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The sentence particle *kɔ* in Ikwere

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byǎ dúkpálábém bó ñgàngà, ñyé làg"ò àlà márónêṁ ñhè ó zèg"ù

When a guest asks you to escort him, just remember it is simple

formality, he knows very well his destination.

1.0 Introduction

The Ikwere¹ morpheme *kó* features among a subset of particles that can occur in the sentence final position. Others include *wé*, *tá*, *ó*, *ʔâ* and *nu*. In a recent paper (Osu, in press), I analysed *wé* and *tá* showing that their use in a sentence has to do with *reassessment*. The morpheme *wé* implies that the speaker's very act of saying something is tentatively called into question. Based on that, the speaker reassesses his act of saying (something) and presents it as the right act of saying. The result is that any alternative point of view, any alternative act of saying (something) whether real or imaginary, is ruled out. The morpheme *wé* is therefore regarded as a means by which the speaker commits himself vis-à-vis his sentence, reaffirming his position. As for the morpheme *tá*, its use implies that a given value (say *p* for positive or *p'* for negative, see section "theoretical background" for details) associated with an event or a state of affairs, initially introduced without considering any alternative value, is reassessed in the sense that an alternative value is introduced. The result is that *p* and *p'* are both regarded as possible values.²

1.1 Aim

The present article focuses on *kɔ*. This morpheme has a wide range of uses. Unlike *wé* and *tá* which occur exclusively in the sentence (or clause) final position, *kó* can occur in a post-verbal position as in (1), within the verb as in (2) and in a clause final position as in (3). It can occur in affirmative, negative, injunctive and interrogative sentences. Further, it contributes to the construction of a variety of meanings. Thus, in (1), the speaker refuses to take advice, in (2), he confirms the boy in question has eaten, and in (3), he lets his friend know he has no option.

¹ Ikwere is an Igboïd Benue-Congo language spoken in Rivers State, South-east Nigeria by a people also called Ikwere (alternate name: ìh^wúrúhà). My analysis is based on the Ogbakiri [ògbàkiri] dialect of this language.

IPA symbols are used in Ikwere examples except that *dʒ* is replaced with *j*; *tʃ* with *c*, and *j* with *y*. *kp* and *gb* are nonexplosive, bilabial stops with no velar occlusion. They resemble their explosive counter-parts *p*, *b* in several ways but differ from them in that they involve no buildup of air pressure behind the occlusion. *gb* is fully voiced and nonimplosive while *kp* is preglottalized, voiced prior to release, and frequently imploded. They must not be confused with labiovelar stops such as those found in Gbe languages. (Interested readers may see Clements & Osu 2002). Tones are indicated as follows: *á* for High, *à* for Low, *ǎ* for Rising or Low-High, *â* for Falling or High-Low, and *↓á* for Down-step High. Ikwere has a system of vowel harmony according to which with a few exceptions, all vowels of a word are either [+ATR] or [-ATR]. Hence, *-lem* changes to *-lém*, *-g^wu* to *-g^wò*, *-ru* to *-rò* and the *3SG o* to *ò*. Ikwere also has a system of nasal harmony according to which nonobstruent sounds nasalize if followed by a nasal vowel; for instance the underlying form for *-nem* is *-lém*. (See Clements & Osu 2003, 2005 for further discussion).

² As for *nu*, see Osu (2003a).

[Osi has been offended and means to retaliate. Therefore, he does not want to listen to those who advise him to forgive and forget:]³

- (1) m̩ kʷé-kô-m
 m̩ kʷé-kô-m
 1SG B.V.accept.NEG-SP-AGR 1SG
 No way, I refuse your apology.

[Wori and Chike are two sisters trying to figure out why their younger brother keeps crying. Wori is not sure the boy has eaten his lunch. Chike reassures her.]

- (2) ò rí-kó-lê-m
 ò rí-kó-lê-m
 3SG B.V.eat-SP-AFF PFT
 Of course s/he has eaten.

[Osi has been hiding from his friend to avoid paying him back his money. His friend suddenly meets him:]

- (3) í nòtúgʷă í nòtúgʷă, ʔâ mólʰôri kínà kó?
 í n-òtúgʷă í nòtúgʷă ʔâ mó hʷôro ì kínà kó
 2SG PROG-V.B.hide 2SG PROG-V.B.hide this way 1SG V.B.see-EFF 2SGO now SP
 You're hiding and hiding. Now I have found you. What about that?

The above examples reveal that kô does not bear an identical tone. One may be tempted to think that we are dealing each time with a separate morpheme. In other words, we are dealing with several homonymic kô. One answer to such a question is that linguistic objects do not exist in isolation; they always interact with each other.⁴ Therefore, tones and tone patterns of a given unit may vary depending on the context whereas the tone bearer remains the same. And although, I do not have any historical account of Ikwere at my disposal, I claim in this paper that we have the same kô in the sentences analysed in this paper, meaning that its different uses are intrinsically related and that it has an invariant property (also referred to as schematic form) which enables it to operate the way it does in the language.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the invariant property of kô by examining the specific part it plays in sentences, the contribution it makes to the construction of meaning of sentences and the means by which it does that. To achieve this aim, I consider kô as a marker (say, a trace) of some linguistic operation which it brings to play in its specific ways. Also relevant to my analysis are the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic constraints associated with the use of this marker in a given situation.

2.0 Theoretical background

This article is realized based on the theory of linguistic markers within the framework of enunciative and predicative operations, often referred to as TOPE (in French: *Théorie des Opérations Prédicatives et Enonciatives*), elaborated by Antoine Culioli and his research associates (Culioli 1990, 1995, 1999a&b; see also Groussier 2000; Osu 2003b, 2005). TOPE is classified as a theory of enunciation. A major claim in the enunciation paradigm is that there can be no meaningful sentences unless grounded in contexts, be they linguistic, social, economic, political or historical, and therefore, any linguistic study that aims at meaning construction or even communication, must incorporate the speaker's point of view and the context of production of sentences into analysis (see Benveniste 1966 & 1974, Ducrot 1984, Bakhtine 1977 [1929]).

The basic assumption of TOPE is that there is a finite series of cognitive processes underlying language activity. These processes, called linguistic operations, are represented by words in individual languages. And for that reason words, including the sentence particle under study, are termed as

³ Abbreviations are provided at the end of this paper.

⁴ Russell (1956: 41) writes: "But, for my part, I come to think that many words and phrases have no significance in isolation, but only contribute to the significance of whole sentences. I have therefore ceased to hope to meet "if" and "or" and "not" in heaven". Culioli also writes: "Linguistic objects are either primitive or derived from a primitive object. Linguistic objects (whether primitive or constructed) only occur in relations: they never occur in isolation" (1990: 116).

markers of operations. However, several units can represent the same operation just as one single unit can represent several operations. Therefore, there is no one-to-one relationship between markers and operations. Each marker has its own way of marking a specific operation or operations. And each marker has an invariant property that is flexible enough to enable it to behave the way it does. In this view, the specific role a marker plays while interacting with other markers in the construction of meanings is equivalent to its invariant property.

Within Culioli's theoretic model, a *notion* is a hybrid entity that provides extralinguistic materials which linguistic units are made from. Roughly speaking, a notion is like a mental image, our representation of reality. It is regarded as a complex bundle of physico-cultural properties that has no fixed boundary, meaning that with additional properties the boundary can always be extended. In fact, notions are characterized by two things, namely ramification as a result of inter-notional relationships created by the user (e.g., sheep and dog as opposed to sheep and lion); and abundance as physical, cultural and anthropological properties interrelate in such a way that they refer to a multiplicity of potentialities (see Culioli 1995: 44).

These notional properties are filtered with the help of a certain number of primitive operations that underlie language activity. One such operation is quantifiabilization (also referred to as fragmentation or individuation). It is a complex operation of determination that can be broken down into two components i.e., quantification and qualification. The operation of quantification consists of extracting and singling out an occurrence of a given notion and locating such an occurrence with reference to spatio-temporal parameters (enunciator and time of enunciation) of the referential space while the operation of qualification differentiates the extracted occurrence from all other related occurrences. The result of the operation of quantifiabilization is that a notional domain is constructed. Therefore, a notional domain is an occurrence of a notion.

Lexical items, grammatical units and predicative relations (or grammatical sentences) are obtained by filtering notions. For example, with the notion 'being a dog' or 'being red' one can construct a notional domain 'dog' or 'red'; similarly, from the notion of aspect, one can construct aspectual categories; and finally from a complex notion of the type 'antelope, trap, catch' one can construct a complex notional domain or predicative relation <antelope-catch-trap> which utterances can be made from, as follows: My trap caught a very big antelope this time; My trap didn't catch any antelope today; My trap may catch an antelope; etc.

It must be underlined that notions are only perceived through linguistic units, and that there is no one-to-one relationship between notions and units; a word, a lexical unit, a morpheme or a predicative relation does not equate with a notion, it is all a matter of representation, a matter of regulation in the sense that a lexical unit embodies only some properties of the notion but never all of them. It should then be clear that words and such other linguistic units are very complex entities. They are a means of representing cognitive activity, real entities, events and states of affairs and at the same time, they are traces of linguistic operations.

A notional domain is organized into three different zones that are intrinsically related. These are the Interior zone which represents the notional domain by default; the Exterior zone which is the linguistic complement of the Interior; and finally, the Boundary, which is neither the Interior nor the Exterior but at the same time compatible with the Interior and the Exterior.

The Interior zone contains a class of occurrences which identify with one another and at the same time differ from each other. The Interior zone also contains an abstract representative occurrence that serves both as its organizing centre (or prototype) and as its attracting centre. The organizing centre enables one to discern what occurrences do or do not belong to the class associated with the domain. It can be likened to the Platonic archetype. The attracting centre enables one to state that something is identifiable with the representative occurrence to a lesser and lesser degree. And it can be likened this time to the prototype in prototype semantics (see in particular Rosch 1978; Lakoff 1987; Kleiber 1990; Geeraerts 1994). The Interior zone represents the notional domain and therefore is associated with a positive value, conventionally noted *p* while the Exterior zone is associated with the negative value and is noted *p'*.

The Boundary, also noted *p'*, is assimilated a priori to the Exterior zone. However, its relation with the Interior zone is qualified as that of simple difference. The Exterior zone is regarded as being totally different from the Interior zone. The Exterior zone has therefore nothing to do at all with the

Interior zone. For example, if we use the word ‘dog’ to refer to a notional domain, then anything at all that has nothing in common with the prototypical representation of ‘dog’ will belong to the Exterior zone, while a hybrid wolf-dog for instance will be viewed as belonging to the Boundary.

As we have seen, a notional domain has two constituent values. Each value is defined with respect to the other. However, each value is by definition different from the other and the relation between both is characterized as that of alterity (or otherness). This is to say that alterity is a founding property of the notional domain. And each marker in its specific ways may bring about redefining the relation of alterity between p and p' . This could mean either ignoring alterity by presenting one value as the one and only valid value. It could also mean eliminating alterity, or maintaining it. It is argued in this paper that $k\alpha$ rejects alterity.

2.1 More on the operation of locating

I stated earlier that the operation of quantification consists of extracting and singling out an occurrence of a given notion and *locating* such an occurrence with reference to spatio-temporal parameters (enunciator and time of enunciation) of the referential space while the operation of qualification differentiates the extracted occurrence from all other related occurrences. Culioli's position is that when we speak, we construct meanings using utterances. And at any stage of this construction of meaning, we can identify operations which are reducible to one elementary, primitive operation called: LOCATING (see Culioli 1990: 180 & elsewhere). The whole process implies setting a linguistic object as the reference point in relation to which the value of a second linguistic object is defined. In other words, the operation of locating consists of locating one term relative to another. And it very much has to do with the process of determination.

Thus, if you say that x is located relative to y you mean that x is situated [or, again, defined] with reference to y , whether the latter, which is a locator (reference point), is itself located with reference to another locator or whether it is itself a locator origin. In fact, nothing prevents a term from being located relative to itself or a term which is the locator in a first relationship from becoming the locatum [the located element] in a reciprocal relationship of locating. The relationship of locating is always binary and where we have three terms or more in a sentence, for example, we obtain a second or third binary relationship on top of the first one. We use a unary operation to construct a binary relationship. The operator of locating is noted $\underline{\in}$ signifying ‘is located by’ or ‘has as a locator’. Therefore $\langle x \underline{\in} () \rangle$ means that x is the locatum in a relationship which is being established. From $\langle x \underline{\in} () \rangle$ we can construct a locator, say y , and thus have the relationship $\langle x \underline{\in} y \rangle$ read: ‘ x is located relative to y ’ (see Culioli 1990: 74–75).

3.0 Analysis of $k\alpha$

The remainder of this paper gives a detailed account of the way $k\alpha$ operates in the language. I first examine interrogative sentences, then negative, interro-negative (or negation in question) and declarative sentences are considered. I end the study with injunctive sentences. Each kind of sentence is fully illustrated with examples. The way $k\alpha$ interacts with its co-text and the specific part it plays in the sentence are equally underlined.

3.1. Interrogation

Questions generally introduce a predicative relation while indicating that the speaker is not in a position to determine which of the two constituent values of the notional domain represented by this predicative relation is valid. He therefore calls on someone else to select a value. To put it differently, apart from rhetorical questions in which the speaker tends to insinuate that he already knows the answer to his question and simply wants to emphasize something in particular,⁵ questions generally imply that the person who asks them does not already know the answer. And not knowing the answer

⁵ Nevertheless, the moment it is a question whether rhetorical or not, the interlocutor can choose to answer. Take for instance: Question: Who cares? Answer: me. Question: Are you kidding me? Answer: Yes. Question: Is there anyone smarter than me? Answer: Yes, me.

invariably means that there are several possible answers. In fact, questions, including rhetorical ones, imply that the speaker is uncertain about a given situation or that there is instability in the situation. Alterity is inherent in questions. Having recourse to another person who is liable to confirm, emphasize or know the answer in order that he will choose between all the possibilities is a means of stabilizing the situation. In a ‘yes or no’ or ‘all or nothing’ type of question, the person has to choose between two equiponderant values. But in a situation where the question implies a gradient, he has to choose the degree (among several degrees) to which the answer is right. Finally, there are situations where he has to choose between an element (an occurrence) of a given class and another. In sum, we can say that in a ‘yes or no’ or ‘all or nothing’ kind of question, *p* represents ‘yes’ while *p*’ represents ‘no’; with a gradient i.e. to what extent or degree is it true that an event takes place, *p* is the representative value and *p*’ anything other than *p*, to a lesser and lesser degree; and with occurrences, *p* represents a given occurrence and *p*’ any occurrence other than *p*.

Now let us turn to examples. The question in (4) is typically asked by a neighbour who comes around, finds children playing within their compound but does not find their mother nearby. It is also often used by a relative in a situation where children of a given family stop by to greet him or her on their way to school.

- (4) *íné ánó kó?*
 íné ánó kó
 mother 2PL SP
 What about your mother?⁶

If we delete the morpheme *kó*, the example in (4) loses its question form and becomes ill-formed in the contexts mentioned above. The resultant expression *íné ánó* ‘your mother’ is well-formed in a completely different situation. Now consider the following: A group of children previously fought each other. A relative who did not even witness the fight later comes to scold them. The children are surprised and ask him *nyê kànnì nù á lórò òg^wò* ‘who told you that we fought?’ And the relative can say *íné ánó* ‘your mother’. On first intuition, one may think that with the question in (4), the speaker wants to know where to find their mother (or how to locate her). But in fact, this question implies that the speaker wants to be informed about their mother. He cares about her. We may observe that if it has to do with somebody who only wants to find out whether their mother is at home or not, the person will not use *kó*. He will most likely say: *byă íné ánó ò zì nù órò* ‘Come on, (and tell me), is your mother at home?’ The truth is that the question aims at general information concerning the mother and that it does not focus on her whereabouts even though certain situations however may lead to such interpretation.

In fact, to ask after the mother using *kó* is a way of signalling that she is part and parcel of those he cares about. Put differently, the mother’s absence tends to bring about divide between those the speaker cares about and those he does not care about. And *kó* rejects such alterity. The result is that the entire group of people the speaker cares about appears to be intact.

[In order to properly welcome their guest who has just arrived, the hosts first offer him wine and kola nut. But the guest says he does not feel like drinking. They then offer him food, like this:]

- (5) *wírí yá kó, á g^wèyâ*
 wírí yá kó áyí g^wèyâ
 food 3SG.EMPH SP 1PL V.B take-return.CTP
 What about food, should we bring you some?

Example (5) is a clear case of ‘yes or no’ question. The guest is called upon to choose between two equiponderant values (*p* and *p*’). It is of utmost importance to note here that the guest has refused a first offer. This means that ‘food’ belongs to a class of things the hosts offer him. Otherwise the question is not natural. The very focus of the question is the fate of food from the point of view of the guest: is he going to accept it or not? A refusal signifies that he assigns it the same value as wine and

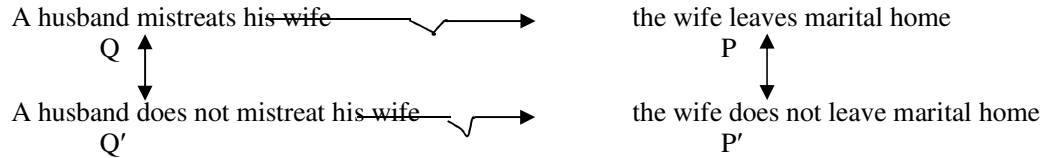
⁶ It might be interesting to investigate in a typological perspective what kind of connection exists between this particle and the interjection ‘*ńkó*’ in Yoruba in a construction like *Bàbá rẹ ńkó?* ‘What about your father?’ *Ó wà* ‘He is fine’ (see Sachnine 1997).

kola. Alternatively, accepting it signifies that he introduces a difference between food on one hand and wine and kola on the other. The morpheme *kɔ* is used here to indicate that though the speaker offers food to their guest, he does not have any hope as to whether their guest will accept it, based on the fact that the latter has earlier refused wine and kola. Technically, the guest assigns the *p'* value to the first offer and the host strongly suggests the guest will assign the *p'* value to the second offer. The question is a means of asking the guest to confirm *p'* while leaving the door open for the alternative option. In sum, there is no difference between the fate of wine and kola on one hand and that of food on the other. Consequently, there should be no difference between the point of view of the guest and that of the host. Here again, the morpheme *kɔ* ensures the continuity or homogeneity of a given domain.

[A man is mistreating his wife. His friend warns him against the possibility of his wife leaving him and going back to her parents' home]

- (6) ì tǔnè èkék^wáró ñwǒ rìyà k'â ákâ. ó lálé kó
 ì tǔ-nè èkék-k^wâ-ró ñwǒ rìyà kè â ákâ
 2SG V.B find-PFT.NON-AFF V.B handle-wellness-DAT child female CONN DEICT hand
 ó lál-é kó
 3SG V.B leave-PFT.NON-AFF SP
 You don't want to handle this girl with care, what (about) if she leaves you?

The primary aim of the speaker's question in (6) is to call his friend to a change of attitude. In so doing, the speaker introduces a cause and effect relationship. More precisely, this situation entails a two-level network of inference relations that can be represented as follows:



How does *kɔ* interact with the question in this particular example (6) to yield the meaning we have? By continuously mistreating his wife, the husband insinuates that *Q* leads to *P'*, this is a way of introducing alterity here. The husband's attitude violates a pre-established relation (he realizes *Q* and expects *P*). Thus, he introduces alterity into the domain represented by the complex relation *Q-P*. The primary verb suffix *-le* implies that an expected event may be realized. This morpheme *kɔ* refers to *Q-P* indicating that the expected or unavoidable end result (i.e., divorce) of the husband's attitude (i.e., he mistreats his wife) is bound to happen.

With the question, the speaker asks his interlocutor to reflect over this unavoidable or expected end result, rephrased as follows: "with the way you mistreat her there is no iota of doubt that she will divorce you, do you know that"? In fact, *kɔ* signifies that the link between the husband's attitude and divorce cannot be disrupted, or in other words, there is no room for alterity. However, the question form calls into question the relationship *Q-P* and therefore enables the speaker to create room for avoiding *P* by putting an end to *Q*. Let us consider (7).

Chima and Wori are playmates. For one reason or another they begin to quarrel. Wori calls Chima ñyè ñh^wùrñ^wǒ 'a foolish person'. Chima can choose to answer:

- (7) jée kó
 jée kó
 2SG.CONTR.EMPH SP
 What about you?

As a matter of fact, the speaker, Chima, does not expect Wori to give any answer to his question; it is assumed that he already knows it. Hence, (7) can be considered a rhetorical question. In this kind of situation, Chima introduces a value, let us say *p* (you are not different from me) and considers it to be the right value. As a result, it does not seem necessary to refer to or introduce *p'*. In fact, there is no need for it, from the point of view of the speaker. But like I said earlier, a rhetorical

question remains a question. As such, Wori can choose to answer it. She can say something like this: mò bò jí ‘Am I (like) you?’ meaning ‘you are a fool, I am not’. Such an answer will enable her to introduce p’ alongside p.

If we come back to Chima’s answer “what about you”, we record the following things:

- a) For Chima, Wori’s attempt to exclude herself from the abstract class of foolish persons brings about an unstable relation ‘someone is foolish’ that requires to be stabilized. Wori thus introduces alterity; b) The morpheme kɔ indicates that there is no difference between Wori and Chima with respect to the quality ‘be foolish’. Wori cannot be excluded from the class and consequently, the relation is stabilized and alterity is eliminated; c) The rhetorical question implies that though the speaker has scanned different possibilities arriving at the conclusion that there is no difference between both of them, he (the speaker) still leaves room for the interlocutor to scan other possibilities; d) And finally, the speaker has no doubt the interlocutor will arrive at the same conclusion as his.

However, Chima may choose to answer as in (8):

- (8) ñyé bó mmé ñyé ñh^wùrñ^wó bó jí
 ñyé bó mmé ñyé ñh^wùrñ^wó bó jí
 person V.B.be first person foolishness V.B.be 2SG.CONTR
 The person who is a fool is you.
 It’s you who is a fool.

Contrary to (7), sentence (8) is not a question. It is an example of focus construction in Ikwere. Such a construction implies two things: a pre-constructed predicative relation containing an unspecified entity ñyé ‘someone’, the entire relation is noted <ñyé p₁>, and then a relation of identification introduced with the help of the verb bú ‘to be’. This relation of identification enables the speaker to specify the person who instantiates the place of the unspecified entity introduced by someone. But this process entails choosing the interlocutor, noted x, from an abstract class of possible fools. The whole complex process can be rewritten as follows: <₀<₁ ñyé p₁> bú x₀>, read: Someone is a fool, and the person who is a fool is x. Most importantly, the speaker uses this means to indicate that he himself is not a fool.⁷

Lastly, Chima can equally answer as in (9):

- (9) jée màkó bó ñyé ñh^wùrñ^wó
 jée màkó bó ñyé ñh^wùrñ^wó
 2SG.CONTR. EMPH. too V.B.be person foolishness
 You too are a fool.

Sentence (9) is not a question either. The thing with this example is that the word màkó ‘also, too’ contains kɔ. The speaker acknowledges that he and his playmate are fools. The second person singular element emphatically introduces Wori in relation to the speaker, meaning that in relation to the quality ‘being foolish’ Wori is really the person concerned. This debate on who is foolish and who is not brings about a situation that is not stabilised. The morpheme ma introduces Wori as the only reference point in relation to which the situation is stabilised. In this setting, kɔ implies that Wori cannot be separated from Chima and that they both share the quality ‘being foolish’. If we take this analysis to be correct, we can then admit that kɔ in màkó is the same as the one we have seen in previous examples. In fact this example provides further illustration of how words interact beyond our expectation, defying our methods and challenging our reasoning capacity.

In the examples examined so far, we consistently observe that there is an attempt to introduce alterity in form of a division into a notional domain between p and p’. The marker kɔ rejects such alterity. Consequently, the notional domain remains homogeneous or intact. However, with the question, the speaker refers the domain represented as p or p’ to someone else and asks the person to validate it. This could mean asking the person to provide missing information, as in (4), (7) and (9); to choose between accepting or refusing an offer with the hope that the expected value will be chosen, as

⁷ See Osu (2000a) for further discussion.

in (5); and finally, to reconsider a pre-established relationship to see if that is what the person desires, as in (6).

3.2 Negation

Many scholars including Horn (1989: 31 sqq)⁸ have often stressed the fact that it is not always easy to draw a line between affirmative and negative sentences. However, Crystal (1997) defines negation as “a process or construction in GRAMMATICAL and SEMANTIC analysis which typically expresses the contradiction of some or all of a sentence’s meaning”. Ramat (1994: 2769) also asserts that “[t]he linguistic operation of negation (NEG) consists in denying the truth value of the negated sentence, or of a part of the sentence, by applying a NEG operator (π_{NEG}) to a sentence like: 1a) *John likes to work* gives *John does not like to work*, i.e., [*it is not true that [John likes to work]*]; 1b) *John does not like beer at lunch* i.e., [*John does like beer, [$\pi_{\text{NEG ADV SATELLITE}}$ at lunch]*]. He further (p. 2769) states that negative sentences are those “used to correct states of affairs assumed by the speaker to be either shared knowledge or to represent the commonest ones to be expected in the context. *The post hasn’t been delivered this morning* is a felicitous message only under the assumption, shared by speaker and hearer, that the post has to be delivered every day. This is the reason why negative sentences are not normally used to introduce new propositions or new referents”. Crystal and Ramat tend to suggest that negation is a derivative of a positive construct.

In my view, depending on the context, negative constructions may mean that something is not the case or that <something is the case> is not the case. In other words, negative sentences imply that a predicative relation or a state of affairs is certain. The speaker states that the predicative relation which he introduces using a negative sentence is the case. Thus, if he says “John has not killed the antelope”, he means that <John has not killed the antelope> is the case. Similarly, if he says “It is not raining”, he means that <It is not raining> is the case. Thus, the speaker uses such sentences in order to negatively evaluate something. In more technical terms, we can say, following Culioli (1995 & elsewhere) that in a given notional domain endowed with two values (p and p’), negation implies that we are dealing with p’ i.e., the Exterior zone, Boundary inclusive. As Culioli (1995: 71) puts it:

“It [negation] is everywhere: when we analyse alternative values, the Exterior, absence, the void, we process operations of negation. Concerning negation we can only have two attitudes: either we seek to eliminate it or we consider it to be primitive. Personally, I do not think it can be constructed as a derivative – we cannot do without the operation of negation. I am forced to posit it as being primitive. This means that when I construct my Exterior, I shall do so based on a notion that I shall first apprehend in its positive form as an Interior”.

According to Osu (2000b), Ikwere has a wide range of markers of negation which include such verb suffixes as -g^wo (possibly derived from g^wu+o), -le, -re (probably derived from ru+e) and the verb prefix zε- (possibly the verb of locating zi + e). They also include the periphrastic element òzê which occurs only in the initial of the sentence, and tones.⁹ We must however underline the fact that though tones play a crucial role in negation marking in Ikwere, no one single tone is devoted to negation marking in this language. Semantically, negation in Ikwere can imply contrast between a given predicative relation and another. It can also imply the absence or rejection of something that has been previously affirmed and indicate that an expected event does not occur. At issue here is what kind of combinations bring about the negative reading and what role does kò play? I shall therefore attempt to point out such elements for each example in this section. Let us examine (10) below. It is about an everlasting applicant. And the speaker links the applicant’s situation to his lack of formal training.

- (10) m̀bórú bá kàrò ó ẓě s̀ùk^wúlù ò k^wê
 m̀bórú bá kà-rò ó ẓě s̀ùk^wúlù ò k^wê
 when 3PL V.B say-EFF 3SG V.B go school 3SG V.B agree.NEG
 When they advised him to go to school he refused.

⁸ For further discussion see inter alia Horn (1989) and Progovac (1994).

⁹ Interested readers may see Ndimele (1995: 112). Ndimele (2004: 951-953) further argues while referring to Emenanjo (1985) that “tones play a very important role in negative constructions throughout Igboid.” Ikwere provides further evidence in favour of Ndimele’s assertion.

- (13) ò kà mà jì wémákô ìkè byá óh^wú ñwé ótù óbòcì nhè í làrò, **má kà nó í wékò òhèrè kè.**
 má kà nó í wékò òhèrè kè ém
 1SG.EMPH B.V say CONN 2SG B.V have-SP opportunity CONN DIST
 Lit.: He said if you also had no energy to come and see him one day before you go back, I said that you don't have that chance.
 He asked me if you would find time to go and see him and **I told him that you have no time to do that.**

Because of lack of space, I give henceforth a word-for-word gloss for only the portion of the example I am concerned with, that is, in (13), the part of the sentence that contains the negative construction and is written in bold-face characters. Example (13) is a reported speech. My focus here is the negation expressed with the verb form and tone pattern wékò (the positive form will read as follows: ì wèrùkò 'you do have'). The sentence gives the impression of emphasis. Thus the speaker really means that his son has no time to pay his relative a visit. Note that if kò is deleted, the sentence remains valid though the impression of emphasis is lost. Negation implies that we are dealing with p', and kò indicates that the subject ɪ 'you' is located relative to the Exterior zone of the domain 'have time' in such a way that any attempt to make him cross over to the Interior zone of the domain, in other words, any attempt to consider p is completely ruled out. From the ongoing discussion, we can rephrase this part of the sentence like this: "when I say he has no time, you may nurse some doubt, in fact I mean that he has no time, not even a second for visiting you". Consequently, the speaker tentatively clears any possible doubt in his relative's mind.

Example (14) is all about a neighbour whose character is not appealing.

- (14) ?ém ó zì nhēm áyâ á vómè nó ñhè ójó, rúmòòrò kâ dúm, ò màkò áamá nèmé ó nèmé
ò zíkò ñyè k^wèg^wù nò à, bà kà nó ó ñyè bísí.
 ò zì-kò ñyè k^wè-g^wù nò à
 3SG V.B. be.LOC-SP individual V.B.accept-STAT CONN 3SGO
 Lit.: There is no one person (who) believes in him.
 As you see him there, he is always seeking evil. Take the entire Rumuoru community, he can do whatever pleases him **no one single person trusts him.** He is known to be an evil-doer.

The third person singular marker, realized ó because it harmonizes with zì for the feature - ATR, does not refer to any specific being or thing. This sentence can therefore be likened to an impersonal construction in some of the world's languages. Here again, we can delete kò and the correct form obtained is òzè ñyè k^wèg^wù nò à 'Nobody trusts him', where òzè (it does not exist) can be analysed as ò-zì-è (s/he-be located-negative marker). The negated element is the verb zì 'to be located, to exist' (note that èzì is the uninflected form). And negation is marked using both the high tone verb base zì and the low tone kò. So the result of the interaction of the third person singular marker and the negative form of the verb 'to be located, to exist' can be phrased as follows: "there is nobody to be found so as to say that the person trusts him". With kò, the speaker is more specific, like this: "when I say nobody trusts him, I mean no one single person, so don't go imagining that you may spot out one that trusts him". If we represent the Rumuoru community made of individuals as a class of abstract occurrences of x (x_i, x_j, x_k ... x_z), and the predicate 'trust him' as P, the whole sentence can then be taken to mean that no single occurrence of x is located with respect to P. The class of x remains totally empty and therefore uniform in relation to P.

- (15) m̀ **mákò** ?á mé zèmé gbásíró bé, kárikó mé g^wèrú òwà ?á mó h^wòrò á.
 m̀ **mákò** ?á mé z-èmé gbá-sí-ró bé
 1SG V.B. know.NEG-1SG AGR how 1SG.CONTR FUT-V.B.do V.B.concern-STAB-DAT 3PLO
I don't even know what (else) to do with them except that I should take things the way they are.

In (15), the speaker stresses the fact that no solution is foreseeable from his own point of view. However, there is no indication as to whether the speaker's point of view is introduced at the expense of another person's point of view. We can delete kò. In that case, the sentence remains valid and interpretable. The speaker signifies that he is looking for a solution to the problem, meaning that there

is room for a solution. Note in passing that negation is marked using the high tone verb base and the low tone kɔ.

[Just imagine. I told him I was going to the hospital. His answer was:]

- (16) éʔɛ mó h^wókâ n'ɔ́ n'ɔ́ n'ɔ́.
 éʔɛ mó h^wókâ n'ɔ́ n'ɔ́ n'ɔ́
 no 1SG.EMPH V.B.mention-SP LOG CONN mouth
 I shouldn't mention his name at all.

Example (16) can be interpreted as follows: just stay away from my name. This example is an indirect speech. The speaker reports what another speaker (henceforth S₂) said to him. We first notice the element éʔɛ translated here as 'no'. It indicates that S₂ does not tolerate the very act of mentioning his name. Negation of h^wókâ (uninflected form: òh^wókâ) 'mention' is marked using a high tone verb base and a high-low tone kɔ. But the interesting thing is that S₂ succeeds in blocking every discussion with the speaker. Negation implies that the speaker is located relative to the Exterior of 'mention my name' (you don't mention my name is the case). kɔ implies that the slightest attempt to mention his name is strictly prohibited in order to avoid introducing alterity in the zone. The outcome of this process is that the zone is intact.

In summary, with the negative construction, the Exterior zone of a notional domain is introduced. There is attempt, real or imaginary, to move away from this zone in order to be located in the Interior zone, for instance. Such attempt brings alterity to play. And it may consist in a minimum acceptance and knowledge of something, as in (11) and (15); a simple call of someone's name, as in (16); that one has little time (as opposed to no time at all), as in (13); and that there is someone (as opposed to no one), as in (14). The morpheme kɔ blocks such attempt so that one remains in the Exterior zone, no more, no less.

3.3 The interro-negative construction

A combination of negation and kɔ can also give an interro-negative reading. In that case, kɔ must occur in the verb or sentence final position and not in the infix position. And it must bear a high tone. An interro-negative construction (or negation in question) means that we are no longer dealing with a question where yes and no, Interior value and Exterior value are equiponderant (equal weighted) answers. In fact, the speaker posits the p' value and asks the interlocutor to confirm it. If the interlocutor confirms it, then the p value is automatically ruled out. Nevertheless, the interlocutor may choose not to confirm p'. For instance, he can reply 'I don't know', or 'I don't want to answer'. He may also choose to just keep quiet. No matter the weight of p' in that case, there remains a possibility for p to be validated.

- (17) ánúlé ryêkó ódó ókóró kâ
 ánú-lê ryê-kó ódó ókóró kâ â
 2PL-EMPH V.B.eat.NEG-SP kind crab CONN DEICT
 You don't eat this kind of crab at all, do you?

In (17), the speaker is carefully preparing his basket of crabs in order to cook his dinner and has no intention to give out any of them. But his neighbours wouldn't stop looking at him with envy. The neighbours' envious look introduces p. This sentence is therefore the means by which the speaker justifies his act of not sharing his crabs with his neighbours. The use of kɔ enables him to strengthen his argument i.e., that no single member of the family eats the kind of crabs he is preparing. He thus gives the impression that not only these crabs are prohibited in his neighbours' family but also no member of the family ever dares to taste them. In other words, the domain represented here by means of the Exterior value <x-do not eat> is considered to be free from containing any form of alterity, where x represents the neighbours' family. Recall that alterity could be introduced if a member of the family would just taste the crabs. We can therefore qualify the domain as homogeneous with respect to p' i.e., <not eat such kind of crabs>. If we delete kɔ, we obtain a declarative sentence in which the

speaker simply states that p' is the case. It can equally be a question if adequate intonation is employed. In that case, the speaker sets out to know whether or not p' is the case. Finally, we can move $k\alpha$ to the sentence final position like this: $\acute{a}n\acute{o}l\acute{e} ry\acute{e} \acute{o}d\acute{o} \acute{o}k\acute{o}r\acute{o} k\acute{a} k\acute{o}$? ‘You don’t eat this kind of crab, isn’t it so?’ In this case, the speaker first introduces p' , he then uses $k\alpha$ to refer back to this value while asking for it to be confirmed. At this point, the difference I can see between $ry\acute{e}k\alpha$ where $k\alpha$ is in the verb final position on one hand, and $k\alpha$ in the sentence final position on the other, is that with $ry\acute{e}k\alpha$, the speaker indicates that he is more concerned with the process ‘to eat’. With $k\alpha$ in the sentence final position, the speaker states that he considers the whole sentence in block. The role of the question is to reintroduce p alongside p' while indicating that it is the interlocutor’s onus to eliminate p . The analysis given in (17) can further be supported with (18) and (19) below.

- (18) $\acute{a} z\acute{e}n\acute{e} k\acute{o}$
 \acute{a} $z\acute{e}-n\acute{e}$ $k\acute{o}$
 IPL V.B.go-PFT NON AFF.NEG SP
 What if we don’t go at all (what would you do in that case)?

In (18), the speaker wants to find out the consequences he would face if he refused to run an errand and in (19), the consequences for refusing a proposal. Both examples imply that the expected thing is p i.e., ‘we have to go’ in (18) and ‘I have to accept’ in (19). They also contain the primary verb suffix $-ne$ (the nasalized non affirmative form of $-lem$). In the affirmative form, this suffix indicates that a process is constructed both on the time plane and on the subject plane and that the construction on the time plane is in conformity with the construction on the subject plane. The same suffix in the negative form signifies that the construction of the process on the time plane does not correspond with its construction on the subject plane. The morpheme $k\alpha$ occurs in the sentence final position in both examples. Now, given the context of use, if we delete $k\alpha$, we have the impression of an incomplete sentence i.e., a sentence that is not stabilized. We may also choose to insert $k\alpha$ between the verb base and the suffix. The resultant sentence is not complete either. This provides further argument to support the fact that $k\alpha$ does contribute to stabilizing a sentence. In the sentence final position, $k\alpha$ interacts with the question to say that one should consider the predicative relation in the preceding co-text the way it is i.e., without introducing anything different at all. To put it another way, one should view the domain this predicative relation represents ‘we don’t go’ as homogeneous (meaning that the domain is free from any intention ‘to go on errand; to accept the proposal’) and then state one’s own position in return. The question implies that though p' is preponderant, p remains a possible value until it is eliminated.

- (19) $m\acute{e} k^w\acute{e}r\acute{i}l\acute{e} k\acute{o}$
 $m\acute{e}$ $k^w\acute{e}r\acute{i}-l\acute{e}$ $k\acute{o}$
 1SG V.B.accept-PFT NON AFF.NEG SP
 What if I bluntly refuse (what would you do in that case)?

Let’s recapitulate. There are three main ingredients here: interrogation, negation and the morpheme $k\alpha$. As we have seen, with negation in question (or the reverse) the speaker introduces the p' value of a given notional domain, meaning that the p value is a priori out of the race; he then calls on someone else to confirm it. We must point out here that the privileged value is p . Therefore, the p' value is introduced relative to p . The morpheme $k\alpha$ signifies that having taken p into account, the p' value or the domain introduced should be considered without reference to any other value or domain.

3.4 Affirmative sentences

Affirmative sentences are a means by which a speaker positively evaluates events, states of affairs, processes or predicative relations. The speaker considers that a given state of affairs represented by a predicative relation is *certain* in the sense that its locating relative to time and space is conform to what he expects. Put differently, the speaker states with an affirmative sentence that a state of affairs *is the case*. Thus if he says ‘I am eating’, he means that \langle I am eating \rangle is the case.

Affirmative sentences, alongside with negative sentences and rhetorical questions, are assertive constructions.

Consider (20):

- (20) ò rílêm
 ò rí-lêm
 3SG V.B.eat-PFT- AFF
 He has eaten.

The typical situation in which this sentence is usually produced is a cultural setting: In a community that makes yearly offerings to their ancestral father, it is a general belief that the statuette moulded in the village Jury room and representing their ancestral father shakes to signify that their ancestral father accepts their offering. And so, if in the course of the ceremony the statuette shakes, the whole village trembles with joy as they shout in unison: ò rílêm ‘He has eaten (i.e., he has accepted our offering)’. Here again, the primary verb suffix -lêm implies that what the whole village has been expecting has come to pass. In other words, the construction of the predicative relation <He-eat> on the time plane is consistent with the construction of the same relation on the subject plane.

If we add kò as in (21), the meaning changes, the context of use too. For example, one of two friends wonders whether Chima’s weird behaviour could be linked to the fact that he did not have his meal previously and the other friend reassures him, saying:

- (21) ò rí-kó-lêm
 ò rí-kó-lêm
 3SG V.B.eat-SP-PFT-AFF
 He did eat.

We see from the context of use that Chima’s weird attitude, noted Q, creates a situation that is not stabilized and calls for explanation. One of the two friends links Q to the process P (to eat) in order to find out which of the two values, p (Chima has eaten) or p’ (Chima has not eaten) is the case. He indicates at the same time that from his own point of view, p’ is preponderant as evidenced by the fact that the sentence will otherwise not contain kò. The speaker (i.e., the other friend) introduces p as the right value. There are two divergent views here between the first friend, noted S₁ and the speaker, noted S₀. S₁ has doubts and therefore suggests that Chima may not have eaten. Based on the fact that Chima has actually eaten (the relation is located in time and space), S₀ considers the position of S₁ as a way of calling p into question. S₀ indicates using kò that p is the case in such a way that there is no room for p’ and therefore, the domain <Chima-to eat> noted P, cannot be fragmented. Thus, S₀ rejects S₁’s attempt to introduce p’. Example (21) can be phrased as follows: “As for eating, I can tell you that he has eaten; there is no doubt about it”. With -lêm here, the speaker signifies that what S₁ tends to introduce as a process yet to be realized is in fact a process that has already been realized.

- (22) mà yá mà ñwèrè ă yá ?á bó k’ú-kó
 mà yá mà ñwèrè ă yá ?á bó k’ú-kó
 CONN 3SG.EMPH CONN wife 3SG.GEN 3SG.EMPH how 3PL V.B.speak-SP
 Both him and his wife, that’s what they say all the time.

As we can see in (22), the speaker introduces the process ‘say something’ but uses the linking word ma to introduce ‘he’ and ‘his wife’ i.e., the collective subject of this process. Interestingly this linking word occurs twice introducing each time one of the two subjects. What we need to know about this morpheme here is that in this kind of use i.e., where it follows a noun phrase (NP), ma brings about a focus effect. This is because it singles out the NP from an abstract class of occurrences (of NP) and sets it as the sole occurrence with reference to which the process ‘say something’ can be said to be validated. The fact that ma introduces two occurrences of the class represented by NP means that each occurrence is considered on its own as the sole reference.¹⁰ In fact, the speaker means that with respect to ‘say something’ each ma plays a specific role. Indeed, the mere fact that there are two different

¹⁰ See Osu (2005: 403-436).

individuals playing the role of the subject of ‘say something’, one would expect that each of them says it in a different way or again that they say something different from one another. The morpheme *kɔ* indicates that though the two subjects are capable of displaying differences on various topics, they do not differ in any way when it comes to what they say: they say just the same thing.

- (23) **zíkó ʔá mó mòrò ósì dó tà** álángá ă bálélê ñ òhî ñhê mó wùsì ézè há lě íkpè
 zí-kó ʔá mó mòrò ósì dó tà
 V.B.start-SP how 1SG.EMPH V.B.give.birth.to-EFF osi V.B.reach today
 álángá ă bálélê ñ òhî
 needle 3SG.GEN V.B.enter-ever 1SGO corps
 From the day I delivered Osi till today not even a tiny syringe of his has penetrated
 my body not to mention wrapper the great.
 Since Osi was born, he has never done any good thing for me as his mother.

The speaker in (23) is not very happy with her son, Osi. She means to show that Osi does not behave the way a son should behave towards his mother. The verb base *zí* introduces a specific event *ʔá mó mòrò ósì* ‘the time, space and manner I gave birth to Osi’ and makes it the starting point in relation to which one can measure time lapse or geographical distance. The problem here is that the speaker fears that for one reason or another, this starting point might be taken to be a rough estimate. Hence she takes recourse to *kɔ*. This marker enables her to state that what she designates as the starting point should be regarded as the exact (‘absolute’) starting point, and consequently, no other point can be considered.

- (24) **órò ká jìkó tì**
 órò kè â jì-kó tì
 house CONN DEICT V.B.fill up-SP to the brim
 This house was full to the brim.

The sentence in (24) is about someone who, after throwing a party, happily narrates that many people turned up. The speaker achieves his aim utilizing the morpheme *kɔ*. A house can be seen as made of spots (or spaces), meaning that if one spot is occupied another may be free. This is how alterity becomes part and parcel of the house. The use of *kɔ* here is intended to indicate that every corner of the house was occupied. As a result, no empty space could be spotted. In other words, the occupancy-rate of the house (or the rate of house filling) was such that no space was left. Once again, we see how *kɔ* implies that there can be no alterity in the house as far as the domain <house-occupied> is concerned.

[The speaker is very disappointed with the way her two children behave towards her]

- (25) **ì mǎkóm ʔá mé zémé gbásíró bē káríkó** mé g^wèrú òwà ʔá mó h^wòrò á.
 ká-ró-kó [ká-rí-kó] mé g^wè-rú òwà ʔá mó h^wòrò á
 V.B.surpass-DAT-SP 1SG V.B.take-DAT world this way 1SG B.V.see-EFF 3SGO
 I don’t know what to do with them, I only have to take the world as I see it (i.e. take things as they are).

The verb form *kárókó* in (25) serves as a linking word between P i.e., the main clause (I don’t know what to do) and Q i.e., the subordinate clause (I take the world as I see it). This verb contains the base *ká* (the corresponding uninflected form is *àká* ‘to surpass’). It signifies that the speaker has to go beyond the limit set by Q. However, the co-text suggests that he cannot go beyond the limit set by Q. This example can be reinterpreted as follows: I don’t know what else to do with them to enable me go beyond taking life the way it is. We see how Q becomes the ultimate limit for the speaker. But then, the verb also contains the dative marker *-ru*. This morpheme indicates that a process is realized in such a way that the subject of the process is concerned with the end result. In other words, the speaker is very much concerned with how to go beyond the limits imposed on him by her children. The morpheme *-kɔ* has a specific role to play here. It marks that the domain introduced by *àká* is not fragile and therefore enhances the idea that the speaker is firmly determined to go beyond what she normally cannot go beyond. To say that someone is firmly determined to go beyond the limit introduced by Q is

another way of saying that alterity is rejected. Alterity in this example is introduced by the difference between the limit Q and the speaker's need for another limit noted Q'.

(26) A: í h^wóné ñhè ó nákàsí ókà ì máró n'ó ñyé bó vùrò òvù. m nòk^wún'í ézí ók^wú ó.
If you hear him speak in public you know that he is well-trained. I'm telling you the truth.

B: ò bòkò ?êm.
ò bò-kò ?êm
3SG V.B.be.IDT-SP like that
That's right.

The focus of the conversation in (26) is Osi's art of speaking in public. Speaker A suggests that Osi is a good and mature orator. Speaker B confirms the point made by speaker A combining however, the verb òbú 'to be' and kò. The same sentence without kò will give the impression that speaker B's answer only comes from his lips i.e., without conviction, and therefore liable to contain alterity. The presence of kò here conveys the idea that Osi's art of speaking in public, noted P, is just what speaker A says it is, no more, no less. Thus, speaker B implies that there can be no difference, no alterity between P introduced by speaker A, and P located in relation to time and space. This is how kò rejects any form of alterity that could be introduced in any form into the domain represented as P.

An interaction of the morpheme kò with an affirmative construction results in a double assertion. As we have earlier seen, the affirmative construction enables the speaker to assert a value. In ordinary terms, the speaker indicates that a state of affairs is the case. In various examples and contexts, attempt is made to call into question this state of affairs. For example, someone expresses doubts about the effectiveness of a given process, as in (21), about the exactness of a starting point, as in (23), about the occupancy rate of a house, as in (24) or about a point some other person makes, as in (26). Alterity can also be introduced by definition, as in (22) where the fact that there are two persons suffices to expect a different behaviour from each of them; and finally it can be the result of the difference between what is expected and what is obtained, as in (25). In all these cases, kò blocks alterity so that there can be no doubt, and any difference whatsoever is erased.

3.5 Injunctive sentences

The speaker uses injunctive sentences to introduce an event or a process so that it is realized by someone else. According to Culioli (1995: 116) one states using assertion that a certain situation is (i.e., positive) or is not (i.e., negative) the case. But with an injunctive construction one says: 'may a certain situation be or not be'. In fact, injunctive constructions include orders, pleas, wishes as well as requests and suggestions. While with an order A says to B: 'whether you like it or not, do a certain thing', with a request, one is more polite, therefore one says 'I hope that you like it'. A suggestion can be phrased as follows: 'do you like what I like'; a plea: 'I, myself, like [it], I hope you like [it]; and finally wishes are not necessarily addressed to a person, as are pleas. Wishes can be addressed to fate, to a divinity, or to all and sundry.

More precisely, with an injunctive construction, the speaker presents the p value of the domain represented by P as the right one and then refers it to another speaker for the latter to assert and therefore validate it. But as long as the second speaker does not validate p, the alternative value remains a possibility.

We can summarize the process involved in injunctive sentences as follows: From the point of view of S₀, p is the right value, but from the point of view of S₁, p and p' are both possible values; so until the subject represented as S₁ validates one value or the other (for example, p where he chooses to effectively realize the process or p' if he chooses not to realize the process) the two values remain equiponderant, meaning that none of them is privileged by S₀, or again, both possibilities co-exist. Injunctive constructions involve intersubjective relationships and divergent views between S₁ and S₀.

Consider (27) to (35).

[A family is at table. They invite Wori to join them like this:]

- (27) A: wó^{*}rí byă érí nhê
 wó^{*}rí byă érí nhê
 Wori V.B.come.INJ V.B.eat thing
 Wori, come and eat.

The word nhê functions as object-type for the verb base érí.

Wori can naturally answer:

- B₁: ánó rí
 ánó rí
 2PL V.B.eat.INJ
 Eat (i.e., You go on)!

Note that kó is absent in her answer. This is because there is no attempt so far to call her position (I'm not eating) into question. But assuming speaker A insists saying, 'don't you want to join us?', then, Wori will say:

- B₂: ánó ríkó
 ánó rí-kó
 2PL V.B.eat-SP.INJ
 Eat (You go on).

In this second situation, an answer without kó is unnatural. This sentence (B₂) can be phrased as follows: your question suggests that my answer wasn't decisive, in other words, that I might eventually change my mind and join you. I am saying that you should eat without bothering yourself about me. Here again, kó enables the speaker to introduce her answer as a decisive one. And therefore, no room is left for doubts. Let us consider (28) and (29).

- (28) h^wòyâ
 h^wò-yâ
 V.B.emerge-CTP.INJ
 Come with me.
- (29) h^wòyâkó
 h^wò-yâ-kó
 V.B.emerge-CTP.INJ-SP
 Just come with me.

It is very important to note that we cannot commute (28) and (29) in the same context. Example (28) is typical of a situation where the speaker takes a friend out for a walk. As for (29), it is typically produced if the friend suggests by his words or attitude that the speaker (i.e. the person taking him out) does not know the way. In that case, (29) is used in order to reassure the friend. As usual, the question here is: how is Osi able to reassure his friend? Recall that Osi's friend expresses doubt as to whether Osi knows the way or not. The friend's doubt is taken to mean that he will eventually interrupt his walk. And that is how he is led to pave the way for alterity in the notional domain <he-walk>. Let us recapitulate. Osi's friend's behaviour suggests that he might not go to the end of his walk. He thus introduces, though tentatively, alterity into the domain represented by <he-walk>. With kó, Osi asks his friend not to stop walking. Consequently, alterity is thrown out.

- (30) byă, zě kànó ósì nó má kà ó byă
 byă, zě kànó ósì nó má kà ó byă
 come V.B.go.INJ V.B.tell-CONN Osi CONN 1SG V.B.say s/he V.B.come.INJ
 Come, go and tell Osi that I said that he should come.

- (31) zě kànú ósì nù má kà ɔ byǎ kìnà kìnà
 zě kà-nù ósì nù má kà ɔ byà kìnà kìnà
 V.B.go.INJ V.B.tell-CONN Osi CONN 1SG V.B.say he V.B.-come.INJ now now
 (Come), go and tell Osi that I said that he should come right away.
- (32) byǎ, zě kànú ósì nù má kà ɔ byàkó kìnà kìnà
 zě kà-nù ósì nù má kà ɔ byà-kó kìnà kìnà
 V.B.go.INJ V.B.tell-CONN Osi CONN 1SG V.B.say he V.B.come-INJ now now
 (Come), go and tell Osi that I said that he should come right away.

In (30) to (32), we notice that (30) is an instruction to tell Osi to come (to call Osi). The speaker does not give any further information; no time limit, no limit regards his means of coming. And therefore, it is up to Osi to decide when to come and through what means.

If we add the reduplicative sequence kìnà kìnà ‘now now’ to mean ‘immediately’ as in (31) we understand that the need for Osi to come is urgent. The first mention of the word consists of introducing a representation of kina without supplementary operations. In that case, the word kìnà can be understood in its broadest sense. The second use of kìnà introduces a representative occurrence (or a representation par excellence) of the notional domain introduced by this word.

As we have previously seen (cf. example 12), a side-by-side positioning of the same word (the base and the reduplicant) signifies, in my analysis, that the occurrence without further specification is set as identifiable relative to the representative occurrence of the notional domain. The effect of the process is that the domain in question is deemed homogeneous, hence the reading ‘report immediately i.e., a moment that is represented as not different from the moment of speech’ as opposed to ‘any other moment’.

In (31), nothing is said of the very act of coming. Osi may hesitate between ‘to come’ and ‘not to come’; he could also ask to know why he is asked to come, he could delay his coming, and so on. In (32), the verb contains -kó. This brings about a focus on when Osi should come i.e., immediately, not immediately, later. The element kó signifies that when the speaker says ‘come’, he means that this process has to be realized without hesitation or delay or any other act that could give the impression that the relation <Osi-come> is shaky, called into question or subjected to some kind of destabilization. In so doing, the element kó prevents alterity from being introduced into the domain <Osi-come>.

[Osi informs his mother that he wants to discuss something with his father but the mother suggests one of the following three things in (33) to (35):]

- (33) sètě, ɔ rík^wó *wírí
 sètě ɔ rí-k^wó *wírí
 wait.INJ 3SG V.B.eat-finish.INJ food
 Wait, let him finish eating.
- (34) sètě, ɔ rík^wómémé *wírí
 sètě ɔ rí-k^wó-rímé *wírí
 wait.INJ 3SG V.B.eat-finish-first.INJ food
 Wait, let him first finish eating.
- (35) sètě, ɔ rík^wókó *wírí
 sètě ɔ rí-k^wó-kó *wírí
 wait.INJ 3SG V.B.eat-finish-SP.INJ food
 Wait, let him finish eating.

The thing with the three examples is that the process ‘to eat’ is constructed as an unfragmented whole. If Osi is left to speak with his father, he will eventually interrupt the process ‘to eat’. Each sentence is meant to dissuade him from doing so. The verb suffix -k^wo implies that the process ‘to eat’ will have to be realized in such a way that no part of it will be left over. He can then deduce that talking with his father can be envisaged only after ‘to eat’ will have been totally realized. The use of

mme in (34) enables the speaker to overtly introduce the order in which the two processes will be realized: first, the process ‘to eat’ realized in toto; thereafter comes the process ‘to talk with his father’.

The major difference in (35) is that ‘to eat’ will not only be realized in toto but also in such a way that there won’t be any doubt as to whether it has been realized or not. To say that there won’t be any doubt is to say that there is no room for alterity. Like in (33), the order in which the two processes are realized is implicit in (35).

Let us recapitulate. The injunctive construction introduces *p* and *p*′. With *kə*, the speaker privileges one value over the other. But that is all he can do because as long as the addressee has not chosen one value, the two remain possible.

4. Conclusion

The major aim of this paper has been to outline the invariant property of the sentence (final) particle *kə*. We find that it does occur in several kinds of sentences and sometimes in different positions of a sentence. The second aim has consisted in checking how this invariant property adapts to different contexts.

It turns out that the use of this morpheme requires that alterity be introduced, whether tentatively or effectively, into a notional domain representing an event, a state of affairs or a predicative relation. If such condition is satisfied then *kə* is introduced to reject the alterity thus introduced, as if for the speaker using it, the domain must remain intact.

More specifically, with the question, the speaker refers the domain, represented as *p* or *p*′, to someone else and asks the person to choose a value. The question itself does not constitute a relevant source of alterity. Rather, alterity is constantly introduced through an attempt aimed at dividing the domain. The marker *kə* rejects such alterity. In (4), for instance, the act of not asking for information concerning the children’s mother is reinterpreted separating their mother from them. Hence the speaker asks about her. In so doing, he signifies that their mother is part and parcel of the class of people the speaker cares about.

In the negative construction, only the Exterior zone of a notional domain is introduced. However, the speaker senses that the value thus introduced is liable to denote a state of affairs that is not stabilised. Thus, in (11), it is reported that the subject of the process has refused apologies. The speaker suspects that the refusal could be regarded as a weak refusal. That is why he uses *kə*. This morpheme enables him to reject such a reading.

As for the interro-negative construction, the speaker introduces *p*′ only and calls on someone else to confirm it. The interesting thing here is that the starting point is *p*. So, we have the expected value on one side and then the speaker introduces *p*′ as a possibility. With the morpheme *kə*, he reverses the process because he assigns more weight to *p*′. In (18) for instance, the speaker asks his interlocutor to consider the relation <we-do not go> as the most likely one.

Alterity is mostly introduced through doubts in the affirmative construction. It can also be introduced through other means. In such cases, *kə* implies that there can be no doubt relative to a given value. This is the case in (21) and (23). And in the case of injunctive constructions, *p* and *p*′ are introduced. The speaker then uses *kə* to indicate that he privileges one value over the other. The whole process can be characterised as follows:

In a given situation or context, a notional domain associated with a predicative relationship or a state of affairs which in turn is a priori introduced without any reference to alterity, is reinterpreted as liable to contain alterity such that *p* is differentiated from *p*′. *Kə* marks that it is not possible to differentiate *p* from *p*′ and thus rejects alterity.

Abbreviations

1SG: 1st person singular; 1SGO: 1st person singular object; 2SG: 2nd person singular; 2PL: 2nd person plural; 3SG: 3rd person singular; 3SGO: 3rd person singular object; 3PL: 3rd person plural; 3PLO: 3rd person plural object; B.V.: verb base; AGR: agreement marker; AFF PFT: affirmative perfect; CTP: centripetal; CONN: connector; CONTR: contrastive; DAT: dative; DEICT: deictic; DIST: distal; EFF: effective, EMPH: emphatic; FUT: future; GEN: genitive; IDT: identification; INJ: injunctive; LOC.: localization; LOG: logophoric marker; NEG: negation; NON AFF: non affirmative form; PROG: progressive; REDUP: reduplicant; SP: sentence particle; STAB: stabiliser; STAT: stative marker.

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