

## **A Comparative Study of Negation in German and Igbo**

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### **Abstract**

This paper is focused on comparing negation in German and Igbo. The importance of this study arises due to the need to understand the basic structural pattern of the two languages and how negation applies to the two languages. The objectives of the study therefore are to compare the negative markers and their scopal properties of the two languages in simple declarative, perfective and imperative sentence structures. It was found out that the negative structures whose markers have overt morphological markers and syntactic loci have implication for negation in language particular and universal tendencies. Negation can be lexical, phrasal, clausal or sentential in nature. For negation of simple declarative construction in Igbo, all simple declarative statements have the same negative marker: -ghị or -ghị. Each of the suffix negative markers obeys the vowel harmony rule. In Germany, we observed negation with *Kein-* which is a negative indefinite article that also negates nouns. Also negation with *Nicht* (not) that negates all types of verb constructions. Different sentence types have different ways of marking negation. However, the negative markers and processes of negation are different in the two languages under review.

### **Introduction**

Sanusi and Oyewole (2019) admit that negation has attracted a lot of interest and research in linguistics. Alhawaishah (2015) asserts that it is a basic structural pattern and indispensable in human communication. De Swart (2010) and Mabondo (2012) identify negation as a universal grammatical category but is realised differently across languages.

De Swart (2010), Okoro (2016), Adeoye (2019) and Obinna (2019) define it as a construction, which negates an affirmative statement. This perspective is on all fours with the definition of many other scholars such as Chomsky (1989), Radford (2006), Mbah (1999, 2018), Ndimele (2006), Ezenwafor-Afuecheta (2021), Ogah-Adejoh, Ode and Erenje (2022).

Shakhonza (2021) avers that there are two major types of negation, namely, intrinsic negation and process negation. When further declassified according to the scope of the negative markers, these intrinsic and process negations can be further atomised into semantic, lexical, phrasal and clausal negation.

The semantic negation refers to the entities that possess inherent lexical entries, whose meanings are either converse, reverse or polar to each other and whose meanings include elements that contradict each other; these contradictions may be abstract. They include *alive ~ dead*, *tall ~ short*, *white ~ black*. The semantic negatives may also include affixal negatives, such as *un-* (as

in unstable, unsuitable, unable, unhealthy, unlawful), in- (as in inability, ineligible), -il (as illiterate, illegal, illicit), and -ir (as in irredeemable, irregular). Lexical negatives may be seen from two perspectives, to wit, lexical items that are in themselves negative markers or negative markers, whose scope of negation covers only one lexical item. In other words, it may be seen in lexical or sentential constructions, e.g. no, none, dead, short. When the scope of negation covers only a lexical item in a syntactic string, it is also said to be lexical, e.g. Odo does not come. Here, the negative marker is 'not' whereas the scope of the negation covers only the verb 'come'.

Phrasal negation is the negation that involves negative markers that are phrasal in structure or whose scope of negation covers more than one lexical item but not up to a sentence. The examples,

1. (a) Chike did not hit the tall Jessica and beautiful Pauline.  
(b) John did not see Neeto or Sinelo.  
(c) Isioma and Ugoo will not go to Jos in the north or Aba in the east.  
(d) Neither the intelligent Ebube nor the kind Ozioma came second.

In the above examples, the negative marker is 'not' in 1(a, b, c) while it is the discontinuous negative, neither ~ nor, in 1d. The scope of each of the negative markers is phrasal; in other words, the parts of the sentences negated are more than a lexical item in each of them. In 1a, what are negated are 'hit the tall Jessica' and 'hit the beautiful Pauline'. In 1b, they are, 'see Neto' and 'see Sinelo'. In 1c, the structures negated are 'go to Jos in the north' and 'go to Aba in the east'. In 1d, the structures that are negated are 'the intelligent Ebube came second' and 'the kind Ozioma came second'. Further to the above scope of the phrasal negators, negative markers may also be phrasal such as neither ~ nor.

The sentence or clausal negation is the type of negation that involves sentences in their negative coverage. This is better appreciated if the proposition that inflectional materials function as governors is assumed. Abney (1987) along with Radford (1988), Cook (1988), Chomsky (1990), Pollock (1989) and Mbah (1999, 2018) have striven to show that indeed everything about sentence construction is about inflecting linguistic materials on the skeletal schemata of individual languages. Each language inflects the selected lexical and grammatical formatives for each intended grammatical string. The lexicon of each language contains all the linguistic materials for its grammatical constructions. The morpho-syntax of each language has an algorithm, which category-selects and places each lexical item and grammatical formative in their appropriate loci in the phrase marker.

As already stated in the foregoing, negation is a universal linguistic phenomenon. Each language parametrises the loci of marking negation subject to its scope. In English, for instance, as postulated by Pollock (1989) and Radford (1990), the negative markers in the following example have different scopal properties.

- 2a You cannot tell her.
- b You cannot tell her.
- c You can't tell her.

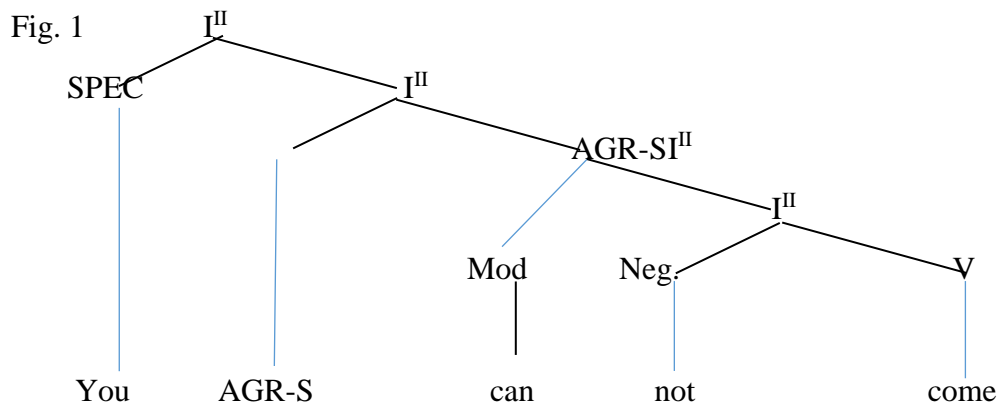
Radford (1990) interrogates the examples in 2 (culled from Mbah, 2018) to elicit their grammaticality and scopal properties:

- 3a Can you not tell her?  
 b Cannot you tell her.  
 c Can't you tell her?

Radford (1990) infers from 3 that the grammaticality of 3a means:

4 It is possible for you not to tell her.

Let 2a-c be reduced to their phrase markers.



Radford (1990) explains that in Fig. 1, the  $I$ -node takes NEGP as a complement. The complement is headed by NEG, which takes VP as its complement. NEG has scope over the VP. It c-commands the VP; this is a necessary precondition for a constituent to have semantic scope over another constituent. This is demonstrated in the following definition of scope.

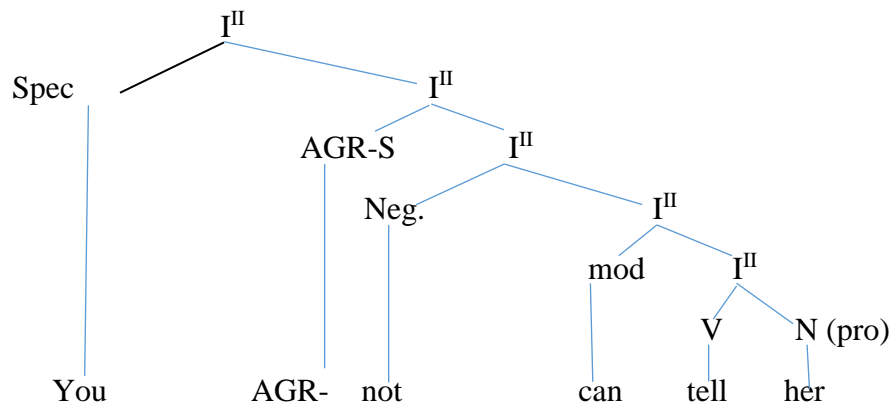
## 5 Scope

- i. X has scope over Y iff X c-commands Y (and X and Y have scopal properties)
- ii. X c-commands Y iff the first branching node above X contains Y as one of its constituents and X is not a constituent of Y, nor Y, X

Radford (1990) argues that scopal relations between constituents are determined by their relative position in the phrase. In Fig. 1, the  $I^I$  constituent c-commands the NEGP because the first branching node above  $I^I$  is  $I^{II}$ -bar.  $I^{II}$ -bar contains NEGP as one of its constituents.

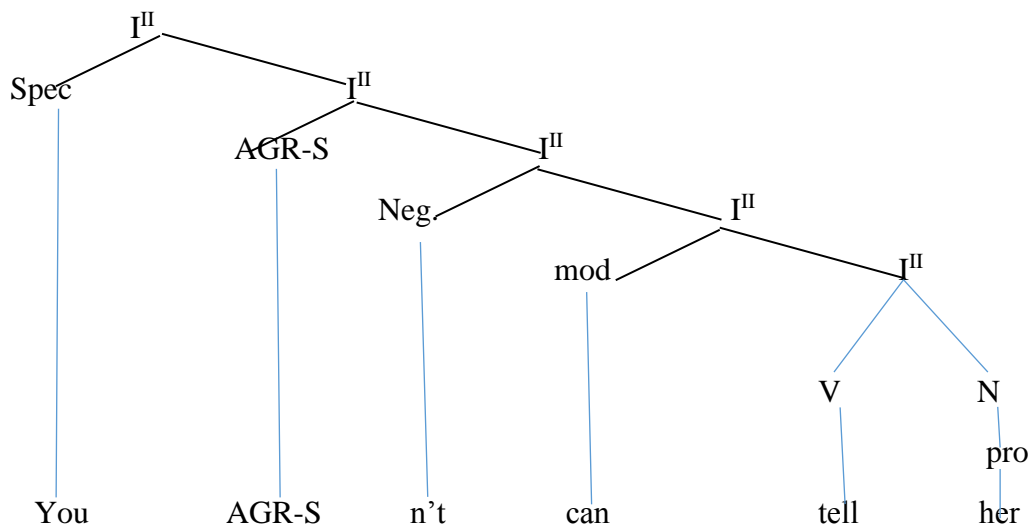
Example 2a has a different structural relation within the structure. Its scopal property differs from that of 2b. Let us examine the following figure.

Fig. 2



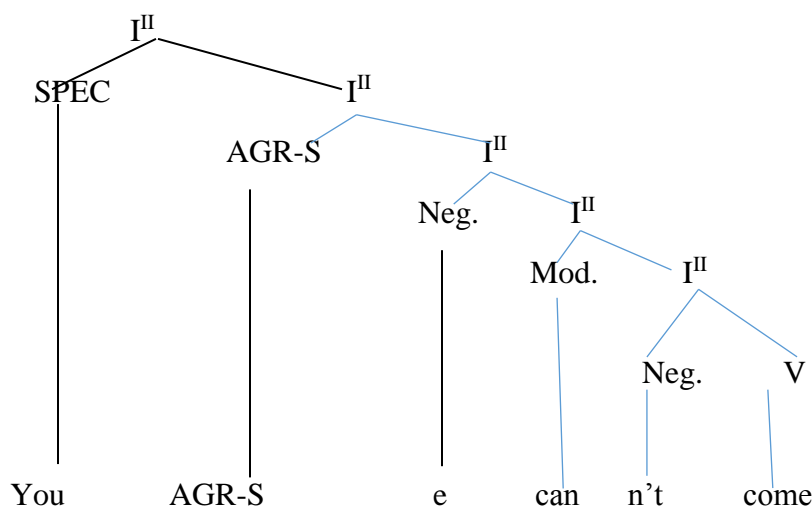
The interpretation of Fig. 3 reflects the scopal relation between NEG and other components of the phrase. NEG c-commands  $I^I$  since its first branching node above NEG is NEG-bar and NEG-bar contains  $I$  as one of its constituents. This corresponds to the interpretation of 2b as 3 (see Yusuf, 1991). Example 2c has the same scopal structure as 2b except that in 2c, Neg. is contracted. This is shown in Fig. 3

Fig. 3



The morphonemic rule, affix hopping, moves the NEG marker to the right of the auxiliary verb thereby making it form the contracted form *can't*. Radford (1990) further argues that *can + not* is un-invertible while *can't* is an invertible negative. The inverted form of Fig. 3 is Fig. 3.

Fig. 4



In 3, the negative marker (not) has scope over 'come'. Furthermore, in 3b, the scope of the negative marker is over 'can'; therefore, the interpretation is:

6 It is not possible for you to tell her.

3b is the same as 3c. The meaning is that if the negative marker has scope over the modal auxiliary 'can', the implication is that it also has scope of the subject of the sentence, to wit, "You do not have the capacity to tell her". It is the ability of negative markers to have different scopal properties that makes Chomsky (1989), Pollock (1989), Teke (1989) and Mbah (2018) argue that it can project into phrases, a projection which arises from the extended endocentricity principle, whose axiom is:

### Extended Endocentricity Principle

Every phrase is a symmetrical projection of a single word category and every single word category projects symmetrically into a corresponding phrase category.

The foregoing discussion reveals some general characteristics of the INFL components. It also gives evidence to the fact that their dominance or precedence relations are determined by semantic factors. These semantic factors are expressed in the scopal properties of the lexical items. However, TP presents an unvarying form, which dominates all the nodes of INFL except AGR-S.

In tone languages, the picture is slightly different. This difference is because tone plays a major role in the interaction of the syntactic components. Tone is the pitch of voice, which is capable of discriminating meaning. It is assigned to words. It can also be assigned structurally. Green and Igwe (1963)

The fact that Igbo has only three level tonemes does not, of course, mean that only three tone, or pitch, levels are used by the language. An utterance may have five or six levels but they will consist in combinations of the three tonemes (p.7).

With the publication of Welmers (1973), the step tone became associated firmly with the language. Nwachukwu (1976) and Emenanjo (1978) classify the tone pitches into high, step and low. Emenanjo (1978) goes further by reclassifying the tones based on their behaviour in associative constructions. There are basically two tone groups that are composed of words ending in any other tone than the high tone.

Studies on tone have shown that it performs major roles in syntactic permutation of the language. Indeed, current researches have argued that every sentence pattern in the Igbo language has a peculiar tone associated with it (see Mbah & Mbah, 2015). Thus, negative constructions in Igbo simple declarative and perfective verb forms have a consistent down-stepped tone pattern irrespective of the scope of the tone marker (see also Mbah, Ezeora, Ugbor and Dioka. 2024). Tone dominates tense because it governs it and assigns its tone to the verb such that the original tone of the verb marking tense is displaced by that of the governor.

The current research, which compares negation in German and Igbo is to examine how negation applies to the two languages. However, the paper is delimited to sentential negation, with the specific objectives on the negative markers and their scopal properties in simple declarative, perfective and imperative sentence structures. These are the negative structures whose markers have overt morphological markers and syntactic loci that have implication for negation in language particular and universal tendencies.

### **Negation of simple declarative construction in Igbo**

The simple declarative statement is an assertion, which claims the performance of an action that is verified. See Mbah (1986). The statement may be in the past, present or future. In Igbo, all simple declarative statements have the same negative marker: -ghì or -ghị. Each of the suffix negative markers obeys the vowel harmony rule; in other words, the form of the root or stem of the verb determines the selection of either of them, e.g.

7 a. Ó jè-rèakwúkwo.

He/she go past school “He/she went to school.”

b. Ó dì òjì.

He/she/it be black “He/she/it is black.”

c. Ujuga-alù di.

Uju modal prefix-marry husband “Uju will marry (a husband).”

7 contains different verb types and forms. 7a is the simple past dynamic verb form. It takes the past tense -re verb form, which flows from the nature of the verb root, je. The tone pattern of the tense marker is low tone, -rè. On the other hand, the tone pattern of the verb root is high, jé. However, because the tone of the past tense marker stands in dominance and government relationship with the verb root, the tone of the verb root changes to the low tone to obey and be in harmony with the governing past tense marker, jèrè.

7b is a stative verb. A stative verb is a verb that expresses a state that may last for a long time or have an air of permanence around it. Because the verb is stative, it does not form the past tense form as the dynamic verbs. Rather than use the harmonising -rV suffix, it uses the suffix -bù irrespective of the nature of the verb root to which it is affixed.

7c is a modal verb of the futuristic type; the action that it expresses may or may not come to pass. 7c has a modal auxiliary verb. It is noteworthy that almost each time the Igbo verb takes on an auxiliary verb, it is the auxiliary word that hosts affixes that may be further affixed to the verb complex.

The negatification of the verb forms in 7a-c takes the down-step toned -ghī or -ghĩ, e.g.

8. a. Ó jè-ghĩ ákwúkwó.  
He/she go-neg school "He/she went not to school / He/she did not go to school."
- b. Ó dighĩ òjí.  
He/she/it be-not black "He/she/it is not black."
- c. Ûjú ágághĩ ālú dī.

Uju pref.-mod-negpref-marry husband "Uju will not marry (a husband)."

The negative marker is overtly expressed in the different simple declarative verb forms. It displaces the past tense marker with the negative marker, such that it appears in the underlying form only. In 8b, the negative marker is suffixed to the stative verb. Because the verb is a low tone verb, it assumed a high tone to obey the tonotactic rule, which stipulates that a down-stepped tone cannot follow a low tone. In 8c, the modal auxiliary verb hosts the negative marker. Here, once the subject of the sentence is bisyllabic (or if otherwise polysyllabic), the auxiliary verb whether modal or otherwise takes on a prefix. But if the subject of the sentence is monosyllabic, it does not take the prefix, e.g., Ì gághĩ ālú dī (You (sing) will not marry (a husband)). Here, because the subject of the sentence is monosyllabic, "gághĩ" did not take the prefix.

### Negative perfective verb construction

The perfective construction is the type of construction whose action is complete but its effect is still being felt in the present. It may be expressed in the past, present tense, and in the future modal aspect. In standard Igbo, it is marked by the suffix -la/-le, depending on vowel harmony. Some dialects have the variants -na/-ne but they are not accepted as standard. However, the Onicha dialect variety, the invariant -go is also accepted as a standard form (see Society for the Promotion of Igbo Language and Culture, (SPILC) 1983), e.g.

- 9a. I sila Aba laaQba.  
You (sg) follow-have Aba arrive-suff.Qba "You have returned to Qba from Aba."
- b. Ada agaalaeruulọ.  
Ada pref.-will-suff. have pref.-reach house "Ada will have reached home."
- c. Eze gaarala enye ya ya.  
Eze will-suff past have pref-give him/her/it it "Eze would have given it to him/her/it."

In 9a, the simple present perfect modal is marked by '-la', which is suffixed to the verb 'si'. In 9b, the verb has a modal auxiliary '-ga', which marks probability before the perfective aspect marker. 9c has the modal auxiliary with the past tense and perfective markers.

As in the declarative sentences seen in the foregoing, once the subject term is monosyllabic, the verb does not affix the prefix if the verb expresses the present, habitual or modal form. However, as seen in 9c, the verb form does not take the prefix even though the subject is disyllabic. This is because the verb expresses a probable past action.



Though ‘-go’ expresses the perfective action, it does not express all the nuances of modality as the ‘-la/-le’ variants, e.g.

9a. I sigo Aba laa Qba.

You (sg) follow-have Aba arrive-suff. Qba - “You have returned to Qba from Aba”

b. Ada agagoeruulo.

Ada pref.-will-suff. have pref.-reach house - “Ada will have reached home”

c. \*Eze gaaragoenyeyaya.

Eze will-suff past have pref.-give him/her/it it - “Eze would have given it to him/her/it”

9c does not appear to be grammatical in standard Igbo.

9a-c can be negative. The negative particle is the invariant perfective negative marker ‘-beghi’, e.g.

9a. I sibeghi Aba laa Qba.

You (sg) follow-have-neg. Aba arrive-suff. Qba - “You have not returned to Qba from Aba.”

b. Ada agabeghi eru ulo.

Ada pref.-will-neg. have pref.-reach house - “Ada will not have reached home.”

c. Ezeagarabeghienyeyaya.

Eze pref.-will-pst.-neg. pref.-give him/her/it it - “Eze would not have given it to him/her/it.”

But for small merge operations, the declarative form merely replaces the affirmative declarative form with the negative marker. See 9a. The simple present and future declarative forms do away with the suffixes attached to the verb root or modal auxiliary while retaining the prefixes. See 9b.

Some writers feel that ‘-be’ in ‘-beghi’ marks the modal while ‘-ghi’ marks the negative. However, this is contentious because, they cannot be divorced one from the other. In some varieties of Igbo, where it appears that ‘-ghi’ is not overtly expressed, this is made possible because both syllables have an identical tone sequence, namely, ‘low low’, e.g. Hàèjèbè (The have not gone.). This makes suppressing the tone of the negator -ghì possible.

### Negative imperative construction

The imperative construction is an abridged sentential construction, which demands that some action be performed or otherwise (see Mbah, 2018:156). The imperative construction transforms the full sentence form into a verbal phrase while deleting the addressee and the modal particle.

10a. Rienri

Eat-suff. Food – “Eat food.”

b. Gwaya

Tell him/her/it – “Tell him/her/it.”

c. Kwenuukwe

Sing-you (pl.) chant – “You chant a chant.”

The examples of 10 are verbal constructions. However, every Igbo speaker knows that they contain the second person and the mood of command, which are not overtly expressed in the constructions. Their full forms are:



11a. *Ị ga-eri nri.*

You (sing.) will eat-suff. food – “You will eat food.”

b. *Ị ga-agwaya.*

You will-tell him/her/it – “You will tell him/her/it.”

c. *Unuga-ekweukwe.*

You (pl.) will chant chant – “You will chant a chant.”

The linguistic economy principle, namely, deletion, deletes the second person, whether singular or plural ‘-i/-i/unu’ and the modal auxiliary verb ‘-ga’. In the case of 11c, the second person plural form ‘unu’ is contracted and suffixed to the verb form. This transformation is not possible with the second person singular pronoun. It is worthy of note that it is not all the verbs that take the open vowel suffix to form the imperative construction. Compare 10a and 10b. While 10a takes the open vowel suffix, 10b does not (for a detailed reading on this, see Mbah, 2024).

12a. *Erilanri*

Pref-eat-neg food – “Do not eat food.”

b. *Agwalaya*

pref-tell him/her/it-neg – “Do not tell him/her/it.”

c. *Ekwelanukwe*

Pref-chant-neg-you (pl.) chant – “Do not chant a chant.”

In the negative imperative construction, the negative markers are usually discontinuous affixes: A-/E- ~ -la/-le. The prefix is affixed before the verb root whereas its suffix counterpart is suffixed immediately after the verb root. See 12a-c. 12c has the criticised form of the second person plural suffixed after the discontinuous negative markers have merged. Furthermore, quite unlike the affirmative imperative construction, the negative form does not take the open vowel suffix in its construction.

### **Scope of negation**

Though sentences may contain negative markers, the scope of negation may vary from sentence to sentence. Scope as enunciated in 5 states that a constituent has scope over another constituent if the former c-commands the latter when both constituents have scope properties. In other words, in a phrase marker, the branching node containing the first constituent contains the second constituent as one of its constituents but none of them is a constituent of each other. Let us examine the following examples:

12a. *Ha ejeghi*

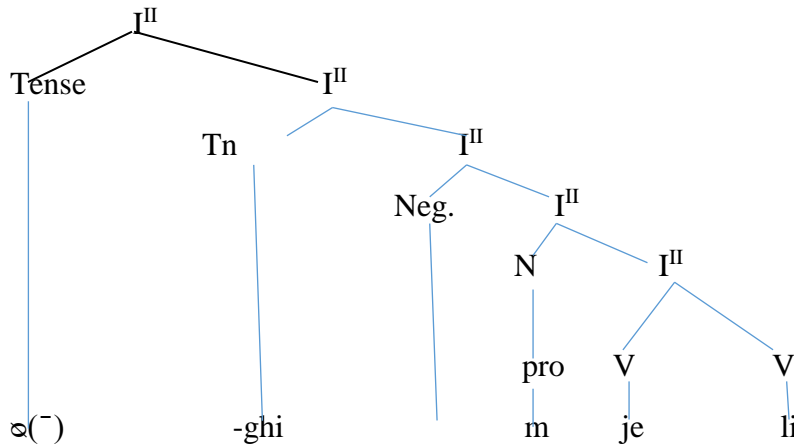
They go-neg. – “They did not go.”

b. *M jelighi/jenwughi*

I go-can-neg. – “I could not go.”

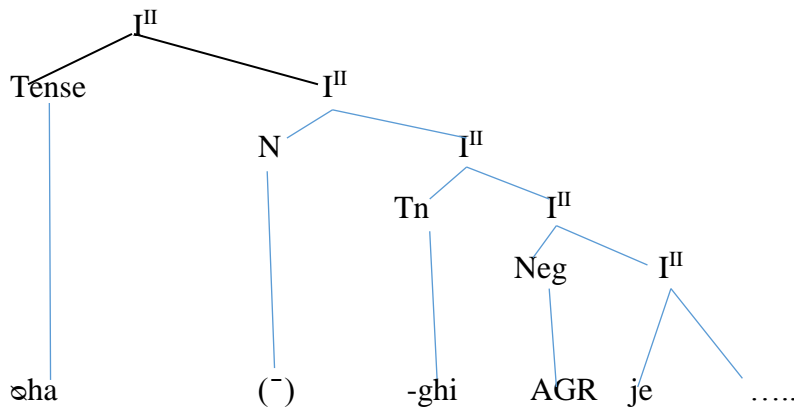
12a shows that the scope of negation covers only the action of the verb -go. In other words, they could but did not go. On the other hand, the scope of negation in 12b is different; it covers the subject term. It was not possible for the subject to go, even if he wanted to. In other words, the scope covers the whole sentence.

Fig. 5



In Fig. 4, Neg. c-commands and governs the subject by the very fact that it has scope over it. Note also that tone does the same thing to neg. and automatically makes it inherit its tone pattern, namely, low tone.

Fig. 6



In Fig 6, neg. c-commands AGR, which also dominates and c-commands the verb. Dominance and c-command are evidence of having supervening scope, which empowers governance.

### Negation in German

The common semantic characteristic of all negation words in German is that they allow the speaker to negate the content of their statement (Helbig & Buscha, 1996). However, negation words can negate the entire content of the sentence (whole-sentence negation or total negation) or just a part of the sentence, such as a word or a group of words (special negation or partial negation). While Helbig and Buscha (1996) and Duden (1998) stop at the two categories above, subsuming the negation of both words and group of words under one category, Winkler (2017) as well as Apelt and Apelt, and Wagner (1992) categorise the third group, word or particle negation, separately (cited in Triyono, 2020).

According to Triyonoet. al (2020), Helbig and Buscha (2005) identify six types of negation markers in German:

- a. Negation markers in the narrow sense, such as *nicht*, *nichts*, *nie*, *niemals*, *nimmer*, *nirgends*, *nirgendwo*, *keinen*, *kein*, *keinerlei*, *nirgendwohin*, *keinenfalls*, *keinsweg*, *nein*, *weder... noch...*’;
- b. Several subjunctions (such as *ohne dass*, *anstatt dass*, and *außer das*) and prepositions (such as *ohne*, *statt*, *außer*, and *anstelle*).
- c. Specific word-formation devices: prefixes for adjectives and nouns (namely, *un-*, *a-*, *in-*, *des-*, and *dis-*), the prefix for verbs and nouns (*miss-*), prefixes for verbs (*ent-*, *ver-*, and *ab-*) and suffixes for adjectives (*-los* and *-frei*);
- d. Specific antonyms among adjectives (such as *kurz* ‘short’ ><*lang* ‘long’ and *dick* ‘thick’ ><*dünn* ‘thin’) as implicit negation, especially in situations where, for example, a prefix such as *un-* cannot be used;
- e. Specific verbs, as implicit lexical negation markers, identifying negation in sub-clauses, all being verbs of refusal and denial. This is seen in the sentence, *Erbestreitet (es), im Kino gewesen zu sein*, ‘He denied having been at the cinema,’ which implies *Er war nicht im Kino*, ‘He was not at the cinema’; and
- f. Plusquam - perfect conjunction in unreal conditional sentences and requirement-related conditional sentences (as an implicit morphosyntactic negation marker). When, for example, the following is stated: *Wenn das Wetter schön gewesen wäre, wären wir baden gegangen*, ‘If the weather had been clear, we would have gone swimming,’ it implies the following: *Das Wetter war nicht schön*, ‘The weather was not clear’ (see Engel, 1989; Paul, 2011; Katny, 2017). However, the focus of this study is on the two negation markers in the narrow sense, namely *nicht* and *kein*.

### **Negation with *kein*-**

The negation marker, *kein*-, which is a negative indefinite article, negates nouns. It replaces the indefinite article *ein*- (a, an) and also negates nouns, which have no article, whether they are in the singular or plural form.

13 a. Ich habe einen Bruder.

I have a brother - I have a brother.

b. Hans ist Arzt.

Hans be doctor - Hans is a doctor.

c. Gestern kaufte Sarah Schuhe.

Yesterday, past-buy Sarah shoes - Sarah bought shoes yesterday.

13a-c has different verb types and forms, but the focus here is on the nouns. 1a is the simple present tense of the verb *haben* (to have). The noun *Bruder* is preceded by *einen*, the indefinite article accusative case marker for singular masculine nouns. 13b is the simple present tense of the stative verb *sein* (to be). The noun *Arzt* is used without an article, since the verb *sein* used with occupations does not require the indefinite article *ein*, unlike in English. 13c is the simple past tense form of the action verb *kaufen* (to buy). The noun *Schuhe* is in plural.

The nouns in the above sentences are negated as follows using *kein-*.

14 a. Ich habe keinen Bruder.

I have no brother - I have no brother.

b. Hans ist kein Arzt.

Hans be not doctor – Hans is not a doctor.

c. Gestern kaufte Sarah keine Schuhe.

Yesterday past-buy Sarah neg. shoes - Yesterday, Sarah had no shoes.

In the phrases *keinenBruder*, *keinArzt* and *keineSchuhe*, in examples (2a - c), the scope of negation by the negation marker *kein-* is clearly only on the words *Bruder*, *Arzt* and *Schuhe*.

### Negation with *nicht* (not)

*Nicht* as a negation marker is used to negate all types of verb constructions: simple declarative construction, perfective verb construction as well as imperative construction. For all types of verb constructions, examples will be given with *nicht* as a whole-sentence negation marker as well as a partial negation marker.

### Negation of simple declarative construction in German

In the following examples, we discuss negation of declarative sentences in the past, present or future.

15 a. Claudia sang am Sonntag.

Claudia past-sing on Sunday - Claudia sang on Sunday.

b. Hans kennt den Sänger.

Hans pres.-know the singer - Hans knows the singer.

c. Die Dozentin wird morgen heiraten.

The lecturer modal tomorrow marry - The (female) lecturer will get married tomorrow.

15a is simple past tense dynamic verb form. It is an irregular verb whose past tense form involves a vowel change of i to a in the verb stem. 15b is a stative verb in the present, while 15c expresses an event in the future, using “wird” as a modal.

The negativisation of the verb forms in 15a-c is as follows:

16 a. Claudia sang am Sonntag nicht.

Claudia past sing Sunday neg - Claudia did not sing on Sunday.

b. Hans kennt den Sänger nicht.

Hans know the singer neg - Hans does not know the singer.

c. Die Dozentin wird morgen nicht heiraten.

The lecturer modal tomorrow neg marry - The (female) lecturer will not get married tomorrow.

### **Negative perfective verb construction**

In the vast majority of cases, the perfective construction in German appears as a past tense and establishes the completion of an action as a given fact or characteristic at the time of speech, i.e. the present (Duden, 1998). To construct the perfect and the past perfect, an auxiliary verb, which can be either *sein* (to be) or *haben* (to have), and past participle are required. Here are examples of this construction expressed in the past, present and future modal aspect.

17 a. Richard hat das Klavier gekauft.

Richard modal the piano participle-buy - Richard has bought the piano.

b. Frieda wird das Auto gekauft haben.

Frieda modal the car participle-buy modal inf..have- Frieda will not have bought the car.

c. Silke hätte das Buch gekauft.

Silkeaux.subj. the book participle-buy - Silke would have bought the book.

In 17a, the simple present perfect modal is marked by the present tense form of the modal *haben* and the past participle of *kaufen*. In 17b, the verb has the present tense form of the modal auxiliary ‘-werden’, which marks probability before the perfective aspect marker. 17c has the modal auxiliary with the past tense and perfective markers. However, the form of 17c could be primarily understood as past subjunctive, thereby making the probability aspect in the sentence much more pronounced than the aspect of future.

17 a-c can be negated as follows:

18 a Richard hat das Klavier nicht gekauft.

Richard modal the piano neg participle buy- Richard has not bought the piano.

b. Frieda wird das Auto nicht gekauft haben.

Frieda modal fut.the car neg participle buy modal inf. have- Frieda will not have bought the car.

c. Silke hätte das Buch nicht gekauft.

Silke aux. subj. the book neg participle buy - Silke would not have bought the book.

### **Negative imperative construction**

The imperative, which is used to give commands, instructions or make requests, transforms the full sentence form into a verbal phrase while deleting the addressee and the modal particle.

18 a. Koch den Reis!

Boil imp.you (sing, informal) the rice – Boil the rice.

b. Bringen Sie das Buch!

Bring imp. You (sing./pl., formal) the book - Bring the book.

c. Kommt nach Hause!

Come imp. You (pl., informal) to home - Come home.

18 a is the imperative of the singular informal, while 18b is imperative of a polite distance and 18c imperative of the plural informal.

All the above examples can be negated, thus:

19 a. Koch den Reis nicht!

Boil.imp. the rice neg-Do not boil the rice.

b. Bringen Sie das Buch nicht!

Bring.imp you (sing./pl. formal) the book neg - Do not bring the book.

c. Kommt nicht nach Hause!

Come you (pl., informal) not to house - Do not come home.

### Rules for the position of *nicht* in sentential negation

Duden (1998) summarises the above rules for the position of *nicht* in sentential negation follows:

When the negation marker *nicht* negates the whole statement in a sentence, it tends to move as far back towards the end of the sentence as possible. Often it forms a negative bracket with the finite verb, so that other sentence elements are enclosed within the bracket. This expresses the close connection between *nicht* and the negated predicate verb, because in the German sentence with the finite verb in second place, external and internal verb proximity are inversely proportional. This means that the closer an element belongs to the finite verb in terms of content and structure, the further it strives externally in position (topologically) away from the verb and towards the end of the sentence:

20. Er heiratete seine Freundin trotz der jahrelangen Beziehung nicht.

He marry pst.her girlfriend despite def.gen. long-lasting relationship neg. – He did not marry his girlfriend despite the long relationship.

However, exact rules for the sequence of elements are difficult to specify, especially since intonation also plays an important role. However, the following tendencies can be observed. The following elements claim final position against *nicht*:

a. The verb suffix:

21. Ich kaufe heute nicht *ein*.

I buy. prs.todayneg part. – I am not shopping today.

b. The infinitive form:

22. Ich werde dich nicht *besuchen*.

I modal fut. you (sg. acc.) visit inf. – I will visit you.

c. The adjectival group (sentential adjective):

23. Ich finde das nicht *schön*.

I find prs. dem. n. acc. neg beautiful – I don't find that beautiful.

d. Noun phrases in a predicate position, which are equated with the subject via a copula verb: 24. Ich ~~nenne~~ *ihnen nicht einen Lügner*.

I call. prs. himneg indef.m.acc. liar - I don't call him a liar.

d. Adverbial clauses in the rank of complements:

25. Sie wohnt nicht *in Rom*.

She live. prs. neg in Rome – She doesn't live in Rome.

e. Object cases that form a fixed conjunction with the verb (e.g., phraseologisms):

26. Ich ~~spiele~~ nicht *Klavier*.

I play. Prs. neg piano – I don't play piano.

However, the elements below tend to remain in the negative bracket:

a. Adverbial groups (sentential particles):

27. Er kommt *trotzdem* nicht.

He come. prs. nevertheless neg. – He's not coming nevertheless.

b. Adverbial clauses:

28. Er kommt *wegen seiner Krankheit* nicht.

He come. prs. because of his illness neg. – He isn't coming because of his illness.

## **Comparison between the negation patterns in German and Igbo**

As stated in the foregoing, it is evident from the analysis that German and Igbo have overt ways of marking and expressing negation. It is further observed that different sentence types have different ways of marking negation. However, the negative markers and processes of negation are different.

In the German language, *nicht* is the general negator and the position it occupies in the syntax of the language depends on the scope of the negation. *Nicht* may negate the lexical or phrasal part of the sentence (refer to examples 16 and 18) or the whole sentence (refer to example 19).

In Igbo, each of the simple declarative, perfective and imperative negative constructions are marked by affixes. While the simple declarative and perfective constructions are marked by suffixes *-ghi/-ghị* (example 8) and *-beghi* (example 9) respectively, the imperative is marked by a discontinuous affix *A-/E- ~ -la/-le* (example 12). These affixes have their dialectal variations.

German has differently conjugated negators for modal verb forms. For the indefinite article accusative marker (singular masculine nouns), the language uses *einen* to negate it in modal verbs (that is 'to have'); for being verb (to be), the language uses *kein* to negate it while it uses *keine* to negate dynamic verbs with plural nouns. These verb patterns in Igbo are not sensitive to number, case or modality as they are in German. These have been adequately illustrated in examples 8, 9, 12, 16, and 18.

In the two languages, the negative markers have scope of the sentence in the negative imperative construction while in simple declarative and perfective construction, the scope of negation may or may not cover the phrase or the whole sentence. It is generally observed that to achieve the desired negation, in the two languages, there are structural changes by the inclusion of particles and agreement markers, which ensure the grammaticality of the output. In some other cases, there are syntactic transformations, which ensure that the surface structure of the phonologically realised can be accounted for and related to the base generated form.

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