TONE AND PREFIXATION: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN NEGATION IN ORSU DIALECT OF IGBO

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Abstract
There are some concepts in linguistics like negation among others, which are a sine-qua-non for everyday human communication. The implication of this existence is its universal nature as all languages of the world adopt a unique negative particle. GHI has been established as the negative particle used in the Igbo language, which is usually a type of affix known to be suffix. Hence, this paper aims at revealing the peculiar strategy used by Orsu dialect of the Igbo language in achieving negation for various constructions. The researchers contracted about five different native speakers for the data using a voice recorder. The native speakers were in the age bracket of 50-70 years comprising of three men and three women, as the young native speakers don't speak the Orsu dialect anymore. The researchers visited the native speakers severally in order to get an authentic equivalent of the sentences written down in Standard Igbo. Having researched on the Orsu dialect of Igbo, we observed that the dialect basically adopts tone variation as a strategy for marking negation. Then, the prefix gla/dri/gri which is usually used only for the formation of the subjunctive sentence is also a sign of consonant cluster, and an unusual situation in Igbo to mark negation. This claim is in line, and can be justified by Obiamalu's (2013) paper on the role of tone in Igbo negation in Nneewi and Onicha lects. The researchers, therefore, register that tone as well as vowel lengthening and prefixation are the paramount strategies for negation in Orsu.
Keywords: Orsu, Negation, Tone, Prefix, Consonant cluster.

Introduction
Negation as a concept in linguistics is basically known to be the denial of an assertion. Every language employs a unique strategy for marking negation. Languages like English adopts 'not', German 'nicht', Swedish 'inte', Standard Igbo '-ghi' to mention but a few. Lyons (1977) sees negation as a denial of a position, proposition or a predication that a proposition is false. Crystal (2008) posits that negation is a process or construction in any grammatical semantic analysis which expresses the negation of a sentence.

Furthermore, Mgbemena (1982) defines negation as a process which affirmative sentences are change to negative constructions. According to Miestamo (2005), standard negation is the basic way a language has for negating sentences. To Obiamalu (2013), negation is usually seen as a subcategory known as polarity and that this polarity in question bifurcates into affirmation and negation of a sentence construction. The Igbo language employs two negation marking strategies, namely- affixation and tonal prosody. Though in Standard Igbo, ghị having no inherent tone, is used as the general negative marker, but Obiamalu demonstrates that high tone plays more important role in Igbo negation than the negative suffix -ghị. In this paper we shall demonstrate that tone is also evident in Orsu and that the gla/gri/dri is only used for making subjunctive sentences or statements. This hence, presents a shift away from the norm '-ghi' as negative marker in Igbo.

Background Information
Orsu is a Local Government Area and a tribe in the Imo State of Nigeria. Orsu is also the name of the dialect of its people. Furthermore, Ọrsụ is an Igbo sub-group located West of Orlu town to South of Ozubulu, North of Oguta and in other areas around Oru, Orsu, Orlu, Njaba, Ihiala, Nnewi South and Oguta Local Government Areas. However, it is noted that the unique Ọrsụ dialect over the years, tends to face endangerment as its speakers shift to the central Igbo. The Orsu dialect spoken by the Orsu

people of Orsu constituency cuts across Orlu Local Government as a result of political divisions. Some of the villages seem to have factions of the dialect spoken as the Okporo and Amaifeke speakers speak alike.

Methodology
A descriptive framework is adopted for this study. The data for this research were elicited from Orsu native speakers who were born and raised in the Orsu community. Those native speakers selected as consultants comprised of three men and three women, who are within the age bracket of 50 and 70 years. Adults of such age were consulted (rather than the younger ones) for the research because the young native speakers no more speak the Orsu dialect. According to our investigation, they shy away from speaking Orsu because of the way some people despise the dialect and its name. So, currently, these younger ones speak Orlu dialect, which is predominant around the area. In order to get authentic data, the researchers visited the native speakers of Orsu in their community severally with a compiled list of sentences written down in Standard Igbo, which they were asked to provide their equivalents in Orsu dialect. With the use of a voice recorder, the researchers recorded the data supplied by their Orsu dialect consultants.

Literature Review
Basically, as stated earlier, the standard Igbo employs the –ghị suffix for negation. But this goes contrary to other variants of the Igbo language though some dialects also adopt this same -ghị suffix. In trying to ascertain how negation works in the different dialects of the Igbo language, scholars like Ezenwafor (2017) investigates negation marking in Etulo language of Benue State, Nigeria which is done descriptively. The researcher presents that the language uses two (2) negative particles (ba…) and (…loo), which usually occur at the final positions of the sentences they appear in. The researcher carefully examined different constructions they appear in such as imperative and interrogative constructions, complex clauses and negative words.

Examples:

1a.	Inyani	li	inwunda		1b.	Inyani	li	inwinda	ba
	PN	COP	beautiful			PN	COP	beautiful	NEG
	'Inyani is beautiful'					'Inyani is not beautiful'			

For the achievement of polar question in the negation form, …loo is employed

2a.	Adi	gie	angwcc		2b.	Adi	gie	angwcc	loo	
	PN	eat	yam Q			PN	eat	yam	NEG Q	
	'Did Adi eat yam?'					'Didn't Adi eat yam?'				

Furthermore, Okoro (2016) investigates the morpho-syntax of negation in Egbema Igbo in Ohaji Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State. Okoro (2016) discovers that there is no uniform pattern of marking negation in Ohaji-Egbema, instead she points out that the verb forms as negative auxiliary verbs such as 'kwe' and 'eje'. Okoro (2016) also adds that the negative particle in Egbema could be prefixal or suffixal.

Examples:

3a.	O riri nri		3b.	O riye nri
	(3Scl past eat food)			(3scl pre. eat neg food)
	He/she ate food			He/she did not eat food

4a.	Eze	je	eje afia		4b.	Eze	eje	eje	afia
	Eze Ant pr		going market			Eze Fr aux neg go market			
	Eze will go the market.					Eze will not go to the market.			

Prior to this aforementioned research, Ndimele (1985) studies negation generally from the view of the standard Igbo which is a morpho-syntactic study. Ndimele (1985) analyzes and compares some of the major variants of the Igbo language like the Echie, Nnewi, Igbouzo, Ohuhu, Onicha. He wraps up the strategies for achieving negation in Igbo as negative inflectional affixes, inherent negative auxiliary verbs, tonal alternation and constructive focus.

Some of the examples by Ndimele (1985) are:

5a.	Ọ	gbara egwu		**5b.**	Ọ	gbaghi	egwu
	3SC-	dance-pt	dance		3SC	dance-neg	dance
	He/she danced.				He/she did not dance.		

6a.	Ọ	sara	efere	6b.	Ọ	saghi	efere
	3PS	wash-rvpst	plate		3PS	wash-neg	plate
	He/she	washed	plate		He/she didn't wash plates.		

Following Ndimele's outlined strategies, which are always employed for negation; Obiamalu (2013) carefully investigates negation from the point of view of tone as being paramount in negation when compared to suffixes or prefixes being added to a verb. It is here that the researcher points out Nneewi and Onicha dialects have suffixless negative particle. Obiamalu (2013) argues Ndimele's (1995,2004,2009) position that a floating low tone plays the role of negation where there is no suffix marker. Obiamalu concludes that a floating high tone is what we have in Igbo which is borne by the default agreement marker. The researcher's position is backed up by myriads of data from these dialects with illustrations.

7a.	Ó	yà	èlì	nní
	3S	ANT	NOM-eat	food.
	'S/He will eat food'.			

7b.	Ọ̀	ya	é-li	nní
	3S	ANT.NEG	NOM-eat	food
	'S/He will not eat'			

Obiamalu (2013) posits that in contrast to Ndimele's view, the subject takes a low tone, and the auxiliary verb takes a high tone for negation. In further research, Enweonye and Egwuekwe (2015) examine negation in Amaiyi dialect of the Igbo Language. Also, they find out the negation opposes or contradicts the meaning of a sentence. Their findings reveal that -hi, -he, -hu, -ne, -na, -behi, behu, -behu, -behe in contrast to the standard Igbo negation strategies. They therefore, conclude that there is a different strategy in Amaiyi lect, just we have it different in Ọrsụ Igbo.

Sanusi and Oyewole (2019) study the syntactic position of negation markers in Idoma and Tiv which they title a deviation from the language universal validity. The researchers aimed at comparing two languages with regards to their negation strategies. After a holistic study by the researchers through interviews, it was assumed that the negative marker occurs before the main verb of the S.V.O structure. For an effective analysis, the researchers employed the principles and parameter theory to conclude that there are similarities in the syntax of negative markers in Idoma and Tiv languages.

The study is actually different in many regards as so far in Igbo language there has been no attestation to the presence of a prefix to be a negative particle. This is the gap this paper tries to fill especially now that the Orsu dialect is running towards extinction.

Data Presentation and Analysis
Negation in Orsu Lect
Having gotten the relevant data for analysis, this section will present and analyze some of the different strategies for determining the negative participles such as: the past tense and future tense, factative and imperative constructions, negative words and subjunctive sentences. Analysis will follow after each heading.

Past Tense

8a.   Obi   gàrà   áhía
        Obi   go-rVPST   Market
        'Obi   went to market'
8b.   Obi   é   jē   áhiá
        Obi NOM-go-NEG market
        'Obi   did not go   to market'

9a.   Ada   zàrà   úlọ̀
        Ada   sweep- rVPST   house
        'Ada   swept   the house'
9b.   Ada   á zà.   úlọ̀
        Ada   NOM – sweep-NEG   house
        'Ada   did not sweep   the house'

10a.   Nduka   gbàrà   ḿ   égbè
        Nduka   shoot – rVPST 1S   gun
        Nduka   shoot a   gun   at   me.
10b.   Nduka   á - gbā   ḿ   egbe
        Nduka   NOM – shoot-NEG   1S   gun
        'Nduka did not shoot a   gun   at   me'

11a.   Mama   zù   rù   ji n'áhiá
        Mama   buy – rVPST   yam
        'Mama   bought   yam'
11b.   Mama á zūó   jí   n'áhiá
        Mama NOM – buy-NEG   yam   in the market
        'Mama did not buy   yam   in the market'

12a.   Oke   tàrà   èfè   ḿ
        Rat   eat – rVPST   clothe   1S
        'Rat   ate   my   clothe'
12b.   Òké   á tā   èfè ḿ
        Rat   NOM – bite-NEG   clothe   1S
        'Rat   didn't eat   my   clothe'

Negation for the past tense in Ọrsụ as clearly seen is predominantly based on tone. The default
agreement is usually a high tone, and then, the vowel that is inherent in the verb will either be a downstep
or low tone. Also, all the verbs are usually lengthened. This concept of lengthening could be traced to
Eme (2008), where she examines the parameters of intersegmental co-ordination. Furthermore,
lengthening is an example of articulatory parameter. In (11b), there is a case of labialization. This is
also found in Igbo dialect.

Future Tense
13a.   Okonkwọ   gà   èjé úlọ̀ụ́kà
        Okonkwọ   FUT   AGR –go   church
        'Okonkwọ   will go to   church'
13b.   Okonkwọ   á -gā   éjé úlọ̀ụ̀kà
        Okonkwọ   AGR – FUT -NEG   NOM – go   Church
        'Okonkwọ   will   not   go to the Church'

14a.   Adaeze gà   ègbú   òkụ́kọ̀
        Adaeze FUT   AGR   kill   chicken
        'Adaeze   will   kill chicken'

14b.   Adaeze á   gā   égbú   òkúkò
        Adaeze AGR   FUT – NEG   NOM – Kill   chicken
        'Adaeze   will   not   kill   chicken'

15a.   Chizoba   gà   à lú   m
        Chizoba   FUT   AGR – Marry   1S
        'Chizoba   will   marry   me'
15b.   Chizoba   á   gā   á –lú   m̀
        Chizoba   AGR   FUT – NEG   NOM – marry me
        'Chizoba   will   not   marry   me'

The negation is demonstrated by tone which rests on the FUTURE maker in the dialect which is 'ga'. This 'ga' is usually a downstep tone which is also part of the infinitive construction 'á-ga'. This is in agreement to the rule of downstep, which states that downstep must follow a high tone.

Factative Sentence

16a.   Ézèúkwú   màrà   ḿmā
        Ézèúkwú   be-beautiful-FACT   beautiful
        'Ézèúkwú   is   beautiful'
16b.   Ézèúkwú   á -mā   ḿmā
        Ézèúkwú   NOM -be beautiful-NEG   beautiful
        'Ézèúkwú   is not   beautiful'

17a.   Ǹkèḿ   gbàrà   àgbà
        Nkem   be- huge- FACT   huge
        'Nkem   is   huge'
17b.   Ǹkèḿ   á – gbā   àgbà
        Nkem   NOM- be huge-NEG   huge
        'Nkem   is   not   huge'

18a.   Obi   nwèrè égō
        Obi   be -FACT   money
        'Obi   has money'
                OR
        'Obi   is   rich'

18b.   Obi   é- nwēē   égō
        Obi   NOM – have-NEG   money
        'Obi   does not have   money'

The factative sentence construction in its negative form adopts fully the strategy of the past tense negation strategy. The paramount presence of labialization is always present when an [u] sound comes after the consonant of the root verb.

Imperative Construction

19a.   Gbù   ó ázù̀   áhù̀
        Kill – IMP   fish   DEM
        'Kill   that   fish'
19b.   É   gbú   lé   ázù̀   áhù̀
        PRO   kill   PERF-NEG   fish DEM
        'Don't kill   that   fish'

20a.   Záà   úlò̀   Papa   Amaka
        Sweep – IMP   house   father   Amaka
        'Sweep   Amaka's   father's   house'

20b.   Á   zā   là   úlò   Papa Amaka
        PRO – sweep   PERF-NEG   house   Papa Amaka
        'Don't sweep   Amaka's father's house'

Orsu dialect uses the same strategy as the standard Igbo for negative equivalence of imperative construction.

Negation Words
21.   'Nothing'
        S.I   Ọ nweghi
        Orsu   E nwéè or Èénwèrè
22.   'Never'
        S.I   Émeghi ya émé
        Orsu   Èémē ya émé
23.   'No'
        S.I   Mba
        Orsu   Òlò

In example (21), the E which is a nominalizing prefix bears a gliding tone, falling tone to be precise and lengthening of the vowels which are also both low tone. The same is applicable to example (22) with regards to /e/ which is before the downstep tone on the root. Example (23) has a gliding tone on the first vowel of the word.

Subjunctives
24a.   Úmùákà   má   ákwụ́kwọ́
        Children   know   book
        'Children that are intelligent'
24b.   Úmùákà   glá   á - ḿā   ákwúkwó
        Children   NEG   NOM – know   book
        'Children that are not intelligent'
25a.   Ńdí   ńnē   nwéré   égō
        PLU   mothers   be   money
        'Mothers that are rich/have money'
25b.   Ńdí   ńnē   grí é   nwé   égō
        PLU   mothers   NEG NOM – have   money
        'Mothers that are not rich'
26a.   Ónyé   má   íhé
        Somebody   know   something
        'Somebody that is intelligent'
26b.   Ónyé   drí   ámā   íhé
        Somebody   NEG   NOM –know   something
        'Somebody that is not intelligent/fool'

This section on the negation of subjunctive construction is the salient of all others as it is very significant. There is a deviation of the norm on suffixation and tone. Here, the affix marking negation is a prefix according to the Orsu dialect. This prefix comes in three (3) forms gla, dri, gri which are usually high toned 'gri' has a nasalization on the /i/. These three (3) forms are inherently descriptive in nature. They can also be used interchangeably. The 'na' which is a construction that introduces a clause, is being deleted by this dialect. Then, a replacement of gla for ghi assumes the initial position of the verb.

Summary and Conclusion
The study investigated negation in Orsu dialect which can be said to be an endangered dialect spoken in the Orlu senatorial district of Imo State. The study has shown the different strategies adopted by the Orsu dialect speakers for negation rather than the normal '-ghi' known as negation particle in Igbo. It

was observed that the Orsu speakers adopt three forms 'gla', 'dri' and 'gri' for negation under prefixation in addition to vowel lengthening. Again, the researchers observed that tone is basically used for negation in the Orsu dialect, while the gla, dri and gri are only used in the subjunctive sentence construction. Having noted these forms of negation in the Orsu dialect of Igbo, we conclude by saying that further investigations will be of importance especially in the area of subjunctive sentences in the dialect. Finally, the study, having shown a paradigm shift from the negation norm in Igbo, we encourage more researches on negation in other dialects of Igbo, which would help identify some other negation peculiarities in the Igbo language.

List of Abbreviations

S.I -   Standard Igbo

AGR-   Agreement

NOM- Nominalizing Prefix

rVPST – Rv Past

PERF NEG-   Negative Perfection

FACT-   Factitive

NEG - Negation

FUT-   Future

Nom-   Nominative

PRO-   Pronoun

PLU-   Plural

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