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**OF ENGLISH, LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

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## **EDITORIAL NOTE**

The *Ethiope Journal of English, Literary, and Cultural Studies* (ISSN: 0795-5413) is an interdisciplinary journal that explores topical and generative issues in English linguistics and in literary and cultural studies. We recognise that African humanities research is both problem-based and knowledge oriented, and our aim is to provide a platform for scholars to analyse and theorise Africa in a way that is generative, conversational and decolonial. Specifically, the journal focuses on both the analytical and theoretical approaches to knowledge production in the context of Africa and the Global South. We want to curate papers that are hinged on African indigenous paradigms and approaches or that seek to extend, reimagine, or contextualise current theoretical or analytical approaches in English language studies and in literary and cultural studies.

We invite papers that dwell on all aspects of English language studies, including phonetics/phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, ESL, ESP etc. We also welcome papers that theorise literary and cultural texts, including film, still and moving images, music and dance, photographs, cultural objects, spaces and places, society and social formations, and other relevant corpora. While we accept purely analytical essays, we encourage authors to focus on theorising the texts or data they engage with. In particular, we welcome theoretical conversations that implicate postcolonial subjecthood, ecocritical approaches (especially postcolonial ecocriticism), feminism and gender studies, new trends in linguistics, object-oriented criticism and approaches, and other generative approaches to knowledge production. Authors are encouraged to do original theorisation rather than adopt extant theoretical frameworks. They may also extend the scope of extant theories and approaches based on the material they present and discuss.

Furthermore, papers with interdisciplinary approaches are also welcomed. We recognise that knowledge production is an elastic phenomenon, and that bright ideas might implicate various fields. Interesting multi-modal, eclectic, or collaborative research is encouraged in this journal.

## **JOURNAL POLICY**

The *Ethiope Journal of English, Literary and Cultural Studies* is published biennially by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. All papers submitted to this maiden edition of the journal had undergone double-blind peer review and published papers are well researched, original and data-driven.

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Submitted manuscript which should not exceed 7000 words should be typeset in MS Word Times New Roman Font 12, with double line spacing. The first page should include the title of the manuscript, name(s), and institutional affiliation/address, abstract (not more than 250 words and with not more than six keywords). Manuscripts should conform to the current APA or MLA style sheet. Author(s) of published papers will derive the benefits from peer-review of contributions by seasoned scholars, global visibility and receipt of hard copies as well as soft copies of their papers.

The twelve papers in this maiden edition of the journal cut across disciplines in cultural, media studies and sub-disciplines in English and literary studies. The contributors include seasoned and renowned scholars of international repute and young astute scholars with burning desire to excel in academics. The first article titled: “Folklore and African Poetry in the Age of Globalization” by Prof Ojaide is on cultural studies. Prof. Ojaide is a renowned poet and professor of international repute from the University of North Carolina, USA. It is pertinent to note that the contributors are from universities across the globe. We believe that the twelve articles will be of immense interest to researchers and students.

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## A MINIMALIST INVESTIGATION OF AMBIGUITY IN ENGLISH AND URHOBO NEGATIVE SENTENCES

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the syntactic operations which cause certain English negative sentences to yield dual interpretation while the translation equivalent of such ambiguous English sentences yields unambiguous interpretation in Urhobo, a South Western Edoid Nigerian language. The adopted theoretical framework is the minimalist program (MP) of generative syntax. The data comprises the relevant English sentences, and their Urhobo translation equivalent. Two research questions guide the data analysis: (i) *What* syntactic rules and operations cause certain English negative sentences which comprise a matrix and an embedded *because*-adverbial clause to yield dual interpretation, and (ii) *Why* do their Urhobo translation equivalent structures yield unambiguous interpretation? The data analysis shows that in the English sentence, both the verb (V) of the matrix clause and the adverbial (Adv) head of the embedded *because*-adverbial clause (AdvP) fall within the scope of negation; that is, they are either c-commanded by the negater (Neg/T-Neg) or else are adjacent lexical/syntactic units relative to Neg/T-Neg; hence the English expression yields two interpretations at LF. On the other hand, in the Urhobo translation equivalent, only the adverbial (Adv) head of the embedded adverbial phrase (AdvP) falls within the scope of negation; that is, AdvP is the complement of Neg/T-Neg; hence the Urhobo translation equivalent yields only one interpretation.

**Keywords:** Embedded clause, matrix clause, minimalist, negation, translation equivalence.

## Introduction

This paper aims to (i) identify the syntactic operations which cause certain English negative sentences that comprise a matrix and an embedded *because*-adverbial clause to yield dual interpretation and (ii) explain why the Urhobo translation equivalent structures yield unambiguous interpretation. The data consists of English negative sentences which exhibit ambiguity, and their Urhobo translation equivalent.

Negation is a 'denial of an assertive proposition or a predication that a proposition is untrue' (Lyons, 1977, p. 768). As Horn and Kato noted,

Negative utterances are a core feature of every system of human communication and no system of animal communication. Negation and its correlates truth values, false messages, contradiction, and irony can thus be seen as defining characteristics of the human species (Horn & Kato, 2000, p. 1).

Although the meaning and functions of negation are almost universally invariant, the strategies employed by languages to mark negation vary cross-linguistically. Some of these include the use of free morphemes (e.g. *no*, *not*, *never*) and bound morphemes (e.g. *no-* as in *nobody*; *un-* as in *unsure*, and *n't* as in *don't*). In English, for instance, sentential negation is usually effected via the use of free or bound morphemes (e.g. 'It is *not* that Efe *doesn't* cook') while in Urhobo, negation is marked by two types of free morphemes the tensed *negaters* (T- Neg) *di?*/*diá* and *j?*/*jê* and a *tonal negative morpheme* (*toneg*) which invariably occurs at the clause-final position. These three negative morphemes are indicated with *bold italics* in the sentence '*? diá n? Èf j? èmù-èchérè-é*', which is the Urhobo translation equivalent of the English expression 'It is *not* that Efe *doesn't* cook'.

Constituent negation (in English) is usually effected via a negative prefix; e.g. *no-*, in such words as '*nobody*', '*nothing*', and

'nowhere'. In Urhobo, constituent negation is realized by a combination of *toneg* and the negative suffix '-vu?vo' in such words as 'ohwovu?vo' ('nobody'), 'emuvu?vo' ('nothing'), and 'asavu?vo' ('nowhere'). Without the co-occurrence of *toneg* in sentences which instantiate such words as 'ohwovu?vo', 'emuvu?vo', and 'asavu?vo', the suffix '-vu?vo' means 'only one'. Thus, 'Ohwovu?vo y? me mr?re' means 'It is *only one* person I saw'.

## Review of Related Literature

From the related literature, ambiguity seems to have attracted the attention of semanticists and language philosophers more than it has the attention of syntacticians. Gillon, a semanticist/language philosopher, says an expression is 'ambiguous iff [i.e. if, and only if] the expression has more than one meaning' or 'iff the expression can accommodate more than one structural analysis' (Gillon, 1990, pp. 4, 10). Although our focus is on ambiguous *negative* sentences, we note that ambiguity is not limited to negative structures. Consider, for instance, one of the examples cited by Gillon (1990, p. 8), reproduced below as (1):

- (1) The man saw his wife drunk,  
an expression which  
could mean either  
(1a) or (1b): (1a) The  
man who was drunk  
saw his wife.

(1b) The man saw his wife who was drunk.

Negation occasionally produces ambiguity. Atlas (1977), for example, cites the following instance of a negative sentence, reproduced as (2) below:

- (2) Everyone didn't show up
  - (a) No one showed up  
(Interpretation 1)
  - (b) Not everyone showed up  
(Interpretation 2)

and suggests that the difference between Interpretation 1 and

Interpretation 2 'is a genuine ambiguity accountable for by a difference in scope' (Atlas, 1977, p. 323), while in *Philosophy without Ambiguity*, Atlas (1989, p. 69), attributes the difference to 'two distinct underlying forms'.

The focus of our investigation is on the type of ambiguity which occurs in some English negative structures that consist of a matrix and an embedded *because*-adverbial clause. Lasnik (1972), considering the phenomenon, cites a number of instances, one of which is reproduced as

(3) below:

(3) George doesn't beat his wife because he loves her.

As Lasnik (1972, p. 51) remarked, 'the structure [3] yields two interpretations': (3a) and (3b). (3a) Not because he loves her does George beat his wife [*i.e.* George beats his wife, but

*not* because he loves her];

(3b) Because George loves his wife, *he does not beat her*.

In (3a) the adverbial *because* (as well as the embedded adverbial clause which it heads) lies within the scope of negation, while in (3b), it is the verb of the matrix clause *beat* that is the focus of negation. Structures such as (3), as Lasnik (1972, pp. 51–52) suggests, may be disambiguated by introducing a pause at the end of the matrix clause as illustrated in (4), where the parenthesized stroke (()) represents the pause.

(4) George doesn't beat his wife () because he loves her.

This pause blocks the marker of negation, *n't*, in the matrix clause from extending the scope of negation to the embedded *because*-clause. Sentences such as (3) may also be disambiguated by preposing the embedded adverbial clause, as shown in (5):

(5) Because he loves her, George **doesn't** beat his wife.

Our focus, however, is not on strategies for disambiguating

structures such as (3) but rather on proffering a syntactic explanation for the existence of the ambiguity. It is particularly intriguing that the Urhobo translation equivalent of an ambiguous English negative sentence such as (3) is not ambiguous. To illustrate, consider the English expression (6), which has the dual meaning (6a) and (6b):

(6) They will not go because of money.

(a) *They will go*, but not because of money.

(Interpretation 1)

(b) Because of money, *they will not go*. (Interpretation 2)

The Urhobo translation equivalent of (6) has three syntactic variants (7a–c), each of which yields only one meaning, namely Interpretation 1.

(7) (a) Àyè chà rà if?kè r? ighò–ó.

*Lit.* They will go because of money–*Neg.*

*i.e.* 'They will go, (but) not because of money'  
(Interpretation 1)

?

(b) dî? if?kè r? ighò ?ye àyè chà-vw? rà–á.

*Lit.* It BE-not because of money that they will go–*Neg.*

*i.e.* 'It is not because of money that *they will go*.'  
(Interpretation 1)

(c) Àyè chà rà, ?k?vu?vo ? dî? if?kè r? ighò–ó.

*Lit.* They will go, but it BE-not because of money–*Neg.*

*i.e.* 'They will go, but it is not because of money'  
(Interpretation 1)

The literature on English and Urhobo negation does not adequately

address the issue of

(i) the syntactic operations which cause dual interpretation in such English negative sentences as (3) and (6), and (ii) why the Urhobo translation equivalent of such ambiguous English negative expressions as (6) yield a non-ambiguous interpretation (*e.g.* 7a–c). This gap in the literature informs the two research questions, namely:

(i) *What* syntactic rules and operations cause certain English negative sentences which comprise a matrix and an embedded *because*-adverbial clause to yield dual interpretation, and

(ii) *Why* do their Urhobo translation equivalent structures yield unambiguous interpretation?

One of the influential discussions of English negation (in the minimalist framework) is Radford's. Noting that 'in consequence of the economy principle, only the minimal set of features needed to satisfy some grammatical requirement undergo movement in a given structure', Radford (2002, p. 230; emphasis in the original) suggests (pp. 231–235) that in structures such as (8):

(8) *She never trusts him*

$[\text{Spec-TP} \text{ She } [_T \emptyset]_{\text{ADV}} \text{ never } [_V \text{ trusts } [_N \text{ him}]]]]]$

(i) *never* is a VP adverb and an argumental/A-head; that is, the kind of head which can have an argument as its specifier; (ii) the *third person nominative* specifier-features of V 'trusts' (which is also an A-head) percolate up to the adverbial (ADV) node, and from there to the phonetically null T node in order to be checked against the head-features of the specifier '*she*'. On the other hand, in an (ill-formed) structure such as (9):

(9) \* *She not trusts him*

$[\text{Spec-TP} \text{ She } [_{\text{T}} \emptyset [_{\text{ADV}} \text{ not } [_{\text{V}} \text{ trusts } [_{\text{N}} \text{ him}]]]]]$

(iii) the *third person singular nominative* specifier-features of V 'trusts' cannot percolate up through *not* to the empty T node because *not* is an A-bar or non-argumental head. Since Neg '*not*' blocks the specifier features of V 'trusts' from moving up to T to be checked against the head-features of the specifier '*she*', the features remain unchecked, hence the derived structure

(9) crashes at LF. On the other hand, in a (well-formed) structure such as (10):

(10) She does *not* trust him

$[\text{Spec-TP} \text{ She } [_{\text{T}} \text{ does } [_{\text{ADV}} \text{ not } [_{\text{V}} \text{ trust } [_{\text{N}} \text{ him}]]]]]$

the string *not trust him* is a negative infinitive phrase; in such structures, the negating adverb:

...*not* (by virtue of its traditional status as a *preverbal particle*) can attract the *head features* of the head verb of its complement '[*trusts*]' (though by virtue of being an A-bar head, it cannot attract the *specifier-features* of a finite verb) (Radford, 2002, p. 233; emphasis in the original).

In other words, in (10), the infinitive head-features of V *trust* percolate up to Neg *not* where they are checked against the infinitive complement-features of T '*does*' and erased. At the same time, the *third person singular nominative* specifier-features of T '*does*' are checked against the *third person singular nominative* head-features of Spec-TP '*she*' and erased. 'Since no uninterpretable

features remain after checking, the derivation satisfies the principle of full interpretation and converges at LF' (Radford, 2002, p. 233; emphasis in the original).

While Radford's *feature-checking* explanation accounts plausibly for the data (8)–(10), it does not explain why English structures such as (6) are ambiguous while their Urhobo translation equivalent such as (7) are unambiguous. The literature on Urhobo negation does not also offer the desired explanation. Because Urhobo is a *tone* language; that is, a language inwhich suprasegmental and segmental phonemes converge in the realization of some morphemes (*cf.* Welmers, 1959), most studies of negation in Urhobo such as Onose (2007), Aziza and Mowarin (2006), and Welmers (1969) adopt an essentially phonological approach. As Mede (2019, p. 13) noted, tone plays both lexical and grammatical functions in Urhobo. Our interest here is on grammatical tone; that is, 'those tones which are grammatically significant and...exist independently of segmental phonological strings' (Aziza, 2007, p. 25). Aziza refers to these tones as tonal morphemes or *tomorphs*. Tomorphs delineate tenses and express *negation* and *interrogation* in Urhobo. Negation, for instance,

is marked by a floating L-H tone sequence which is mapped onto the final vowel in the phonetic realization. In order to accommodate the tone sequence, the final vowel is lengthened. In the orthography, this is represented by doubling the final vowel (Aziza, 2007, p. 29).

In syntactic terms, the doubled or duplicated vowel is a marker of negation. The account of negation given above is typical of the description of Urhobo negative structures (*cf.* Aziza & Mowarin, 2006; Welmers, 1969) precisely because the approach adopted in these studies is essentially phonological. One problem with a solely phonological account of Urhobo negation is that such an approach can only identify *one* of the negating strategies in Urhobo, namely the use of the clause-final tonal negative morpheme, *toneg*. As we

noted, Urhobo has (in addition to toneg) two types of lexical negators: the tensed *negaters* (T-Neg) *di?*/*diá*, and *j?*/*jé*. A second (related) problem is that since a solely phonological account of Urhobo negation (as argued here) cannot possibly identify the lexical negators, preceding studies generally do not *describe* or *explain* the syntactic relationship between the two lexical negators (on the one hand) and the tonal negative morpheme, on the other. The point of our argument is that the literature on Urhobo and English negation does not adequately address the issue of why some English negative structures are semantically ambiguous while their Urhobo translation equivalents are not.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

To commence our investigation of the syntactic rules and operations which cause such English negative sentences to yield dual interpretation, and *why* their Urhobo translation equivalent structures yield only one interpretation, consider the sentences (11) and (12) below.

(11) (a) They will not go because of money.

[Spec-TP They [T will [Neg not [v go [Advp [Adv because [P of [N money]]]]]]]]]

(b) (i) Àyè chá rà if?kê r? ighò-*à*.

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chá [v rà [Advp [Adv if?ke [P r? [NP [N igho [Neg -*à*]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* They will go because of money—*Neg*.

*i.e.* ‘They will go, (but) not because of money’

(ii) ? di? if?kê r? ighò ?ye ây chá-vw? râ-*à*.

[Spec-TP ? [T-Neg di? [Advp [Adv if?kê [P r? [N ighò [cp [c ?ye [Spec-TP ây [T chá-vw? [vp [v râ [Neg -*à*]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* It BE-not because of money that they will go—*Neg*.

*i.e.* ‘It is not because of money that they will go.’

(iii) Àyè chá râ, ?k?vu?vo ? di? if?kê r? ighò-*à*.

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chá [v râ [Conj ?k?vu?vo [Spec-TP ? [T-Neg di? [Advp [Adv if?kê [P r? [NP [N ighò [Neg -*à*]]]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* They will go, but it BE-not because of money—*Neg*.

*i.e.* ‘They will go, but it is not because of money’

(12) (a) Efe does not work because of us.

[Spec-TP Efe [T does [Neg not [v work [Advp [Adv because [P of [N us]]]]]]]]]

(b) (i) Éf wíowian if?ke r? òhwò-*à*.

[Spec-TP Éf [T Ø [v wíowian [Advp [Adv if?ke [P r? [NP [N òhwò [Neg -*à*]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* Efe works because of us—*Neg*.

i.e. 'Efe works, (but) not because of us.'

(ii) ? di? if?ke r? óhwô ?ye Èf vw? wíowian-*à*.

[Spec-TP ? [T-Neg di? [Advp [Adv if?ke [P r? [N óhwô [CP [C ?ye [Spec-TP Èf [T vw?[vp [v wíowian [Neg -*à*]]]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* It BE-not because of us that Efe [*tense*] works-Neg.

i.e. 'It is not because of us that *Efe works*.'

(iii) Èf wíowian, ?k?vu?vo ? di? if?ke r? óhwô-*ò*.

[Spec-TP Èf [T Ø [v wíowian [Conj ?k?vu?vo [Spec-TP ? [T-Neg di? [Advp [Adv if?ke [P r? [NP [N óhwô [Neg -*ò*]]]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* Efe works, but it BE-not because of us-Neg.

i.e. 'Efe works, but it is not because of us'

The sentences (11a) and (12a) are English negative syntactic units which exhibit ambiguity, while (11b) and (12b) are the Urhobo translation equivalent of (11a) and (12a), respectively. Each of the two English sentences (11a) and (12a), as we mentioned, yields two interpretations. To illustrate, consider (11a) reproduced as (13) below.

(13) They will not go because of money.

[Spec-TP They [T will [Neg not [v go [Advp [Adv because [P of [N money]]]]]]]]]

*They will go*, not because of money.

(Interpretation 1)

*They will not go*, because of money.

(Interpretation 2)

The syntactic string (13) yields two interpretations; namely, Interpretation 1 and Interpretation 2. On the other hand, the Urhobo translation equivalent of (13) has three syntactic variants (14a-c), each of which yields only one interpretation, namely Interpretation 1.

(14) (a) Àyè chá rà ff?kê r? ighò-*ò*.

*Lit.* They will go because of money-Neg.

i.e. 'They will go, not because of money'

(Interpretation 1)

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chá [v rà [Advp [Adv if?kê [P r? [NP [N ighò [Neg -*ò*]]]]]]]]]

(b) ? di? ff?kê r? ighò ?ye ây chá-vw? rà-*à*.

*Lit.* It BE-not because of money that they will go-Neg.

i.e. 'It is not because of money that *they will go*'

(Interpretation 1)

[Spec-TP ? [T-Neg di? [Advp [Adv if?kê [P r? [N ighò [CP [C ?ye [Spec-TP ây [T chá-vw? [vp [v rà [Neg -*à*]]]]]]]]]]]]]

(c) Àyè chá rà, ?k?vu?vo ? di? if?kê r? ighò-*ò*.

*Lit.* They will go, but it BE-not because of money-Neg.

i.e. 'They will go, but it is not because of money'

(Interpretation 1)

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chá [v rà [Conj ?k?vu?vo [Spec-TP ? [T-Neg di? [Advp [Adv if?kê [P r? [NP [N ighò [Neg -*ò*]]]]]]]]]]]

The structural representation of the English sentence (13) is presented as (15) below:

(15) They will not go because of money.

[Spec-TP They [T will [Neg not [v go [A<sub>Adv</sub> [A<sub>Adv</sub> because [P of [N money]]]]]]]]]

What the representation (15) shows is that the negater 'not' exercises dual SCOPE, first over V 'go' and second, over AdvP 'because of money'; hence (15) yields two meanings: '*They will go, not because of money*' (Interpretation 1); and '*They will not go, because of money*' (Interpretation 2). Interpretations 1 and 2 are represented structurally as (16) and (17), respectively, below.

(16) *They will go*, not because of money.

[Spec-TP They [T will [v go ()] [NegP [Neg not [Advp [Adv because [P of [N money]]]]]]]]]

(17) *They will not go, because of money.*

[Spec-TP They [T will [Neg not [v go ()] [Adv~~p~~ [Adv because [P of [N money]]]]]]]

In (16), the negating adverbial 'not' negates the adverbial phrase 'because of money', while in (17) the focus of negation is the verb 'go'.

As we noted, the Urhobo translation equivalent of (13) has three syntactic variants (14a–c), each of which yields only one interpretation, namely Interpretation 1. The three structural variants are represented structurally as (18a–c) below.

(18a) Àyè chá rà íf?kê r? ighò-ó.

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chà [v rà [NegP [Neg Ø [Advp [Adv if?kē [P r? [NP [N ighò [Neg -ō]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* They will go because of money—*Neg.*

i.e. 'They will go, not because of money' (Interpretation 1)

In (18a), the negating feature of the clause-final tonal negater, Neg, percolates up to the phonetically null Neg head of NegP, from which position Neg negates AdvP 'if?kè r? ighò' (= ENGLISH 'because of money') to derive the interpretation 'They will go, (but) not because of money'. In (18b), T-Neg 'di?' negates AdvP to derive the meaning 'It is not because of money that they will go'.

(18b) ? di? íf?kê r? ighò ?ye ây chá-vw? rà-á.

Fig. 1. RE and  $\delta$  vs.  $\theta$  and  $\theta_0$  for  $N = 10$ .

i.e. 'It is not because of money that *they will go*.' (Interpretation 1)

In (18b), the negating features of the clause-final tonal negater, *Neg*, do not percolate upwards; the reason is that there is no suitable landing site because the *Neg* position in the matrix clause is already filled by the tensed negater/T-Neg, *di?*. It is this T-Neg which negates the Adv head of *AdvP* to derive the interpretation: 'It is not because of money that *they will go*'. Similarly, in (18c) T-Neg 'k' does not. A1 P could be the LF target of 'They will go', but it is

not because of money'.

(18c) Àyè chà rà, ?k?vu?vo ? dì? if?kê r? ighò-ð.

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chà [v rà [ConjP [Conj ?k?vu?vo [Spec-TP ? [T-Neg dì? [AdvP [Adv if?kê [P r? [NP [N ighò [Neg -ð]]]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* They will go, but it BE-not because of money-Neg.

*i.e.* 'They will go, but it is not because of money'

(Interpretation 1)

All three interpretations in (18a-c) correspond to Interpretation 1 of the ambiguous English expression (13), 'They will not go because of money'.

What the analysis of the data (11)–(18c) suggests is that: (i) in English negative sentences which instantiate a negater (Neg) in the matrix clause? and where the matrix clause precedes an embedded *because*-adverbial clause? both the verb (V) of the matrix clause and the adverbial (Adv) head of the embedded clause fall within the scope of negation. In other words, Neg c-commands both V and AdvP; hence such structures yield two interpretations. (ii) By contrast, in the Urhobo translation equivalent, the negater negates the adjacent constituent, AdvP, which is the only constituent that falls within the scope of negation; hence the translation equivalent structure yields only one interpretation. We may account for these facts by stating the scope of negation in configurational terms as suggested below:

#### C-Command/Adjacency Condition on Scope of Negation

The scope of negation is a c-command/adjacency relationship between the negater and the negated constituent/s. Further evidence for the c-command/adjacency condition on negation is furnished by such data as (19), 'Because of money, they will not go'. As shown in the structural representation

(19) below, the fronting of the adverbial phrase disambiguates the sentence because AdvP no longer lies within the scope of negation (that is, AdvP is neither c-commanded by Neg, nor is it an adjacent constituent relative to Neg); thus, the derived structure is assigned only one interpretation at LF.

(19) Because of money, they will not go.

[Adv Because [Prep of [N money [Spec-TP they [T will [Neg not [v go]]]]]]]

The c-command/adjacency relationship between a negater and the negated constituent/s also applies to Urhobo negative sentences. Consider, for instance, the Urhobo sentence (18a) reproduced as (20) below.

(20) Àyè chà rà if?kê r? ighò-ð.

[Spec-TP Àyè [T chà [v rà [NegP [Neg Ø [AdvP [Adv if?kê [P r? [NP [N ighò [Neg -ð]]]]]]]]]]]

*Lit.* They will go because of money-Neg.

*i.e.* 'They will go, (but) **not** because of money'

In (20), the clause-final negative tonal morpheme, Neg, (which occurs as the complement of the N head of NP) is not in an appropriate domain of negation because by virtue of being a terminal constituent in the structure, it neither precedes an adjacent constituent nor c-commands any constituent. Consequently, its negating feature (in conformity with the c-command/adjacency condition on negation) percolates upward from its base-generated position to the phonetically null Neg head of NegP from which position it negates the adjacent adverbial (Adv) head of AdvP.

Tonally disambiguated structures provide additional evidence for the c-command /adjacency condition on scope of negation. We mentioned an instance cited by Lasnik (1972, pp.51–52); the sentence (3) is reproduced below as (21):

(21) (a) George doesn't beat his wife () because he loves her.

[Spec-TP George [T-Neg doesn't [v beat [DP [D his [N wife]]]]]] () [Advp [Adv because [TP [Spec-TPhe [T Ø [v loves [N her]]]]]]]]

The Urhobo translation equivalent of (21) is (22):

(22) ìj?ji hw? àyè r?yê-é () kérìdîe ? gu?ne r?.

*Lit.* George beats wife his-Neg () because he loves her.

*i.e.* George doesn't beat his wife () because he loves her.

[Spec-TP ìj?ji [T-Neg Ø [v hw? [NP [N àyè [D r?yê [Neg -é ]]]]]]] () [Advp [Adv kérìdîe [TP [Spec-TP? [T Ø [v gu?ne [N r?]]]]]]]]

In (21) and (22), the disambiguating pause represented by the parenthesized stroke ()

blocks the negater in the matrix clause from c-commanding the adverbial phrase. Because of the intervening pause, the matrix clause having been processed in SYNTAX (that is, the computational component of the Language Faculty is sent off to PF and LF where it is assigned the appropriate *pronunciation* and *meaning*, respectively. This is the first phase of derivation. In the second phase, the adverbial phrase '*because he loves her*'/'kérìdîe ? gu?ne r?' is sent from SYNTAX to PF and LF. Since in the second phase of derivation, the structure (that is, the adverbial phrase) has no negater, it cannot be and therefore is not assigned a negative interpretation at LF; hence the derived meaning is 'Because he loves her, *George doesn't beat his wife*'.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, with reference to the two research questions, namely

the syntactic operations that cause certain English negative sentences which comprise a matrix and an embedded *because*-adverbial clause to yield dual interpretation, and *why* their Urhobo translation equivalent structures yield only one interpretation, the data analysis shows that in the English sentence, both the verb (V) of the matrix clause and adverbial (Adv) head of the embedded *because*-adverbial clause (AdvP) fall within the scope of negation they are either c- commanded by the negater (Neg/T-Neg) or else are adjacent constituents relative to Neg/T-Neg hence the English expression yields two interpretations at LF. By contrast, in the Urhobo translation equivalent, only the adverbial (Adv) head of the embedded adverbial phrase (AdvP) falls within the scope of negation; hence the Urhobo translation equivalent yields only one interpretation.

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