The structure of negation in Úwù

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This study examines the structure of negation in Úwù; one of the endangered languages of Nigeria. Úwù is spoken in the Àyèré community in the Ìjùmú Local Government in Kogi State. The present study identifies the various negative markers in the language and their structural distributions both at phrasal and sentence levels. In this study, the researcher establishes that a negative clause is derived through Neg that projects into NegP which takes TP as its complement. It is also observed that the language does not manifest lexical negation. The minimalist program (MP) is used to analyse the syntactic distributions of negative markers in sentences. It is our hope that this study will serve as part of the documentation of an aspect of the syntax of the language.

Keywords: Negation, Úwù, Minimalist program

1. Introduction

Úwù is one of the endangered languages spoken in Nigeria (Abiodun, 2004, 2007) with a population of 4,600 speakers (2006 Census). As at the time of this research, the number of native speakers of Úwù has reduced drastically to about 2,000 people due to migration. The speakers of Úwù are compound bilinguals; they speak Yoruba fluently and live within the Yoruba territory. As result, they prefer to use Yorùbá for social purposes and restrict Úwù to the home domain. The speakers of the language live in a small community called Àyèré in Kogi State. The community shares boundaries with Yorùbá and Àhàn in the West, Igbo in the East, and Ebira in the North. It must be noted that there are towns and villages in between Úwù and the other tribes mentioned.

There are controversies among scholars as to the actual genetic classification of the language. Most linguists who have worked on Yorùbá dialects have consistently omitted Úwù from the group of dialects under Yorùbá. Thus far, only Adeniyi and Ojo (2005) classify Úwù as a dialect of Yorùbá, although it is observed in this research that Úwù is not mutually intelligible with Yorùbá. In a preliminary study, Abiodun (2007) observed a close affinity between Úwù and Àhàn, a language spoken in Èkìtì State, but he did not attempt a new genetic classification for Úwù. Akanbi (2014), modifying Elugbe's (2012) classification, grouped Àhàn and Àyèré (Úwù) as a separate branch of Benue-Congo languages, under Defoid, which he called Ahanoid. The group (Ahanoid) comprises Àhàn and Àyèré (Úwù). However, Adeoye (2015), relying solely on lexicostatistic counts of 100 words and mutual intelligibility between Úwù, Àhàn and Yorùbá, maintains that Àhàn and Úwù are closely related but are quite different from Yorùbá. As a result, he treats Úwù as a distinct language.

There is still ongoing research on the genetic classification of Úwù, because most of the classifications done by earlier scholars are not based on substantial data since most studies were preliminary observations. The focus of this paper, however, is not on genetic classification but on the analysis of negation in Úwù. More specifically, we are interested in the identification of the various negative markers in Úwù and their structural distributions both at phrasal and sentential levels. Moreover, efforts shall be made to compare

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Úwù with Yorùbá, Àhàn, and Igbo where necessary. The comparison of Úwù with these languages (Yorùbá, Àhàn, and Igbo) is borne out of the fact that they all belong to the Benue-Congo language family and there are possibilities of structural similarities between them which are likely to assist our data analysis in this study. The grammar of Úwù has received considerable attention in the area of phonology and syntax, but to the best of our knowledge, nothing exists on the syntax of negation in the language. This gap is what this present study aims to fill by documenting the syntax of negation in the language.

This paper is divided into three sections. Section one is the introduction. Section two discusses the concept of negation, sentence negation in Úwù, focus negation, lexical negation and the derivation negative sentences in Úwù. Section three concludes the paper.

2. The concept of negation

Negation has been defined as a device employed in a language to deny an affirmation or assertion. Kempson (1975) observes that unlike positive indicative sentences which are used to assert some propositions, negations are used to claim that their corresponding proposition is false. Dahl (1979, p.80) claims that a negator is used "...for converting a sentence S_1 into another sentence S_2, such that S_2 is true whenever S_1 is false and vice versa." Yusuff (2008, p. 134) further claims that negative sentences are not used in discourse to introduce new arguments, but rather they are used in contexts in which their referential arguments have already been introduced in the preceding context. Ilori (2010, p. 153) asserts that a negator is a functional element used to deny a proposition. He posits two arguments with respect to negators in languages. First, he claims that negators in most languages are *Infl* items which linearly precede the predicate that they are to negate. Secondly, he submits that there are other languages where *Neg* is not solely realised in *Infl*. Contrary to the first assertion, in Igbo the negative marker is an inflectional item which is suffixed to the predicate it negates (see Obiamalu, 2014). Consider the Igbo examples below.[1]

1a. **Àda**   **mà-rà**   **mmã**
    Ada   be beautiful-*r*V   beauty
    'Ada is beautiful.'

1b. **Àda**   **a**   **mã-ghí̩**   **mmã**
    Ada   AGR   be beautiful-Neg   beauty
    'Ada is not beautiful.'

2a. **Ọ̀**   **zụ̀-rụ̀**   **akwà**
    3sg   buy-*r*V(past)   cloth
    'S/he bought some clothes.'

2b. **Ọ̀**   **zụ-ghí̩**   **akwà**
    3sg   buy–Neg   cloth
    'S/he did not buy clothes.'

3a. **Òbi**   **e**   **ri**   **e-la**   **nrĩ**
    Òbi   AGR   eat-OVS   PF   food
    'Obi has eaten.'

3b. **Òbi**   **e**   **ri**   **be- ghi**   **nrĩ**
    Òbi   AGR   eat   PF-Neg   food
    'Obi has not eaten.

(Obiamalu, 2014)

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[1] The following notation is used for syntactic glosses: FocP – focus phrase; PF – phonetic form; Infl – Inflection; Spec – specifier; IP – inflectional phrase; RelP – relative phrase; LF – logical form; NegP – negative phrase; DP – determiner phrase; rV – tense, perfective marker (Igbo).

In examples (1b, 2b, 3b), observe that *ghí/ghị* are the negative markers in Igbo. The negative markers are suffixed to the verb which they negate. Also notice that the *rV* suffixes which mark present tense, and the past tense marker in (1a and 2a), are replaced with the negative markers *ghí/ghị* in (1b and 2b). The *rV* (a fusion of an alveolar trill and a vowel of the verb) is an archimorpheme for suffixes that are used to indicate present, stative and past in Igbo. The vowel of the suffixes is dependent on vowel harmony constraints in the language. In Igbo, co-occurrence restrictions are placed on the occurrences of vowels such that vowels in the language are divided into two harmonic sets: +ATR vowels and –ATR vowels. The +ATR vowels co-occur with each in both derived and underived words and the same thing is applicable to –ATR vowels. Thus, the choice of the *rV* suffixes are dependent on the vowel of the verb to which they are attached. In (3a) it is observed that *e-la*, which is used to mark perfective aspect, becomes *bè* in (3b) and it linearly precedes the negative marker.

In addition, Yorùbá realises its negators at *Infl*. Thus, Ilori (2010) submits that there are four negators in Yoruba. They are *k(ò)*, *k(ì)*, *má(à)* and *kọ́*. Also, he claims that these free morphemes are discretely realized at *Infl*. In buttressing his claim, he argues further that each of the *Neg* items occurs immediately after the subject and they can co-occur with other *Infl*. elements. Let us consider these examples in Yoruba:

4a. **Akín**   **wá**
     Akin   T   come
     'Akin came.'

4b. **Akín**   **k(ò)**   **wá**
     Akin   Neg   come
     'Akin did not come.'

5a. **Adé**   **ń**   **lọ**
     Ade   Prog.   go
     'Ade is going.'

5b. **Adé**   **k(ò)**   **lọ**
     Ade   Neg   go
     'Ade is not going.'

6a. **Kúnlé**   **ti**   **sùn**
     NP   Perf.   sleep
     'Kúnlé   has   slept.'

6b. **Kúnlé**   **k(ò)**   **tí**   **ì**   **sùn**
     NP   Neg   Perf.   Neg   sleep
     'Kúnlé has not slept.'

7a. **Adé**   **máa**   **n**   **lọ**
     Ade   Hab.   go
     'Ade used to go.'

7d. **Adé**   **k(ì)**   **í**   **lọ**
     Ade   Neg   Hab.   go
     'Ade did not used to go.'

8a. **Adé**   **yóò**   **lọ**
     Ade   Fut.   go
     'Ade will go.'

8b. **Adé**   **kì**   **yóò**   **lọ / Adé k(ò) nìí lọ**
     Ade   Neg   Fut.   go
     'Ade will not go.'

In examples (4b and 5b), observe that the negative marker occupies the position of the tense (past) and progressive aspectual marker, respectively. Moreover, in (6b, 7b, and 8b) there are overt markers that show the presence of the perfective, habitual aspectual markers and future tense markers in the negative sentences. Having looked at Yorùbá and Igbo, ample data from Àhàn, which scholars claim has close affinity with Úwù, will be necessary. It must be noted that Àhàn, just like Yorùbá, expresses its negation by using free negative morphemes which are realised as *Infl*. Consider the following examples in Àhàn.

9a. **Kọ́lá**   **yún**
     NP   T   go
     'Kola went.'

9b. **Kọ́lá**   **àà**   **yún**
     NP   Neg   go
     'Kola did not go.'

10a. **Kọ́lá**   **thèrù**
     NP   eat
     'Kola ate.'

10b. **Kọ́lá**   **àà**   **thèrù**
     NP   Neg   eat
     'Kola did not eat.'

11a. **Olú**   **à**   **theru**
     NP   Prog   eat
     'Olú is eating.'

11b. **Olú**   **àà**   **theru**
     NP   neg   eat
     'Olú is not eating.'

12a. **Olú**   **à**   **ǹthì**
     NP   Prog   sleep
     'Olú is sleeping.'

12b. **Olú**   **àà**   **ǹthì**
     NP   Neg   sleeping
     'Olú is not sleeping.'

13a. **Adé**   **ká**   **yún**
     NP   Perf.   go
     'Adé has gone.'

13b. **Adé**   **àà**   **ri**   **yún**
     NP   Neg.   Perf.   Go
     'Adé has not gone.'

14a. **Olú**   **ká**   **ǹthì**
     NP   Perf.   sleep
     'Olu has slept.'

14b. **Olú**   **àà**   **ri**   **ǹthì**
     NP   Neg.   Perf.   Sleep
     'Olu has not slept.'

15a. **Olú**   **é**   **yún**
     NP   Fut.   go
     'Olú will go.'

15b. **Olú**   **àà**   **yé**   **yún**
     NP   Neg.   Fut.   Go
     'Olú will not go.'

<div align="right">(Akanbi, 2014)</div>

In examples (9a), (10a), (11a), and (12a) one can observe that the slot of past tense and the progressive aspect are filled with negative marker *àà* in (9b), (10b), (11b), and (12b)**.** It appears that the language does not allow the co-occurrence of past tense and the progressive marker with the negative marker. On the other hand, in (13a), (14a) and (15a) it is observed that perfective aspectual marker and future marker have overt morphemes that show their presence in (13b), (14b), and (15b). However, the focus in this study excludes languages where *Neg* is not solely realised as *Infl*. Having looked at the manifestation of negative markers in Igbo, Àhàn and Yorùbá, the remaining parts of this study will be dedicated to the examination of Úwù.

In this present study, we will examine the various manifestations of negative markers in Úwù sentences. Also, explanation will be provided to show whether the language uses free morphemes as its negative markers, and more importantly the positions of occurrence of the negative markers and verbs in both simple and complex sentences will be discussed.

2.1. Sentence negation in Úwù. Sentence negation implies denying the truth or the assertion of a sentence. In this study, sentence negation shall be divided into declarative and imperative sentence negation.

2.1.1. Declarative sentence negation. Declarative sentences are simply statements that relay information. A declarative sentence states the facts about something specific. In Úwù, a declarative sentence is negated when the negative markers *kè* or *kàá* are sandwiched between the subject and the verb phrase as in the examples below:

16a.	**Adé**	**á**	**dá**		16b.	**Adé**	**kè**	**dá**
	NP	Pst	go			NP	Neg.	go
	'Ade went.'					'Ade did not go.'		

17a.	**Olú**	**ka**	**ǹṣí**		17b.	**Olú**	**kè**	**ǹṣí**
	NP	Prog.	sleep			NP	Neg	sleep
	'Olu is sleeping.'					'Olu is not sleeping.'		

18a.	**Wálé**	**ka**	**ṣe**	**èṣé**	18b.	**Wálé**	**kè**	**ṣe**	**èṣé**
	NP	Prog.	eat	yam		NP	Neg.	eat	yam
	'Wale is eating yam.'					'Wale is not eating yam.'			

19a.	**Adé**	**káa**	**dá**		19b.	**Adé**	**kàá**	**dá**
	NP	Hab.	go			NP	Neg	go
	'Ade used to go.'					'Ade did not used to go.'		

20a.	**Òjó**	**káa**	**ṣe**	**èṣé**	20b.	**Òjó**	**kàá**	**ṣe**	**èṣé**
	NP	Hab.	eat	yam		NP	Neg	eat	yam
	'Ojo used to eat yam.'					'Ojo did not used to eat yam.'			

21a.	**Wálé**	**káa**	**di**	**bàtà**	21b.	**Wálé**	**kàá**	**di**	**bàtà**
	NP	Hab.	buy	shoes		NP	Neg	buy	shoes
	'Wale used to buy shoes.'					'Wale did not used to buy shoes.'			

In examples (16a-21a) above, the verbs in the sentences which are preceded by progressive, past and habitual tenses are negated accordingly in (16b-21b). The sentences show that when negative markers appear in sentences (16b-21b), the progressive, past and habitual markers are deleted. It appears that the language does not allow the co-occurrence of these markers with the negative morpheme(s) in a sentence because the tenses are reflected on the negative markers. Indeed, the co-occurrence of these markers (progressive, past and habitual) with the negative morpheme renders the sentence ungrammatical, as shown below.

22a.	**Olú**	**ka**	**di**	**èṣé**	22b. *	**Olú**	**ka**	**kè**	**di**	**èṣé**
	NP	Prog	buy	yam		NP	Prog	Neg	buy	yam
	'Olú buys yam.'					—				

In example (22b) above, the co-occurrence of a progressive and a negative marker makes the sentence ungrammatical. The assertion made above with respect to the deletion or replacement of progressive, tense or habitual markers with the negative marker before or after the verb is not peculiar to Úwù alone. In a number of Benue-Congo languages such as Yoruba, Àhàn and Igbo, the co-occurrence of a negative morpheme and some tense and aspectual markers such as: present, past, and progressive aspect, is not allowed in a sentence, as shown in (1-2b), (4-5b), and (9-12b).

Moreover, in Úwù, it appears that the perfect aspect has an overt marker that reflects it in a negated sentence. Consider examples (23b) and (24b) below.

23a.	**Adé**	**ká**	**ṣe**	**uaṣe**
	NP	Perf	eat	food
	'Ade has eaten the food.'			

23b.	**Adé**	**í**	**kè**	**ṣe**	**uaṣe**
	NP	?	Neg	eat	food
	'Ade has not eaten the food.'				

24a.	**Olú**	**ká**	**hure**
	NP	Perf	run
	'Olú has run.'		

24b.	**Olú**	**í**	**kè**	**húré**
	NP	?	Neg	run
	'Olú has not run.'			

In (23a) and (24a), one may tentatively claim that the perfective marker in the examples is realised in the negative counterparts in a different form as (i) in (23b) and (24b). A cursory observation may argue that the negative marker in Úwù is a functional element that prefixes or suffixes cannot be attached to; as a result of this, *íkè* will be treated as two morphemes, where the first part, *í,* is the perfective marker, while the other part, *kè,* will be regarded as the negative marker. However, the data in this study reveals that in the habitual negative sentence the negator is bi-syllabic and functions as a unitary morpheme. Moreover, the data presented in (16b-21b) reveal that the negator precedes *Tns* and *Asp* in Úwù. Thus, *íkè* in (23b) and (24b) will be treated as a unitary morpheme.

However, in Úwù, the future tense marker *égà* has an overt spell-out in the negative sentence. Consider the examples below.

25a.	**Olú**	**égà**	**dá**
	NP	Fut.	go
	'Olu will go.'		

25b.	**Olú**	**kégà**	**dá**
	NP	Neg.Fut.	go
	'Olu will not go.'		

26a.	**Akin**	**égà**	**ṣe**	**uaṣe**
	NP	Fut.	eat	food
	'Akin will eat the food.'			

26b.	**Akin**	**kégà**	**ṣe**	**uaṣe**
	NP	Neg.Fut.	eat	food
	'Olu will not eat the food.'			

In (25a) and (26a), the sentences indicate a future action and the future tense marker is *égà*. The element is overtly spelled-out in (25b) and (26b). One observes the vowel of the negative marker is deleted with its tone. As a result, there is a fusion between the negative marker and the future tense marker, such as: kè + égà = kégà. The occurrence of future tense in a negative sentence is not uncommon in African languages. It has been reported in languages such as Yoruba and Àhàn, as shown in (8b) and (15b).

Moreover, Úwù permits the co-occurrence of modal auxiliary *kú* 'can' and a negative marker in a negative sentence. See the examples below.

27a. **Akin àyèkú dá**	b. **Akin kè kú dá**	c. **Wálé kè kú ṣe uaṣe**
NP modal go	NP Neg. modal go	NP Neg. modal eat food
'Akin can go.'	'Akin cannot go.'	'Wale cannot eat the food.'

In (27b) and (c), the negative marker precedes modal auxiliary *kú*. This is not to say, however, that it negates the modal, rather it negates the verb. The co-occurrence of modal auxiliary with negative marker does not contradict our claims that a negative marker cannot co-occur with progressive, habitual aspect and past tense markers in a sentence. Facts from data presented in (23-26b) clearly show that it is possible for two or more *Infl* items to co-occur in a sentence. This fact and others necessitate the Split-Infl. Hypothesis (see Pollock, 1989).

2.1.2.   Imperative negation in Úwù.   In Úwù, like every other language, imperative sentences indicate command or order. Such sentences are always subject-less after spell-out because it is assumed that the speaker is addressing the second person 'you'. Adewole (1992) notes that in Yorùbá the negative imperative may or may not have an overt grammatical subject and when it has a subject, it is always second person. Moreover, in Igbo, Obiamalu (2014) claims that commands are only given to the addressee (second person). He notes further that when the subject is the second person singular, it is left unexpressed, but, when it is the second person plural there are two options in the imperative. The second person plural pronoun can occur in the subject position before the verb or as an enclitic after the verb. Imperative sentences in Úwù are negated with *mè* and this marker precedes the verb. See the examples below.

28a. **– dá**	29a. **– ṣe uaṣe**	30a. **– húré**
'Go!'	'Eat food!'	'Run!'

28b. **Mè dá**	29b. **Mè ṣe uaṣe**	30b. **Mè húré**
Neg. go	Neg eat food	Neg run
'Don't go!'	'Don't eat the food!'	'Don't run!'

In (18b), (19b), and (20b), we observe that *mè* occurs before the verb and it negates the imperative assertion of the verb. However, it must be noted that aspectual markers cannot co-occur with negative markers in an imperative sentence in Ùwú because they are mutually exclusive. Hence, the sentence below is ungrammatical.

31. * **Mè   ká   dá**
       Neg   Perf.   Go
       –

The ungrammaticality of (31) is triggered by the presence of the perfective marker in the imperative sentence. Moreover, it is a fact of the language that perfect and progressive aspects, and other preverbal particles, cannot co-occur with imperative verbs. The only preverbal particle that the language allows to

co-occur with the imperative verb is the imperative negative marker. It must be noted that the *mè* negative marker is not restricted to imperative sentences; there are also instances where the two negative markers *kè* and *mè* can occur together in a non-imperative sentence, and each negates different constituents. See the examples below.

32a. **Olú   kè   kú   ṣí   ní   mè   dá**
     NP   Neg   can   do   Comp   Neg   go
     'Olu cannot do without going.'

32b. **Ngọ   kè   kú   ṣí   ní   mè   ṣiṣọla**
     2sg.   Neg   can   do   Comp   Neg   fight
     'You cannot do without fighting.'

In (32a, b) it is observed that the two negative morphemes negate two different constituents, while *kè* negates the verb *ṣí*. The negative morpheme *mè,* on the other hand, negates the verbs *dá* (go) and *ṣíṣọla* (fight).

2.2. Focus negation in Úwù. Focus construction has been extensively discussed in many African language families, including the Benue-Congo group. For example, Bamgbose (1990), Awobuluyi (1978), Owolabi (1981, 1983), and Ajiboye (2006) all report that *ní* is the focus marker in Yorùbá. Issah (2013) claims that *kà* and *n* are focus markers in Dagbani, while Omoruyi (1989) maintains that Edo has two focus markers: *è ré* and *ọ ré*. In the three languages mentioned above the focus marker(s) always follow the focused constituents. It has been argued that focusing entails foregrounding specific information or expression in a sentence for the purpose of emphasis. Halliday (1967, p. 204) claims that "information focus is one kind of emphasis that whereby the speaker makes out a part (which may be the whole) of a message block as that which he wishes to be interpreted as informative."

Thus, focus negation implies negating the emphasized constituent in a sentence. Turning back to Úwù, the focused negated constituent is always preceded by the negative morpheme *úkwèdi*. However, the Úwù focus marker *nè* behaves similarly to the previously mentioned Yoruba, Dagbani and Edo cases in that (when it is overt) the focus marker always follows the focused constituents. As we will see in the next subsection, it is only the subject DP and its satellites that are overtly followed by *nè* when focused. For all other focused constituents, the focus marker is always covert.

2.2.1. Subject DP negation. In Úwù, the subject DP can be a noun with its satellites or pronoun. When the subject NP is negated, the constituent is moved to sentence-initial position it is preceded by the negative marker and followed by the focus marker. The moved constituent (subject) leaves a trace at its extraction site. See the examples below.

33a. **Adé   á   dá**   33b. **Úkwèdi   Adéᵢ   nè   *tᵢ*   dá**
     DP   Pst.   go   Neg.   DP   Foc   go
     'Ade went.'   'It was not Ade that went.'

34a. **Awá di bàtà nẹ̀**
     Pro   buy   shoe   Det
     'We bought the shoe.'

34b. **Úkwèdi awa$_i$ nè t_i di bàtà nẹ̀**
     Neg   Pro   Foc   buy   show   Det
     'It was not us who bought this shoe

35a. **Ọma énṣí á dá**
     DP   red   Pst.   go
     'The fair complexion child went.'

35b. **Úkwèdi ọma énṣí$_i$ nè t_i dá**
     Neg   DP   Qual.   Foc.   go
     'It was not the fair completion child who went.'

35c. **Úkwèdi énṣí$_j$ nè di ọma$_i$ nè t_{ij} dá**
     Neg   Qual.   Foc.   Det.   DP   Rel.   go
     'It was not the fair complexion child who went.'

In (33b-35b), it is observed that the negative marker precedes the subject DPs that are negated in the sentences. The subject DP is moved to sentence-initial position and is followed by the focus marker *nè*. The DP leaves a copy in the form of a trace at its extraction site and the trace forms a chain with the DP serving as the head of the chain (Chomsky, 1995). Moreover, in (35c), the adjective that qualifies the NP is focused and negated. It is moved to sentence initial position and is followed by the focus marker while the NP that it qualifies is followed by a relative marker. One also observes that the relative and focus markers in Úwù have the same morpheme. On the sameness of the morpheme, one can explain that the morphemes are homonyms with distinct functions, where one is focus marker and the other is a relative clause. However, the morphemes can co-occur in a sentence and each will perform its own grammatical function.

2.2.3. Object DP negation. The object DP refers to the object of the verb in a sentence. The same focus process that applies to Subject DPs applies here too. The only difference is that when the object is focused the moved constituent is not followed by the focus marker. See the examples below.

36a. **Adé á pu ẹna**
     DP   Pst.   kill   animal
     'Ade killed an animal.'

36b. **Úkwèdi ẹna$_i$ Ø Adé pu t_i**
     Neg   DP   Foc.   Adé   kill
     'It wasn't an animal that Ade killed.'

2.2.4. Verb negation. Verb negation in Úwù involves the prefixation of *a* to the verb to change it to a nominal; thus, the technical name for this nominalised verb is a gerund. This process of verb nominalisation is not unusual in languages worldwide. It is reported in a number of Benue-Congo languages, such as Yorùbá, Igbo, Igala, and Urhobo (see Abiodun 2010, 2014; Ileonu, 2010; Aziza, 2010; and Ilori, 2010, respectively). The nominalised verb is focused and moved to sentence-initial position while a copy of the verb remains in the sentence. One also notes that the nominalised verb is not followed by the focus marker. See the examples below.

37a. **Adé   á   dá**
DP   Pst   go
'Ade went.'

37b. **Úkwèdi   adá   Ø   Adé   dá**
Neg   going   Foc. Adé   go
'It wasn't the act of going that Adé performed.'

38a. **Olu   á   ǹṣí**
DP   Pst   sleep
'Olú slept.'

38b. **Úkwèdi   aǹṣí   Ø   Olú   ǹṣí**
Neg   sleeping   Foc.   Olu   sleep
'It was not the act of sleeping that Olú performed.'

In (36b-38b), the focus maker is not overtly present. In the examples, we suspect that the language doesn't allow overt focus markers to follow any constituent apart from the subject DP and its satellite. One can presume that the covert focus marker for all other constituents is borrowed from the neighbouring languages. It can also be argued that the focus marker is present in the historical development of the language but got deleted at a point, and the remnant is the case of the overt focus marker that shows up when the subject DP is moved. However, covert focus marking is not uncommon. Adeoye (2008) and Akanbi (2014) note that Àhàn has no overt focus marker for any constituent; the only thing that happens is that the focused constituent is moved to sentence-initial position.

2.2.5. Adverb negation. Adverb negation in Úwù involves the negation of the place of an event, the time of an event, the reason for an action and the manner of an action. The process of negation takes the same shape as any other focus negation in the language. Consider the examples below.

39a. **Má yè̩ é̩   Ìbàdàn**
1sg see you DP
'I saw you in Ibadan.'

39b. **Úkwèdi Ìbàdàn ná yè̩ é̩**
Neg   DP   1sg see you
'It was not in Ibadan that I saw you.'

40a. **Jé̩jé̩jé̩ u   kwaná**
Adv. 3sg walk
'He walks gently.'

40b. **Úkwèdi jé̩jé̩jé̩ Ø   u   kwaná**
Neg   Adv. Foc 3sg walk
'It is not gently he walks.'

41a. **U   káa wá   e̩né̩né̩**
3sg Hab. come night
'He comes every night.'

41b. **Úkwèdi e̩né̩né̩ Ø   u   káa   wá**
Neg   night Foc 3sg. Hab. come
'It isn't every night that he comes.'

In (39b-41b), adverbs of place and manner are focused and negated. In (40b) and (41b) the focus marker is covert. The movement of the constituent *Adv.* just like verbs and nouns shows that the position of the focus is null. Moreover, in (39b) there is a marker *ná* that occurs between the moved adverb and the verb;

cursory observation suggests that it is a focus marker. But since focus is not present in other examples of its kind the possibility of it being a focus marker is ruled out. Thus, one can argue that when an adverb of place is focused, the locative phrase marker normally occurs to show that the emphasis is on a location. Ajiboye (2005, p. 135) observes a similar situation in Yorùbá in content questions; he states that the *tí* element found in content interrogative constructions is a marker of locative extraction. In addition, Adeoye (2015, p. 29) notes among other things that when an adverb of place is focused in Úwù it is always followed by a locative phrase marker *ná*. The argument that *ná* is locative seems logical but has a defect in the sense that the first person singular pronoun *má* in (39a) has been dropped in (39b) without a replacement, and this violates the EPP principle. This fact, among others, may lead us to assume that the bilabial nasal consonant in *má,* as shown in (39a), assimilates the feature of the neighbouring alveolar nasal that is the reason *ná* surfaces in (39b).

2.3. Lexical negation. Lexical negation has been reported in both Indo-European and many African languages. Lexical negation involves the prefixation of a lexical negator to an existing word to negate it. In English several markers are used (e.g., *un-* and *in-*), in Yoruba *àì* is used, while in Àhàn it is *èkì*. See the examples below.

42.   English
         important   *unimportant*
         possible   *impossible*
         correct   *incorrect*
         tolerable   *intolerable*
         do   *undo*

43.   Yorùbá
         (Verbs)   (Nouns)
         sùn   *àìsun* 'the act of not sleeping
         lọ   *àìlo* 'the act of not going'
         gbọ́   *àìgbọ́* 'the act of not listening'
         gbọ́n   *àìgbọ́n* 'the act of not wise'
         rìn   *àìrin* 'the act of not walking'

44.   Àhàn
         (Verbs)   (Nouns)
         nthì   *èkìmanthì* 'the act of not sleeping'
         the   *èkìmáthe* 'the act of not eating'
         yún   *èkìmáyún* 'the act of not going'
         ràn   *èkìmaràn* 'the act of not walking'
         hún   *èkìmáhun* 'the act of not carrying'

45. Úwù

(Verbs)	(Verb Phrases)
dá	*kè dá* '(did) not go'
húré	*kè húré* '(did) not run'
ǹsí	*kè nsí* '(did) not sleep'
ṣe	*kè ṣe* '(did) not eat'
ṣíṣọla	*kè ṣiṣọla* '(did) not fight'

46. Igbo

(Verbs)	(Verb Phrases)
jé	*jéghí* '(did) not go'
sị́	*sị́ghị́* '(did) not say'
dá	*dághị́* '(did) not fall'
rì	*rìghí* '(did) not eat'
dé	*déghí* '(did) not read'

In (42), one observes that the negative prefixes do not change the word class of the negated morphemes, but in (43) and (44), the verbs are changed to nouns when the negative prefix is attached to the root morpheme. However, in (45) and (46), the negative prefix is attached to the roots (verbs), and it does not change them to nouns but they remain as verbs. We also observe that Yorùbá, Àhàn and English have a designated lexical negative marker which is quite different from their sentence negative morpheme. Thus, examples (45) and (46) will lead us to assume that Úwù and Igbo use the same morpheme for sentence and lexical negation which is quite uncommon among Benue-Congo languages. For example Yorùbá and Àhàn have different markers for sentence and lexical negation. Based on this fact, pending further research one can conclude that Úwù and Igbo have no lexical negative morphemes.

2.4. Derivation of negative sentences in Úwù. Scholars have proposed different accounts for the derivation of negative sentences in various languages. Ouallala (1999, pp. 389-391) asserts that *Neg* belongs to a category known as the negative phrase and it functions as a syntactic head which projects into *NegP*. Dechaine (1995, p. 135) notes also that *Neg* "is a quasi-functional head." Ilori (2010) further asserts that the *Neg* projection in Igala takes a VP adjunct. Moreover, Fabunmi (2013) claims that Yorùbá dialects have a *NegP* that selects a VP adjunct. In this study, the Minimalist Program (MP) is used to account for the derivation of the negative sentence in Úwù. Within MP, the representation of a sentence at PF and LF is derived through the operation of the computation system which takes place in the lexicon, C_{HL} (Chomsky, 1995; Radford, 1997). The operations are Select, Merge and Move, which occur before spell-out. Examples (16b) and (19b) are repeated below.

16b. **Adé kè dá**
'Ade did not go.'

19b. **Ade kàá dá**
'Ade did not used to go.'

47.

```
                    NegP
            ┌────────┴────────┐
          Spec              Neg'
            │         ┌───────┴───────┐
           Adé       Neg             TP
                      │        ┌──────┴──────┐
                      kè     Spec           T'
                              │        ┌─────┴─────┐
                           [Ade]       T          VP
                                            ┌──────┴──────┐
                                          Spec           V'
                                            │             │
                                         [Ade]            V
                                                          │
                                                          dá
```

48.

```
                    NegP
                      │
                    Neg'
              ┌───────┴───────┐
            Neg             FocP
              │        ┌───────┴───────┐
           úkwèdi    Spec           Foc'
                       │        ┌──────┴──────┐
                      Olú      Foc           TP
                                 │      ┌──────┴──────┐
                                 nè    DP            T'
                                        │       ┌─────┴─────┐
                                     [Olú]       T          VP
                                                       ┌─────┴─────┐
                                                     Spec         V'
                                                       │           │
                                                    [Olú]          V
                                                                   │
                                                                   dá
```
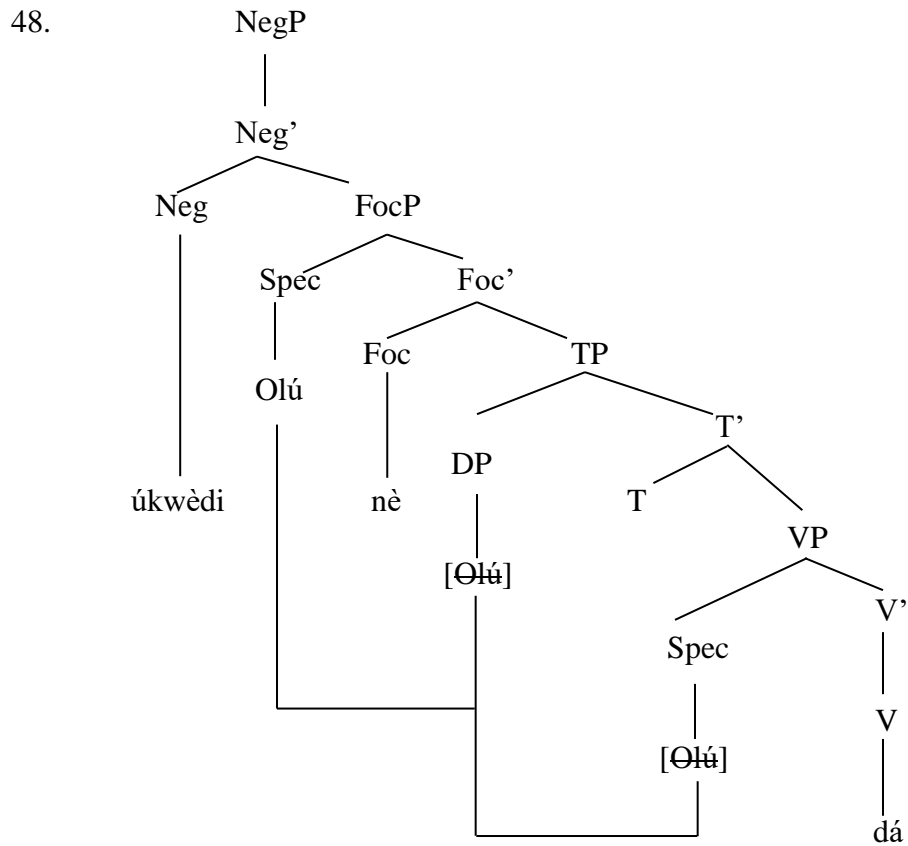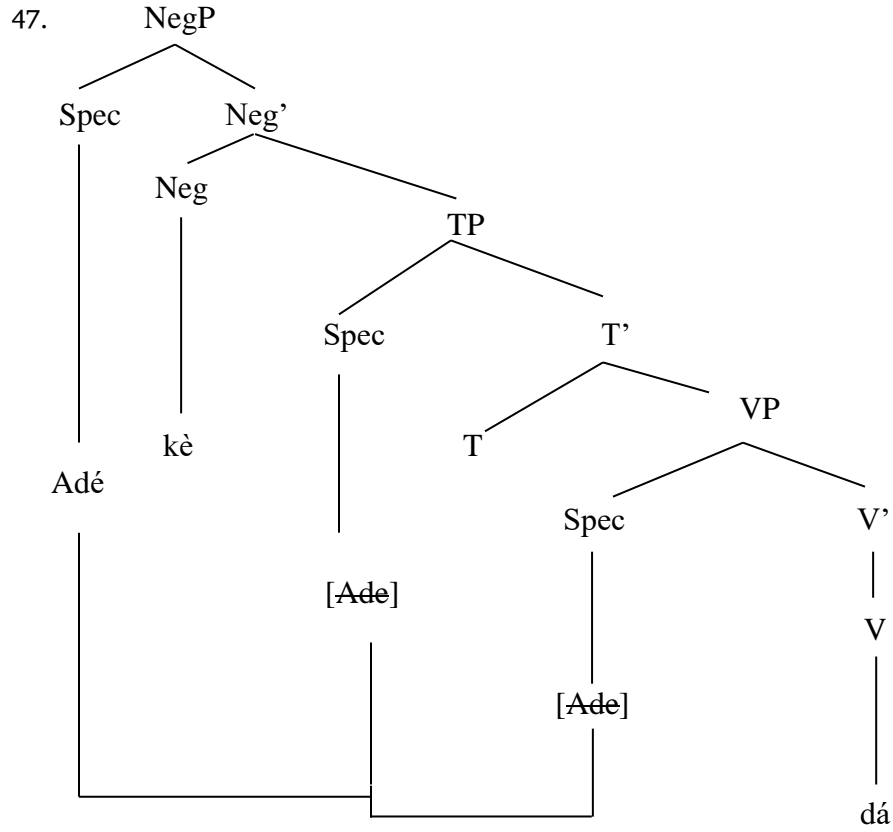
In (16b), the verb *dá* 'go' is selected in the lexicon by the computation system and merged with the Subject *DP*, *Adé*, at the *Spec VP*, and the *T* head is merged with the VP to project *T'*. The *T* head becomes a potential probe which attracts the Subject *DP* to *Spec TP*. The *TP, Adé dá*, is merged with the *Neg* head to project *NegP*, *kè Adé dá*, the *Neg* head becomes a probe which attracts the Subject *DP* from *Spec TP* to *Spec NegP*. To derive *Adé kè dá*, as shown in (16b)_, the operation Move must be invoked before spell-out. See the diagram in (47).

In (47), the *DP* obeys the shortest move; it moves from *Spec VP*, where it has check its theta role, to *Spec TP* to check its case. After checking its case feature at *Spec TP*, the subject *DP* moves *Spec NegP* to satisfy the EPP feature. However, (48) and (49) are complex structures. See again (33b) and (35c) below.

33b. Úkwèdi Adé nè dá

    'It was not Ade that went.'

35b. Úkwèdi énsí nè di ọma nè dá

    'It was not the fair complexion child who went'

In (33b), the verb *dá* 'go' is selected in the lexicon and merged with the Subject *DP* at the *Spec VP*. The *T* head is merged with the *VP* to project *T'*, the *T* head automatically becomes a probe that attracts the Subject *DP* to *Spec TP*, and the *Foc* head is merged with *TP* to project *Foc'*. The *Foc* head becomes a potential probe that attracts the subject *DP* to *Spec FocP*, and the *Neg* head is in turn merged with *FocP* to project *Neg'* and *NegP*. Moreover, to derive the sentence in (35b), the operation Move must occur before spell-out (see example 48).
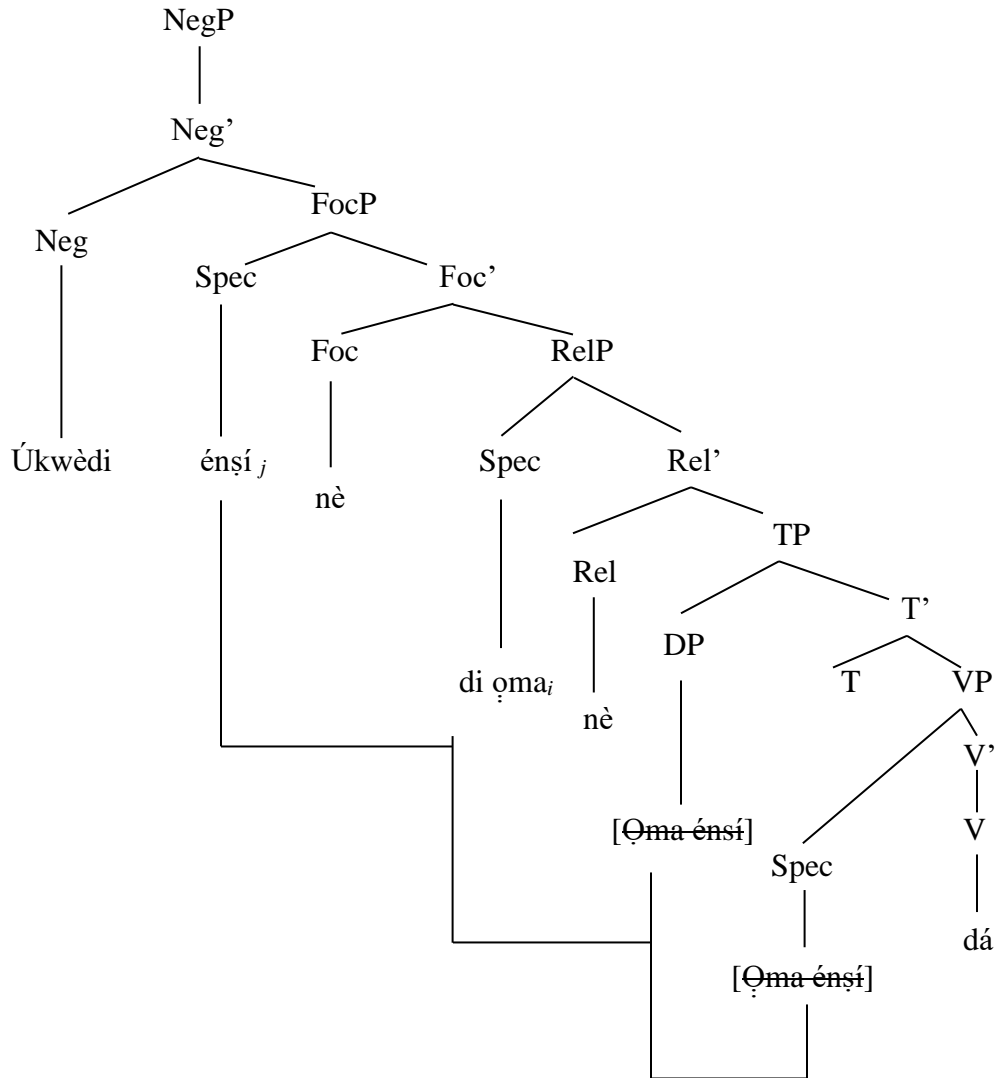
In the sketch in (48), the *DP* obeys the shortest move; it moves from the *Spec VP* where it has to check its theta role, to *Spec TP* to check its case against *T*. In turn, it moves to *Spec FocP*, its final landing site. In (35b) the verb *dá* 'go' is selected in the lexicon and merged with Subject *DP ọma énsí* at *Spec VP*, while the *T* head is merged with *VP* to project *T'*. The *T* head becomes a potential probe which attracts the Subject *DP* to *Spec TP*, while the *Rel* head is merged with *TP* to project *Rel'*. At this point, the *Rel* head becomes a potential probe that attracts the Subject *DP* to *Spec RelP*. The convergent *RelP* is in turn merged with the *Foc* head to project *Foc'*, while the *Foc* head becomes a potential probe that attracts the *DP* qualifier *ensi* to *Spec FocP*. The *FocP* is merged with the *Neg* head to project *Neg'* and *NegP*. Moreover, to derive the sentence in (35b), the operation Move must occur before spell-out.

In (49), the *DP* moves from the *Spec VP* where it must check its theta role, to *Spec TP* to check its case against *T*. It then moves to *Spec RelP*, while the modifier *énjú* moves to *Spec Foc*, leaving the *NP* behind at *Spec RelP*. The simple reason for this is that the modifier is the constituent that is focused and negated.

3. Conclusion

In this research, we have examined negative structures in Úwù. We argue that negative markers are *Infl* items in the language. We also established that *Neg,* which projects into *NegP*, dominates *TP,* and that it linearly precedes the constituent it negates. The study notes that the language forbids the co-occurrence of negative markers, perfective, progressive and habitual aspect, and past tense morphemes. The study also shows that the imperative negative marker and perfective aspect are mutually exclusive. However, we assert that the language permits the co-occurrence of the modal auxiliary and negative markers. Lastly, the study claims that there is no lexical negation in the language.

49.

NegP

Neg'

Neg   FocP

Spec   Foc'

Foc   RelP

Úkwèdi   énṣí *j*

nè

Spec   Rel'

Rel   TP

di ọma*i*

nè   DP   T'

T   VP

[Ọma énṣí]

Spec   V'

V

[Ọma énṣí]   dá

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