The Negation Phrase in Búlu

Cyrille Christal ONDOUA ENGON

The Negation Phrase in Búlu

Cyrille Christal ONDOUA ENGON

The Negation Phrase in Búlu

F OLLOWING *the split CP analysis (Rizzi 1997), it is admitted that the highest position of the clause structure is the Force Phrase. This paper describes and analyses the structure of the negation phrase in Búlu and shows that the behaviour of some negation markers go against this proposal. Therefore, it is shown that the data attested in Búlu, enriches the cartography of the Force-Finiteness system by displaying a negation phrase above Force Phrase..*

INTRODUCTION

Búlu is a Cameroonian language mainly spoken in Djoum, Bengbis, Kribi, Sangmelima and Ebolowa. According to the United Bible Societies (1991), the language has about 800.000 speakers among which 200.000 are not native speakers. Although the language is circumscribed in the Búlu area, it is also used out of its locality.

NEGATION IN BÚLU

In Búlu, the negator (Neg) is a vocalic monophone morpheme with a high tone: /á -/, which is always placed between the verbal prefix and the formative. This morpheme is only attested in the indicative mood as can be observed in the following examples:

(1)   a. bə a-   á - bo nale
         they SM- Neg- do so
         "They don't do so"
          b. bə a-   á -   dí áváлətə
         they SM- Neg- eat so
         'They don't eat so"

When this negator is employed alone, it is followed by a reduplicated verbal root and is attested in the indicative present tense:

(2)   a. ə-wulu "to walk"
         b. bâwuluwulu "one doesn't walk"

(3)   a. ə tabə "to seat"
         b. bâtabətabə "one doesn't seat like that"

THE NEGATOR WITH OTHER MORPHEMES

In the indicative mood, the negation is rendered by the discontinuous signifier/ á….ki / which is made up of the negator / á -/ and the appendix / ki/:

(4)   a. mə a-   a-   á-   yi   ki ofumbí
         I SM- Pres- Neg- need Neg orange
         "I don't need an orange"
         b. Ela a-   a-   á -   dí   ki fón
         Ela SM- Pres- Neg- eat Neg corn
         " Ela doesn't eat corn"

As can be observed in the examples above, both elements / á…..ki / encode the negation in Búlu. Thus, according to the behaviour of this negator and following Chomsky (1989) and contrary to Pollock (1989), one can say that á is the specifier of the negation phrase and ki is the head.

When the verb is conjugated in the recent and remote past, the tense marker in between the discontinuous negation morpheme in Búlu has a morphological modification and becomes ndí, the negation marker of these tenses are shown in the following examples:

(5)   a. Ela   a- á- ndí- dí fío
         Ela SM-Neg- P2- eat pear
         "Ela has not eaten pear"
         b. Ela a-   á-   ndí- dí fío
         Ela SM- Neg- P3- eat pear
         "Ela had not eaten pear"

As one can remark, in the examples above, ndí can be used both in P2 and P3 to mark negation.

When it concerns a non indicative conjugation, the negative expression is obtained with the use of the auxiliary /bə/ or the invariable /tə/ to which is adjoined the present form of the indicative mood:

(6)   a. o   bə- kə
        Alloc Aux go
        (2Ps) Neg- go
        "Don't go"
        b. a   bə- dí
        Alloc Aux eat
        (3Ps) Neg- eat
        "He should not eat"

(7)   a. tə wo a-   a- kə sikólo
        Neg you SM- pres- go school
        "Don't go to school"

(8)   tə Ondoua a- bom ngál
        Neg Ondoua SM- beat wife
        "Ondoua should not beat his wife"

Finally, there is a special marker in Búlu that seems to occupy only the left periphery of the clause. This marker is sakə.

THE NEGATION MARKER SAKƏ

Let's consider the following examples:

(9)   sakə Oyono ənyə a-   a- kə- sikólo
        Neg Oyono Foc SM- Pres- go school
        "It is not Oyono who goes to school"

(10)   (10)a sakə Oyono a-   a- kə ndá
        Neg Oyono SM- Pres- go house
        "It is not Oyono who goes to the house"
        b. sakə zá(ənyə) a- ké- wé nyó
        Neg who Foc SM- P2-kill snake
        "It is not who who kill the snake"
        c. sakə mfóndé (yaá) Ango a-   ké- kus
        Neg shirt   that Ango SM- P2- buy
        "It is not the shirt that Ango bought"
        d. sakə nâ Ango (ənyə) a- a-   kus mfóndé
        Neg that Ango Foc SM- Pres-buy shirt
        "It is not that Ango buys a shirt"

The examples above show that the negation marker sakə in Búlu is part of the Force-Finiteness system. This state of affairs questions the structure of the negation in Búlu. In other words, following the same examples, the negation with sakə can be given the structure below:

(11)   NegP>AgreeP

Negation with sakə can be considered as a fragment negation in the sense of Chizuru Nakao (2008).

Now let's consider the following examples:

(12)   a. sakə ma ma- a- kə sikólo
         Neg   I   SM- Pres- go school
         "I am not the one who is going to school"
         b. *ma ma sakə a- kə sikólo
         I   SM Neg Pres- go school
         "I am not the one who is going to school"
         c. sakə Oyono ənyə   a- a- dí fón
         Neg Oyono Foc SM- Pres-eat corn
         "It is not Oyono who eats corn"
         d. *Oyono sakə ənyə a-   a- dí fón
         Oyono Neg Foc SM- Pres- eat corn
         "It is not Oyono who eats corn"

(13)   a. sakə zá (ənyə) a-   a- dí fón
         Neg who Foc SM- Pres- eat corn
         "It is not who who eats corn"
         b. *zá sakə (ənyə) a- a-   dí fón
         who Neg Foc SM- Pres- eat corn
         "It is not who who eats corn?"
         c. nâ sakə zá (ənyə)   a- a- dí fón
         that Neg who Foc SM- Pres-eat corn
         "That it is not who who eats corn?"

(14)   a. sakə mətwa (yaá) Ebaa a- a- dutu
         Neg   car   that Ebaa SM- Pres- drive
         "Not the car that Ebaa drives" (contrary to another car)
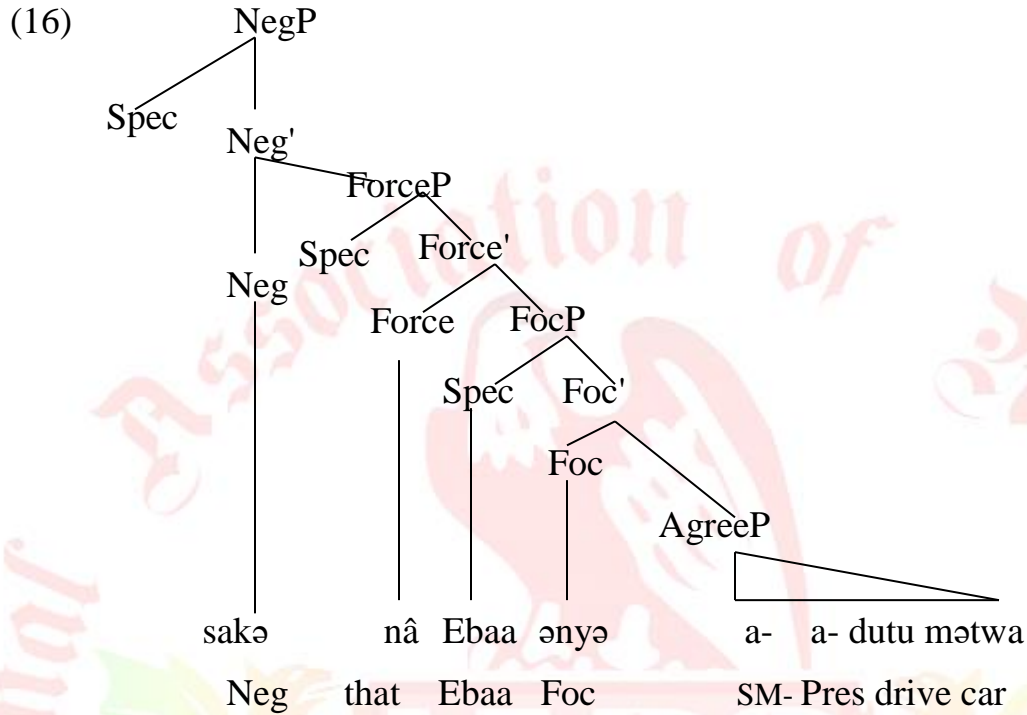   b. *mətwa sakə (yaá) Ebaa   a- a-   dutu

<div style="margin-left:2em">

car　　Neg　　that　Ebaa SM- Pres- drive

"It is not a car that Ebaa drives"

(15)　　　a. sakə　nâ Ebaa　(ənyə)　a-　　a- dutu mətwa

Neg　that Ebaa Foc SM- Pres- drive car

"It is not that Ebaa drives a car"

b. nâ sakə Ebaa (ənyə)　a-　　a- dutu　mətwa

that Neg Ebaa Foc SM- Pres- drive car

"That it is not　Ebaa who drives a car"

c. mətwa , sakə Ebaa (ənyə)　a-　　a-　　dutu

car　　　Foc Ebaa　Foc SM- Pres- drive

"The car, it is not Ebaa who drives"

d. * nâ Ebaa sakə　a-　　a-　dutu　mətwa

that Ebaa Neg SM- Pres- drive car

"It not that　Ebaa drives the car"

</div>

The ungrammaticality of the examples above confirm that the negation marker sakə "It is not" is only attested in the left periphery. It can also occur alone (12a) or in the different transformations which are focalisation (12c), questions'formation (13a), relativization (14a) and topicalisation (15c).

The presence of sakə "it is not" in the left periphery of the clause calls an adjustment of the fine structure of the left periphery proposed by Rizzi (1997). Indeed, according to Rizzi (1997) the highest position of the C system is the Force-Phrase (ForceP). But, the functioning of sakə "it is not", shows that this marker can occupy a position above ForceP. To be convinced, let's observe the following tree diagramme which illustrates the position of this element in the Búlu clause structure:

(16)   NegP

    Spec
            Neg'
                    ForceP

            Neg   Spec   Force'

                            Force   FocP

                                    Spec   Foc'

                                        Foc

                                            AgreeP

        sakə   nâ Ebaa ənyə   a- a- dutu mətwa

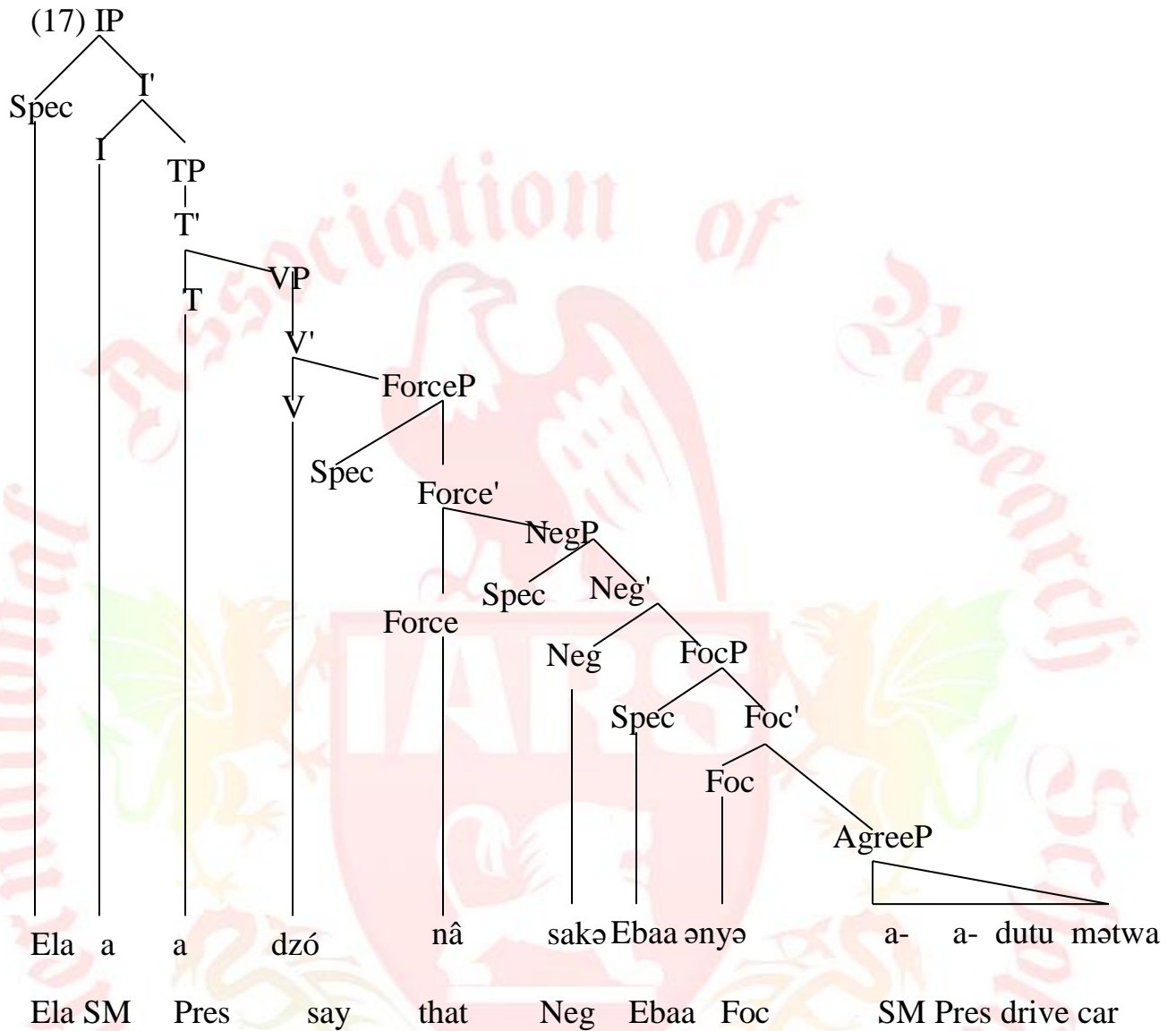   Neg   that Ebaa Foc   SM- Pres drive car

                "It not that Ebaa drives the car"

The tree diagramme above does not completely go against the structure proposed by Rizzi (1997) given that in the data attested in Búlu, the negation marker sakə " it is not" can occur in a position below ForceP (15b). This state of affairs gives the following alternative diagramme:

(17) IP

Spec I'

I TP

T'

T VP

V'

V ForceP

Spec Force'

Force NegP

Spec Neg'

Neg FocP

Spec Foc'

Foc AgreeP

Ela	a	a	dzó	nâ	sakə	Ebaa ənyə	a- a- dutu mətwa
Ela SM	Pres		say	that	Neg	Ebaa Foc	SM Pres drive car

"Ela says that it is not Ebaa who drives a car"

In order to understand the position of the negation marker sakə in the Force-Finiteness system, it is important to draw a parallel between negation and other constructions in the Force-Finiteness system. Given that the movement of complements in the left periphery at the specifier position of the head is a diagnostic (Aboh 2004: 238) for these peripheral markers which occur in the left periphery, one can understand that sakə be part of the Force-Finiteness system.

Apart from the negation marker sakə, there is also another negation marker which occupies this position of the sentence. It is the negator tə.

3 The negation marker tə

As sakə, the negation marker tə is also a constituent of the Force-Finiteness system, but this one is only attested in the matrix sentences and needs another element occurring also in the left periphery. To be convinced, let's examine the examples below:

(18)   a. tə wo a- a- kə ósoé
        Neg you SM Pres- go river
        "Don't go to the river"
        b. tə Ela a- a- kə ósoé
        Neg Ela SM Pres- go river
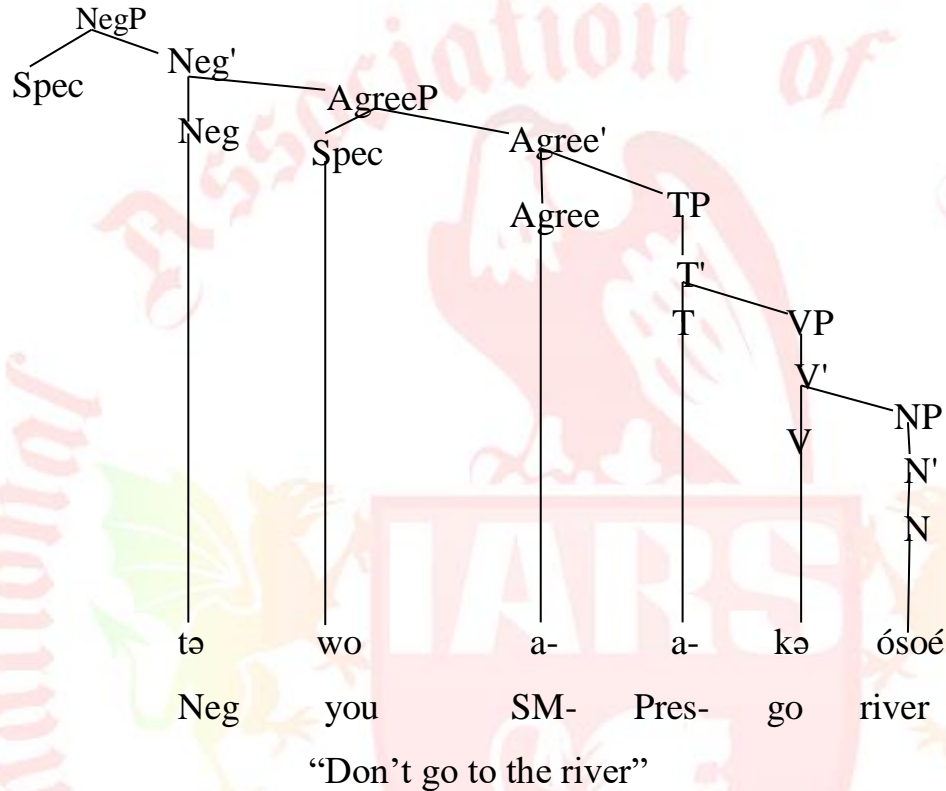   "Ela should not go to the river"

Remark that in the examples above, the sense of the sentence varies according to the use of the personal pronoun (18a) or a noun phrase (18b). This situation is not the matter of this paper. Our interest here is the position of this element in the clause structure. To better visualize this situation, let's observe the following examples:

(19)   a. Ango a- a-   yi nâ tə Ela a- a- kə ósoé
        Ango SM- Pres- want that Neg Ela SM- Pres- go river
        "Ango doesn't want Ela to go the river"
        b. *Ango a- a-   yi tə Ela a- a- kə ósoé
        Ango SM- Pres- want Neg Ela SM- Pres- go river
        "Ango wants Ela not to go to the river"
        c. *Ango a- a-   yi tə nâ Ela a- a- kə ósoé
        Ango SM- Pres- want Neg that Ela SM- Pres- go river
        "Ango wants Ela not to go to the river"

A clear look at the three examples above reveals that tə can not appear alone in an embedded clause. The ungrammaticality of (19b) is explained by the absence of nâ in the sentence. However, when this one occurs with the complementizer nâ, the sentence is grammatical (19a). (19c) is ungrammatical because tə precedes nâ. The behaviour of tə leads us to think that this negation marker is only possible in the matrix sentences and doesn't need the presence of nâ to express negation in the embedded clauses. When tə is

alone at the initial position of the clause, it marks the negation of the imperative mood. With the previous information, tə can occupy the position below:

(20)


```
                    NegP
            Spec         Neg'
                    Neg       AgreeP
                          Spec      Agree'
                                Agree     TP
                                           T'
                                         T     VP
                                                V'
                                              V     NP
                                                     N'
                                                      N

            tə          wo        a-      a-    kə    ósoé
            Neg        you        SM-    Pres-  go    river
```

"Don't go to the river"

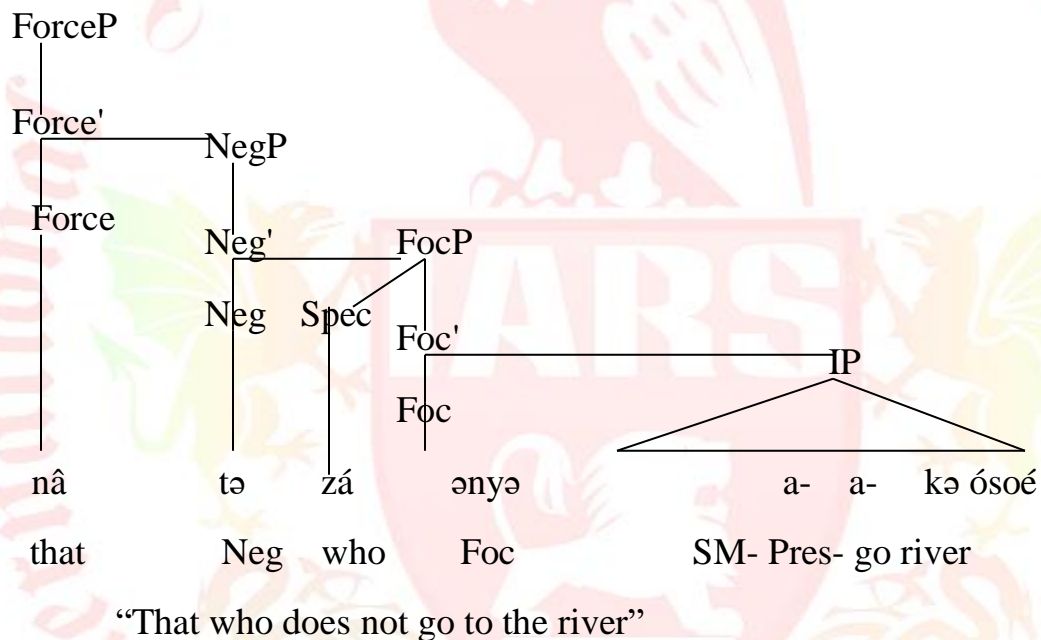Now let's examine the examples below:

(21)   a. Ela a- a-   dzó nâ tə zá a- a- kə ósoé
        Ela SM- Pres- say that Neg who SM- Pres- go river
        "Ela says that who does not go to the river"
        b. Ela a- a-   dzó nâ tə zá ənyə a- a- kə ósoé
        Ela SM- Pres- say that Neg who Foc SM-Pres- go river
        "Ela says that who does not go to the river"
        c.*Ela a- a-   dzó nâ zá tə a- a   kə ósoé
        Ela SM- Pres- say that who Neg SM- Pres- go river
        "Ela says that who does not go to the river"
        d. Ela a- a- dzó nâ zá bo tə kə ósoé

Ela SM- Pres- say that who do Neg go river
"Ela says that who does not go to the river"

The four examples above (21) result into the following remarks: the negation marker tə can occur with the Wh- phrase. However, it cannot precede the Wh-element. The ungrammaticality of (21c) is explained by the fact that tə has followed zá (who). For the Wh-element to precede the negation marker tə, there is a need of another morpheme, bo "do", between the two as illustrates the example in (21d). The tree diagramme below clearly shows this situation in the clause structure:

(22)

ForceP

Force'   NegP

Force

    Neg'   FocP

    Neg   Spec

              Foc'

                           IP

               Foc

nâ   tə   zá   ənyə   a- a- kə ósoé

that   Neg   who   Foc   SM- Pres- go river

     "That who does not go to the river"

CONCLUSION

The description made in this paper contribute to have a large view of the left periphery in a comparative perspective and show that the behaviour of the negation markers sakə and tə in Búlu is pertinent to review the fine structure of the left periphery.

REFERENCES

1. ABOH, E.O, 2004a, The Morphosyntax of complement-head sequences. Clause structure and word order patterns in Kwa, New York, Oxford University Press.
2. BILOA, E., 1997, Agreement and Verb Movement in Ewondo, in the Journal of West African Languages Vol., 26, pp. 43-54.
3. CHOMSKY, N.,1989, Some notes on economy of derivation and representation, MIT Working Papers in Linguistics 10, pp. 43-74.
4. HAEGEMAN, L., 1995, The Syntax of Negation, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
5. NAKAO C., 2008, On Focus of Negation, Cascadilla Proceedings paper completed.
6. ONDOUA ENGON, C.C., 2007, Une approche minimaliste de quelques aspects de la syntaxe du focus en búlu, mémoire de DEA, Université de Yaoundé I.
7. POLLOCK, J. Y., 1989, Verb Movement, Universal Grammar and the structure of IP, Linguistic Inquiry 20. pp. 365- 424.
8. RIZZI, L., 1997, The fine structure of the left periphery, in Liliane Haegeman (ed.) Elements of Grammar, Dordrecht, Kluwer, pp. 281-337.
9. UNITED BIBLE SOCIETY, 1991, USA.

– END –

Certificate of Recognition

This certificate is awarded to

Cyrille Christal Ondoua Engon

in recognition of his contribution

"The Negation Phrase in Búlu"

to Vol. 03, No. 01, 2013 *of*

International Research Journal

....

Chief Managing Editor