This paper reports on the ‘and’-word nyâŋ in Ibibio verbal coordination. Like English and, Ibibio possesses morphologically invariant coordinators linking NPs, PPs, and CPs. However, these cannot coordinate verbs and predicates, unlike and in English. Many African languages distinguish between nominal and verbal coordinators (Welmers 1973: 305), but Ibibio showcases this distinction in a unique way. Subject agreement and inflection for tense and negation suggest that nyâŋ is a verb, resembling “and’-verbs” in Walman (Brown & Dryer 2008). Closer inspection reveals that nyâŋ patterns more like an adverb or functional head, expanding our understanding of what constitutes ‘and’ cross-linguistically.

1 Introduction

Across African and Niger-Congo languages, juxtaposition serves as a general strategy for coordinating clausal units (Zeller 2015; Creissels 2000; Watters 2000). African languages also commonly feature a distinction in coordinators triggered by categorial features of the conjuncts. Such distinction can be seen, for example, in Dagbani, where mini exclusively conjoins nominal expressions, and ka is obligatory for coordinating verbal predicates and clauses.
(1) Dagbani (Gur; Niger-Congo)
   a. doo ŋ ṣ  m  mini m ba chẹni daa
   man this and my father go.IPfv market
   ‘This man and my father go to the market.’ (Olawsky 1999: 44)
   b. o bićị ka kọvisi ka davi
   he be.bad and be.thin and be.dirty
   ‘He is bad and thin and dirty.’ (Olawsky 1999: 44)
   c. m ba wumdi dagbanli ka tuzőhi wumdi silimiinsili
   my father hear.IPfv Dagbani and brothers hear.IPfv English
   ‘My father knows Dagbani and my brothers know English.’
   (Olawsky 1999: 51)

Ibibio, a Lower Cross Niger-Congo language spoken in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria likewise showcases this division, but with an unexpected twist: the language recruits an unlikely candidate for verb and predicate coordination, one that we show has verb- and adverb-like properties.

Ibibio uses an array of equivalent coordinators for NP/DP coordination.1,2

(2) Ékpê yè/ndsò/mmè Àkpán è-mà é-ŋ wọŋ úktősàŋ.
    Ekpe and Akpan 3PL-pst 3PL-drink palmwine
    ‘Ekpe and Akpan drank palmwine.’

These are, however, illicit when coordinating verbs and larger verbal constructions. Instead, nyáŋ is used, which surfaces to the left of the main verb in the second conjunct.

(3) a. À-mà à-diá àdésì à-nyáŋ/*yè/*ndsò/*mmè à-ŋ wọŋ
    2SG-pst 2SG-eat rice 2SG-and 2SG-drink palmwine
    úktősàŋ.
    ‘You ate rice and drank palmwine.’
   b. Êmá à-kpón à-nyáŋ/*yè/*ndsò/*mmè á-yáiyá.
    Ima 3SG-become.big 3SG-and 3SG-be.beautiful
    ‘Ima grew up and became beautiful.’

1Essien (1990: 147) treats these three coordinators as “dialectal variants.”
2Unless otherwise noted, our Ibibio data are from Mfon Udoinyang and reflect his judgments.
Cross-linguistically, ‘and’-words are typically not verbs, though they can be in some languages (e.g., Walman; see Brown & Dryer 2008). One puzzling aspect of Ibibio verb and predicate coordination, then, is the fact that the overt element that signals coordinate status bears person and number agreement, which is a property of verbs and other elements that comprise the clausal spine across the verbal and inflectional domains (Baker & Willie 2010).

Our aim in this paper is to investigate distributional evidence for \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} in order to approach an understanding of its status in Ibibio, and provide a foundation for further investigation of the structure(s) of \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} clauses. To clarify what \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} might be—and what it is not—we compare it with similar constructions involving verbs (e.g., serial verbs) and low adverbs. Traditionally in Ibibio literature (Essien 1985; 1990), as well as in closely-related Efik (Goldie 1857; Welmers 1968; 1973),\footnote{While \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} in Ibibio and Efik resemble each other morphosyntactically, there are important differences. For example, Efik \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} cannot take the negative suffix, unlike Ibibio (see §2.3.)} \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} has been analyzed as a coordinator itself (a conjunction) that is “verbal grammatically and conjunctive in function” (Essien 1990: 148). Our work shows, though, that it is not entirely verbal. Moreover, it may not actually be the coordinator, but some third thing that surfaces in verbal coordination. The data we present suggests that \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} inhabits a liminal space somewhere at or near the border of the inflectional and verbal layers. Current evidence seems to tip the balance toward an adverb-style analysis.

2 Is \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} a serial verb?

The verbal coordinator \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} bears person and number features. Other possible inflectional marking on \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} includes tense and negation (Essien 1985; 1990). Moreover, \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} in many cases appears flanked by verbs, making it look (on the surface) like one verb in a series.

\begin{equation}
\text{Ínèm á-mà-kòp á-nyʌ́ŋ á-dí.}
\end{equation}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
Inem 3SG-PST-hear 3SG-and 3SG-come \\
\end{tabular}

‘Inem heard it and came.’ (Essien 1985: 86)

Because of these properties, Essien (1985: 86) (and Essien 1990: 142) treats \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} as a V in a $V_1V_n$ sequence, calling it a “serial construction.”

However, Ibibio \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} clauses do not exhibit features that have shown to be characteristically associated with seriality in the language (Major 2015; Duncan 2016). In what follows, we consider \textit{nyʌ́ŋ} in light of the following properties of...
serial verbs in Ibibio, which we take as tests of seriality: (a) single tense marking, (b) obligatory subject sharing, (c) availability of contrastive verb focus, (d) single negation, and (e) object sharing.

2.1 Single tense test

Collins (1997) and Hiraiwa & Bodomo (2008) argue that serial verb constructions (SVCs) maximally contain a single tense marker. This property obtains for true SVCs in Ibibio (Major 2015).

(5) a. Ékpê á-mà á-dí  (*á-mà) i-sé úfɔ́k ñmì.  
    Ekpe 3SG-PST 3SG-PST 1-SG-see house 1SG-POSS  
    'Ekpe came and saw my house.'

b. Ínêm á-mà á-kòp á-mà á-nyʌ́ŋ á-dí.  
    Inem 3SG-PST 3SG-hear 3SG-PST 3SG-and 3SG-COME  
    'Inem heard it and came.'

The SVC in (5a) is thus ungrammatical if the second tense marker is added. Nyʌ́ŋ clauses, though, may contain more than one tense marker, depending on the number of conjuncts involved. In (5b), the past tense marker mà appears twice, once in the first conjunct and once in the second.

Related to this, verbs in Ibibio SVCs obligatorily share a single subject. Again, though, we find that this is not the case for nyʌ́ŋ clauses.

(6) a. *Ôkốn á-mà á-dùwɔ́ ìkùn  á-dấk àdùbè.  
    Okon 3SG-PST 3SG-fall Akpan 3SG-ENTER pit  
    (Intended: ‘Okon fell (and) Akpan entered a pit.’)

b. Ènɔ̀ á-mà á-kà store á-nyʌ́ŋ Ïmá á-mà á-dép ñwèt.  
    Eno 3SG-PST 3SG-go store 3SG-and Ima 3SG-PST 3SG-buy book  
    ‘Eno went to the store and Ima bought a book.’

Subject restrictions in Ibibio SVCs follow from the existence of a single TP layer in such constructions. The absence of this restriction in nyʌ́ŋ clauses corresponds to the presence of a TP in each clausal conjunct.

2.2 Contrastive focus test

A second difference between SVCs and nyʌ́ŋ clauses in Ibibio pertains to the (un)availability of contrastive verb focus. In Ibibio, any (or all) verbs in an SVC can potentially undergo contrastive verb focus.
Given the existence of a low focus phrase near the verbal domain in Ibibio (Duncan et al. 2018), Duncan (2016) proposes that the fact that any V in a $V_1V_n$ sequence can be contrastively focused follows from the vP-internal nature of low FocP. Since SVCs contain at minimum two vPs, iterated FocPs are an outcome of iterated vPs (Duncan 2016: 98-100).

Interestingly, the verbal coordinator ńyʌ́ŋ cannot participate in contrastive verb focus.\(^4\),\(^5\)

(8) *Ímá á-kpón á-nyɔ́ɔ-ńyʌ̂ŋ á-yàìyá.
Ima 3sg-become.big 3sg-and-and 3sg-be.beautiful
(Intended: 'Ima became big AND beautiful.')

Again, this suggests that ńyʌ́ŋ clauses are not exactly SVCs. What makes contrastively focusing ńyʌ́ŋ impossible is not, however, due to the number of vPs present. Presumably, there are two vPs in (8), as there are two vPs in each on the sentences in (7). Instead, we posit that the site of attachment for ńyʌ́ŋ drives its inability to participate in contrastive verb focus. That is, the attachment site of ńyʌ́ŋ is vP-external.

\(^4\)An audience member at ACAL 45 raised the question as to the intended meaning of contrastively focused ńyʌ́ŋ in the first place. We acknowledge that the meaning could be complicated, but presented the form as a diagnostic in the event that it were possible. (If, for example, ńyʌ́ŋ were a verb with a meaning like ‘do in addition to’ then, potentially, a contrastive focus reading might emphasize the nature of the event in relation to another.) Regardless, we are unaware of any semantic constraints on verbs that bar them from participation in contrastive verb focus.

\(^5\)For an overview of the formal features of Ibibio contrastive verb focus and its effects on vowel quality, see Akinlabi & Urua (2003) and Duncan et al. (2018).
2.3 Single negation test

Cross-linguistically, SVCs commonly allow for only one instance of negation (Hiraiwa & Bodomo 2008), and this holds for Ibibio, as well. In Ibibio, negation scopes over $V_1$ and $V_2$, but only $V_1$ gets negated (Major 2015).\(^6\)

\[(9)\] 
\[\begin{align*}
  a. & \text{Ènɔ̀ i-ké í-dàká-ké i-dá.} \\
  & \text{Eno 1-pst.foc 1-rise-NEG 1-stand} \\
  & \text{’Eno didn’t arise.’} \\
  b. & \text{* Ènɔ̀ á-mà/i-ké á-/i-dàká i-dá-há.} \\
  & \text{Eno 3sg-pst/1-pst.foc 3sg/i-rise 1-stand-NEG} \\
  & \text{(Intended: ’Eno didn’t arise.’)} \\
  c. & \text{* Ènɔ̀ i-ké i-dàká-ké i-dá-há.} \\
  & \text{Eno 1-pst.foc 1-rise-NEG 1-stand-NEG} \\
  & \text{(Intended: ’Eno didn’t arise.’)}
\end{align*}\]

The SVC meaning ‘arise’ is comprised of the verbs ‘rise’ and ‘stand’. As seen in (9a), when this construction is negated, only $V_1$ bears the negative suffix, meaning that only the highest verb in the sequence raises to $\text{Neg}^0$ (Duncan et al. 2018), possibly as it travels en route to $T^0$\(^7\). Thus, neither the lower verb can be negated, nor can both verbs be negated simultaneously.

From this, one straightforward prediction is that, if $\text{nyǎ́ŋ}$ clauses are true SVCs, $\text{nyǎ́ŋ}$ should be non-negatable, given that on the surface it follows $V_1$ in the matrix clause. However, this is not the case.

\[(10)\] 
\[\begin{align*}
  \text{Ínêm i-ki-kòp-pó i-nyǎ́ŋ-ŋ i-dí.} \\
  & \text{Inem 1-pst.foc.1-hear-NEG 1-and-NEG 1-come} \\
  & \text{’Inem did not hear it and did not come.’ (Essien 1985: 86)}
\end{align*}\]

Like the serial verbs above, $\text{nyǎ́ŋ}$ follows a higher, negated verb. Unlike SVCs, though, $\text{nyǎ́ŋ}$ itself can be negated. This suggests that there is a NegP associated with the matrix verb, and there is a second NegP associated with the clause that houses $\text{nyǎ́ŋ}$. In other words, $\text{nyǎ́ŋ}$ clauses have biclausal properties, whereas SVCs are monoclausal.

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\(^6\)The negative suffix in Ibibio has several allomorphs. See Akinlabi & Urua (2003: 124-127) and Duncan (2016: 89) for discussion.

\(^7\)Baker & Willie (2010: 120) claim that “the verb moves to $T$ in Ibibio and thus surfaces to the left of negation.” While we remain agnostic as to whether raising-to-$T$ is a regular feature of Ibibio grammar, for our purposes, either analysis successfully accounts for the distributional facts in (9).
2.4 Object sharing test

The final property that we consider when comparing nyάŋ with SVCs is object sharing (Baker 1989), shown in the following examples.

(11) a. Ḗkpá-má á-tóp ítiyát á-ń-tó.
   Ekpe 3SG-pst 3SG-throw stone 3SG-1SG-hit
   ‘Ekpe threw a stone and it hit me.’

b. Ḗkpá-má á-tóp ítiyát á-nyάŋ á-ń-tó.
   Ekpe 3SG-pst 3SG-throw stone 3SG-and 3SG-1SG-hit
   ‘Ekpe threw a stone (somewhere) and (something else) hit me.’

In (11a), the overt object of V, ítiyát ‘stone’, is “shared” by V. This sentence thus has the interpretation that Ekpe threw a stone, and that same stone is what Ekpe hit me with. Nyάŋ disrupts this pattern; as seen in (11b), object sharing is blocked when the verbal coordinator is present.

2.5 Interim summary

Although nyάŋ clauses bear surface affinity to SVCs, the preceding discussion shows that these construction types fail to show key morphosyntactic attributes that are characteristic of SVCs. Table 1 summarizes these properties and how they do (or do not) map onto each clause type.

Table 1: Properties of Ibibio SVCs and nyάŋ clauses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Obligatory</th>
<th>Contrastive</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>O sharing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tense</td>
<td>S sharing</td>
<td>focus</td>
<td>negation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SVCs</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyάŋ clauses</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While this does not amount to a positive account for what nyάŋ is, we take the above data as evidence for what nyάŋ is not: Ibibio nyάŋ clauses are not SVCs. Instead, nyάŋ clauses exhibit parataxis. Moreover, nyάŋ is verb-like in that it bears agreement and can be negated, but it also bears non-verb-like properties, such as the inability to undergo contrastive verb focus.
3 Structural observations

Structurally, it would appear that nyʌ́ŋ attaches below NegP, which is dominated by TP, and above vP. This yields the following hierarchy for the constituent containing nyʌ́ŋ.

\[ TP \gg NegP \gg nyʌ́ŋ \gg vP \]

The location of nyʌ́ŋ—what we have been calling a coordinator—presents a bit of a puzzle. In a language like English, ‘and’ introduces (and precedes all overt material in) the second conjunct, allowing for a structure as follows with conjoined TPs.\(^8\)

\[ \begin{array}{c}
& & \&P \\
& & \text{TP}_1 & & \&' \\
& & \triangle & & \text{TP}_2 \\
\ldots & & \text{and} & & \ldots \\
\end{array} \]

Figure 1: TP coordination in English.

This is quite common cross-linguistically: ‘and’-words typically intervene between conjuncts.

In Ibibio verb and predicate coordination, though, the ‘and’-word nyʌ́ŋ is embedded deeply inside the second conjunct. Thus, it is not that the presence of a second T\(^0\) is problematic, and the possibility of a different subject for the lower clause containing nyʌ́ŋ is similarly unproblematic. How, then, might we account for the location of nyʌ́ŋ, and what might this indicate about its status?

We tentatively pose the structure in Figure 2 to account for the unique distribution of nyʌ́ŋ. If this line of thought is on the right track then, given its place in the structure, nyʌ́ŋ is not actually (or is very unlikely to be) a coordinator. Instead, it appears to be an associate of coordination that is restricted

\(^8\)We adopt the asymmetric structures in Figure 1 and Figure 2 following, e.g., Munn (1987; 1993; 1999), Kayne (1994), and Johanessen (1998), a.o. Our point here is not to commit to a particular analysis of coordination for either English or Ibibio. Instead, we schematize coordination in each language to illustrate the uniqueness of nyʌ́ŋ’s place in the syntax, both in terms of word order and structurally in relation to the coordinator.
to verbal coordination. We leave the precise structure of verb and predicate coordination to future investigation; for now, treating a structure like the one in Figure 2 as a live option opens up other avenues to consider, such as whether nyʌ́ŋ clauses really are coordinate structures.

4 Are nyʌ́ŋ clauses really coordinate structures?

If Ibibio nyʌ́ŋ clauses involve parataxis, they should be sensitive to the Coordinate Structure Constraint (CSC) (Ross 1967), wherein:

- Extraction from a single conjunct is impossible; and
- Extraction from both conjuncts is grammatical (= across-the-board (ATB) extraction).

Ibibio verbal coordination is indeed island-inducing and sensitive to the CSC. When vPs are coordinated, object extraction becomes impossible. This supports the notion that nyʌ́ŋ clauses do involve coordination (whether or not nyʌ́ŋ is the coordinator or an associate of such).
Evidence for this comes from *wh*-movement. Neither the object in the first conjunct nor the object in the second conjunct can be extracted in *nyʌ́ŋ* clauses.

(13) a. Á-mà á-díá àdésì á-nyʌ́ŋ á-ŋ úkótńsʌ̀ŋ.  
3SG-pst 3SG-eat rice 3SG-and 3SG-drink palmwine  
'She ate rice and drank palmwine.'
b. *Ǹsọ ké á-ké-díá á-nyʌ́ŋ á-ŋ úkótńsʌ̀ŋ?  
what foc 3SG-pst.foc-eat 3SG-and 3SG-drink palmwine  
(Intended: 'What *i* did she eat *t* and drink palmwine?')
c. *Ǹsọ ké á-ké-díá àdésì á-nyʌ́ŋ á-ŋ wọ́n?  
what foc 3SG-pst.foc-eat rice 3SG-and 3SG-drink  
(Intended: 'What *i* did she eat rice and drink *t*?')

ATB extraction is, however, permitted.

(14) Ì̀nsọ ké á-ké-díá á-nyʌ́ŋ á-ŋ wọ́n?  
what foc 3SG-pst.foc-eat 3SG-and 3SG-drink  
'What *i* did she eat *t* and drink *t*?'

This result is expected if, in fact, *nyʌ́ŋ* clauses are coordinate structures.

Ibibio has both overt *wh*-movement (15a) and *wh*-in-situ questions (15b), the latter of which may involve covert movement.

(15) a. Ì̀nsọ ké á-ké/*mà á-nám?  
what foc 3SG-pst.foc/*pst 3SG-do  
'What did she do?'
b. Á-ké á-nám Ì̀nsọ?  
3SG-pst.foc 3SG-do what  
'What did she do?'
c. Á-mà á-nám Ì̀nsọ?  
3SG-pst 3SG-do what  
'She did what?'

Whether overt or covert, Á-extraction is signaled by the use of special focus tense morphology. In (15a-b), for example, the tense marker *ké-* is obligatory for past tense; use of the unmarked past tense marker *mà* produces ungrammaticality when extraction is overt, or else it signals an echo question, as in (15c).
These facts help us further diagnose the presence of coordination in nyʌ́ŋ clauses. Interestingly, with verbal coordination the object wh-question can remain in situ in the second conjunct with no overt object in the first conjunct (16a), but the reverse does not hold (16b).9

(16) a. À-ké à-diá à-nyʌ́ŋ à-ŋ wɔ́ŋ ñsọ?
   2SG-pst.foc 2SG-eat 2SG-and 2SG-drink what
   ‘What did you eat and drink t_i?’
   b. *À-ké à-diá ñsọ à-nyʌ́ŋ à-ŋ wɔ́ŋ?
   2SG-pst.foc 2SG-eat what 2SG-and 2SG-drink
   (Intended: ‘What did you eat and drink?’)

Combining these two strategies yields a positive result: two in situ questions can be coordinated by nyʌ́ŋ.10

(17) À-ké à-diá ñsọ à-nyʌ́ŋ à-ŋ wɔ́ŋ ñsọ?
   2SG-pst.foc 2SG-eat what 2SG-and 2SG-drink what
   ‘What did you eat and drink?’

These facts suggest that both overt and covert ATB extraction are possible in Ibibio.

Thus, even though nyʌ́ŋ itself may not be a coordinator, predicate coordination behaves as if coordination is present. Clauses coordinated with nyʌ́ŋ behave like syntactic islands and obey CSC constraints. This makes a coordination analysis of nyʌ́ŋ clauses a viable option, even though the question of what nyʌ́ŋ is remains unresolved.

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9It is also possible to leave an ordinary NP object in the first conjunct and have an object wh-element in the second.

(i) À-ké à-diá ádési à-nyʌ́ŋ à-ŋ wɔ́ŋ ñsọ?
   2SG-pst.foc 2SG-eat rice 2SG-and 2SG-drink what
   ‘You ate rice and drank what?’

However, this blocks the wide scope interpretation and forces an echo reading. It appears that the presence of the object ‘rice’ in (i) blocks covert ATB movement.

10We do not attempt here a syntactic analysis of wh-questions in Ibibio, but the ungrammaticality of (16b) is interesting in light of the availability of partial wh-movement in the language. The impossibility of the object wh-element stopping and being pronounced in object position of the first conjunct as it transits upwards is most likely an artifact of the type of conjuncts being coordinated (i.e., TPs or vPs, but not CPs).
5 Is *nyáŋ* a verb, or something else?

In §2 we argued against analyzing *nyáŋ* as part of an SVC, but this by itself does not preclude *nyáŋ* from being a verb of some kind. Even though *nyáŋ* possesses verb-like qualities, in this section we show that it actually behaves more akin to a low preverbal adverb.

Ibibio adverbs that attach low on the clausal spine commonly appear postverbally in reduplicant form (18a). Some of these adverbs, such as the one translated ‘quickly’ below, alternate between postverbal and preverbal position.

(18)  
(a. İmá á-má á-fèhé ítòk ù-sóp ù-sóp.  
Ima 3SG-PST 3SG-run race NMLZ-do.quickly NMLZ-do.quickly  
’Ima ran the race quickly.’  
(b. İmá á-má á-sóp á-fèhé ítòk.  
Ima 3SG-PST 3SG-do.quickly 3SG-run race  
’Ima ran the race quickly.’

Postverbal reduplicant adverbs are nominalized, but do not bear subject agreement. When these adverbs appear preverbally, the reverse is true. This is significant for the purposes of the present paper because it potentially identifies intermediate space between T⁰ and v⁰ where subject agreeing elements can reside.

Also like *nyáŋ*, main verbs, and V₁s in SVCs, low preverbal adverbs can bear negation.

(19)  
İmá i-kí-sóp-pó í-fèhé ítòk.  
Ima 1-PST.FOC.1-do.quickly-NEG 1-run race  
’Ima didn’t run the race quickly.’

Given the proposed site of low adverbs like ‘quickly’, presumably they can be the goal of a higher probe that triggers raising-to-Neg, just as a main verb can, and just as *nyáŋ* can.

Unlike main verbs and V₁s in SVCs—but like *nyáŋ*—low preverbal adverbs cannot be contrastively focused.

(20)  
*İmá á-ké á-sòð-sóp á-fèhé ítòk.  
Ima 3SG-PST.FOC 3SG-do.quickly-do.quickly 3SG-run race  
(Intended: ‘Ima QUICKLY ran the race.’)
This restriction comports well with our understanding of where nyʌ́ŋ is located. Distributionally, then, low adverbs may be significant for two reasons. On the one hand, they offer insight into the nature of nyʌ́ŋ in terms of category. Second, they provide supporting evidence into the placement of nyʌ́ŋ structurally. Elements that attach above vP are not accessible to low Foc0. However, nyʌ́ŋ and low adverbs do display relevant differences. Specifically, nyʌ́ŋ does not have an alternative postverbal reduplicative form.

(21) *...ḿ-fɔ́p ̀ùnàm ̀n-nyʌ́ŋ ̀n-nyʌ́ŋ.
1SG-roast meat NMLZ-and NMLZ-and
(Intended: ‘…and I roasted meat.’)

Nyʌ́ŋ therefore successfully negates and unsuccessfully undergoes contrastive verb focus, just like a low adverb. But, simply identifying nyʌ́ŋ as an adverb is potentially suspect, given that it cannot surface postverbally.11

Nyʌ́ŋ and ‘quickly’ can also co-occur preverbally in the same clause, and stack like adverbs do elsewhere.

(22) a. M-mà á-kòt úyò mfò ̀n-nyʌ́ŋ ̀n-sòp ̀n-dì.
1SG-pst 3SG-hear voice your 1SG-and 1SG-do.quickly 1SG-come
‘I heard your voice and came quickly.’

b. *M-mà á-kòt úyò mfò ̀n-sòp ̀n-nyʌ́ŋ ̀n-dì.
1SG-pst 3SG-hear voice your 1SG-do.quickly 1SG-and 1SG-come
(Intended: ‘I heard your voice and came quickly.’)

Importantly, a rigid ordering ensues when nyʌ́ŋ and ‘quickly’ appear together: the former must precede the latter, at least linearly.

As suggested previously, we take it that nyʌ́ŋ attaches low in the clause (below NegP and above vP), but the differential outcomes of (22a) and (22b) necessitate a bit more precision. One possible way to approach a more specific attachment site is to explore additionally available projections in the inflectional layer, which in Ibibio is rather rich. Baker & Willie (2010) motivate the following expanded architecture.

(23) MoodP » TP » AspP » vP » VP

11An anonymous reviewer rightfully notes that the attempt to put nyʌ́ŋ postverbally may simply be disallowed for independent reasons, such as iconicity. If this is the case, then evidence for the adverb-like nature of nyʌ́ŋ is even stronger.
Additional layers might prove helpful for syntactic signposting, and, given the location of AspP, it stands out as a likely candidate for helping determine a more precise location for \( ny\ddot{a}n \).

Though the ordering of \( ny\ddot{a}n \) is fairly predictable on account of its fixed order with respect to low adverbs, it appears to have a bit more flexibility with respect to Asp\(^0 \).

(24)  

\( a. \) ...ḿ-mà ŋ-n-sé ŋ-n-y\ddot{a}n ŋ-timmé ŋ-kène m-fɔ́p ìnàm.  
1SG-PST 1SG-HAB 1SG-and 1SG-repeat 1SG-emulate 1SG-roast meat  
‘...and I also again with other folks had been roasting meat.’

\( b. \) ŋ-kpá ŋ-ké ŋ-sé ŋ-kóót ŋwèt (ŋ-kpá  
1SG-COND 1SG-PST.FOC 1SG-HAB 1SG-read.PL book 1SG-COND  
ŋ-ké) ŋ-n-y\ddot{a}n ŋ-sé m-brè m-brè...  
1SG-PST.FOC 1SG-and 1SG-HAB 1SG-play NMLZ-play  
‘I would have read books and I would have played ...’

Thus, \( ny\ddot{a}n \) can potentially attach above or below AspP, but it must always be below MoodP, TP, and NegP, and above \( vP \).

(25)  

...ň-kpé ŋ-ké ŋ-y\ddot{a}n-ŋ ő́ ŋ-sé m-brè m-brè.  
1SG-COND 1SG-PST.FOC i-and-NEG 1SG-HAB 1SG-play NMLZ-play  
‘...and I wouldn’t have played.’

Taken together, the data from this section shows that \( ny\ddot{a}n \) is both verb-like and adverb-like. Table 2 compares properties of verbs with that of low adverbs and \( ny\ddot{a}n \).

Table 2: Properties of verbs, low adverbs, and \( ny\ddot{a}n \).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S-agreeing</th>
<th>Negatable</th>
<th>Focusable contrastively</th>
<th>Postverbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main verbs &amp; ( V_1s ) in SVCs</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low preverbal adverbs</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( Ny\ddot{a}n )</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the differences are not major, comparing \( ny\ddot{a}n \) with similar elements reveals that it is both verb-like and adverb-like, but bears a stronger affinity to the latter, making it a special type of adverb.
6 Conclusion

Reminiscent of Walman “‘and’-verbs” (Brown & Dryer 2008), nyʌ́ŋ in Ibibio displays several verb-like characteristics, such as subject agreement, ability to bear negation, and (potentially) being inflected for tense. Recognition of these properties has led to the standard assumption that nyʌ́ŋ is part of a serial verb construction. In light of recent developments regarding properties of Ibibio serial verbs, though, we find that nyʌ́ŋ effectively fails to meet all criteria for seriality. Distributional evidence similarly showed an affinity between nyʌ́ŋ and low adverbs. Nevertheless, just as nyʌ́ŋ is verb-like in degrees, we likewise find only partial correspondences with adverbs.

In our approach to nyʌ́ŋ we largely focused on delineating what nyʌ́ŋ is not, refraining from strong positive statements about what nyʌ́ŋ actually is. Still, current evidence weighs in favor of nyʌ́ŋ being an adverb of a special type. Moreover, the data reveal some promising directions that may shed light on the precise nature of nyʌ́ŋ and nyʌ́ŋ clauses. First, these clauses are island-inducing, which supports the claim that nyʌ́ŋ truly participates in coordination. Perhaps most surprisingly, though, our presentation casts doubt on the notion that nyʌ́ŋ is itself a coordinator. Together, we take these observations as possible evidence for covert coordination in the language. If this is on the right track then nyʌ́ŋ operates as an associate of covert conjunction.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations follow the 2015 Leipzig Glossing Rules, with one addendum: i = default agreement marker /í/, following Baker & Willie (2010).

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References


