

**A MORPHO-SEMANTIC CATEGORIZATION OF NEGATORS
IN EDO**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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CERTIFICATION

I Certify that this project work was carried out by **OKONOB OH ELIZABETH (Matric No. ART2000573)** in the Department of Linguistics Studies, University of Benin, Benin city, Edo State.

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PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **OKONOB OH ELIZABETH** with Matriculation Number **ART2000573** declare that this work titled " **A MORPHO-SEMANTIC CATEGORIZATION OF NEGATORS IN EDO** " has passed the anti-plagiarism test (with a score of 5%) and does not violate any copyright regulations.

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DATE : _____

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty who has given me the wisdom and knowledge to carry out this project. And to my parents for their endless support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I am grateful to God for his guidance and wisdom. I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to my project supervisor, Mr. G.O Agharuwa for his continuous guidance, cordial cooperation and valuable suggestion from time to time during the course of my project work. I also acknowledge the Head of the Department of Linguistics, Prof. M. S. Agbo for his constant encouragement, support and guidance.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how negation is expressed in Ẹdo basic clauses by analyzing different types of negators used in the language. Negators are words or expressions that indicate when something is not happening, did not happen, or should not happen. The research explores how these negators are formed, how they function in different sentence structures, and what they mean in various contexts. Using data from native speakers and previous studies, this research identifies and categorizes different types of negators, showing their roles in communication. The study finds that Ẹdo has specific negators that indicate different kinds of negation. For example, the negator "ma" is used to show that an action did not take place, as seen in Òzó mà yó ("Ozo did not go"). The negator "ghẹ" expresses that an action should not happen, such as in ghẹ yé òbó kán ọré ("Do not touch it"). Additionally, there are negators that show a loss of ability, like "Ẹ ghi khian" (He no longer walks...), and those that indicate a discontinued habit, such as "Ẹ ghi yo evba" (He no longer goes there). The research also looks at how these negators interact with different clause structures and the patterns they follow. Findings reveal that Ẹdo negators are structured in a way that changes both the form and meaning of sentences, influencing tense and aspect. By explaining the role of each negator with examples, the study highlights the richness of Ẹdo negation and its importance in effective communication.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

The current study sets out to investigate the nature of negation in the Edo language, which is a language spoken in Edo state , Nigeria . The study is motivated by the need to account for the possible number of negators in the Edo language and the meanings that they convey in Edo basic clauses. The study focuses on the meanings of these negators when they are used in everyday expressions using edo basic clauses. Negators are linguistic elements that are used to show the reverse or denial of the truth of a proposition, serving to generate negative sentences or clauses (Beck and Sauerland, 2000).

Edo is a generic name given to the group of people who have a common ancestor and a common language. Edo is the language of the Ancient Benin Kingdom. According to Omozuwa(2003:246), ‘History has it that the term Edo came into use during the reign of Oba Ewuare (1440-1473).

Thus, the land became known as “Otọ Ẹdo”, the people as “Ivbi Ẹdo” and the language as “Ẹdo” respectively. The language is spoken in seven out of the eighteen Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ẹdo State with its standard form spoken within the Benin Metropolis where the palace of the Benin Monarch is situated. The seven LGAs are: Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Ego, Ovia-South-West, Ovia-North-East, Uhunmwode and Orhionmwo.

Ẹdo is largely a homogenous language but varieties of it exist in some of the LGAs listed above, Omoregbé (2012). The varieties include: Oza Nogogo, Oza Aibiokunla, Oza Nisi, Odiguetue, Errua, Ehọ, Oke, Urhonigbe, and others. Oza Nogogo is in Ika South LGA in Delta State, while Oza Aibiokunla and Oza Nisi are in Orhionmwo LGA; Odiguetue, Errua, Ehọ, Oke, are in Uhunmwode LGA all in Ẹdo State. These varieties are however intelligible.

The Ẹdo language is an open syllable language type manifesting the simple syllable structure pattern. It is considered the core language of the Ẹdo area. The language was first written down by the Portuguese when they first had contact with the Ẹdo people (Imasuen 1996:3). However, with the

influence of the British colonial masters, the language has been written with English alphabets. The orthography used in this work is one that captures all the sounds in the language as shown in Omozuwa(2010:10-11)"a, an,b,d,e,ẹ,en ,f, g, gb, gh, h, i, in, k, kh, kp, l, m, mw, n, nw, ny, o, ọ, ọn, p, r, rh, rr, s, t, u, un, v, vb, w,y,z".

Various attempts were made to classify the Ẹdoid languages. The first attempt was made by Williamson (1968) and (1970) after which Hoffman (1974) followed by Elugbe (1989). The Ẹdo language belongs to the Kwa sub-group of the Niger-Congo phylum (Greenberg 1963). Williamson (1968; 1970) classification is based on wordlists collected from a number of languages in the Ẹdoid group. She however affirms that the classification is not fully developed. In the above classification, the Ẹdo language is identified as ‘Bìní’ and considered as a member of the Central Ẹdo sub group. Hoffman (1974) classification of Ẹdoid languages is not very different from Williamson’s classification. The only difference is that this classification has two subgroups namely southern Ẹdo and northern Ẹdo. In

this classification, the Edo language is referred to as 'Bini' and comes under the Northern Edo sub group.

Elugbe (1989) classification of Edo languages holds a different view from its predecessors. Elugbe (1989) divides the Edo area into three which he further subdivides into four groups, these three areas are: South-Western, North-Central and North-Western. While the four subgroups are Proto Delta Edo, Proto South-Western Edo, Proto North-Central Edo and Proto North-Western Edo. The Edo language is classified here as a member of the Proto North-Central Edo group.

The present study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one entails the general introduction with sections on the background information to the study, the methodology, the purpose of the study, and the significance and justification of the study. Chapter two is the literature review. It entails sections on the conceptual review, previous studies and concerns of the present study. Chapter three is concerned with the theoretical framework adopted for the study. Chapter four is the data analysis and discussion of findings. This is followed by chapter five which is the concluding chapter

detailing the findings and the conclusion. This is then followed by the references.

1.2 Methodology

The study relied on data derived from competent speakers of the Edo language living in Ekosodin, Urelu and Ugbowo, the informants were between the ages 40 and 65, the data were recorded using a field note and a voice recorder and previous works done on negators in Edo. These sources provided the data that formed the basis of syntactic and morpho-semantic interpretation in the study. Basically, syntactic approaches were used to derive and analyze the oral data. The bulk of the secondary data which was relied on for the study were derived from journal articles on negators.

The data were recorded and organized for systematic analysis. These data were critically examined in the light of the morpho-semantic input of the negators in syntactic constructions. The data were also subjected to internal and external verification for the purpose authentication; the integrity of the data was confirmed by Edo native speakers who are teachers in the

Department of Linguistics and Edo in the University of Benin. The work is a descriptive study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

In this section, the aim and objectives of the study is presented as well as the statement of the problem that motivated the investigation of the morpho-semantics of Edo negators in Edo syntactic constructions.

1.3.1 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this project is to establish the categories of negators in Edo. The set objectives include:

- i. to establish the number of negators in Edo;
- ii. to show the morpho-semantic properties of the identified negators; and
- iii. to demonstrate how the information in Edo basic clauses are affected by semantic nature of the identified negators.

1.3.2 Statement of the Problem

In Linguistics researches, the statement of the problem captures the gap the study seeks to identify and provide a solution to. There are three problems every linguistic research seeks to solve namely; the problem of undocumented linguistic phenomena, the problem of streamlined or mono-analysis of linguistic phenomena, and the discontinued research of linguistic phenomena. The first is solved by documentation, the second is solved by alternative approaches using a different theory or method and the third is solved by a reinvestigation of concluded research for the purpose of extending knowledge.

To the best of our knowledge the negators in Edo and their morpho-semantic properties in Edo basic clauses is yet to be discussed and documented. This study therefore seeks to establish a foundational study of negators in the Edo language using insights from descriptive linguistics.

1.4 Significance and Justification of the Study

The current study is relevant to linguistics, Edo language studies, Edo teachers, researchers and students alike. For linguistics, it provides a documentation of linguistic phenomena in one of the important languages in Nigeria. For Edo studies, it adds to the existing literature on the grammar of the language. For Edo language teachers, researchers and students, it is relevant for further studies on aspects of the morpho-syntactics and morpho-semantics of the language. The justification for the study is therefore premised on the fact that it is not just a pioneer study on the morpho-semantics of Edo negators, it also serves as a foundational work for further and extensive studies in other aspects of the Edo grammar.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section is concerned with the review of concepts that are relevant to the present study, the previous studies that have been carried out on negators in Edo and the concerns of the present study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

In this section, the concepts of negators, morpho-syntax and morpho-semantics are reviewed.

2.1.1 Negators

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002), negators are defined as "elements that provide a negative meaning or indicate the absence of something in a sentence. They affect the truth value of the proposition expressed by the clause." Huddleston and Pullum present negators as key components that alter the truth value of statements. Their definition

highlights the impact of negation, indicating that it can entirely change the meaning of a proposition from true to false. This understanding emphasizes the role of negators in logical reasoning and communication. In essence, negators serve as linguistic tools that allow speakers to express disagreement, denial, or the absence of a quality or condition. For instance, in the sentence "She is not happy," the word "not" negates the positive state of being happy, thereby conveying the opposite meaning. This demonstrates how negators are crucial for accurate and nuanced communication in any language.

Croft (2001) describes negators as " grammatical elements that indicate the negation of a predicate, often including negative particles and affixes that modify the meaning of verbs or sentences." Croft's definition focuses on the grammatical nature of negators, categorizing them into various forms like particles and affixes. This approach highlights the structural role of negation in sentence formation and the diverse ways in which negation can be expressed across languages. Negators are not limited to standalone words; they can also take the form of prefixes or suffixes that attach to verbs or nouns, modifying their meanings. For example, in the verb

"disagree," the prefix "dis-" functions as a negator. Croft's analysis illustrates that understanding negation requires examining how it functions both syntactically and morphologically in language.

Aarts (2001) emphasizes that negators are "linguistic items that are used to create a negation effect within a statement, playing a crucial role in the syntax and semantics of language." Aarts brings attention to the syntactic and semantic dimensions of negation, underscoring its significance in constructing meaning within sentences. By framing negators as integral to syntax, Aarts indicates that they contribute to how sentences are structured and understood. Aarts' perspective implies that the placement of a negator can influence sentence interpretation and grammatical correctness. For example, the sentence "I can't go" employs the negator "can't" to modify the verb "go," which fundamentally shapes the meaning. This shows how the positioning and choice of negators can decisively alter comprehension.

In Carroll (2006), negators are defined as "linguistic elements that can negate verbal or nominal expressions, making them central to understanding sentence meaning in terms of polarity." Carroll explains that negators are

essential for understanding sentence polarity, which refers to the positive or negative quality of a statement. Her focus on theory and practice indicates that negators are not just theoretical constructs but have practical implications in language usage. By considering negators as pivotal to polarity, Carroll's definition helps illuminate their function in everyday speech and writing. For instance, the simple affirmative "I understand" becomes its negative counterpart "I do not understand" through the application of a negator. This conversion is vital for creating contrasts and clarifications in communication.

Roberts (2011) presents negators as " functional elements that serve to negate propositions, often manifesting as standalone words as well as affixes that modify verb forms, affecting the overall interpretation of the sentence." Roberts approaches negators by examining their functional elements in language. By positioning negators as influences on proposition negation, he highlights their role in shaping sentence meaning and structure over time, suggesting that they are central to the evolution of language. Roberts notes that negators can manifest in various ways, including as independent words

or as part of verb conjugations. This diversity suggests that the mechanism of negation can be quite complex. For instance, in the sentence "No one came," "no" serves to negate the entire proposition, while in "She isn't coming," the contraction "isn't" modifies the verb. This dual function underpins the importance of negators in conveying clear and precise meaning in language.

2.1.2 Morphology

Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1998:770) states that “morphology is the study of form and structure of living organisms which was taken up by linguistics in the nineteenth century as a cover term for inflection and word formation”. In school grammar, morphology corresponds to the study of forms, that is, the sub disciplines of inflection as well as of the study of word classes and their classificational criteria. In various ways word formation is treated as an independent discipline beside morphology or as a further sub discipline of morphology. It further explains that there are three types of morphological models: (a) the item and

arrangement grammar pursued in American structuralism with consideration to distribution.

(b) the concept of an item and process grammar (process morphology) which is fundamental to generative grammar and in which basic abstract forms are transformed into their surface structure forms and

(c) the word- and paradigm model (paradigm morphology), which posits not the morpheme, but the word as the basic element of morphological description. The basic concepts of morphology in recent linguistics were developed in the framework of dictionary of language and linguistics structuralism. Here, morphology consists of the study of form, inner structure, function and occurrence of a morpheme as the smallest meaningful unit of language.

Ndimele (1999:1) states that ‘morphology studies the internal structure of words’. According to Ndimele, morphology as a branch of linguistics is concerned with the study of how words are formed. Although everybody knows the importance of words in human language, a separate

branch of linguistics which is devoted to the study of the internal structure of the words did not emerge until the early part of the 19th century. Before now, morphology was treated as a part of syntax. In fact, most scholars still discuss morphology together with syntax under the broad concept; grammar. However, treating the internal structure of words or words structure in syntax is quite unfortunate. This makes it difficult for the study of word structure to be given proper place in the linguistic theory.

Arnold and Andrew (2001: xvii) defines morphology as the study of word structure and xxx are at the interface between phonology syntax and semantics. They argue that morphology is at the conceptual centre of linguistics. They further state that words contrast relationship with other by virtue of their forms, that is, the form paradigm and lexical groupings. Malt (2009) defines morphology as the mental system involved in word formation or the branch of linguistics that deals with words, and how they are formed. This definition presupposes the fact that morphology studies patterns of word formation with and across languages and attempts to formulate rules that model the knowledge of the speakers of those languages, the

morphological analysis of a natural language which is a productive analysis of natural language which is a productive area of research in linguistics. Morphology therefore serves of natural language which is a productive area of research in linguistics. Morphology therefore serves as a way of gaining insight into the word structure and formation in a language.

Haspelmeth and Sims (2002:3) argue that morphology is the study of the combination of morphemes to yield words. The definition above implies that morphemes are used to form words and that words cannot exist except morphemes come together to form them. This may not be entirely true. Word are actually morphemes and morphemes are two categories; morphs (bound morphemes) and words (free morphemes). Not all words are formed from morphs and the fact remains that Morphbring in an additional grammatical meaning to the root word they are added to the definition therefore does not recognize the difference between a word and a morph.

2.1.3 Morpho-Syntax

According to Lieber (2010), Morpho-syntax refers to the study of the interplay between morphology and syntax, examining the relationship between the structural properties of words and their role in creating larger sentence structures. Lieber defines morpho-syntax as the study of the effect of morphology on syntax and the effect of syntax on morphology and how they react with each other. It examines the shared relationship between the properties of words formation and the role these properties play in sentence formation.

Aissen & Pereltsaig (2013) states that Morpho-syntax is concerned with the interaction between morphology and syntax, investigating how morphological processes and structures impact the grammatical organization of a language at the sentence level. Aissen and Pereltsaig definitions is similar to that of Lieber. This shows that there is some kind of serious relationship between words formation and sentential constructions. Words are formed from strings of sounds, then words join together to form phrases, phrases to clause and clauses when joined together equal a sentence. They concluded that morpho-syntax investigate how morphological processes and

structures has effect on the organization of the grammar of a language at the level of sentential construct.

For Booji (2012), Morpho-syntax studies the combined effects of morphological and syntactic processes on the forms and structures of words and sentences, exploring the ways in which morphological patterns interact with and shape syntactic structures. This states that morpho-syntax studies the combined effect of morphology and syntax on the forms and structure of words and sentences taking into consideration ways in which the morphological patterns interact and shaped sentential constructions.

According to Inkelas (2013), Morpho-syntax delves into the interaction between the morphological and syntactic components of a language, examining how word formation processes and syntactic operations coordinate to produce grammatical structures at different levels of analysis. Inkelas definition states that the interaction between the morphological and syntactic components of a language plays a vital role in understanding language structures and it is essential for effective communication

Spencer and Luis (2012) argue that Morpho-syntax investigates the interface between morphology and syntax, exploring how the formation, inflection, and arrangement of words contribute to the overall grammatical organization of a language. This definition investigates the point at which morphology and syntax meet and the effect of the meeting on the formation and arrangement of words and its contributions to the organization of grammar of a language.

2.1.4 Morpho-Semantics

Marantz (2010) states that Morpho-semantics is a subfield of linguistics that investigates the interface between morphology and semantics, analyzing how morphological processes contribute to the meaning of words and how meaning is encoded and manipulated through morphological structures. In Marantz's definition, morphology and semantics share a finite attribute that is meaning. He stated that morpho-semantics investigates the point at which semantics and morphology meet by examining the impact morphological processes have on the meaning of words and how meaning is

converted and control through changes that occur in a construction to fit its syntactic and communicational context.

For Ackerman and Stump (2014:18), Morpho-semantics explores how the morphological properties of words and their structure interact with the meaning of words and the structure of sentences. Ackerman's and Stump definition states that morpho-semantics investigates how the internal and external structure of words interact with the meaning of words and their structure in sentences. This states that the meaning of a morpheme or word can be affected by its structure or formation.

Borjars and Vincent (2011:134) argue that Morpho-semantics investigates the relationship between the morphological forms of words and their semantic interpretation, analyzing how the formal features of morphemes influence the meaning of words in a language. Borjars and Vincent's definition talks about the connectedness that exist between the formation of words and the meaning. This definition is also similar with that of Marantz (2010) and Ackerman and Stump (2014:18), stating the influence

of morphological structures, processes or rules on the meaning of words or sentences.

According to Lieber (2010), Morpho-semantics studies how the morphological structure of words interacts with semantic composition, examining the contribution of morphological features to the overall meaning of complex words and sentences. Complex words and sentences do not have simple analyses to their structure. Lieber is stating that morph-semantics is studying of the structures in morphology and how these structures have effect on the meaning of complex words and sentences.

Scalise and Guevara (2017:13), states that Morpho-semantics investigates the interface between morphology and semantics, focusing on how morphological processes shape the meaning of words and contribute to the interpretation of sentences. Scalise and Guevara's definition is same as Marantz (2010), Ackerman and Stump (2014:18), and that of Borjars and Vincent (2011:134), stating the relatedness and effect of morphology on semantics. Investigating the point at which meaning has to rely on the structure of words and the point at which and vice versa if possible.

2.2 Previous Studies

Evbuomwan and Usenbo (2019) carried out a study titled "Acoustic Evidence for a Tonal Negative Marker in Èdò". The study aimed to investigate the role of tonal markers in negation within the Èdò language. Specifically, it sought to identify how the absence of overt negative markers can still convey negation through tonal variations. The objectives included: identifying the overt morphemes that serve as markers of negation, and analyzing negative utterances lacking overt markers to uncover underlying tonal structures. Primary data for the study were gathered from native Èdò speakers through structured interviews, focusing on natural speech patterns. The analysis utilized PRAAT 6.0.30 software to examine the acoustic properties of the utterances. The researchers specifically looked at pitch contours and the behavior of tones in negative constructions. The study operated within a phonological framework, emphasizing the significance of tone in conveying grammatical meaning, particularly in negation. It drew on morphophonological principles to explain how tones interact with morphemes. The key findings include:

- a. Three overt morphemes were identified as markers of negation: “í”, “má, and “ghẹ”. Among these, the “í”-marker plays a critical role even when it is not overtly realized.
- b. The absence of the “í” marker does not negate its presence; instead, it is often elided, allowing a high tone to float either regressively or progressively to adjacent segments.
- c. Acoustic analysis revealed that negative utterances typically exhibit a perceptible increase in pitch compared to affirmative statements, attributed to the floating high tone.

The research concluded that tonal variations are integral to negation in Èdọ, suggesting that tone should be recognized as a legitimate strategy for expressing negation in this language. This study contributed significantly to our understanding of how tonal languages like Èdọ utilize pitch and tone not only for lexical meaning but also for grammatical functions such as negation. The findings underscored the complexity of linguistic structures where tonal elements play a crucial role in shaping meaning.

2.3 Concerns of the Present Study

The present study seeks to not only shed light on the possible negators in the Edo language, it also endeavours to examine the morpho-semantic properties of the identified negators. The study also explores the semantic effects of the negators in Edo basic clauses. The study intends to contribute to the broader field of linguistics by providing an analysis of negative constructions, while seeking to offer practical insights for cross-cultural communication and intercultural understanding, thereby addressing real-world implications of the research. Finally, it seeks to justify its significance as an essential area of study, warranting comprehensive attention in the academic discourse on linguistics and grammar studies.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CONTENT ANALYSIS

3.0 Introduction

Content Analysis is a research method used in linguistics to analyze and interpret the content of written, spoken, or visual communication. It aims to systematically identify and examine the presence, meanings, and relationships of words and concepts within texts and speech. The theoretical framework of content analysis is grounded in the principles of semiotics, discourse analysis, and linguistic anthropology, drawing on theories of language, communication, and social interaction to understand the meanings and messages embedded within linguistic texts. Content analysis

incorporates methods from quantitative and qualitative research, allowing for both numerical and interpretive analysis of linguistic data.

One of the pioneering proponents of content analysis in linguistics is Harold D. Lasswell, an American political scientist, and communications theorist. Lasswell's work laid the foundation for the study of mass communication and propaganda. His seminal text "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society" outlines the basic principles and techniques of content analysis, emphasizing the importance of understanding the symbolic meanings and cultural contexts of language use.

3.1 Theoretical Foundations of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method that is deeply rooted in various theoretical foundations within the field of linguistics analysis. It involves systematically analyzing and interpreting the content of texts, conversations, and other forms of communication to uncover underlying meanings, relationships, and patterns. The theoretical foundations of content analysis draw from multiple disciplines and schools of thought, including semiotics,

discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, communication theory, and social psychology, to name a few. The integration of these diverse frameworks allows for a comprehensive approach to understanding language and communication.

One of the key theoretical foundations of content analysis is semiotics, which is the study of signs and symbols and their use and interpretation. Semiotics provides the theoretical underpinning for content analysis by emphasizing the significance of linguistic signs in conveying meaning. According to semiotic theory, language is a system of signs and symbols that carry specific meanings, and content analysis seeks to decode these meanings within linguistic texts. Within the realm of discourse analysis, another theoretical foundation for content analysis, language is viewed as a social practice that reflects and shapes social structures and power relations. Discourse analysis focuses on how language is used to construct and convey social identities, as well as how it influences and is influenced by social contexts. Content analysis, within this framework, seeks to uncover the

ideological and discursive patterns embedded in linguistic texts and conversations.

3.2 Theoretical Orientation of Content Analysis

The theoretical orientation of content analysis as a theoretical framework in linguistics analysis encompasses a diverse range of theoretical foundations that contribute to the understanding of language, communication, and social interaction. These theoretical underpinnings provide a robust framework for examining the content of texts, conversations, and other forms of communication to uncover underlying meanings, relationships, and patterns. Communication theory also plays a significant role in shaping the theoretical orientation of content analysis. This theoretical framework examines the processes and dynamics of communication in various contexts, providing insights into how messages are transmitted, received, and interpreted, as well as the effects of communication on individuals and societal structures (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008). In the context of content analysis, communication theory informs the study of the transmission and reception of messages through linguistic texts and communication channels.

Finally, social psychology offers theoretical insights into the ways in which language influences attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions. Theoretical principles from social psychology are integrated into content analysis to examine the impact of language on individuals and groups, as well as the role of language in shaping social interactions and relationships. The theoretical orientation of content analysis in linguistics analysis is deeply rooted in diverse theoretical foundations, including semiotics, discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, communication theory, and social psychology. The integration of these theoretical frameworks provides a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to understanding language, communication, and social interaction within diverse cultural and societal contexts.

3.3 Theoretical Organization of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method used to analyze and interpret the content of communication, such as texts, images, and audiovisual materials. It is a widely used technique in various fields, including linguistics, sociology, political science, and media studies. In linguistics,

content analysis is used to study the structure, meaning, and use of language in various contexts. The theoretical organization of content analysis in linguistics involves various theoretical frameworks that guide the analysis and interpretation of linguistic data.

Another theoretical framework that informs the organization of content analysis in linguistics is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and power, developed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk. CDA aims to uncover the ways in which language is used to reproduce and challenge social inequality and power relations. According to CDA, language is a site of struggle and contestation, and the analysis of language should be embedded within the broader social and political context. In content analysis, the theoretical organization of CDA involves an emphasis on the analysis of discursive strategies and linguistic features that contribute to the reproduction or transformation of power relations.

The theoretical organization of content analysis in linguistics involves the use of various theoretical frameworks to guide the analysis and

interpretation of linguistic data. These theoretical frameworks provide different perspectives and tools for understanding the structure, meaning, and use of language in different contexts. By drawing on these theoretical frameworks, researchers are able to conduct systematic and rigorous analyses of language content, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in linguistics and related fields.

3.4 Theoretical Applications of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research method used to analyze subjective content, such as written or visual materials, with the goal of identifying patterns and insights. In the field of linguistics, content analysis can be applied as a theoretical framework to investigate linguistic features and communication patterns in various texts, conversations, or other forms of communication. The theoretical applications of content analysis in linguistics are wide ranging and can be used to study language use in different contexts. For example, content analysis can be applied to analyze the language used in political speeches, media representations, or social media conversations. This method provides linguists with the ability to

systematically study and interpret language use, which can help to uncover underlying meanings, attitudes, and beliefs within the texts or spoken language. Content analysis can also be used in the study of language in political speeches and rhetoric. Linguists can apply content analysis to analyze the language used in political speeches, debates, and public addresses, in order to understand how politicians and public figures use language to convey their messages and influence public opinion. This research can provide insight into the rhetorical strategies employed in political communication, as well as the impact of language use on the perception of political figures and their policies.

The theoretical applications of content analysis in linguistics provide a valuable framework for studying language use and communication patterns in various contexts. This method can be applied to investigate language in media representations, social media conversations, political speeches, and other forms of communication, in order to gain insight into language use and its impact on society. By systematically analyzing language use, linguists can uncover patterns, meanings, and attitudes within texts and spoken

language, contributing to a deeper understanding of communication and language use in different contexts.

3.5 The Relevance of Content Analysis to the Analysis of Edo Negators

The Edo language, predominantly spoken in Edo State, Nigeria, offers a rich linguistic landscape, particularly with respect to the use of negators, which are crucial for expressing denial, refusal, and contradiction. The application of content analysis as a theoretical framework in examining negators within Edo helps in systematically categorizing and analyzing various forms of negation present in the language. This method facilitates a deeper understanding of how negators function grammatically and semantically within different contexts, allowing researchers to investigate patterns of usage, variations, and the implications of negation for meaning construction. By focusing on these elements, content analysis provides a

structured approach to uncovering the intricacies of negation in Edo, contributing to the broader field of descriptive linguistics.

Moreover, content analysis is particularly relevant for exploring the sociolinguistic dimensions of negators in Edo. This framework allows researchers to examine how negation is employed in interpersonal communication, reflecting cultural norms, social hierarchies, and power dynamics within Edo-speaking communities. For instance, the choice of negators may vary between formal and informal contexts, offering insights into how speakers navigate issues of politeness, authority, and identity. By analyzing discourse samples through content analysis, researchers can uncover correlations between the use of specific negators and sociocultural factors, thereby deepening our understanding of language as a social phenomenon. Such insights are essential for appreciating the role of language in shaping and reflecting cultural identities in the Edo community.

Furthermore, the relevance of content analysis is amplified by its adaptability to modern research tools, including computational methods for language analysis. In the case of the Edo language, using content analysis

enables researchers to analyze large corpora of spoken and written texts, providing comprehensive data on negation across different genres and contexts. This approach can accommodate the examination of variation in negators among different dialects of Edo, as well as changes over time influenced by language contact and globalization. Ultimately, applying content analysis as a theoretical framework to the study of negators in Edo not only enhances the understanding of linguistic structure and use but also positions the language within a broader discourse of cultural and social significance in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the data collected and organized for the present study are analyzed and discussed. The chapter is divided into two main sections. Section 4.1 presents a morpho-semantic identification and description of the various negators in the Edo language while section 4.2 shows the operation of negators in imperative, declarative and interrogative constructions in the Edo language.

4.1 Negators in Edo

In this section, we present the possible number of negators in the Edo language and their semantic implication in Edo basic clauses. These negators are not just morphologically described, their semantic implication is also determined by using them in clauses so that their grammatical function in the Edo grammar can be determined.

4.1.1 The Negator that shows that an action did not take place/the actor did not perform an action

In the Edo language, there are negators that indicate that an action did not take place. The negator here is focused on the action and not the actor in the basic clause. The data in (1) below shows the use of the negator *ma* “*did not*” in Edo basic clauses:

1. a. Osasu ma le evbare.

Osasu NEG cook-pst-sl food.

Osasu did not cook the food.

In the above data, the action referenced is *le* ‘*cook*’. The negator *ma* ‘*did not*’ is used to show that the action did not take place. In some cases, it may be that what is being negated is not the action but the subject in the construction. That is, another interpretation besides that *no cooking took place*, the presence of the negator can also mean that *Osasu did something else or it was not Osasu that cooked the food* or that it was not food that Osasu cooked. Some more examples are shown below:

b. Imade ma gbe ofen.

Imade NEG kill-pst-sl rat.

Imade did not kill a rat.

c. Ebaba ma de imoto.

Father NEG buy-pst-sl motor.

Father did not buy a car.

d. Osasu ma bo owa.

Osasu NEG buy-pst-sl house.

Osasu did not buy a house.

e. Eki ma mi nene igbo.

Eki NEG see-pst-sl the money.

Eki did not see the money.

The above shows that the negator *ma* ‘*did not*’ shows that an act was not done or that the referenced subject and/or object in the construction has been negated. The next sub-section shows the negator that is used to show that a habitual action has been discontinued.

4.1.2 The Negator that shows that a habitual action has been discontinued

The data collected and organized for analysis shows that in the Èdo language, there is a negator that is used to show that the action that was performed in the past by the actor referenced in the basic clause, has been discontinued. The data in (2) below show the use of the negator *ghi* “*does no longer*” in Èdo basic clauses:

2. a. Imade ghi yo esuku.

Imade NEG go-prs-sl school.

Imade does no longer go to school.

The data above shows the grammatical information that the negator ghi ‘does no longer’ bring into the clause in which it is used. As shown in the data above, this negator indicates that an action that was previously done habitually has been stopped or discontinued. Some more data are shown below:

- b. Osasu ghi gbẹn ebe.

Osasu NEG write-prs-sl book.

Osasu does no longer write.

- c. Ameze ghi bọ owa.

Ameze NEG build-prs-sl house.

Ameze does no longer build houses.

- d. Uyi ghi nwinna vbe eko.

Uyi NEG work-pst-sl in lagos.

Uyi does no longer work in lagos.

e. Osasu ghi tie ebe.

Osasu NEG read-pst-sl book.

Osasu does no longer read.

The above data indicates that the negator *ghi* is used to show that an action that was done in the past is no longer done in the present.

4.1.3 The Negator that shows that a skill has been lost

In the Ẹdo language, there are negators that indicate that a skill once possessed by the subject referenced in the clauses has been lost. The negator here is focused on the action and the actor in the basic clause. This negator is captured by a negation phrase that combines a negator with an auxiliary verb. The data in (3) below shows the use of the negator *ghi sẹtin* “*can no longer*” in Ẹdo basic clauses:

3. a. Ozo ghi sẹtin kpee ema.

Ozo NEG can play-prs-sl drum.

Ozo can no longer beat the drums.

In the data in (3a) above, the negator *ghi sẹtin* ‘*can no longer*’ shows that the skill that the subject once possessed is no longer there. This negator shows that the action is not carried out because the subject has lost the skill.

Below are some more data:

- b. Imade ghi sẹtin le evbare.

Imade NEG can cook-prs-sl food.

Imade can no longer cook.

- c. Uyi ghi sẹtin fi osisi.

Uyi NEG can shoot-prs-sl gun.

Uyi can no longer shoot a gun.

- d. Eki ghi sẹtin dumwu ema.

Eki NEG can pound-prs-sl pounded-yam.

Eki can no longer pound pounded-yam.

e. Ozo ghi sẹtin so ihuan.

Ozo NEG can shout-prs-sl song.

Ozo can no longer sing.

4.1.4 The Negator that shows that a planned action did not take place or happen

In the Edo language, there are negators that indicate that a planned action referenced in the clauses did not take place or no longer happened. The negator here is focused on the action and the actor in the basic clause. This negator is captured by a negation phrase that combines two negators. The data in (4) below shows the use of the negator *ma ghi* “*did no longer*” in Edo basic clauses:

4. a. Imade ma ghi le nene evbare.

Imade NEG NEG cook-pst-sl the food.

Imade did no longer cook the food.

- b. Osasu ma ghi bọ nene owa.

Osasu NEG NEG build-pst-sl the house.

Osasu did no longer built the house.

- c. Uyi ma ghi gbe nene ofen.

Uyi NEG NEG kill-pst-sl the rat.

Uyi did no longer kill the rat.

- d. Imade ma ghi tie nene ebe.

Imade NEG NEG read-pst-sl the book.

Imade did no longer read the book.

- e. Ebaba ma ghi bọ nene owa.

Father NEG NEG build-pst-sl the house.

Father did no longer build the house.

4.1.5 The Negator that shows that an actor will not perform the stated action

The data collected and organized for analysis shows that in the Èdo language, there is a negator that is used to show that the subject referenced will not perform the action indicated in the basic clause. The data in (5) below show the use of the negator *i “will not”* in Èdo basic clauses:

5. a. Imade i yo esuku.

Imade NEG go-fut-sl school.

Imade will not go to school.

b. Uyi i bọ nene owa.

Uyi NEG build-fut-sl house.

Uyi will not build the house.

c. Ozo i dẹ nene ebe.

Ozo NEG buy-fut-sl the book.

Ozo will not buy the book.

- d. Ẹki i le nene evbare.

Ẹki NEG cook-fut-sl the food.

Ẹki will not cook the food.

- e. Ebaba i dẹ nene owa.

Father NEG buy-fut-sl the owa.

Father will not buy the house.

4.1.6 The Negator that shows that the actor cannot perform the stated action

In the Ẹdo language, there are negators that indicate that the subject referenced cannot perform the action stated in the clause. The negation here is focused on the action and the actor in the basic clause. This negation is captured by a negation phrase that combines a negator with an auxiliary verb.

The data in (6) below shows the use of the negator *i sẹtin/mẹtin* “cannot” in Edo basic clauses:

6. a. Ozo i sẹtin gbe ẹwe.

Ozo NEG can kill-prs-sl goat.

Ozo cannot kill a goat.

b. Uyi i mẹtin sua nene aga.

Uyi NEG can push-prs-sl the chair.

Uyi cannot push the chair.

c. Ebaba i sẹtin kpa egbe.

Father NEG can lift-prs-sl body.

Father cannot stand up.

d. Imade i mẹtin gbọ ọghẹde

Imade NEG can plant-prs-sl plantain.

Imade cannot plant plantain.

- e. Osasu i sẹtin gbinna ne egbe ẹre.

Osasu NEG can fight-prs-sl for body his.

Osasu cannot fight for himself.

4.1.7 The Negator that show that an action should not take place

In the Edo language, there are negators that indicate that an action should not take place. This negator is used as an imperative, that is, to give commands. It occurs in the initial position of the clause. The negation here is focused on the action in the basic clause. This negation is captured by the negator *ghẹ* “do not” as shown in the data in (7) below:

7. a. ghẹ gbe nene ofẹn!

NEG kill-prs-sl the rat!

do not kill the rat!

- b. ghẹ kpolo ibare!

NEG sweep-prs-sl outside!

do not sweep outside!

- c. ghẹ sa nene amẹ!

NEG fetch-prs-sl the water!

do not fetch the water!

- d. ghẹ mu nene ọmọmọ!

NEG carry-prs-sl the child!

do not carry the child!

- e. ghẹ kpe nene ekpamaku.

NEG wash-prs-sl the plate. #

do not wash the plate.

4.1.8 The Negator that shows that the actor is not performing the action stated

The data collected and organized for analysis shows that in the Edo language, there is a negator that is used to show that the subject referenced is not performing the action indicated in the basic clause. The data in (8) below show the use of the negator *i “is not”* in Edo basic clauses:

8. a. Imade i yo esuku.

Imade NEG go-prs-sl school.

Imade is not going to school.

b. Uyi i bọ nene owa.

Uyi NEG build-prs-sl house.

Uyi is not building the house.

c. Ozo i dẹ nene ebe.

Ozo NEG buy-prs-sl the book.

Ozo is not buying the book.

- d. Ebaba i gbe nene ewe.

Father NEG gbe-prs-sl the goat.

Father is not killing the goat.

- e. Eki i le nene evbare.

Eki NEG cook-prs-sl the food.

Eki is not cooking the food.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the data in 4.1 shows that the negators in Edo are: *i*, *ma*, *ghi* and *ghẹ*. These negators can be combined with each other or combined with auxiliary verbs to form the negation phrase. In the paragraphs below, we present a discussion of the findings from the analysis done in section 4.1.

The negator *i* have multiple meanings and it is dependent on the time of the action or whether it is combined with the auxiliary *mętin/sętin* ‘can’. When the action specified by the verb is in the future, the negator *i* translates to ‘**will not**’. The data in (9) shows that the negator *i* can translate to will not showing that the action is referring to a future action that will not take place:

9. a. Imade *i* yo esuku.

Imade NEG go-fut-sl school.

Imade will not go to school.

b. Uyi *i* bọ nene owa.

Uyi NEG build-fut-sl house.

Uyi will not build the house.

The negator *i* can also be used to indicate that the action being referenced is not being done. Here, the action is in the present time and not in the future like in (9) above. The data in (10) below shows that negator *i* can be used to

show that the subject is not carrying out the action specified by the verb in the sentence:

10. a. Imade i yo esuku.

Imade NEG go-prs-sl school.

Imade is not going to school.

b. Uyi i bọ nene owa.

Uyi NEG build-prs-sl house.

Uyi is not building the house.

Lastly, the negator *i* can co-occur with the auxiliaries *mẹtin/sẹtin* ‘can’ to show that an ability that subject was previously known has been lost or is no longer there. This is shown in the data in (11) below:

11. a. Uyi i mẹtin sua nene aga.

Uyi NEG can push-prs-sl the chair.

Uyi cannot push the chair.

b. Ebaba i sẹtin kpa egbe.

Father NEG can lift-prs-sl body.

Father cannot stand up.

The above discussion shows the findings that were observed in the analysis of the negator *i*.

The negator *ma* can occur on its own and can also be combined with another negator *ghi* to form *ma ghi* ‘*did no longer*’ and can also be combined with the auxiliaries *sẹtin/mẹtin* ‘can’ to form *ma sẹtin/mẹtin* ‘*can no longer*’. The negator *ma* ‘did not’ is used to show that either the subject in the sentence did not carry out the action stated by the verb or the action expressed by the verb in the sentence is not the action carried out by the subject. The data in (11) shows this:

12. a. Imade ma ghi le nene evbare.

Imade NEG NEG cook-pst-sl the food.

Imade did no longer cook the food.

- b. Osasu ma ghi bọ nene owa.

Osasu NEG NEG build-pst-sl the house.

Osasu did no longer built the house.

The combination of *ma ghi* ‘*did no longer*’ is used to show that a planned action no longer took place. Most times it can also be that the person that was supposed to carry out the action was no longer the one who carried out the action. This is shown in the data in (13) below:

13. a. Uyi ma ghi gbe nene ofen.

Uyi NEG NEG kill-pst-sl the rat.

Uyi did no longer kill the rat.

- b. Imade ma ghi tie nene ebe.

Imade NEG NEG read-pst-sl the book.

Imade did no longer read the book.

Lastly, the negator *ma* can be combined with the auxiliaries *sɛtin/mɛtin* ‘can’ to translate into ‘*could not*’. This is shown in (14) below:

14. a. Uyi ma sɛtin gbe nene ofɛn.

Uyi NEG can kill-pst-sl the rat.

Uyi could not kill the rat.

- b. Imade ma mɛtin tie nene ebe.

Imade NEG can read-pst-sl the book.

Imade could not read the book.

The above discussion shows the various ways that the negator *ma* brings about a difference of information in the sentences in which it occurs whether it stands alone or is combined with another negator or auxiliary verbs.

The negator *ghi* ‘*no longer*’ is used to indicate that the subject is no longer involved in the action they were involved in before. This negator can

also mean that the subject has started a new line of action. This is shown in the data in (15) below:

15. a. Ameze ghi bo owa.

Ameze NEG build-prs-sl house.

Ameze does no longer build houses.

- b. Uyi ghi nwinna vbe eko.

Uyi NEG work-pst-sl in lagos.

Uyi does no longer work in lagos.

The negator *ghi* can also be combined with the auxiliaries *metin/setin* ‘can’ and the result will be *ghi metin/setin* ‘can no longer’. This indicates two things: it can be that the subject started an action but got tired at a point and can no longer continue or it can also mean that the subject has totally lost an ability he or she used to have. This is shown in (16) below:

16. a. Imade ghi setin le evbare.

Imade NEG can cook-prs-sl food.

Imade can no longer cook.

b. Uyi ghi ṣetin fi osisi.

Uyi NEG can shoot-prs-sl gun.

Uyi can no longer shoot a gun.

The above discussion concerns the different ways that the *ghi* negator play out in the sentences in which they occur whether they occur alone or co-occur with the auxiliaries *ṣetin/ṃetin* ‘can’.

The last negator is the negator *gḥe* ‘do not’ which is used imperatively, that is, to give commands. These commands that begin with this negator indicate that the actions should not take place. This is shown in the data in (17):

17. a. gḥe sa nene aṃe!

NEG fetch-prs-sl the water!

do not fetch the water!

- b. ghẹ mu nene ọmọmọ!

NEG carry-prs-sl the child!

do not carry the child!

The above discussion shows the use of the *ghẹ* negator to give commands that indicate that an action should not be done.

4.3 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, we have analyzed the data collected for this project and also discussed the findings from the analysis. The chapter was divided in two main sections. The first main section showed that semantically, the negators in Èdo perform at least eight functions which are showing that an action did not take place, the action cannot be performed, among others. The second section discussed the findings in the analysis of the data collected. The next chapter is concerned with the summary and conclusion of this project.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This project has attempted to offer an analysis of the negation system within the Edo language. The project identified four primary negators used in Edo and demonstrated their use in the language. The project showed that these negators do not merely serve a singular function; instead, they are capable of fulfilling eight distinct roles in communication. These roles range from indicating that an action did not occur to suggesting that an action should not occur, as well as expressing alternative actions taken by the subject. By categorizing these negators morpho-semantically, the project sheds light on the complex interplay between grammar and meaning in Edo basic clauses.

The findings of the study not only enhance our understanding of the grammatical categories of the Edo language but also contribute to broader discussions on negation in African languages. The identification of multiple

functions for each negator underscores the richness of the Edo language's grammatical framework, revealing how speakers affect meaning in different contexts. This project not only serves as a valuable resource for linguists interested in the Edo language but also opens avenues for further exploration into the semantic implications of negation across other languages.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This project was centred on the morpho-semantic categorization of negators in Edo basic clauses. Below is a list of the summary of the findings of the project:

1. There are four primary negators used within the language and they are *i* ‘**will not/is not**’, *ma* ‘**did not**’, *ghi* ‘**no longer**’ and *ghẹ* ‘**do not**’.
2. The analysis demonstrated that these four negators, when they stand alone or when combined can express eight distinct meanings. These meanings include indicating that an action did not occur, signaling that an action should not take place, and representing alternative actions undertaken by the subject.

3. All the negators except *ghẹ* ‘do not’, can co-occur with the auxiliaries *sẹtin/mẹtin* ‘can’, resulting in the following: *i sẹtin/mẹtin* ‘cannot’, *ma sẹtin/mẹtin* ‘could not’ and *ghi sẹtin/mẹtin* ‘can no longer’.
4. The negators *ma* ‘did not’ and *ghi* ‘no longer’ can be combined to form *ma ghi* ‘did no longer’.
5. Only the negator *ghẹ* ‘do not’ is used as an imperative or a command.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this project provided significant insights into the negation system of the Edo language. The research revealed that while there are four core negators present in Edo, their functionality extends into eight distinct applications in communication. This finding highlights the richness of the Edo language and the ways in which speakers convey meaning regarding actions that did not occur, should not occur, or alternative actions taken by subjects. This framework of negators contributes to the understanding of Edo grammar and also emphasizes the necessity for further linguistic exploration into morpho-semantic structures in other languages,

thereby broadening the scope of studies on negation and its implications in human language.

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