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Characterizing Complementisers in English and Ibibio: A Preliminary Investigation

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ABSTRACT
Clausal complements, (traditionally complement subordinate clauses), are regularly introduced by a certain category of words referred to as complementisers. In this study, attempt is made at characterizing them in English and Ibibio. This is with a view to determining the morphological, syntactic and semantic features which they encode. Some of the English data analyzed in this study were obtain from BBC online application, and, some along with the Ibibio ones came from written responses (based on a free composition task designed to elicit grammaticality judgment intuition) of 450 educated Nigerian speakers of English selected through a stratified random sampling method. Drawing on the Distinctive Feature Theory assumption of phonology that linguistic elements are built up out of primitive features, a feature system was used in charactering complementisers identified in the two languages based on three criteria: morphological, syntactic and semantic, following Radford (1988). An analysis of the data showed that four complementisers have been identified in English: *that*, *if*, *for* and *whether*. In Ibibio, three are attested: *ké*, *mmé* and *yàk*. Findings further indicate that complementisers in English and Ibibio might be characterized as bearing the features [± FINITE], [± WH] and [± DECL] on morphological, syntactic and semantic criteria. Moreover, a characterization of complementisers in the two languages studied point up in some light linguistically significant generalizations about the items investigated as well as cross-linguistic generalizations often made within UG and X-bar syntax in general.

Key Words: Complementiser(s), clausal complement(s) characterization, [± FINITE], [± WH] [± DECL], feature specification/structure, C-bar.

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I. Introduction

The term 'complementiser' may be used in one sense to refer to a particular category of word which introduces complement subordinate clauses (i.e. clauses which function to complement relevant Verb, Noun, Adjective and Prepositional heads. In English for example, such words as *that, for, if* and *whether* are classified under this category (Radford, 1988, p.298, 1997, p.256; Borsely 1991, Haegeman, 1994. etc.). In another sense of the use of the term, it denotes the clause (or sentence) position occupied by complementisers (the complementiser position), which is sometimes also occupied by inverted auxiliary constituents in some sentences (like Yes - No questions, e.g. "Will they come home"). The focus of attention in this paper is on complementisers as clause introducers, which typically introduce complement embedded clauses.

Two issues relate to the function of complementisers as clause - introducing elements: first, their tendency to merge with the embedded sentences which they introduce to form larger structures; and, second, their function as head constituents of the higher projections which result from the merger operations involving complementisers and subordinate sentences. Following the hypothesis put forward by Chomsky (cited in Radford, 1997a, pp. 76-77) that phrases, clauses and sentences are derived by a binary merging operation which combines pairs of categories to form larger structures, complementisers might be said to merge with the complement sentences (Ss) which they introduce to form larger structural constituents. Thus, complemnent clauses introduced by complementisers and with which they merge are referred to in the Government-Binding format as complement phrase (CP) (Stowell, 1981; Chomsky, 1986), or in earlier work in syntax as S-bar (or S) constituents (Bresnan, 1979). The sets of rules in (1) and (2) are the phrase structure (PS) rules of complement subordinate clauses under the two formats indicated here (1) (a) and (b) are PS rules under the S-bar analysis and (2 a-c) show the immediate constituents of CP:

(1) (a) S' C + S
(b) S NP I VP

The rule in (1) (a) states that a complement subordinate clause has as its immediate constituents a complementiser element (abbreviated as COMP (or in later work in Syntax) as simply C) occurring in pre-subject position and an S constituent. An analysis of the embedded S-constituent shows it to contain a noun phrase (NP) constituent occurring in subject position, and Inflection (or I -constituent and a verb phrase (VP). (1) (a) and (b) can be captured in an X-Tree structure such as the one in Fig 1.

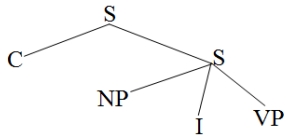

Fig 1: Tree structure representation of S-bar.

Under the second analysis, the constituent structure of the complement phrase (CP) may be described as comprising the immediate constituents C and IP. The relevant constituent structure rules under this are shown in (2):

(2) (a) CP C ⟶ IP
(b) IP D ⟶ I
(C) I ⟶ I VP

(2) can be represented on a tree structure as in Fig 2.

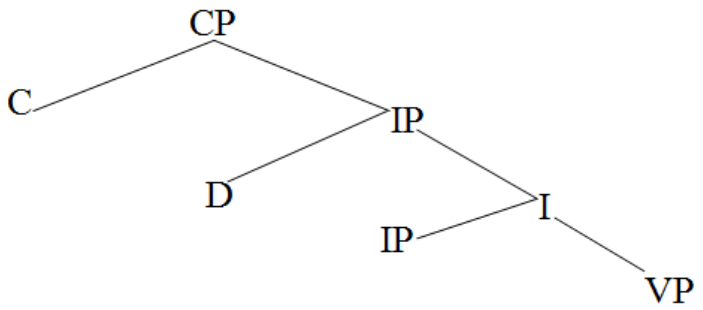

Fig.2: Tree Structure Representation of a Complement Phase (CP).

From both the PS rules in (1) and (2) and the tree structure representations in Figs 1 and 2, it would be observed that complementisers are sister constituents to Ss (i.e. the sentences which they introduce and with which they merge to form larger clausal projections. Moreover, on the basis of universal linearisation principles of phrasal and clausal constituents complementisers occur as the left -most constituents of S-bar. Thus, they typically precede the complement sentences which they introduce (cf Soames and Permulter, 1979; Radford, 1988, p.298).

A second major issue about complementisers relates to their function as heads of CP (or S-bar constituents). This results from the fact (mentioned earlier) that complementisers merge with complement sentences and from the universal language property that all phrases in natural languages have a particular word which is semantically the most important word in the phrase described as the head category (Napoli, 1990, pp.366-8; Radford, 1997, p.168). On account of this, since head constituents in XPs determine the properties of the entire phrase which they head, complementisers determine the syntactic and semantic behaviour of the clauses of which they are head. Furthermore, within the GB format, it is assumed that grammatical categories like Tense and Complementiser head full X- bar structures. (Van Valin, 2001).

Complementisers encode the following set of grammatical properties:

i) they indicate whether the complement clause they introduce is finite (i.e contains a present/past tense verb or auxiliary or infinitival (i.e. contains infinitival 'to');

ii) they mark the fact that the clause they introduce is the complement of some other word/expression in a given sentence context; and

iii) they mark the illocutionary force (i.e semantic/pragmatic function) of the clause they introduce. (Radford 1997, p.49).

Complementisers in English

There are four complementisers in English: *that, whether for* and *if* (Radford, 1988, 1997; Aarts 2001, p.288, Van Valin 2000, p.6; Poole 2002, p.63). Each may be characterised differently depending on the syntactic and morphological tendencies that it exhibits. In the following sub-sections, English complementisers are examined and illustrative complement sentences provided to support their characterisation.

The Complementiser *that*:

That is sometimes described as a demonstrative pronoun and as a complementiser in English. In its role as a complementiser (its analysis in this study), *that* is described as semantically "inert" (Bresnan, 1970) on account of being a functor. On the syntactic criterion the complementiser *that* is classified as a noninterrogative complementiser since it usually introduces noninterrogative clausal complements. Morphologically, *that* is described as "inherently finite" (Radford 1997, p.49). Available linguistic evidence in English shows *that* to regularly introduce complement subordinate clauses in which the embedded verbs have relevant inflectional forms like +s, +d and +n and might thus be specified as [+ FINITE].

Further morphological evidence for specifying *that* as "inherently finite" as shown in Radford (1997, p.49) is based on two facts: One, finite verbs in complement clauses introduced by the complementiser *that* have subjects in the nominative case, for example, pronominal forms like *I/ We/ He/ She/ They* not objective pronominal forms like *Him/ Her/ Them/ Us*. Two, embedded verbs in complement clauses introduced by *that* bear tense/agreement properties (Radford, 1988, 1997; Aarts 2001, Poole, 2002) Such verbs are therefore the morphosyntactic loci in their containing subordinate clauses since they bear the tense marking which specifies the clause as finite (cf. Haspelmath and Sims, 2010, p.143). The sentence data in (3) below contain bracketed *that* – clauses:

3) (a) I am confident [that the result will be positive]
(b) The chairman is anxious [that the board should meet]
(c) The President suggested [that the increase should be gradual]
(d) He preferred [that the Minister of Finance was not there]
(e) They thought [that government should build libraries in all the schools]

Semantically, since *that* introduces statement – making clauses, it is said to express declarative illocutionary force and specified as [+ DECLARATIVE].

The Complementiser *Whether*:

A syntactic characterisation indicates that the English complementiser *whether* is marked featurally as [+ WH], specifying that it is used to introduce interrogative complement clauses. On the morphological criterion, *whether* bears the features [± FINITE] signifying that it is capable of introducing a clausal complement containing a present/past tense auxiliary or nonfinite verb forms like +ing or the infinitival 'to' in appropriate contexts (Radford 1997, p.49).

Semantically, *whether* might be characterised as a DUBITATIVE or INTERROGATIVE complementiser since as Bresnan (1970, p.82) notes complement clauses introduced by *whether* generally occur after interrogative or dubitative predicates. The bracketed constituents in (2a – c) are *whether*-clauses in English:

(4) (a) He asked [whether government had endorsed the proposal].
(b) The secretary wondered [whether workers' salaries would be paid].
(c) They wondered [whether to write to the NLC President].

4(c) contains a nonfinite complement clause introduced by *whether*: it contains the infinitival 'to': the first occurring 'to' is the infinitive marker, the second, a prepositional 'to'.

The Complementiser *if*:

The complementiser *if* is one of those identified in English. Available complementation data show it to be used to introduce interrogative complement clauses; therefore, on the syntactic criterion, *if* might be characterized as [± WH]. Morphologically, *if* is regularly used to introduce clausal complements in which the embedded verb/auxiliary can take the +s or +d inflection; therefore it is marked with the feature [+ FINITE]. The bracketed constituents in (5) are complement subordinate clauses introduced by *if*:

(5) (a) He wondered [if the government was concerned about the welfare of the masses].
(b) They doubted [if the government would listen to their plight].
(c) They asked [if the petroleum subsidy would be removed].

As is apparent form the sentence data in (5) above, the English complementiser *if* introduces complement subordinate clauses containing verbs/auxiliaries which show tense contrasts: +s, +d and, possibly, viz: (6):

(6) He was thinking [if Nigerian workers were to support the strike]

On the criterion of the illocutionary force which *if* – clauses may be used to express, they can be specified with the feature [+ INTERROGATIVE].

The Complimentiser *for*:

For is one of the four complementisers attested in English (Radford 1997, Aarts, 2001, Poole, 2002, and others). Radford (1997) noted that *for* "is an inherently infinitival complementiser, and so can be used to introduce a clause containing infinitival to, but not a finite clause containing a tensed (i.e. present/past-tense) auxiliary like should..."(p.49). The sentence data in (7) exemplify *for* as a nonfinite/infinitival complementiser:

(7) (a) Workers were dying [for union officials to tell them something positive].
(b) Parents desired [for their children to finish school in time].
(c) They preferred [for government negotiations to some with some evidence].

In each of (7a-c), the complement subordinate clause, because it is introduced by the complementiser *for* contains nonfinite/infinitival forms of verbs, thus: "to tell"(7a), "to finish"(7b) and "to come"(7c). On the strength of the morphological evidence apparent in the data (7a-c) above (and many more in English), *for* can be specified by the feature [-FINITE] indicating that it can only introduce nonfinite/infinitival not tensed complement clauses (cf Van Valin 2001, Poole 2002).

On the syntactic criterion, the complementiser *for* can be specified by [-WH], indicating that it introduces non-interrogative clausal complements in English (Radford, 1997, p.49, Adger 2003, p.290). Regarding the illocutionary force (i.e. semantic/pragmatic function) which a complementiser may mark, *for* regularly introduces statement-making clauses (ibid). The pattern of occurrence of complementisers within English S-bar structures is summarized in Table 1:

Table 1: Complementisers in English: Pattern of Occurrence within S-bar Structures

Complementiser that	**Contain S-bar Finite clauses**	**Illustrative samples that the result will be positive**
whether	Finite clauses	Whether to agree government had endorsed the proposal whether to write to the NLC President.
if	Finite clauses	I don't know if I should agree
for	Non-finite / infinitival clauses	for you to arrive on time

The Complementiser as Head of CP (= S- bar)

Head categories (= N, V, A and P) generally possess two kinds of head features (Radford, 1997a/b), which determine their choice of complements. These are complement features and head features. The head features of a word describe the "intrinsic grammatical features" of the word (head) in question (Radford, 1997). For example, this set of features indicates whether the head, if it were a verb is [Pres; Past], [Finite, Non finite], [Sing; Plural] or if it were an adjective is specified with the features [-er; -est], and so on. With regard to complementisers, the relevant head features which they carry are specified in relation to (non) finiteness and the illocutionary force which they encode (Radford, 1997a, p.511). With regard to (non) finiteness, complementisers are described as "inherently finite (Radford, 1997). This inherent finite nature of complementisers is accounted for by using the empty I analysis' formulated in terms of the existence of "a complex interdependency between C and IP such that a clause introduced by a finite C will contain a [+ FINITE] I - constituent; conversely, a clause introduced (i.e. which is headed by a nonfinite C will contain a nonfinite [- FINITE] I - constituent (Radford 1988; p. 307). These facts can lead to a generalization statable as (8):

(8) Any clause which contains C (= complementiser) contains a compatible 1

(Radford, 1988, p.308) and may thus lead to specifying complementisers as [± FINITE]. In English for example, an infinitive complement clause headed by an overt complementiser like 'for' must include an I constituent containing the infinitive marker 'to'.

In addition to the intrinsic grammatical features which complementisers carry, they also encode semantic properties expressed in relation to the speech acts which the clauses they head may be used to perform. In this regard, complement clauses (=CPs) have been shown to be capable of being used to 'perform different kinds of speech acts: Declarative, Interrogative, Imperative and Exclamative (cf. Grice, 1975). Thus a complementiser which heads a complement clause which makes a statement of fact is characterised as [+ DECLA(ARATIVE] and one which introduces a clause used to ask a question as [+ INTER(ROGATIVE)], and so on.

Generally, complementisers may be distinguished from Wh-NPs by the fact that whereas the latter carry some properties which mark them for gender or animacy, complementisers do not typically bear such properties. Consider for example the English Wh-NPs **who** and **which.** According to this criterion, **who** and **which** can be

analysed as pronouns since ***who*** implies a human antecendent, and **which** a non-human antecedent; but by contrast, *that* in English is analyzed as a typical complementiser for the reason *that* it is semantically "neutral" or "inert" (cf Bresnan 1970), 1989; Radford 1988:483). Generally, therefore, complementisers may be said to bear grammatical rather than lexical meaning (Radford 1988:483).

A further general property of complementisers relates to the tendency for them to occur in restricted syntactic environments. Unlike pronouns (or wh-NPs) which tend to occur freely in either finite or infinitival clauses, complementisers typically tend to be restricted to occurring only in a given clause-type. In English, for instance, the complementiser for can only introduce infinitival clauses.

Complementisers in Ibibio

Every human language serves one basic function which is to provide the proximity for speakers to interact and convey a variety of meaning expressable in terms of a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic forms of particular languages. One essential part of communicating meaning in language is an appropriate deployment of the complement categories which operate in such languages, given that the meaning of communication messages as well as language users' attitudes may need to be modified one way or the other.

The characterization of a linguistic item in natural language systems is usually done on the basis of certain idiosyncratic features which the item in question possesses or certain linguistic behaviour which the said item exhibits. For example, verbs are classified as transitive or intransitive on the basis of whether they require and take following NP objects or not (Brown and Miller, 1990).

Owing to their semantic behaviour (i.e a tendency for them to overlap with verbs, semanticaily), adjectives in Ibibio have been classified as [+ VB] (Essien, 1990). In the sections following we analyse only those clausal structures which are generally considered to be complement subordinate clauses in Ibibio. Three complementisers have been identified in Ibibio by Isok (2000) and Ekah (2003). They include *ké*, which is capable of introducing both finite and nonfinite clauses and may thus be specified with the feature structure [± FINITE]; *mmê*, which is specified as [+ FINITE] because it regularly introduces finite complement clauses and *yák* which is a complementiser compatible with an I- constituent containing the Ibibio nonfinite marker, the *edi-* morpheme (Essien, 1990).

The Complementiser *Ké*

In the immediately preceding section, we have noted that the complementiser *ké*: 'that'' in Ibibio straddles both the classes of finite and infinitival complementisers. In the two sub-sections following we examine *ké* in these dual functions and illustrate with the different syntactic contexts in which it occurs as head of finite and nonfinite complement clauses. The illocutionary force which the illustrative clauses express is also indicated.

Finite *ke* in Ibibio

The complementiser *ké* has been identified in Ibibio. It may be glossed as 'that' in English, and just like the English complementiser that, *ké* carries the head feature [+ FINITE] and is subcategorized for a finite IP complement (Van Valin, 2001 p.194); that is because *ké* is a finite complementiser it selects an S complement which contains a finite I- constituent. The following clauses illustrate *ké* as a finite complementiser. The bracketed constituents are the CPs (=: S-bar constituents):

(9) (a) Ńné á-bò [ké Ètté á-yêm Ḿfọń.
Mother says [that father wants (to see) Mfon]

An analysis of the bracketed CP constituent in (9a) shows that it contains an overt complementiser *ké* 'that' occurring in presubject position and an (= IP) constituent' Èttế á-yêm Ḿfọń: "father wants Mfon" The C and the S (its IP complement) are sisters since they both are housed within the same mother node, CP. This is consistent with the operations of complementation within a GB format: the complement of a head category is its sister. A further analysis of the S constituent shows that it contains a finite I-constituent which is compatible with the finite feature of the complementiser which heads the C ie. introduces the complement subordinate clause. It would be observed from the clause data in (9a) that the verb yém: 'want(s)' indicates +s inflection which attaches to it. Yém may take the +d inflection in appropriate contexts as (9b) shows:

(9) (b) Ńné ábò ké Èttế á-màá-iyém Ḿfộn
Mother says that father wanted (to see) Mfon'
Also, Future time can be indicated on the verb yem: 'want' as in (9c):

(9) (c) Ńné ábô ké Èttế á-yă-iyém Ḿfoộn'
Mother says that father will want (to see) Mfon'
This situation obtains in respect of each of the verbs in the Ss in (9a-g):

(9) (d) Ětím ákérè ké édìm â-dèp

'Etim thinks that it is raining'
(9) (e) Àmì ń-kérè ké ékpémé ádàn ábómò
'I think that the bottle of oil is broken'
(9) (f) Údúák á-ịkíd ké údùà âsúánà
Uduak realizes that (the) market over.
(9) (g) Ḿfộn ábô ké íbộk áḷsộń údùà
Mfon says that (the) medicine/ drug is expensive'

As is apparent in (9), all the subordinate clauses in (a-g) are statement- making clauses. Since they are introduced by the complementiser ké, it may therefore be said that ké has the head feature [±DECLARATIVE], indicating that the clauses have declarative illocutionary force. Moreover, all the complement subordinate clauses in (9a-g) are finite declarative (or noninterrogative) ones.

Nonfinite ké in Ibibio

The complementiser ké may sometimes occur as the head of nonfinite/infinitival complement clauses in Ibibio (Udoudom, 2006). Nonfinite/infinitival clauses are clauses whose verbs/ auxiliaries do not indicate Tense, Number and Person contrasts. This situation is regularly signaled by the presence of an infinitive marker, which precedes the verb of the subordinate sentence. In English for example, the infinitive marker is 'to'; in Ibibio it is what Essien (1990, pp.121-2) describes as the 'Abstract Morpheme III: the *edi*-morpheme.

Essien notes in part that "the use of the *edi*-morpheme corresponds to the English infinitive construction and the for-to-nominalization" (p.122). When the *edi*-morpheme introduces (= heads) a complement sentence, it marks such a sentence for nonfiniteness. This clause type is illustrated with examples from both English and Ibibio. (10a-c) are the English infinitival clauses while (11a-c) are clause data illustrating nonfinite complement sentences in Ibibio. The bracketed constituents in both sets of data are infinitival clauses:

English
(10) (a) The parents expressed the desire [*for* their children to finish school]
(b) They are anxious [*for* you to make up your mind]
(c) The board is waiting [*for* members to take a decision on the matter].

Ibibio
(11) (a) Ètté é-kérè [ké Ḿfộn á-kã èdí-díộn énàń-úkwàk ìmộ]
Father thinks (that) Mfon has gone to repair his bicycle
(b) Étḿ ábộ [ké Ńné á-yêm èdí-k â ùdùà]
Etim says (that) mother wants to go to the market
(c) Ímá â-ndộkộ [ké Ùdèmé á-díì èdí-nyâm ḿbòró]
Ima (personal name) tells me [that Udeme (personal name) has come to sell bananas].

A constituent analysis of the Ibibio data in(11) shows that the C-bar structure which houses the *èdí*-morpheme appears to contain two verbal elements both of which occur closely together; however, the *èdí*-morpheme attaches to the second rightmost verbal element and renders it incapable of showing Tense and other contrasts. But the leftmost verbal element is not so affected.

A consideration of the bracketed C-bar constituents in the English and Ibibio complex sentences in (10) and (11) shows that infinitival clauses are introduced by overt complementisers - *for* in the English data and *ké* in the Ibibio examples. Of particular significance to our discussion here is the fact that owing to the presence of *for* in the English clause samples and *ké* in the Ibibio ones, the verbs/auxiliaries of the complement subordinate clauses have been rendered 'Tenseless' and 'Agreementless' (cf. Van Valin, 2001, p.194). Following from the analysis of the bracketed C-bar structures in (11a-c) as infinitival complement clauses introduced by *ké*, it can be assigned the value [- FINITE] and on the criterion of the illocutionary force which *ké* may be used to express, it can be specified with the feature [- INTERROGATIVE].

The Complementiser Mmé:

Mmé is another complementiser identified in Ibibio. It is similar to **ké:** 'that' in certain respects. For example, like *ké, mmé* introduces finite complement sentences. However, the complementiser *mmé*: 'whether' differs from *ké* in that the former complementiser is observed to regularly introduce interrogative clauses. (12 a-d) are Ibibio clause data which exemplify ***mmé*** as a finite interrogative complementiser:

(12) (a) Ímá !bộộn á-bîp Ḿfộn [ḿmé ányé â-nkíd míìn]
Imabong enquired (from) Mfon [whether she had seen me]
(b) Ámì ń-kérè [ḿmé ḿ-kpé nà ké ḿbít]
I am wondering [whether I should lay on a mat (not perhaps on a bed or a settee).
(c) Ówódèèn á- bîp [ḿmé íbộk áḷásọñ ùdùà]
(A) man enquires [whether (the) medicine/drug is expensive]

A major feature of the verbs in (12) is the notion of Tense contrast implicit in their forms: (13) kḷd: 'see' takes the +d inflection indicated by the past tense morpheme - má- and may, in appropriate sentence contexts, take the future time indicator - yá. The verb ná: lay (down)/sleep' is capable of taking a *+s +d* inflection or a future time marker; and sộñ "difficult' can inflect for past and future tenses. (13 d-f) demonstrate the time (Tense) contrasts capable of being indicated on the verbs in question:

(12) (d) Ímá bóng á-bịp Ḿfộn [ḿḿe ányé á-yă-n ḷkíd míín] Imabong enquired (from) Mfon [whether she would meet me (in church, school, at a party, etc.)]

(e) Àmì ń-kérè [ḿḿe ń-yă-.nă ké ḿbít]

I am wondering [whether I will sleep on a mat]

(f) Ówódèèn á- bîp ḿḿe íbộk á- màá -ḷsộn ùdùà]

(A) man enquires [whether (the) medicine/drug was expensive].

Thus (12d-f) demonstrate that the Ibibio complementiser *ḿmé* heads (=introduces) finite complement sentences. With regard to the illocutionary force which complement subordinate clauses introduced by *ḿmé* are regularly used to express, it would be observed from (12) above that they can be employed to ask questions. Indeed, this fact is underscored by the presence of questioning words in some of the illustrative sentences, for example, (12 a/c) where the verb of the matrix sentence is bíp: 'ask/enquire' On the basis of these observations, we may characterize *meé* as a finite interrogative complementiser.

The Complementiser Yák

Yàk is one of the complementisers identified in Ibibio (Ekah 2004). Even though it is glossed as 'that' in English (similar to *ké*, discussed above), it differs from *ké* on the morphological, syntactic and semantic criteria. Let us consider the clause data in (13) (a):

(13) (a) Ìmé á-bô [yàk Úwém á dộ añwân]

Ime says [that Uwem should marry a wife

The verb of the complement subordinate clause is in focus here. It would be observed that the verb dọ: 'marry' may not yield itself to any formal change to indicate Tense, Aspect or Mood. Such verbs are generally characterised as nonfinite/infinitival. Like the nonfinite *ké* (see section 2.3) the verb dọ: "marry" may not permit tense markers to be affixed to it. The ungrammaticality of the following sentences in which the verb do: 'marry' takes on an affixal tense markers demonstrate this point:

*(14) (a) Ìmé á- bô [yàk Úwém á- màá- áḷdọ ánwân

* (b) Ìmé á-bô [yàk Úwém á-yă ḷdộ ánwân.

* (c) indicate that yàk: that introduces nonfinite (infinitival) clauses.

Thus, on the morphological criterion yák may be specified with the feature [-FINITE]. Regarding the syntactic characterization, since *yàk* occurs in non-interrogative clauses, it bears the feature [-INTERROGATIVE] and might be said to express imperative illocutionary force. The pattern of occurrence of complementisers within Ibibio S- bar structures is summarized in Table 2:

Table 2: Complementisers in Ibibio: Pattern of Occurrence within S-bar Structure

Complementiser	**Containing s- bar**	**Illustrative Samples**
Ké: "that'	Finite/Nonfinite clauses	Ké à-kịm áfọñ á-tíè ké ùdùà ámì 'that there is a seamstress/tailor in this market
Mmê: "whether	Finite Clauses	ḿmé ùdùà ódΛk Ḿmé íbộk á!sộn ùdùà whether (the) medicine is expensive
yák: "that"	Nonfinite	yàk Ètté é-dêp ḿbòró

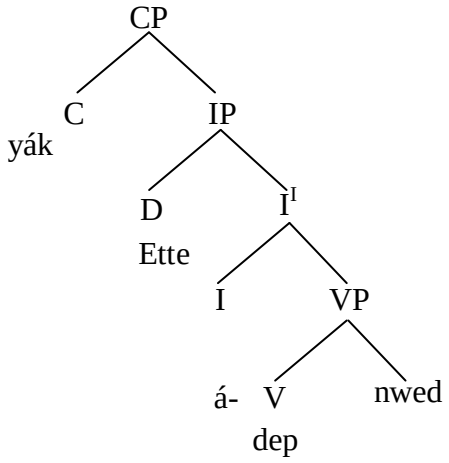

Fig.2: A Tree Representation of the CP "yák Ette a-dep ñwed

Characterization of Complementisers in English and Ibibio

Isok (2001), and Ekah (2003) have identified the following as complementisers in Ibibio *ké:* 'that' *ḿmé:* "whether" and *yák:* "that", Complementisers can be classified using three criteria- morphological, syntactic and semantic (Radford 1988; 1997). Morphologically, complementisers can be characterised on the basis of whether they introduce finite or infinitival clauses and may thus be specified with the features [± FINITE]. A syntactic classification specifies complementisers as occurring in interrogative or non-interrogative complement sentences and may carry the features [± WH). On the semantic criterion, complementisers are classified according to whether they express declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamative Elocutionary force.

Given the classifications outlined above, we might characterise the Ibibio complementiser" ké: "that" as a non-interrogative finite complementiser, which introduces statement- making clauses with declaractive illocutionary force. conversely, we can classify yàk: "that" as a non- interrogative, infinitival complementiser, which introduces non- interrogative clauses with imperative Elocutionary force. By contrast **ḿmé:** ":whether' is an interrogative finite complementiser, which is restricted to occurring in complement clauses with interrogative illocutionary force.

We can use the feature [± WH] to indicate that a given complementiser is interrogative or not, and the feature [± FINITE] to indicate whether a complementiser is finite or not (or both), following Jackendoff (1977). On the basis of these feature specifications therefore we could analyze each of the four complementisers in English as having the feature structures in (15) and Ibibio, the feature structures in (16):

English:

(15) that = [- WH, + FINITE]
for = [- WH, - FINITE]
whether = [+ WH, + FINITE]
if = [+ WH, + FINITE]

Ibibio:

(16) ke:"that" = [- WH, ± FINITE]
yak: "that" = [-WH, - FINITE]
mmé: "whether = [+ WH, + FINITE]

II. Conclusion

Overall, this paper offered a description of how clause-introducers (technically known as complementisers) in English and Ibibio may be characterised morphologically, syntactically and semantically. In this discussion we have provided clause data from the two languages to illustrate the specific restricted morphsyntactic environments in which the individual complementisers in the language occur, and arising from occurrence in these environments their appropriate feature structures [± FINITE], [± DECL, INTERROGATIVE] or [± WH].

This study provides some new insights into aspects of the complementation system of English and Ibibio, illustrating some linguistically significant generalisations that may be found to exist in different linguistic systems (Aarts, 2001, p.292). For instance, regarding the infinitival clause in English and Ibibio, it would be observed from the sentence data of Ibibio that unlike their comparable structures in English, Ibibio infinitival clauses contain two verbs, and the *édí*-morpheme (= the infinitive marker) attaches to the rightmost verbal

element of the complement sentence. Infinitival clauses in English contain only one verbal element and the 'to' infinitive marker attaches to it and precedes it. Moreover, the paper demonstrated that the X-structure of complement sentences (CPs) in Ibibio and the complement features of heads are similar to those existing in some other languages like English, with a basic [C S] structure.

This research also showed that complementisers may be considered as head categories (like Tense, Determiner, Inflection, etc) and as head categories they have the privilege of selecting complements. It has been demonstrated that the sentences with which they merge to form C-bars are their complements. We also considered complement clauses in English and Ibibio for the speech acts which they may be employed to perform. Following Grice (1975) it has been demonstrated that CPs in Ibibio like their counterparts in English can serve Declarative, Interrogative and Imperative functions.

By characterising complementisers in English and Ibibio, the paper contributes to our understanding of the nature of an aspect of the language system, in particular of the relationships posited within Universal Grammar (UG). At the same time, it contributes to our understanding of how the structural forms of language can be used to express intended meaning in communication.

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