THE GRAMMATICALISATION OF *SỊ* 'SAY' IN IGBO

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Abstract

Although many works have been done in the verbs of the language but much work has not been done in the language as regards to grammaticalization of the lexical words in the syntactic constructions. It is on this premise that this study sets out to investigate the grammaticalization of the verb sị'say' in the Igbo language with the objectives of examining the various grammatical functions it can perform in the syntactic constructions, its grammatical relations and its distributions as well as finding out the processes that are involved in its grammaticalisation. The study employs the parameters of Lehmann's (2015) aspects of grammaticalization as a theoretical framework in the analysis of the data. The data for this study were drawn from these literature texts Chi Ewere Ehihie Jie, Emecheta and Nkọlị by J.U.T Nzeako, Dimkpa Taa Akụ, Ebubedike and Ụwaezuoke by F. C Ogbalu, Ofunna, A Chọwa Isi Ọchụ and Onye Chi ya Akwatughị by C. E Ọfọmata. Furthermore, the data for this study were also drawn from daily conversations and discourses. The findings of the study reveal that grammaticalization of the verb sị 'say' is language internal phenomenon and it can undergo grammaticalization as a result of its varied semantic meaning changes and the different grammatical roles it plays in the syntactic structures as evidenced in the study. The study has demonstrated that sị is gradually ripping off its lexical features to perform different grammatical function such as complementizer and pronoun. Phonological change is also observed in the tone of sị. It also has an agentive subject and a recipient as its subcategorization requirements. It obeys the ATR rule that operates in the language. The tone marking convention adopted in this work is Green and Igwe (1963).The present study serves as a reference point in an attempt to further expand the frontier of research in grammaticalization as well as in Igbo language scholarship in general.

Keywords: **Grammaticalisation, Verb, Syntagmatic Variability, Bondedness, Paradigmatic.**

1. Introduction

Obviously, the lexicons of a language are constituted by the words of that language. They are fundamentally base, because they perform different grammatical functions in the syntactic structures of the languages, hence, they can be classified into different word classes. In the historical development of languages, there exists a phenomenon called linguistic change. During the developmental stages, a number of changes and innovations are taking place. These changes do not only affect the lexicons and the phonology of words in a language, it also affects the grammar of the language.

In various languages of the world, a number of lexical verbs have undergone changes in use, forms, meanings and functions in the historical development as a result of grammaticalization. For instance, some verbs have undergone changes from lexemes to auxiliaries, complementizers and tense, while others encode temporal constituency of a situation. This implies that in grammaticalization, lexical

items can loss their meanings to grammatical functions. Grammaticalization can be seen as the gradual historical development of function morphemes from content morphemes (Fintel, 1995).

In Igbo, the verb *sị* means 'say' in English. It is always used in its expression manner; hence, it has expressive value. It is a simple monosyllabic root verb. It belongs to the class of verb which Mmadike (2015:120) classifies as "verbs of speaking". The verb *sị* is typically, a verb of communication. Mensah (2012:18) affirms that it always "focuses on the communication of a message by the subject rather than illocutionary force". He further adds that it has an agentive subject and a direct object or a recipient as its sub-categorization requirements. It should be noted that *sị* 'say' is the basic form in Igbo language, but over a time in different contexts, it has undergone different semantic changes in the syntactic constructions to perform different grammatical functions such as conjunction, complementizer, introducer of embedded clauses. The paper is organised as follows: section one is the introduction, section two treats the concepts of grammaticalization, section three presents a brief overview of Igbo verbs and studies on grammaticalization in Igbo, section four is the methodology while section five forms the data analysis and section six is the conclusion

2. The Concept of Grammaticalisation: An Overview
Historically, there were earlier studies on grammaticalization which were carried out at different phases by different scholars. Such studies include Condillac (1746), Bopp (1816, 1833), Schlege (1818), Humboldt (1825), Wüllner (1831), Whitney (1875) and Gabelentz (1901). Of all these studies, the term 'grammaticalization' is credited to a French linguist Meillet (1958) because he was the person who coined the word, published in 1912, to refer to "attribution of grammatical character formerly autonomous word" Then, Meillet was interested in identifying how new categories and system change arise. It was observed that many grammatical items originate as lexical wordsand over a time these tend to bleach. Grammaticalization has gained popularity in linguistics since the seminal work by Christian Lehmann's *Thought on Grammaticalisation* which was first published in 1982, republished and expanded in 1995, 2002 and 2015.

The concept of *grammaticalisation* has been variously defined by different scholars according to each individual's perspective. But whatever may be one's orientation concerning the term, the general consensus is that grammaticalisation is the process of language change whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to perform grammatical functions, and once grammaticalized, the lexical items continue to develop new grammatical functions. In other words, it is also the process of language by which words representing objects and actions (that is, nouns and verbs) become grammatical markers such as affixes, prepositions, tense, modals, and so on. This process tries to create new function words other than deriving them from existing bound inflectional constructions, instead, deriving them from content word. Grammaticalization is linked with the following processes: semantic bleaching, morphological reduction, phonetic erosion and obligatorification. This implies that a number of semantic, syntactic and phonological processes interact in grammaticalisation of morpheme of whole constructions. For instance, the old English verb *willan* (to want, to wish) which has become the modern English auxiliary verb *will* expresses intension or simple futurity. The process by which the word leaves its word class and enters another is not sudden, but occurs by a gradual series of individual shift. The overlapping stages of grammaticalization form a chain which is generally called a cline. These shifts generally follow the same patterns in different languages. It is believed that the stages on the clines do not have a fixed position, but vary. Note that the movement along the cline may be partial or complete. Hopper and Traugott (1993) illustrate the pattern of the cline of grammaticalization by various stages of form thus:

Lehmann points that some of these parameters correlate positively, others negatively. As grammaticalisation increases, the parameters of cohesion increase as well, while parameters of weight and variability decrease. These six parameters are not processes but properties of signs. We shall not go into detail discussion of each of the above parameters. But one thing noteworthy is that the above six parameters of linguistic sign are criteria insofar as they can be used to order two functionally similar syntagms on a grammaticalization scale. They are parameters insofar as grammaticalization may be measured along each of them; it may be verified to degree they correlate.

3. Brief Overview of Igbo Verb

As it obtains in other natural languages, verb plays significant roles in the grammar of many languages, and Igbo language is not excluded. The verb category is the most prominent word class in the Igbo language. This implies that the grammar of the language centres on the verb. Nwachukwu (1983), Mbah (2006; 2011) and Mbagwu and Eme (2007) affirm that the Igbo language is a verb language. Obiamalu and Mbagwu (2014) emphasize that the category verb highly contributes to the derivation of words in the language, there does not seem to be any lexical category that contributes to the derivation of Igbo verb. The Igbo verb category has attracted the attention of many Igbo scholars which made them to carry out various studies concerning the category and its classification in language over the years. The works of scholars such as Emenanjo (1975a), (1975b), (1978), (2005) and (2015); Nwachukwu (1983), (1984), Uwalaka (1982), Ubahakwe (1976)   have built a foundation for treatment of the verb category in the Igbo language. For instance, Nwachukwu (1984) classifies the Igbo verbs under the following: dynamic, stative and copula verbs. Emenanjo (2005) attempts the classification of Igbo verbs into five categories namely general complement verbs (GCVS), inherent complement verbs (ICVS), bound complement verbs (BCVS), prepositional phrase compliment verbs (PPCVS) and ergative complement verbs (ECVS).

In the study of the semantics of the Igbo verbs, Uwalaka (1988) in her analysis recognizes six classes of verbs namely: action verbs, verbs of occurrence, experiential verbs, verbs of quality, locative verbs, identificatory and equative verbs. Almost all these classes have sub-classes.Uwalaka (1988) studies verbs of speaking in Igbo and categorises them as a sub-group of experimental verbs. She claims that only animate NP can function as the subject of such a verb (Uwalaka 1988:149). Mmadike (2015) in the study of the verb of speaking claims that semantically verb of speaking constitutes a coherent class of verbs specifically used for verbal process in the human act of speaking. He further adds that there is usually a speaker who reports the speech of the sayer (the subject NP) as direct or indirect. Uchechukwu (2011:1-4) divides the structure of Igbo verbs into the following: simple verbs, compound verb: [verb + verb] and [verb +suffix] and verbal complex: [verb + noun phrase] or [verb + prepositional phrase]. Anyanwu and Iloene (2004) identify some Igbo verbs which lack semantics content or which are semantically opaque or indeterminate. They used two tests to identify imperativization and pronunciation. The verbs include: *gba, kpọ, da* and *kwa*. The verbs are liable to more than one interpretation expect they occur with an appropriate nominal element as in:

Content word⟶ grammatical word ⟶ clitic ⟶ inflectional affix

Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer (1991) who support that grammaticalization has to do with a lexical item assuming a new grammatical meaning illustrate their contention using data from Ewe, a language belonging to the Kwa branch of the Niger- Congo family spoken in Eastern Ghana, Southern Togo and Southern Benin.

1a. me-ná   ga   Kofi.
       ISG-give   money Kofi.
        I gave kofi money.

b.   me-pie   βɔtrúnákofi.
       ISG-buy   door   give   Kofi.
       I bought a door and gave it to Kofi or
       I bought a door for Kofi.

c.   me-wɔdɔvévíénádódókpɔlá.
       ISG-do work hard   give   exam   DEF.
       I worked hard for the exam.

From the data in (1), Heine, Claudi and Hünnemeyer remark that the verb*na*'give' assumes a grammatical meaning of the prepositional notion *for* or *to* in certain contexts as exemplified in (1a and b) respectively. Furthermore, cross linguistically, the verb *go* which is attested in different natural languages of the world is commonly used as an example to confirm how it develops from a lexical to a grammatical status to indicate future marker or future auxiliary verb in different languages. Following this, Uchechukwu (2012) illustrates his contention using the examples below.

2a. Uche goes to school every Monday.

b. Uche is going to school on Monday.

c. Uche is going to read that book.

From the examples, the verb *go* in sentence (2a) is a full verb, a motion or change of location verb. In (2b), it indicates future while in sentence (2c), it also indicates future meaning. In the data, it seems that the verb *go* does not involve any physical motion of going to the location of the *book,* but *Uche shall surely read it*. From the data in (2),Uchechukwu affirms that the same similar variations are obtained in the meaning of the Igbo verb -*ga* 'go'. From his analysis, he concludes that the verb *ga* 'go' can develop from a full verb *ga* 'go' to future auxiliary marker 'shall/will' to indicate auxiliary *gà* 'must/might'.

Lehmann (2015: 132) proposes six parameters of grammaticalization as indicated in table 1:

Table 1: Parameters of Grammaticalization

PARAMETER	AXIS	
	Paradigmatic	Syntagmatic
Weight	Integrity	Structural scopes
Cohesion	Paradigmaticity	Bondedness
Variability	Paradigmatic variability	Syntagmatic variability

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{egwu} \\ \text{m̀gba} \\ \text{egbe} \\ \text{ọsọ} \\ \text{ọ̀bàrà} \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{bmatrix} \text{danced} \\ \text{wrestled} \\ \text{Shut a gun} \\ \text{ran} \\ \text{bleed} \end{bmatrix}$$

3.a. gba-Ezègbàrà   ''Eze

   b. kpọ-Ezè kpọ̀rọ̀   ''Eze

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{ọkụ} \\ \text{òkù} \\ \text{anwụrụ̀} \\ \text{ụ̀ga} \end{bmatrix} \quad \begin{bmatrix} \text{burnt (something)} \\ \text{called (somebody)} \\ \text{took some stuff} \\ \text{played a kind of} \\ \text{clapping game} \end{bmatrix}$$

Furthermore, Udemmadu's (2015) carries out the study of the verb *ṣi* 'say' as a pronoun in the Igbo language. In her discussion, she argues that *ṣi* belongs to impersonal or indefinite pronoun. With data drawn from intuition as a native speaker and adopting the descriptive approach, the author found out that the verb can function as a pronoun in the Igbo language and that it can take only the subject position in a sentence. The study concludes that since *ṣi* 'say' has all the qualities of a pronoun following from its syntactic position and grammatical function, and the fact that it cannot take the position just like other impersonal pronoun in the language, it can be categorised as an impersonal or indefinite pronoun.

Other empirical works adopting Lehmann's (2015) framework are Uchechukwu's (2008) study of the grammaticalization of prepositional markers in Igbo using the Igbo verb root *nye* 'give' and Uchechukwu's (2011) discussion of grammaticalization of the copula verb *nọ̀.* While the former uses the verb root *nye* to illustrate the process of grammaticalization which according to him involves category change of the second verb in a compound verb structure from a V1 + V2 construction to a verb + suffix configuration exploring the literal and figurative uses of the verb. The study concludes that:

> The parameters of grammaticalization at both the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic levels, shows that there is a loss in the weight and variability of the structure *-nyé*, but a gain in cohesion. As the second component of a compound verb formation, *-nyé* loses in para-digmatic integrity and structural scope and can no longer function as a full verb in this context: instead, it becomes obligatory in the identified V_2 context. In addition, its structural scope narrows to a VP instead of its clausal level structural scope as a main verb. However, these losses in weight and variability are counterbalanced by a gain in paradigmatic and syntagmatic cohesion. Paradigmatically, there is a formal and semantic integration of *nyé*within a group of 'prepositional markers,' whose syntagmatic quality is bound to the identified V_2 context for the expression of prepositional meanings. (Uchechukwu, 2008:404)

The later, Uchechukwu (2011), concludes that the copula verb *nọ̀* is still undergoing the process of

grammaticalization, thus further investigation in this regard is required.
The foregoing has presented an overview of grammaticalization and empirical works on Igbo verbs. The subsequent section discusses grammaticalization of the verb *si* 'say' using Lehmann's (2015) parameters.

4. Methodology

The data for the study come from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were made up of data largely drawn from recording of natural occurring speeches of the Igbo native speakers during conversations, discourses and meetings. The researchers also added their intuitive knowledge for some data. For the secondary sources, insights were gained from these literature texts ***Chi Ewere Ehihie Jie***, ***Emecheta*** and ***Nkọlị*** by J.U.T Nzeako, ***Dimkpa Taa Akụ***, ***Ebubedike*** and ***Ụwaezuoke*** by F. C Ọgbalụ, ***Ofunna, A chọwa Isi Ọchụ*** and ***Onye Chi Ya Akwatughị*** by C. E Ọfọmata to sieve out how the verb *sị* is employed in the texts to perform different grammatical functions respectively. Furthermore, the data for this study were also drawn from daily conversations and discourses. Also, materials from journal articles, textbooks and internal materials constitute the sources of the data for the study. The data collected were carefully analyzed using parameters of Lehmann's (2015) aspects of grammaticalization as a theoretical framework.

The tone marking convention adopted in this work is that of Green and Igwe (1963) where low [`] (L), and downstep [-] (DS) tones are marked, while high tone [´] (H) tone is left unmarked

5. Data Analysis
5.1 The Grammaticalisation of the Verb *Ṣi* 'Say'

In this section, the literal usage of the verb *sị* 'say' is explained for a better understanding of the verb before discussing the parameters of grammaticalization. Following Igwe (1999), the verb *sị* is glossed as *say*; *tell*; *talk*; *talk spitefully about* (an absent person); *backbite*; *gossip*. The following examples show the literal use of the verb and the additional meaning when it is suffixed to a verb root.

(4)   ***Sị***   *Chioma*   *bìa*
      Say   Chioma   come
      'Tell   Chioma to come'

(5)   *Chioma*   ***ṣi***   *nà*   *ọ*   *gà-àbia*   *echī*
      Chioma   say   COMP PRO   FUR-come   tomorrow
      'Chioma said that she will come tomorrow'

(6) *Agadīnwaanyị̀*   *ahụ̀***sị*** *Onyenekeya* *kà*   *o*   *bìliekà ha*
old   woman   that toldOnyenekeyaCOMP   PRO   riseCOMPthey
      laa   ngwa   n̄gwā
      go   quick quick
      'The old woman told Onyenekeya that he should rise so that they can go quickly'.

5.2. Analysis of Data Using Aspects of Grammaticalization Parameters in Table 1 to Show the Process of Change of the Verb Sị

Here, aspects of grammaticalization parameters will be used to analyse the data. Lehmann (2015), states that the fundamental aspects of every linguistic operation are the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic aspects; i.e. the selection and combination of linguistic sign. Using these parameters, the paradigmatic aspects of *sị* will be discussed, thereafter, the syntagmatic aspects will follow.

5.2.1. The Paradigmatic Aspects of *Ṣi*

The paradigmatic weight of a sign viewed paradigmatically is its *integrity.* It involves the processes of phonological attrition and desemanticisation (Heine 1993; Lehmann, 2002:114) or loss of semantic components/features. It is observed that in examples (4) - (6) the verb *ṣi* maintains its identity with regard to its meaning as *say, tell, talk, told* and a high tone. Thus, semantic and phonological integrity are maintained in the sentences where it functions as a main verb and subordinating clause as in example (7). However, there is a semantic loss in integrity when there is a remarkable decrease in the semantic integrity and/or semantic reduction as in examples (8), (9) & (10) where it changes its meaning from 'say' to *complementizer, supposing*, *let, thought, if, someone, and ask.*

(7) Ọ̀   jụọ   Ezindù **ṣị,**   ″Òleē ihe   i   **ṣī**   nà   o   mèrè?"
     PRO   ask   Ezindu say,   "what thing   PRO   say COMP PRO do-rV?
     S/he asked Ezindu saying, what did you said that s/he did?

(8).   Ezènnànya   kwuo   ṣị   nà   ihe   kpātārā   ọ̄nyā
      Ezennanya   speak   COMP that   thing   cause   injury

      dị̄   n'ūkwū,   kpàtàrà   imēkā   yā
      be   PREP-leg,   cause   wounding/damaging   it
      'Ezennanya said that what causes injury in the leg, causes its re-opening'

(9) Ò   sị,   "a   sị   nà   m   nwèrè nwa,   ò   so   m̄   b   ị   a
PRO   said   "PRO   say   that   PRO   have   child,   PRO   follow PRO come

      n'ubī   à"
      PREP-farm   DET.
      S/he said, supposing/assuming I have a child, s/he would have followed me to this farm

(10) Ụmụ̄Kasìe   ùgbu à nọ̀   kà   nwambē   nyụ̄rụ̄   ahụ̀,   à
    PL Kasie   now   stay   like   tortoise   pollute-rV   fart,   PRO

    sị   **sị**   kpùchie   akā   n'̄ı̄mī
    say   let   cover   hand   PREP-nose
    Now Kasie's children are staying like tortoise that farted, someone says let cover the nose with hands.

In examples (8), (9) & (10) above, the meaning changes from 'say' to 'complementizer, 'supposing' and 'let' respectively. However, in examples (11-13) below, there is a reduction in the phonological integrity that is, from high to low and downstep tones. Heine and Reh (1984:21) call it phonological attrition which is described as the successive subtraction of phonological features. In this instance, there is a loss of a suprasegmental feature, which is a high tone to a downstep tone.

(11) Obìnnà yipùrù   akpukpọukwū yā   chịsa   ǹ'àlà   ebe   a
     Obinna remove-rV   shoe   PRO   kept   PREP-ground   place   DET

     sị̄   hā   ràhụ   ǹ'èzi.
     told   DET   sleep   PREP-outside
    'Obinna removed his shoes and kept them on the ground and told them to sleep outside'

(12)   Ṣi   ṣī   ya   bị̀a
       IMP   say   PRO   come
       'Someone should tell him/her to come'

(13)   Chioma   sị̀rị̀   sị   sị   ha̅   che̍re
       Chioma   say-rV COMP say   them   wait
       'Chioma said that they should be told to wait'

5.2.2 The Paradigmaticity of -ṣi

It refers to the degree to which it enters a paradigm and is integrated into it and dependent on it. In other words, in paradigmatic cohesion, there is semantic integration of the members of a paradigm which can be linked to each other by paradigmatic relations with some semantic basis. There is homogeneity when *si* is used with similar composition with other words. For instance, in examples (14-16) below:

(14)   Ṣi   go̍tere m̅   nῙ̅ī
       Someone   buy   PRO   food
       'Someone should buy edible food for me'

(15)   Ṣi   yā   bị̀a
       Tell   PRO   come
       'Tell him to come'

(16)   Ṣi   sị   yā   bị̀a
       IMP   say   PRO   come
       'Someone should tell him/her to come'

The homonymous nature of *ṣi* makes it to function as a verb and a pronoun. Observe also its grammatical role in examples (17) & (18) below:

(17)   Ihe   bụ̅   ụ̀to   ijè   bùe   jechaa   **sị́**   lọ̍ta
       Thing be   sweet journey be PRO   go-complete let   come back
       'The sweetness of a journey lies in going and coming back'

(18)   N'ime izù   àto   ahụ̀,   a   **sị́**   m̅   kwùo…
       PREP week   three that, PRO   if   I   speak…
       'During that week, if I'm asked to speak…

5.2.3. The Paradigmatic Variability of *ṣi*

The paradigmatic variability refers to language user's freedom of choosing other signs as a whole in its place or omitting it entirely. That is to say, the extent to which the sign has become obligatory in the system. This grammaticalization process occurs when the use of linguistic structures becomes increasingly more obligatory. See examples (19) and (20) below:

(19)   O   kwùrù   nà   ọ̀   gaghῙ̅   ābị̄ā
       PRO   speak-rV   COMP PRO   go-NEG   come
       'S/he said that s/he will not come'

(20)   Ọ   sῙ̅   nà   ọ̀   gaghῙ̅   ābị̄ā
       PRO   speak-rV   COMP PRO   go-NEG   come
       'S/he said that s/he will not come'

It is observed that in example (19) *ṣi* is omitted and the verb *kwu* 'speak' is used in its stead giving the meaning of said. In this case, the language user has the freedom to choose other verbs as in exemplified in (19) to take the place of the verb *ṣi* as used in example (20).

5.3. Syntagmatic Aspects of *Ṣi*
This involves the syntagmatic weight/structural scope of a linguistic sign, syntagmatic cohesion/bondedness and syntagmatic variability. The structural scope refers to the structural size of the construction it can help to form. The structural size decreases with increasing grammaticalization; while the bondedness refers to the closeness of a structure to another structure with which it bears a syntagmatic relation, the syntagmatic variability refers to the ease with which a sign can be shifted around with respect to those constituents with which it forms a construction. There is a reduction in this quality with increasing grammaticalization. All these parameters will be used to examine the verb *ṣi*.

5.3.1. The Structural Scope of *Ṣi*
Ṣi has a full structural scope of a main verb at the syntagmatic level. However, it can function as a complementizer and introducer at the clausal level. For instance, in example (21) it has the whole sentence as its structural scope, while in example (22) it reduces its scope to function as an introducer.
(21) Ọ̀   sị̀rị̀   gịnị̀?
      PRO   say-rV   what?
      'What did s/he say'?

(22) Ọ   sị̄,   "Nnà   lèe,   adị̀   m   ndụ̀"
      S/he   say,   "Father   see   be   PRO   alive"
      'S/he said, "Father see, I am alive"'

5.3.2. The Bondedness of *Ṣi*
The verb *ṣi* has close affinity with verbs of speaking such as *kwu* 'talk', *gwa* 'tell', *ju* 'ask', e.t.c., hence it co-occurs with them. Although, it is independent as a main verb, it is also structurally bonded as an introducer or complementizer in sentences. Observe in the example below:
(23) Ọ   gwàrà/kwùrù/jụ̀rụ̀   ya   si…
      PRO   tell/speak/ask-rV   him/her   say
      'S/he told/spoke/asked him/her that…'

5.3.3. Syntagmatic Variability of *Ṣi*
With regard to variability, *si* can be possibly shifted around the constituents with which it forms construction. In comparing sentences (23) & (24), it is observed that *sị* has the freedom of functioning as the main verb as in example (25).
(24) Ọ   sị̄   sị̄   gwa/jụ̀ọ   yā
      PRO   say   that   tell/ask   him/her
      'S/he said that we should tell/ask him/her'

(25) Ṣi   yā   jụ̀ọ   yā
      Tell   him/her   ask   him/her
      'Tell him/her to ask him/her

The foregoing shows that the structural scope decreases with increasing grammaticalization. There

seems to be a reduction in the quality of the verb being shifted around among constituents in a construction as it increases in grammaticalization.

Conclusion

The study investigated the verb *ṣi* in order to find out if it can undergo the process of grammaticalisation using the parameters of Lehmann's (2015) aspects of grammaticalization. Consequent upon the foregoing, it is observed that the verb understudy can undergo the process of grammaticalization obviously seen in the varied meaning changes and the grammatical role it plays in structures as shown in the study. This study has also demonstrated that *ṣi* is gradually ripping off its lexical features to acquiring grammatical features such as pronoun which was confirmed by Udemmadu (2015) and as complementiser which was affirmed by Mmadike (2015), although not along the lines of grammaticalization.

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