

## Chapter 22

# Verb and predicate coordination in Ibibio

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This paper reports on the ‘and’-word *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* is a verb, resembling “‘and’-verbs” in Walman (Brown & Dryer 2008). Closer inspection reveals that *nyáŋ* 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.





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 *nyáŋ* in order to approach an understanding of its status in Ibibio, and provide a foundation for further investigation of the structure(s) of *nyáŋ* clauses. To clarify what *nyáŋ* 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),<sup>3</sup> *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* a serial verb?

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

- (4) *Ínêṃ á-mǎ-kòp á-nyáŋ á-dí.*  
 Inem 3SG-PST-hear 3SG-and 3SG-come  
 ‘Inem heard it and came.’ (Essien 1985: 86)

Because of these properties, Essien (1985: 86) (and Essien 1990: 142) treats *nyáŋ* as a V in a  $V_1 V_n$  sequence, calling it a “serial construction.”

However, Ibibio *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* in light of the following properties of

<sup>3</sup>While *nyáŋ* in Ibibio and Efik resemble each other morphosyntactically, there are important differences. For example, Efik *nyáŋ* cannot take the negative suffix, unlike Ibibio (see §2.3).

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 & Bodomomo (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. *Ékpè á-mà á-dí (\*á-mà) í-sé úfòk òmmì.*  
 Ekpe 3SG-PST 3SG-come 3SG-PST I-see house 1SG-POSS  
 ‘Ekpe came and saw my house.’
- b. *Ínèm á-mà á-kòp á-mà á-nyáñ 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. *Nyáñ* 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 *nyáñ* clauses.

- (6) a. \* *Òkòn á-mà á-dùwó Àkpán á-dák àdùbè.*  
 Okon 3SG-PST 3SG-fall Akpan 3SG-enter pit  
 (Intended: ‘Okon fell (and) Akpan entered a pit.’)
- b. *Ènò á-mà á-ká store á-nyáñ Ímá á-mà á-dép òwèt.*  
 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 *nyáñ* clauses corresponds to the presence of a TP in each clausal conjunct.

## 2.2 Contrastive focus test

A second difference between SVCs and *nyáñ* 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.

- (7) a. Òkôn á-mà á-tèm ndídíyá á-nyàm.  
Okon 3SG-PST 3SG-cook food 3SG-sell  
'Okon cooked food and sold it.'
- b. Òkôn á-mà á-tèé-tèm ndídíyá á-nyàm...  
Okon 3SG-PST 3SG-cook-cook food 3SG-sell  
'Okon COOKED food and sold it...'
- c. Òkôn á-mà á-tèm ndídíyá á-nyàá-nyàm...  
Okon 3SG-PST 3SG-cook food 3SG-sell-sell  
'Okon cooked food and SOLD it...'
- d. Òkôn á-mà á-tèé-tèm ndídíyá á-nyàá-nyàm...  
Okon 3SG-PST 3SG-cook-cook food 3SG-sell-sell  
'Okon COOKED food and SOLD it...'

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  $\nu$ P-internal nature of low FocP. Since SVCs contain at minimum two  $\nu$ Ps, iterated FocPs are an outcome of iterated  $\nu$ Ps (Duncan 2016: 98-100).

Interestingly, the verbal coordinator  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  cannot participate in contrastive verb focus.<sup>4,5</sup>

- (8) \*Ímá á-kpón á-nyòó-ny\acute{\lambda}\eta á-yàiyá.  
Ima 3SG-become.big 3SG-and-and 3SG-be.beautiful  
(Intended: 'Ima became big AND beautiful.')

Again, this suggests that  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  clauses are not exactly SVCs. What makes contrastively focusing  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  impossible is not, however, due to the number of  $\nu$ Ps present. Presumably, there are two  $\nu$ Ps in (8), as there are two  $\nu$ Ps in each of the sentences in (7). Instead, we posit that the site of attachment for  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  drives its inability to participate in contrastive verb focus. That is, the attachment site of  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  is  $\nu$ P-external.

<sup>4</sup>An audience member at ACAL 45 raised the question as to the intended meaning of contrastively focused  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  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,  $ny\acute{\lambda}\eta$  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.

<sup>5</sup>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).<sup>6</sup>

- (9) a. Ènò í-ké      í-dàkà-ké í-dá.  
 Eno I-PST.FOC I-rise-NEG I-stand  
 ‘Eno didn’t arise.’
- b. \*Ènò á-mà/í-ké      á-/í-dàkà í-dá-há.  
 Eno 3SG-PST/I-PST.FOC 3SG/I-rise I-stand-NEG  
 (Intended: ‘Eno didn’t arise.’)
- c. \*Ènò í-ké      í-dàkà-ké í-dá-há.  
 Eno I-PST.FOC I-rise-NEG I-stand-NEG  
 (Intended: ‘Eno didn’t arise.’)

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  $Neg^0$  (Duncan et al. 2018), possibly as it travels en route to  $T^0$ .<sup>7</sup> Thus, neither the lower verb can be negated, nor can both verbs be negated simultaneously.

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

- (10) Ínèm í-kí-kòp-pó      í-nyáŋ-ŋ ó í-dí.  
 Inem I-PST.FOC.I-hear-NEG I-and-NEG I-come  
 ‘Inem did not hear it and did not come.’ (Essien 1985: 86)

Like the serial verbs above, *nyáŋ* follows a higher, negated verb. Unlike SVCs, though, *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ*. In other words, *nyáŋ* clauses have biclausal properties, whereas SVCs are monoclausal.

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

<sup>7</sup>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 *nyáŋ* with SVCs is object sharing (Baker 1989), shown in the following examples.

- (11) a. Ékpè á-mà á-tóp ítíyát á-ń-tó.  
 Ekpe 3SG-PST 3SG-throw stone 3SG-1SG-hit  
 ‘Ekpe threw a stone and it hit me.’
- b. Ékpè á-mà á-tóp ítíyát á-nyáŋ 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  $V_1$ , *ítíyát* ‘stone’, is “shared” by  $V_2$ . This sentence thus has the interpretation that Ekpe threw a stone, and that same stone is what Ekpe hit me with. *Nyáŋ* disrupts this pattern; as seen in (11b), object sharing is blocked when the verbal coordinator is present.

## 2.5 Interim summary

Although *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* clauses.

	Single tense	Obligatory S sharing	Contrastive focus	Single negation	O sharing
SVCs	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
<i>Nyáŋ</i> clauses	N	N	N	N	N

While this does not amount to a positive account for what *nyáŋ* is, we take the above data as evidence for what *nyáŋ* is not: Ibibio *nyáŋ* clauses are not SVCs. Instead, *nyáŋ* clauses exhibit parataxis. Moreover, *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* attaches below NegP, which is dominated by TP, and above *vP*. This yields the following hierarchy for the constituent containing *nyáŋ*.

- (12) TP » NegP » *nyáŋ* » *vP*

The location of *nyáŋ*—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.<sup>8</sup>

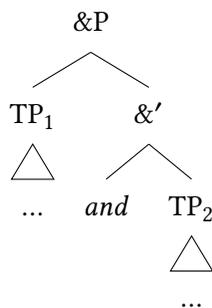


Figure 1: TP coordination in English.

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

In Ibibio verb and predicate coordination, though, the ‘and’-word *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* is similarly unproblematic. How, then, might we account for the location of *nyáŋ*, and what might this indicate about its status?

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

<sup>8</sup>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 *nyáŋ*’s place in the syntax, both in terms of word order and structurally in relation to the coordinator.

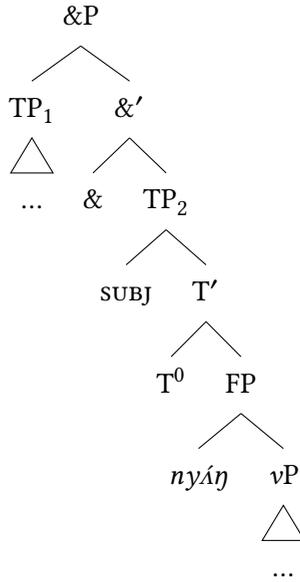


Figure 2: TP coordination in Ibibio.

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 *nyáη* clauses really are coordinate structures.

#### 4 Are *nyáη* clauses really coordinate structures?

If Ibibio *nyáη* 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 *vP*s are coordinated, object extraction becomes impossible. This supports the notion that *nyáη* clauses do involve coordination (whether or not *nyáη* 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 *nyáŋ* clauses.

- (13) a. *Á-mà á-díá àdési á-nyáŋ á-ŋ wóŋ úkótínsàŋ.*  
 3SG-PST 3SG-eat rice 3SG-and 3SG-drink palmwine  
 ‘She ate rice and drank palmwine.’
- b. \**Ñsǒ ké á-ké-díá á-nyáŋ á-ŋ wóŋ úkótínsàŋ?*  
 what FOC 3SG-PST.FOC-eat 3SG-and 3SG-drink palmwine  
 (Intended: ‘What<sub>i</sub> did she eat *t<sub>i</sub>* and drink palmwine?’)
- c. \**Ñsǒ ké á-ké-díá àdési á-nyáŋ á-ŋ wóŋ?*  
 what FOC 3SG-PST.FOC-eat rice 3SG-and 3SG-drink  
 (Intended: ‘What<sub>i</sub> did she eat rice and drink *t<sub>i</sub>*?’)

ATB extraction is, however, permitted.

- (14) *Ñsǒ ké á-ké-díá á-nyáŋ á-ŋ wóŋ?*  
 what FOC 3SG-PST.FOC-eat 3SG-and 3SG-drink  
 ‘What<sub>i</sub> did she eat *t<sub>i</sub>* and drink *t<sub>i</sub>*?’

This result is expected if, in fact, *nyáŋ* 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. *Ñsǒ ké á-ké/\*mà á-nám?*  
 what FOC 3SG-PST.FOC/\*PST 3SG-do  
 ‘What did she do?’
- b. *Á-ké á-nám ñsǒ?*  
 3SG-PST.FOC 3SG-do what  
 ‘What did she do?’
- c. *Á-mà á-nám ñsǒ?*  
 3SG-PST 3SG-do what  
 ‘She did what?’

Whether overt or covert,  $\bar{A}$ -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 *nyáŋ* 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).<sup>9</sup>

- (16) a. À-ké            à-díá    à-nyáŋ à-ŋ            wóŋ òsǒ?  
 2SG-PST.FOC 2SG-eat 2SG-and 2SG-drink what  
 ‘What<sub>i</sub> did you eat *t<sub>i</sub>* and drink *t<sub>i</sub>*?’
- b. \* À-ké            à-díá    òsǒ à-nyáŋ à-ŋ            wóŋ?  
 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 *nyáŋ*.<sup>10</sup>

- (17) À-ké            à-díá    òsǒ à-nyáŋ à-ŋ            wóŋ òsǒ?  
 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 *nyáŋ* itself may not be a coordinator, predicate coordination behaves as if coordination is present. Clauses coordinated with *nyáŋ* behave like syntactic islands and obey CSC constraints. This makes a coordination analysis of *nyáŋ* clauses a viable option, even though the question of what *nyáŋ* is remains unresolved.

<sup>9</sup>It 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-díá    ádésí à-nyáŋ à-ŋ            wóŋ òsǒ?  
 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.

<sup>10</sup>We 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. *Ímá á-mà 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. *Ímá á-mà 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  $T^0$  and  $v^0$  where subject agreeing elements can reside.

Also like *nyáŋ*, main verbs, and  $V_1$ s in SVCs, low preverbal adverbs can bear negation.

- (19) *Ímá í-kí-sóp-pó í-fèhé ítòk.*  
 Ima I-PST.FOC.I-do.quickly-NEG I-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  $V_1$ s in SVCs—but like *nyáŋ*—low preverbal adverbs cannot be contrastively focused.

- (20) \* *Ímá á-ké á-sòó-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 *nyáŋ* is located. Distributionally, then, low adverbs may be significant for two reasons. On the one hand, they offer insight into the nature of *nyáŋ* in terms of category. Second, they provide supporting evidence into the placement of *nyáŋ* structurally. Elements that attach above *vP* are not accessible to low *Foc*<sup>0</sup>. However, *nyáŋ* and low adverbs do display relevant differences. Specifically, *nyáŋ* does not have an alternative postverbal reduplicative form.

- (21) \*...ń-fǒp ùnàm ñ-nyáŋ ñ-nyáŋ.  
 1SG-roast meat NMLZ-and NMLZ-and  
 (Intended: ‘...and I roasted meat.’)

*Nyáŋ* therefore successfully negates and *unsuccessfully* undergoes contrastive verb focus, just like a low adverb. But, simply identifying *nyáŋ* as an adverb is potentially suspect, given that it cannot surface postverbally.<sup>11</sup>

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

- (22) a. ń-mà á-kót úyò ñfò ñ-nyáŋ ñ-sóp ñ-dí.  
 1SG-PST 3SG-hear voice your 1SG-and 1SG-do.quickly 1SG-come  
 ‘I heard your voice and came quickly.’  
 b. \* ń-mà á-kót úyò ñfò ñ-sóp ñ-nyáŋ ñ-dí.  
 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 *nyáŋ* and ‘quickly’ appear together: the former must precede the latter, at least linearly.

As suggested previously, we take it that *nyáŋ* 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

<sup>11</sup>An anonymous reviewer rightfully notes that the attempt to put *nyáŋ* postverbally may simply be disallowed for independent reasons, such as iconicity. If this is the case, then evidence for the adverb-like nature of *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ*.

Though the ordering of *nyáŋ* 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<sup>0</sup>.

- (24) a. ...ń-mà ń-sé ń-nyáŋ ń-tímmé ń-kèné ń-fóp ùnàm.  
 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. ń-kpá ń-ké ń-sé ń-kóót ñwèt (ń-kpá  
 1SG-COND 1SG-PST.FOC 1SG-HAB 1SG-read.PL book 1SG-COND  
 ń-ké) ń-nyáŋ ń-sé ń-brě ñ-brě...  
 1SG-PST.FOC 1SG-and 1SG-HAB 1SG-play NMLZ-play  
 ‘I would have read books and I would have played ...’

Thus, *nyáŋ* can potentially attach above or below AspP, but it must always be below MoodP, TP, and NegP, and above *vP*.

- (25) ...ń-kpé ń-ké í-nyáŋ-ŋ ń-ń-sé ń-brě ñ-brě.  
 1SG-COND 1SG-PST.FOC í-and-NEG 1SG-HAB 1SG-play NMLZ-play  
 ‘...and I wouldn’t have played.’

Taken together, the data from this section shows that *nyáŋ* is both verb-like and adverb-like. Table 2 compares properties of verbs with that of low adverbs and *nyáŋ*.

Table 2: Properties of verbs, low adverbs, and *nyáŋ*.

	S-agreeing	Negatable	Focusable	Postverbal
			contrastively	
Main verbs & V <sub>1</sub> s in SVCs	Y	Y	Y	n/a
Low preverbal adverbs	Y	Y	N	Y
<i>Nyáŋ</i>	Y	Y	N	N

Although the differences are not major, comparing *nyáŋ* 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), *nyáŋ* 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 *nyáŋ* is part of a serial verb construction. In light of recent developments regarding properties of Ibibio serial verbs, though, we find that *nyáŋ* effectively fails to meet all criteria for seriality. Distributional evidence similarly showed an affinity between *nyáŋ* and low adverbs. Nevertheless, just as *nyáŋ* is verb-like in degrees, we likewise find only partial correspondences with adverbs.

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

## Abbreviations

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

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