl	(enyin) iki (ka) (enyin) iki (di)	<i>ĩ</i> -ki ka (au) <i>ĩ</i> -ki di (oo)	(efu) eke (ka) (efu) eke (di)	(efu) iki V(au) efu iki V(oo)	(emu) eke (ka) (emu) eke (di)	(emu) eke ka-au (emu) eke di-oo

*om*i =I, (1<sup>st</sup> person singular); *ovu*= you, (2<sup>nd</sup> person singular) *onyi*= He or she (3<sup>rd</sup> Person singular). ‘*Enyin*’, ‘*evù*’, ‘*emù*’ indicate first, second and third person plural respectively

### Negation and Future Tense

In *oro*, the future tense is segmentally marked with /*ma*/ to indicate futurity. However, the structure of negation in this tense is different as indicated below:

- Affirmative  
 19a. *Ńmi ma ndi nkpong*  
 I FUTAGR.M come tomorrow  
 “I will come tomorrow”

- Negative  
 19b. *Ńmi oundedi ndi nkpong -oo*  
 NEG-B AGR.M come tomorrow NEG-E  
 “I will not come tomorrow”

- Affirmative  
 20 a. *Ovu ma tei mbiõng*  
 You FUTsit hunger  
 “You will be hungry”

- Negative  
 20b. *Ovu u du tei mbiõñ- oo*  
 You NEG-B AGR.M sit hunger NEG-E  
 “You will not be hungry”

- Affirmative  
 21 a. *Emu me edi nkpong*  
 They FUTcome tomorrow  
 “They will come tomorrow”

- Negative  
 21b. *Emu e-didi nkpong-ù*  
 They NEG-B. AGR.M come tomorrow NEG-E  
 “They will not come tomorrow”

Table 2 Future tense

	1 <sup>st</sup> Person		2 <sup>nd</sup> Person		3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	
	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative	Affirmative	Negative
Sg	(omi) <sup>3</sup> ma	(omi) o-ndi-v <sup>9</sup> -oo a-ndi-v-au	(ovu) <sup>4</sup> ma	(ovu) udu	(onyi) <sup>5</sup> ma	(onyi) edi v NEG-E
Pl	(enyin) <sup>6</sup> mi	(enyin) Idi v	(evu) mee	(evu) i-di	(emu) <sup>7</sup> mee	(emu) edi v NEG-E

### Negation in Ọrọ, Efik and Ibibio: A brief background

Ọrọ, Efik and Ibibio have co-existed in their present location for over 900 years. That is, counting from Ọrọ’s movement from Usahadit in Cameroon to their final settlement in their present abode which is speculated to have been around 1100 A.D. (Uya, 1984). There is nothing short from the fact that such mutual co-existence could have influenced their languages in one form or the other. But while the more populous Ibibio speakers as tried to assimilate the less populous Ọrọ speakers, the latter has always maintained their distinct identity in order to enhance their culture and freedom.

Efik, on the other hand as a language has dominated several other dialects and languages within and around its domain. Its strategic location near the Atlantic coast has made Efik speakers easily accessible to European explorers, exporters and missionaries. This had invariably led to the early description and influence of Efik down till date. To many people, Ọrọ is still seen as a dialect of Efik. On the other hand, Ibibio which is phonologically closer to Efik is seen as a distinct language. The table below shows the similarities and differences in Ọrọ, Efik and Ibibio negating pattern.

Table 3

No.	Ọrọ		Efik		Ibibio	
1	Affirmative Uyo e-jei Uyo is beautiful	Negative Uyo ẽ-jei-òò Uyo is not beautiful	Affirmative Uyo eyie Uyo is beautiful	Negative Uyo i-yiehe Uyo is not beautiful	Affirmative Uyo áyàiyá Uyo is beautiful	Negative Uyo í-yàiyáke Uyo is not beautiful
2	Mbiõñ ọlọng mi	Mbiõñ e-lọng mi-òò	Biõñ ọdọn mi	Biõñ i-dọn-ke mi	Bion andọn mien	Bion indọnke mien
3	I am hungry  Ofu osi use You are washing	I am not hungry  Ofu u-si use-ou You are not washing	I am hungry  Afo eyet ofon You are washing	I am not hungry  Afo u-yet-ke ofon You are not washing	I am hungry  Afo ayet ofon You are washing	I am not hungry  Afo u-yet-ke ofon You are not washing

In example 1 table 3 above, while Ọrọ makes use of /j/ from the root word ‘jei’ – ‘fine’ or beautiful, both Efik and Ibibio made use of /y/ from the root word ‘yie’ and ‘yaiya’ respectively. Negation in the three languages takes the same procedure – at the prefix and suffix of the root verb.

In example 2 table 3, Ọrọ uses the noun ‘mbiõñ’ involving /m/ bilabial nasal while in Efik and Ibibio, the bilabial nasal /m/ is absent. Ọrọ also made use of /l/ which is an

alveolar lateral, as in ɔlɔŋ while Efik and Ibibio are devoid of this sound in their sound system. It is replaced with /d/- voiced alveolar plosive. Most Ibibio dialects however use /ɔbiɔñ/ for the same noun hunger. Negation in example 3 of table 3 in Efik and Ibibio are the same. For a full study of negation in Ibibio, see Essien (1985).

### Other Forms of Negation

In this section, we shall see other ways that negation can be expressed. This is because in our daily conversations we make use of several forms of negation, to convey different kinds of information.

#### Negation and Imperative

An imperative is used to issue either a command or a request. In Ọrọ kú is used as an imperative marker which is also in the negative ‘don’t’ or ‘do not’. According to Akaduh (1984), “The prefix KU affixed to the root constructs the singular” Ku in Ọrọ therefore plays a dual role as negative imperative. From the above, we can conclude that there are two forms of negation in Ọrọ: The discontinuous form and the lexical form.

22. Kú' bọhọ “Don't collect	23. Kú' di “Don't come”	24. Kú lụk! “Don't enter
25. Kú mai “Don't beat	26. Kú ka “Don't go”	27. Kú bei “Don't carry”

22-27 above are without the usual suffixes /au/, /ou/ etc., but is still understood by the native speakers to take the form /ku'bọhọ-òù/, /kũ'di-oo/, /ku'mai-au/ and /ku'ka-àù/ respectively. On the other hand /ka/ meaning ‘go’ is also used as an imperative in the affirmative:

28a. Ka bọhọ Go and collect	28b. Ka mai Go and beat
--------------------------------	----------------------------

Sometimes, combination of the two /kũ/ and /ka/ are used as imperative. For example:

29. Ku k' ubọhọ-òù (ku ka ubọhọ → kũ k' ubọhọ)  
“Don't go to collect”
30. ku k' u la ma onyi iwana ifuo-oo  
NEG-IMP-B IMPAGR.M Stand with him/her fight fight NEG-E  
“Don't go to engage him in a fight”

Sometimes in Ọrọ, it very difficult to delete a vowel in an adjacent position without violating the rule of semantics in this language. (See 30). But in 29 deleting the adjacent vowel could still bring out the meaning.

### Negation and Focus Marker

Focus marker in Ọrọ is ‘enu’. The nature of focus involved in negation is contrastive focus, ‘because it seems to correct false information’(Ndimele, 1995). Ndimele further observes: “in most cases, it is the verb of the introductory (periphrastic) clause that is negated. The verb of the original sentence may lose or retain its inflectional ending depending on

whether it occurs within or outside the domain of negation.” In Ọrọ, negation in the following utterances is in focus:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>31. Enu onyi ata ayak onu-oo<br/>“It’s not him (or her) that ate that fish”</p> <p>33. Enu onyi okid.oo<br/>“It’s not him (or her) that saw it</p> | <p>32. Enu emu ene oo<br/>“They are not the cause”</p> <p>34. Enu Atim akpa-au<br/>“It is not Atim that is dead”</p> |
|---|--|

From the examples above (31– 34) the focus of the utterances were to correct false information through using the focus form of negation.

### The Possessive verb ‘onyii’

In Ọrọ, /onyii/ is used as possessive verb to express possession or to ‘have’, the negative /enyii-oo/ negates. This could be demonstrated this way:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Affirmative</p> <p>35. a. Usọ ọnyii<sup>1</sup>okuk<br/>Your father Poss.v money<br/>Your father has money</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Affirmative</p> <p>36 a. Etim onyii ufok<br/>Etim has a house</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <p>35 b. Usọ ẹ-nyii okuk -oo<br/>Your father NEG-B Poss.V money NEG-E<br/>“Your father does not have money”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <p>36 b. Etim ẹ-nyii ufok-oo<br/>Etim does not have a house</p> |
|--|---|

The affirmatives in 35a and 36a are negated by the use of ẹnyii-òð. Just like the case of present tense discussed above, there is no tense marking or any mood marking which should indicate the present tense. In other tenses, regular negators are used to achieve negation. For first person singular, nnyii is used as possessive verb- ‘I have’ while inyii- ‘we have’ is for first person plural.

### Existential Negation

This refers to negation of utterances that denote existence of something. In Ọrọ existence is expressed through the copula verb/abak/, ‘be’. /Mbak<sup>2</sup>/is used first person singular and ‘ebak’ is used for the 3rd person plural.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Affirmative</p> <p>38a. Titia mmọ abak ku klas<br/>Teacher is be in class<br/>“The teacheris in the class”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Affirmative</p> <p>36 a. Onyii mmọ abak k’ufọk<br/>S/he is be in house<br/>“S/he is in the house”</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <p>35 b. Titia ebak ku klas-oo<br/>Teacher NEG-B be in class NEG- E<br/>“The teacher is in the class”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Negative</p> <p>36 b. Onyii ẹ bak k’ufọk-oo<br/>S/he NEG-B be in house NEG-E<br/>“S/he is not in the house”</p> |
|--|--|

The notion of existence is to tell the presence of something or someone. The absent of which is the negated.

### Negation and Serial Verb Constructions

According to Ejele (1995), Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs) are strings consisting of verbs that stand next to each other without an overt connector. The verbs in question do not have their own individual subjects, but are connected to the same subject. In *Ọrọ* this could be demonstrated this way:

Affirmative	Negative
37 a. ka li nwid sok mi	37 b. ku ka uli nwid usok mi-oo
Go buy book return me	don't go buy book return me
v v v	v v v
Go and buy book for me	Don't go to buy the book for me
38 a. Di ka boho ufok oku li	38 b. ku 'ka boho ufok oku li-oo
Come go collect house that buy	Don't Go collect house that buy
v v v v	v v v
“Go and negotiate that house and buy”	“Don't negotiate that house to buy”

A closer look at the verb pattern of the two sentences shows the appearance of verb in a sequential order in the two negative and positive constructions, with all the verbs pointing to only one subject. It is also observed that the negative marker /ku/ ‘don’t’ occurs before the first verb of the construction. The negator in this case as in other cases does not scope over verbs in series. The application of the negator KU - “don’t” on the first verb apply to all the subsequent verbs. They are all negated.

### Negation, Tone and PPT

Tone refers to the distinctive pitch level of a syllable. Tonal variation is one on the processes of word formation in tonal languages. According to Anyanwu (2007) “it constitutes a suprasegmental feature superimposed on a segmental entity such as syllable, morpheme or word, so that such an entity comes out with two, three or four different meanings.” It is like interplay of melody in the human system of communication noticeable at the rise and fall of pitch to convey different meanings or emphasis. Katamba (1989) also notes that “pitch of an utterance depends on the rate of vibration, the higher the resulting pitch becomes. . .” In a tone language, these pitch differences are used phonemically either to differentiate between word meaning or convey grammatical distinction” Our research work so far has revealed the extent and role tone plays in the formation of negative morphemes.

Moreover, a low tone which precedes a high tone has the effect of slightly lowering that high tone and a low tone can be raised before and between high tones Essien, (1990). The phonologization of declination which leads to phonological process called downdrift is very common in *Ọrọ*. By this process, high tones are drastically lowered after low tones. This can be seen from the following Underlying Representation and Phonetic Representation:

39	UR	PR	GLOSS
(a)	H-L-H-H-H /úfok Ábási/ → Noun + noun	H-L-L-L-HL [úfok Àbási]	‘house of God’



(b)	H-L-H-H /úfòk íbók/ Noun + noun	→	H-L-L-HL [úfòkìbòk] compounding	‘hospital’ (house of medicine)
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We can see that in example 39 (a) the once high tones [Ábási] was lowered to [Àbàsì] due to the low tone which precede the high tone even across word boundary. The same in example 39 (b) the once high tone in [íbók] as a single word taking up a low tone and falling tone in [ìbòk] respectively as a result of their coming together to form [úfòkìbòk] due to the effect of the preceding low tone and its function. And this is also a typical example of a lowering influence of a low tone on a high tone extending beyond word boundary. In the above explanation, movement in line with PPT is involved. Moreover, as it has been exemplified, negation takes place in Ọṛọ after subject, usually a noun or pronoun. Therefore, the following parameters are observed:

- Affixes in Ọṛọ negation are simultaneously default circumfix and discontinuous affixes.
- Affixes in Ọṛọ are concatenative: serving as Downstep, Upstep, default prefixing and suffixing and tonal variation
- A high tone loss its highness when subjected to negation.
- Negation is neither semantically nor syntactically equal to affirmation

### Conclusion

This paper which addresses the patterns of negation in Ọṛọ has used quite a sizeable amount of data and several examples from semantically and morphosyntactic point of view to show/clarify how negation is processes in Ọṛọ. Fourteen negative patterns have been examined. It is observed that the simultaneous prefixation and suffixation of negative morphemes on the verb root in a construction is used to derive negation. Moreover, both the prefix and suffix are concatenative, that is performing different functions – such as downstep, upstep, prefix, suffix, negation etc. In this language, the negator is an affix and its function is to negate an assertion.

Based on the research question, finding shows that negation plays a very vital role in the construction of Ọṛọ grammar. Negative imperative like ‘KU’ – ‘don’t’ negates right away in addition to the suffix. ‘Ku’ is also used to express readiness to start an action ‘about to’. ‘Ka’ an imperative meaning ‘go’ are sometimes combined with the negative ‘ku’ to bring about a negation – ku ka – ‘don’t go’ without resorting to affixes to negate. Focus marker in Ọṛọ is ‘enu’ which is used to correct false information – and thus at the same time negating. Additionally, ‘one word’ sentences negating pattern differs significantly from sentential negation in the sense that, in the one word pattern, the negators border the entire construction, for example, ‘amfak-au’ while the verb is circumfixed. However, in sentential negation, the subject is left out before negation begins. In terms of tone, the high tone in an affirmative sentence is dropped during the process of negation. In other words, the high tone losses its highness when subjected to negation. That means, tone also play a vital role in the processes of negating an affirmation. The study further identified the two forms of negation in Ọṛọ - The discontinuous form and the lexical form.

And as noted by Ndimele, ‘auditory and articulatory impressions alone are not enough for the study of segmental and suprasegmental features in any natural language.’ The same conclusion we are drawing in the study of tones in Ọṛọ. There is more to be done in the study of Downstep and Upstep in Ọṛọ. Modern sound equipment should be in place

to give a full description of this language and to help it occupy its place among tonal languages. Linguists who are really interested in the study of tone should take the advantage offered by the rich inventory of tone in this language to carry out their research.

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