Sentence Patterns in Izon Using the "Kolokuma" Dialect as a Case Study

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Abstract

This study focuses on the sentence patterns of the kolokuma dialect of Izon spoken in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. This study adopts the principle and parameter approach. The data for this study was collected from two texts written in the Kolokuma dialect. A total of fourteen sentences were analyzed and the study revealed that the Kolokuma dialect of Izon has ten sentence patterns for its basic sentences.
Keywords: Sentence, Patterns, Principle and Parameter, Texts, Dialect, Basic.

1.   Introduction

Language is the most valuable asset nature has bestowed upon man and his immediate environment. Language and society are intertwined. None can function independently without the other. Language and society are important in the education of the child and indeed in the growth and development of any community. Man is born into the society as he uses language to communicate his individual thoughts, inner feelings and personal psychological experience. In other to establish social relationship, language is used. Akindele and Adegbite (1999) opine that language does not exist in a vacuum. It is always contextualized. They further explain that language is situated within a cultural setting or community.

Cullup (2012) asserts that languages are rule-governed. This means that we can't just make them up anyhow and do what we like when we speak or write them. Ofoegbu (2017) asserts that human language is very unique because it has its own structure and its own system of organizing its component units into meaningful patterns. Ofoegbu's assertion is a testament that the grammar of a particular language is the complete system which makes one language different from another.

As earlier stated, every human language exists in the human society. The Izon language is one of Nigeria's indigenous languages used for communication among the Izon people of the Niger Delta States in South-South, Nigeria. The users of the Kolokuma dialect of Izon in Bayelsa State, Nigeria, use the language as the vehicle for expressing their tradition and culture. The people use the dialect in all aspects of their daily lives. The rich cultural heritage of the people has been successfully passed down from one generation to another using the dialect.

Also as pointed out earlier, human language is systematic. Every language has its own laid down rules for its spoken and written communication. No language is spoken or written

anyhow by its users. Every language has its own finite rules for the formation of grammatical sentences. All languages have their unique sentence patterns in which the sentence elements are arranged in sentences. The Kolokuma dialect of Izon, just like any other dialects, has its own unique sentence patterns. Users of the dialect have to maintain the rules of sentence patterning if they really need to communicate well and be understood. When communicating in the Kolokuma dialect of Izon, whether in speech or in writing, the users arrange the sentence elements according to the appropriate sentence patterns.

The Concept of Sentence

Tomori (1999) asserts that the sentence is one of the most linguistic terms to define; this is partly due to the fact that an all-inclusive definition of any concept is almost impossible to achieve and partly because it is virtually impossible to combine the distinctive features of a written and a spoken sentence in the same definition. Ndimele (1993) also affirms that the sentence is one of the most difficult concepts to define precisely. Ndimele, however, writes that it is referred to as the largest structural unit of expression that is capable of independent existence. Leech and Svartvik (2010) define sentences as units made up of one or more clauses. According to Richard and Schmidt (2010), a sentence is the largest unit of grammatical organization within which parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, adverbs) and grammatical classes (e.g. word, phrase, clauses) are said to function. They further assert that in English a sentence normally contains one independent clause with a finite verb. For Crystal (2006), a sentence is the largest structurally unit in terms of how the grammar of a language is organized. Crystal notes that innumerable definitions of sentence exist, ranging from the vague characterizations of traditional grammar (such as the expression of a complete thought) to the detailed structural descriptions of contemporary linguistic analysis. Crystal further explains that most linguistic definitions of the sentence show the influence of Leonard Bloomfield who pointed to the structural autonomy, or independence, of the notion sentence: it is 'not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form'. Crystal further asserts that linguistic discussion of the sentence has focused on problems of identification, classification and generation. He notes that identifying sentences is relatively straight forward in the written language, but is often problematic in speech, where intonation and pause may give uncertain clues as to whether a sentence boundary exists. On that of classification, Crystal explains that sentence structure proceeds along many different lines, e.g. the binary constituent procedures of immediate-constituent analysis, or the hierarchical analysis of Hallidayan and other grammars (sentence being seen as composites of clauses, which in turn are analyzed into phrases, etc). Crystal further explains that in generative grammar, likewise, there are several models of analysis for sentence structure, with competing views as to the direction in which a sentence derivation should proceed. Certain analytic problems are shared by all approaches, e.g. how to handle elliptical sentences (or sentence fragments), such as To town (in answer to Where are you going?) how to handle cross-reference between sentences, such as She's writing (sentence connectivity), and how to handle the minor, non-productive sentence types in a language (e.g. Yes, please, How do you do?). Crystal notes, that most analyst agree on the need to recognize a functional classification of sentences into statement, question, command and exclamation types. There is also widespread recognition of a formal classification into declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamative types. Crystal further points out, that most analyses also recognize some such classification of sentence patterns into simple v. complex or compound types, i.e. consisting of one subject-predicate unit as opposed to more than one. He writes that whether one calls this subject-predicate unit, a clause or a simple sentence, or uses some other term depends on one's model of analysis, but something analogous to this unit emerges

in all theories, e.g. NP+VP, ACTOR-ACTION-GOAL, SUBJECT-VERB-OBJECT. Likewise, the numbers of formal sentence types recognized, and how they are best defined, has been and remains controversial. Crystal notes that several linguists insist on making a systematic distinction between sentence (a theoretical unit, defined by a grammar) and utterance (a physical unit, a matter of speech production or performance): in this view, utterances can be analyzed in terms of sentences, but utterances do not consist of sentences.

2.   Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the principle and parameter approach. This theory, according to Mbah (2016), is a brainchild of Chomsky (1981). It arose out of the weakness of the transformational grammar model. The transformational grammar model has many language specific transformational rules, which do not appear to head towards a minimal rule of linguistic generality. It is therefore thought that a shift in focus and approach is vital to achieving the purpose of current linguistic theory. It is further inspired by the assumption that natural language grammars include a set of innate universal hypotheses, which describe those aspects of grammar, which are common to all languages and a set of measures, which amount to deviations or adaptations of individual languages to the general rule.

The principle and parameter theory (P&P) has introduced two vital concepts, namely, principle and parameter. A principle here refers to the hypotheses, which captures a syntactic feature shared by all languages. On the other hand, parameter is a measure of variation from or adoption to the general principle. There are principles, each of which addresses specific areas of the grammar. In other words, the study of syntax is modular. Each module focuses on an area of the grammar. In other words, there are many modules. No module can independently account for the common properties of languages all over the world. It is consequently assumed that syntactic modules are independent in order to provide an overall picture of what children know when they acquire a language.

Sentence Elements

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1979), a sentence may alternatively be seen as comprising five units called elements of sentence structure. Leech and Svartvik (2002) also affirm that a clause can be analyzed into five different types of clause elements. All the scholars stated above assert that the five sentence (clause) elements are subject, verb, complement, object, adverbial abbreviated as S, V, C, O, A.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1979) further state that sentence (clause) elements can both be syntactically and semantically defined. However, in this paper, the authors are only concerned with the syntactic definitions of sentence elements.

Subject

Nwokedi (2003) opines that the subject of a sentence is a word or group of words about which something is said. For Crystal (2006) the term subject is used in the analysis of grammatical functions to refer to a major constituent of sentence or clause structure, traditionally associated with the doer of an action, as in the cat bit the dog. The oldest approaches make a twofold distinction in sentence analysis between subject and predicate and this is still common, though not always in this terminology; other approaches distinguish subject from a series of other elements of structure (object, complement, verb, adverbial, in particular). Crystal notes that linguistic analysis have emphasized the complexity involved in this notion, distinguishing for example, the grammatical subject from the underlying or logical subject of a sentence as in The cat bit the dog, where The cat is the grammatical and the dog the logical subject. He highlights that not all subjects, moreover, can be analyzed as

doers of an action, as in the sentences Dirt attracts flies and the books sold well. The definition of subjects as the surface grammatical features (using word-order or inflectional criteria) is usually relatively straightforward, the specification of their function is more complex and has attracted much discussion (e.g. in relational grammar). Crystal further asserts that in generative grammar, subject is sometimes defined as the NP immediately dominated by S. While NP is the typical formal realization of subject, other categories can have this function, e.g. clause (S-bar), as in That oil floats on water is a fact, and PP as in Between 6 and 9 will suit me. The term according to Crystal is also encountered in such contexts as raising and the specified-subject condition.

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1979), syntactically speaking,
The subject of a clause is normally a noun phrase or a clause with a nominal function;
Ebitimitula is happy.
The boy is Ebitimitula Tolumoye.
The handsome boy sitting under the tree is Ebitimitula Tolumoye.
That we need more money is inevitable.
The subject occurs before the verb phrase in declarative clauses and immediately after the operator in questions;
They left yesterday.
Did they leave yesterday?
The subject has number and person concord with the finite verb;
She knows.
We know.

Verb
Crystal (2008) notes that the verb is used in the grammatical classification of words, to refer to a class traditionally defined as "doing" or "action" words (a description which has been criticized in linguistics , largely on the grounds that many verbs do not act in any obvious sense, e.g. seem, be). Crystal, however, gave a formal definition of the verb as an element which can display morphological contrasts of tense, aspect, voice, mood, person and number. He further notes that functionally, it is the element which, singly or in combination with other verbs (i.e. as a "verb phrase"), is used as the minimal predicate of a sentence, co-occurring with a subject, e.g. she/wrote. If the predicate contains other elements (e.g. object, complement, adverbial), then it is the verb which more than any other is the unit which influences the choice and extent of these elements; e.g. the verb put takes both an object and a locative adverbial, as in he put the book on the table. Crystal opines that in many grammatical theories, accordingly, the verb is considered the most important element in sentence structure.

The verb phrase, according to Crystal, is used in two senses. Traditionally, it refers to a group of verbs which together have the same syntactic functions as a single verb, e.g. is coming, get up to. In such phrases (verbal groups, verbal clusters), as Crystal asserts, one verb is the main verb (a lexical verb) and the others are subordinate to it (auxiliary verbs). A verb followed by a non-verbal particle is generally referred to as a phrasal verb.

Crystal further asserts that in generative grammar, the verb phrase (VP), has a much broader definition, being equivalent to the whole of the predicate of a sentence, as it is clear from the expansion of S as NP+VP in phrase structure grammar. In the minimalist programme, the head of the upper VP shell is referred to as little v.

The adjective from "verb", verbal, is often used in traditional grammar description.

Richard and Schmidt (2010) define a verb as a word which occurs as part of the predicate of a sentence. They note that a verb carries markers of grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, person, number and mood. They also opine that a verb refers to an action or state, e.g. He opened the door; Jane loves Tom. Radford et al (1999) explain that verbs typically refer to activities (collide, steal, applaud, snore).

Object (Direct or Indirect)
According to Quirk and Greenbaum,
An object, like a subject, is a noun phrase or clause with nominal function;
Can you see that red car over there?
Now we can see that too little has been spent on the environment.
An object normally follows the subject and the verb phrase;
After the chairman announced the takeover bid, the stock exchange council banned dealings in the company's shares.
An object, by the passive transformation, assumes the status of subject;
The farmer found the little girl yesterday morning.
The little girl was found yesterday morning by the farmer.
Quirk and Greenbaum further assert that an indirect object, where both objects are present, precedes the direct object (except in rare instances), and is semantically equivalent to a prepositional phrase;
She sent Mary some money – She sent some money to Mary.

Complement
Crystal (2006), notes that complement is a term used in the analysis of grammatical function to refer to a major constituent of sentence or clause structure, traditionally associated with completing the action specified by the verb. In its broadest sense, complement therefore is a very general notion, subsuming all obligatory features of the predicate other than the verb, (e.g. She kicked the ball) and adverbials (e.g. She was in the garden). Crystal further notes that in some approaches, the complement is given a more restricted definition, e.g. to refer only to the completing function of structures following the verb to be (or similar verbs) in such an analysis, She saw the doctor would be subject-verb-object, whereas She is a doctor would be subject-verb-complement. Crystal explains that a further distinction is sometimes made between complements of the subject and those of the object, as in she is a doctor (subject complement) and she called me a fool (object complement). According to Crystal, complement clauses of various kinds are recognized, this notion sometimes being interpreted as any kind of subordinate clause, sometimes as only one kind of subordinate clause (e.g. a clause following be such as That is what I said). He further opines that the domain of complementation remains an unclear area in linguistic analysis, and there are several unresolved issues, e.g. whether the particles in phrasal verbs (e.g. come in) should be subsumed under this heading. In general grammar, according to Crystal, a complement is a sister constituent of a zero level category. Categories other than the verb are also sometimes said to take complements, e.g. in a student of physics, of physics is said to be the complement of student. He finally opines that in X-bar syntax, the term is used in opposition to adjuncts (a student with long hair).

Richard and Schmidt (2010) assert that in grammar complement is that part of the sentence which follows the verb and which thus completes the sentence. They note that the commonest complements are:
Subject complete: the complement linked to a subject by be or linking verb:
She is a doctor.
Object complement: the complement linked to an object:
We made her the chairperson.
Adjective complement: the complement linked to an adjective:

I am glad that you can come.
Prepositional complement: the complement linked to a preposition:
They argued about what to do.

Richard and Schmidt further opine that while adjuncts are optional parts of sentences, complements are often obligatory parts of the sentence in which they occur. A clause which functions as a complement is called a complementary clause.
For example: The question is why you did it.

Richard and Schmidt further explain that in generative grammar, the term complement has a broader meaning, referring to an expression that combines with a head to become a larger constituent of essentially the same kind. For example, in read a book, a book is the complement of the verb read; in at the end, the end is the complement of the preposition at; in bags of groceries, of groceries is the complement of the noun bag.

Nwokedi (2003) defines a complement as a word or group which adds or completes the meaning of the sentence. He notes that when the verb in the predicate is intransitive, it takes a complement. He further explains that that which is used to complete verbs of incomplete predication is called the complement.

Leech and Svartvik (2002) define a complement as something that is necessary to complete a grammatical construction. They opine that the complement of a clause;
Can be a noun phrase
Dr Seth's a very good lecturer.
Can be an adjective or adjective phrase
Dr Seth's lectures are interesting
Can be a nominal clause
The only challenge is that we need more money
Does not become subject through the passive construction
Follows the subject, verb phrase, and object
All students consider him a very good lecturer.

Adverbial
For Leech and Svartvik (2002), adverbials often tell us something extra about an action, happening or state as described by the rest of the sentence. They note that adverbials;
Can be an adverb phrase
I saw Mary yesterday
Can be a noun phrase
Peter arrived last week
Can be adverbial clause
The child cried because he was hungry
Can be a prepositional phrase
The dog is under the car are generally mobile, so that they can occur in different places in the sentence
I honestly don't know what he wants.
Honestly I don't know what he wants.
Are generally optional, that is, may be added to or removed from a sentence without affecting its acceptability but are obligatory elements in the SVA and SVOA patterns.

Sentence Patterns in English Language
Teilanyo and Kpolugbo (2009) define sentence patterns as the different ways in which the sentence elements – S, V, O, C and A appear or are arranged in a sentence. There are innumerable sentence patterns. However, this paper will only be concerned with those elements that are normally obligatory from which seven clause types can be distinguished.

The basic seven sentence patterns are listed below:

SVA   John   is   in the car
        S   V   A

SVC   Mary   is   a teacher
        S   V   C

SVO   Somebody killed   the goat
        S   V   O

SVOA I   put   the cups   on the table
        S   V   O   A

SVOC They elected him   chairman
          S   V   O   C

SVOO My mother bought   me   a bag
          S   V   O   O

SV The dog   died
    S   V

Method of Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from two texts written in the Kolokuma dialect of the Izon language of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. However, the researchers themselves are native speakers of the Kolokuma dialect who communicate fluently in the language.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be presented in a tabular form showing the differences in sentence patterns in the Kolokuma dialect of Izon. This paper will only analyze the basic seven sentence patterns.

Differences in sentence Patterns in Izon (Kolokuma Dialect) and English language

Izon	English
1 . SOOV/SOVOV	SVOO
Wo dau aru u pirimi His father a car him gave S O O V Esther fun fe I pirimi Esther book bought me gave S O V O V	His father gave him a car S V O O Esther bought me a book S V O O
2 . SOCV/SCOV	SVOC
Omini Ebi tibiowei miemi They Ebi chairman made S O C V Ebiweni okoba ama Tari pirimi Ebiweni money some Tari gave S C O V	They made Ebi chairman S V O C Ebiweni gave Tari some money S V O C
3 . SOV	SVO
Tarila obiri baami Tarila dog killed S O V Ebi diibi pelemi	Tarila killed the dog S V O Ebi cut the net

Ebi net cut S O V	S V O
4 . SAV	**SVA**
Ebi wari boloubi mi Ebi house inside the is S A V Eri bubaikoyo paami He yesterday travelled S A V	Ebi is in the house S V A He travelled yesterday S V A
5 . SV	**SV**

Tobou bi banghimi
Boy the   ran
   S   V
NOUN + DET
 	
Kimi bi fimi
Man the   died
   S   V
NOUN+DET
	The boy ran
	  S V
	DET+ NOUN
	
	The man died
	     S V
	DET+NOUN

6 SOAV/SAOV	**SVOA**

Ari fun bi   tebulu ongono   werimi
I   book the   table on   left
S   O   A   V
   NOUN+DET
 	
Eri bubai buru fimi
He yesterday yam ate
S   A   O   V
	I left the book on the table
	S V O A
	        DET+NOUN
	
	SVOA
	He ate yam yesterday
	S V O A

7 . SC	**SVC**
Diepreye inei binaowei Diepreye my brother S C Omini ikiaotu They friends S C	Diepreye is my brother S V C They are friends S V C

1.   Discussions

Generally, one important feature of language is that it is structure independent. This means that the structure of one language does not rely on the structure of another language for it to

be grammatically acceptable by its users. Thus, structurally, the Kolokuma dialect of Izọn is different from English, the official language of Nigeria. This difference is noticed from the data in this paper reflecting the different sentence patterns. Examples:

Izọn language   English language
Ebi diibi pelemi.   Ebi   cut   the net.
S   O   V   S   V   O
Wo dau aru u pirimi   His father gave him a car
S   O O V   S   V   O   O
Esther fun fe I pirimi   Esther bought me a book
S   O V O V   S   V   O   O

From the forgoing, one can see the variance in the sentential patterns. This difference is subsumed in the theory adopted in this article. The theory is apt for this paper because it captures the fact that certain syntactic features are shared by all languages and at the same time there is a measure of variation from the general principle. For instance, the headedness principle as stated in the Principles and Parameter indicates that a phrase must have a head. It is important to note that this is not a comparative study. Nevertheless, placing the English and Kolokuma dialect of Izọn languages side by side, one can see that both languages portrayed the headedness principle highlighted in the theory. This syntactic feature is common to both languages even though the sentence patterns or word order are arranged differently. From the findings of this study, the Kolokuma dialect of Izon has ten sentence patterns for its basic sentences: SOOV/SOVOV, SOCV/SCOV, SOV, SAV, SV, SOAV/SAOV, SC. As it is clearly seen, the Kolokuma dialect of Izon has double sentential patterns for the English SVOO, SVOC, and SVOA patterns respectively. As also revealed from the findings of this study, the Kolokuma dialect of Izon and English have the same sentential typology but differ in the typology of their phrases, e.g. (Izon) tobou bi- boy the, kimi bi -man the, (English) the boy, the man. The head of the phrase is initial in the Kolokuma dialect but final in English. The differences in the sentence patterns and word order of both languages are testament that language is systematic and rule-governed.

2.   Conclusion

Hitherto, no two languages are exactly the same; so also the interpretation of meanings between languages may differ from language to language. The basic structural elements and sentence patterns in Kolokuma dialect of Izon are analyzed in this paper. A combination of these elements can help the users of the language to form acceptable sentences. In all, having a knowledge of these structures as pointed out in this article can enhance one's ability to express complex ideas with ease to the admiration and understanding of one's audience.

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