

SYNTAX OF ADJUNCTS IN THE IGBO LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This work examines the syntax of adjuncts in the Igbo language. It aims to verify the claim of Mbah (1999) that adjuncts have many privileges of occurrence within a sentence structure. The work seeks to investigate adjuncts in Igbo to explicate the meaning of adjunct and ascertain their features and syntactic positions. The data used in this work are drawn from the standard Igbo through the researcher's 'day to day' interaction with Igbo speakers and the researcher's intuitive knowledge of the language. The transformational theory of Chomsky (1965) will shape the study. The descriptive analyses of the Igbo sentences used as data confirm that adjuncts are optional constituents and have many privileges of occurrence within a sentence structure; there are three main positions accessible to the adjuncts in a sentence structure namely: initial, medial and final positions; their meanings are unlike with any other lexical category, the same in these positions. The work supports the claim that adjuncts in the Igbo language are mobile constituents which can occupy different positions within a sentence structure.

Key words: syntax, adjunct, Igbo language

Introduction

In linguistics, sentences are divided into two parts: subject and predicate which can also be called noun phrase and verb phrase. The predicate (verb phrase) includes the verb plus any other phrase modifying the verb. The verb phrase contains a verb which is the head of the verb phrase and other words which are dependents to the head. The dependents are all the remaining words in a phrase other than the head. Normally, dependents are classified into two main types namely: Adjuncts and complements. While adjuncts are optional, complements are unavoidable in a sentence structure. The difference between them is that a complement is a phrase selected by the head and has a close relationship with the head whereas adjuncts are more like additional information attached to a sentence structure which do not have much to do with the head; whose removal does not affect the structural identity of the rest of the construction. This study investigates the adjuncts in the Igbo language to substantiate the mobility and many privileges of occurrence of adjunct within sentences in the language.

The first part of this study handles the introduction. The literature and empirical review are taken care of in the second part. The analysis of data was done in section three while conclusion was made in the last section. The tone marking convention used in this work is the Green and Igwe convention. Only the high tone is left unmarked, the grave accent (`) is used to mark the low tone while the macron (-) is used to mark the down stepped tone.

Literature Review

Overview of Adjuncts

Several scholars have made contributions to the study of adjunct. Lyons (1968), defines an adjunct as "an optional or optionally dispensable part of a sentence, clause, or phrase that when it is removed will not affect the remainder of the sentence except to discard from it some auxiliary information." He sees an adjunct as the modifier of the head, the head upon which it is dependent but from which it can be dispensed without any consequent grammatical change in the sentence. The above view shows that adjuncts are optional modifying and embellishing constituents in clause structure. In line with the foregoing, Tallerman, (2005:19) opines that "Adjuncts are more like 'bolt-on' extra pieces of information and does not have a particularly close relationship with the head". Going further, he says "An adjunct is a phrase which is an optional modifier to a head, i.e., not selected by a head, adjuncts typically have a rather loose relationship with the head that they modify (p.247).

Nordquist (2013), in agreement with the above views stipulates "an adjunct is a term used in grammatical theory to refer to an optional or secondary element in a construction: an adjunct may be removed without the structural identity of the rest of the construction being affected. Emenanjo (1978) argues that an adjunct is the construction type that can occur in the adverbial slot. He claims that:

Strictly speaking, the adjunct is not part of the VP, since it modifies the whole utterance. The adjunct can be added freely to all sentences, like the PP, it can occur before the PP (p. 162).

In Emenanjo's view, the adjunct is not subcategorised by the verb, which entails that the adjunct is significantly optional and enjoys freedom of movement in a clause structure.

Classification of Adjuncts

Some scholars classify adjuncts in different ways. Thomson (1986:180ff) sees adjuncts as adverbs, which can be classified in many ways but one simple way is to classify them according to the elements that they modify. He classified adverbs that form an integral part of the clause they occur in as adjuncts. He further identifies some other adverbs that help to join the clause they occur into another as conjunct and another class of adverbs that neither form an integral part of the clause they occur in nor help join their own clause to another clause elsewhere, but instead express a parenthetical opinion of the speaker as disjuncts.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973:210) have eight classes of adjuncts. These are: view point, focus, intensifier, process, subjects, place, time and others which can be termed contingency adjuncts. Going further, Quirk and Greenbaum subclassified adjuncts into classes that are essentially semantic. The eight classes and their sub classes are as follows: view point adjuncts, focusing adjuncts (additive, limiter), intensifier adjuncts (emphasizer, amplifier, downtoner), process adjuncts (manner, means, instrument), subject adjuncts (general, volitional, formulaic), place adjuncts (position, direction), time adjuncts (when, duration, frequency, relationship), other adjuncts (purpose, cause, reason...). According to internet grammar (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk>), many types of constituents can function as adjuncts; the following examples are given: Noun phrases functioning as adjuncts; these NPs as adjuncts general refer to time as in these examples:

1. (a) Dave gave speech *last week*
 (b) *Next summer*, we are going to Spain
 (c) We've agreed to meet the *day after tomorrow*

Adverbial phrases functioning as adjuncts:

2. (a) They ate their meal *too quickly*
 (b) She works *very gracefully* down the steps
 (c) *Suddenly*, the door opened

Prepositional phrases functioning as adjuncts:

3. (a) Sussan went to school *in New York*
 (b) I work late *on Mondays*
 (c) *After work*, I go to a local restaurant

PPs as adjuncts generally refer to time or to place; they tell us when or where something happens. Clauses functioning as adjuncts: subordinate clauses can function as adjuncts. Examples:

4. (a) *While we were crossing the park*, we heard a loud explosion.
 (b) I was late for the interview *because the train broke down*.
 (c) My car broke down, *so I had to walk*.

In all the above examples, notice also that the adjuncts express additional and optional information, if they are omitted, the remaining clause is still syntactically complete.

While Kalu (1990) claims that sometimes adjuncts are subcategorised obligatorily by the verb; Mbah (1999) argues that part of the unique characteristics of adjuncts is that they have many privileges of occurrence within a sentence structure and that this freedom of movement marks adjuncts from

adverbial phrases in the Igbo language. According to Mbah (1999), adjunct as a complement has a unique form and function. In his opinion “part of the unique characteristic of adjuncts is that they have many privileges of occurrence within a sentence structure”. Adjuncts are very mobile in their syntactic configuration. Their meanings are unlike with any other lexical category, the same in these positions. Furthermore, they are neither subcategorised by the noun nor by the verb. This present study upholds the view that adjuncts differ from complement given to their freedom of movement unlike complements which maintain close relationship with the head they modify.

In his contribution, Oye (2009) also views adjuncts as detachable extra nuclear constituents of a sentence signifying that adjuncts can be removed from a structure without any adverse effect on the meaning of the construction.

Emenanjo (2015:194-196) in agreement with Mbah’s submission refers to adjuncts as adverbials which can appear initially, medially and finally in an utterance with semantic nuances peculiar to their occurrences. He gives the examples below.

- 5(a) *Naanị ya* jere Aba Only he, went to Aba
 Sọsọ ya jere Aba Only he, went to Aba
- (b) O jere Aba *naanị ya* He went to Aba all alone/himself alone
 O jere Aba *sọsọ ya* He went to Aba all alone/himself alone
- (C) O jere *naanị* Aba He went only to Aba and did no other thing
 O jere *sọsọ* Aba He went only to Aba and did no other thing

Empirical Studies

A few studies on adjuncts are examined in this section. Mora-Bustos (2009) in his study on fixed adjunct in Spanish classifies adjuncts basically into two groups: those adjuncts that modify the predicate's nucleus, sentence's adverbs and adjuncts' adjective modifiers and the second group he termed fixed adjuncts or subcategorised adjuncts. In Spanish, there are verbs which subcategorize or require fixed adjuncts. These verbs are intransitive as in (6). The syntactic form of these adjuncts can be a prepositional phrase, an adjectival phrase, a bare- NP adverb and an adjunct subordinate clause or may appear as lexical adverbs.

- 6 a. (i) El niño se comporta *mal*
 DET boy CL.PRN=behave-3PSG.PR badly
 'The boy misbehaves'
- (ii) *El niño se comporta
 DET boy CL.PRN=behave-3PSG.PR
- b. (i) La gente procede *con cautela*
 DET people procede-3PSG.PR with caution
 'The people proceed cautiously'
- (ii) *La gente procede
 DET people proceed-3PSG.PR
- c. (i) María se siente enferma
 María CL.RF=feel-3PSG.PR sick
 'María feels sick'
- (ii) *María se siente
 María CL.RF=feel-3PSG.PR
- d.(i) Pedro vivió *una tarde perfecta*
 Pedro live-3PSG.PD DET afternoon perfect
 'Pedro lived a perfect afternoon'
- (ii) *Pedro vivió
 Pedro live-3PSG.PD
- e. (i) La corte actúo *cuando ilego el acusado*
 DET court act-3PSG.PD when arrive-3P.SG DET defendant
 'The court acted when the defendant arrived'

- (ii) *La corte actuo
 DET court act-3PSG.PD

On the other hand, if the verb is transitive, the direct object can also be replaced by a fixed adjunct, as in (7)

- 7a.(i) La actriz viste un traje rojo/ elegantemente
 DET actress wear-3PSG.PR DET dress red / elegantly
 'The actress is wearing a red dress / dresses elegantly'
- (ii) *La actriz viste
 DET actress wear-3PSG.PR
- b.(i) Las FARC asesinan policias / en la noche
 DET FARC murder-3PPL.PR police / at night
 'The FARC murders police at night'
- (ii) *Las FARC asesinan
 DET FARC murder-3PPL.PR
- c.(i) Juan conduce un BMW / cuando su padre esta enfermo
 Juan drive-3PSG.PR DET BMW/ when PS3PL father be-3PSG.PR sick
 'Juan drives a BMW / when his father is sick'
- (ii) Juan conduce un BMW
 *Juan drives 3PSG. PR DET BMW

In these clauses, (6) and (7), a nuclear predicate verb only has meaning if it has a complement in the form of fixed adjunct. According to Mora-Bustos (2009), fixed adjuncts almost always appear in intransitive sentences. Syntactically, these clauses have three basic units: subject, verb and fixed adjunct. These adjuncts may in principle occur in any order, principally in post-verbal adjacent position, but they can appear before the verb also if the subject moves to a post-verbal position. Intransitive verbs in clauses may be in the initial position but not at the end of the clause, as in (8).

8. a. Mariana actuaba compulsivamente/ a mis espaldas
 Mariana act-3PSG.CO compulsively / to my backs.
 'Mariana acted compulsively / behind my back'
- b. Compulsivamente/ a mis espaldas actuaba Mariana
- c. Actuaba Mariana compulsivamente/ a mis espaldas
- d. ?? Mariana compulsivamente/ a mis espaldas actuaba

In sentences with peripheral adjuncts, which are not subcategorized by the verb, as in (9), their movement is flexible, because they maybe in different positions, even the nuclear verb occurs in the final position in the clause.

9. a. Pedro se afeita cuidadosamente
 Pedro CL.RF=shave. 3PSG.PR carefully
 'Pedro shaves carefully'
- b. Cuidadosamente Pedro se afeita
- c. Pedro cuidadosamente se afeita

From the foregoing, we discover that in Spanish, peripheral adjuncts which are not subcategorized by the verb have a flexible movement while fixed adjuncts which are subcategorized by the verb may be in an initial or final position.

In another study, Mirheseini, Gowhary, Azizifar and Mirzahoseinni (2015) in a study titled "In contrastive analysis of place of Adjuncts in English and Persian sentences analysed 136 sentences collected from English story books and their Persian translations. The study shows that there is a meaningful difference between English and Persian regarding the place of adjuncts in sentences. The results affirm that in English, the adjuncts are placed in initial, middle and final positions, the initial and middle positions have the most frequency. In Persian, the initial position is the most frequently used position.

In his work, Mbah (1999) states that there are four main positions that are accessible to the adjunct. In his explanation, adjunct can occur at the sentence initial position where it functions either as a relator or as a modifier of the entire sentence. Mbah gives the following examples to justify his claim that adjuncts are very mobile in their syntactic configuration.

10(a) Mgbe ha byara, unu ga-ahụ ha.
When they come, you will see them

Unu ga-ahụ ha mgbe ha byara.
You will see them, when they come

(b) Maka na o nuru, Ugwu byara.
Because he heard, Ugwu came

Ugwu byara maka na o nuru.
Ugwu came because he heard

(c) Ada gara ahya n'utu, mgbe anyi puru.
Ada went to the market in the morning when we were absent
N'utu mgbe anyi puru, Ada gara ahya.
In the morning when we were absent, Ada went to the market

Mbah maintains that the meaning of adjuncts in the different positions is the same unlike with any other lexical category.

Theoretical Framework

The Transformational Theory of Chomsky (1965) will be of use to determine the syntactic positions of adjuncts. Transformational theory came into being as a result of the failure of Phrase Structure Grammar (PSG) to fulfil the three levels of adequacies for any syntactic theory to be accepted (Mbah, 2011:59). The shortcomings of the PS grammar necessitated the introduction of transformational theory as developed in the works of Chomsky (1965). Chomsky (1965) claims that, it is not always that all the lexical items that give a sentence its meaning appear in the spoken form of the sentence. The fact that they are elliptically absent does not foreclose their existence in the underlying structure (Robinson 1970, Mbah 1999). In other words, adequate grammar syntax must be able to provide all the lexical items that contribute to the meaning of a sentence and account for what happened to them before the surviving lexical items are spoken. These postulations have resulted in three levels of transformational grammar, namely: deep or underlying structure, transformational and surface structure. The Deep Structure (D-Structure) is the level where lexical items that give a sentence its meaning appear in their natural order. It is an abstract level where the underlying representation of formation is fully specified and all the constituents are in their original positions. Mbah (2009) states that transformation is the changes which the D-structure undergoes to make its constituents take their phonological positions so that, the structures could be grammatical or acceptable. By transformation operations, the elements of syntactic structure can be moved from one syntactic position to another or deleted, such that even though they appear in the deep level, they become absent in the surface structure or may be adjoined such that even though they are absent in the D-structure level they find themselves at the S-structure level or they are substituted with elements which are not originally at the D-structure. It can then be said that transformation is a rule that states how constituents of a sentence are reorganised or moved from one node to another. Transformation or change exists in four forms: movement, deletion, substitution and adjunction. Movement transformation is the type of transformation that involves the movement of some elements of the surface structures from their original syntactic positions to a position before or after the original. When the landing site is before their original position, it is called topicalisation, while if the landing site is a position after their original positions, the movement is called extraposition. Adjuncts are optional syntactic elements and so can be rearranged without affecting the meaning of the sentence structure. In this study, movement transformation is used to capture the syntactic mobility of adjuncts in the Igbo language.

Syntax of Adjuncts in the Igbo Language

In this section, the syntactic features and positions of adjuncts in the Igbo language will be examined.

Syntactic Features of Adjuncts

- (a) Optionality - This refers to (elements) that can be deleted from a syntactic or other structures. Adjuncts are always optional constituents. They have a fairly loose relationship with the head they modify and so can be detached.

For example;

11. *Ugbọ yā kwùsirì nà mbèrèdè*
Car his/her stop-pst suddenly
His/her car stopped suddenly
12. *Ha gàrà ahịa n'ùtùtù*
They go-pst market in the morning
They went to market in the morning

The italicised words *nà mbèrède* and *n'ùtùtù* in 11 and 12 are optional; they can be removed from the construction without any negative effects on the grammaticality of the construction.

Thus, we can have;

13. *Ugbọ yā kwùsirì.*
Car his/her stop-pst
His/her car stopped
14. *Ha gàrà ahịa.*
They go-pst market
They went to market

- (b) Preposing and Extraposing: Adjuncts can be detached e.g. from a head noun. It is possible to extrapose or prepose adjuncts because they are less tightly bound to the head noun. See examples 15a and c below.

- (c) Adjuncts are mobile: Adjuncts can be placed in different positions within a construction as the following examples show.

15. a. *Ngozi tìrì mkpu n'amaghī ama*
Ngozi shout-pst not knowing
Ngozi shouted without knowing
- b. *Ngozi n'amaghī ama tìrì mkpu*
Ngozi not knowing shout-pst
Ngozi without knowing shouted
- c. *N'amaghī ama, Ngozi tìrì mkpu*
Not knowing, Ngozi shout-pst
Unknowingly Ngozi shouted

This implies that adjuncts can be re-ordered with respect to one another.

- a. Adjuncts can be stacked: This means that more than one of them can appear in a sentence. A given head can be modified by a potentially unlimited number of adjuncts. Consider the following sentences.
16. *Ànyị gàrà àla Bèkee otùtù ùgboro n'àfọ gara àga*
1pl-prn go-pst land white many times last year
We went to overseas many times last year
17. *Emèka nùrù mmirì di n'iko, màkà nà ike gwùrù yā n'ehihie*
Emeka drink-pst water in cup because he be-pst weak in the afternoon
Emeka drank the water in the cup because he was weak in the afternoon

In no.16, *n'àfọ gara àga* and *otùtù ùgboro* are adjuncts modifying *ànyị gàrà àla Bèkee*.

In no.17, *dị n'iko*, *màkà nà ike gwùrù ya*, *n'ehihē* are adjuncts modifying *Emèka nùrù mmirī*.

Syntactic Positions of Adjuncts

Adjuncts can move into the junctures of the major syntactic categories without violating co-occurrence restrictions. In this study, we will consider three main positions accessible to the four main classes of adjuncts in the Igbo language namely: subject, manner, place and time adjuncts.

(a) Adjunct can occur at the sentence initial position: In this position, it either functions as a relator or as a modifier of the entire sentence. In this initial position they are focused. Many adjuncts may have initial position for emphasis or contrast. Subject or act-related adjuncts usually take the initial position in a structure. For example,

18. *Mgbè ha bìarà*, ànyị gà-àla.

When 3pl-prn come-past, 1pl-prn will leave

When they come, we will leave

19. *N'ezìokwu*, e tìrì yā ihe

Sincerely, he/she was beat-past

Sincerely, he/she was beaten

The italicized words in 18 and 19 are subject adjuncts. They are modifying the entire sentences and not just the action in the construction. The adjuncts, *mgbe ha bìarà* and *n'ezìokwu* in the above sentences refer to or give information about the whole sentences.

Time adjuncts can also occupy initial position in a structure. Consider these examples:

20. *N'ùtùtù*, ha rìrì nri

In the morning, they eat-past

In the morning, they ate

21. *N'elekerè ato*, ànyị gà-èje ahịa

At three o'clock, 1pl-prn will go to market

At three o'clock, we will go to the market

(b) Adjuncts can be placed at medial position: Medial position is any slot between the subject and the last obligatory element in a clause. In this position, they are normally placed before the verb or between the auxiliary and main verb. Adjunct of manner can take medial position in a structure. Consider the following illustrations;

22. *Emèka nà mbèrède* gbàrà ọsọ

Emeka suddenly run-pst run

Emeka suddenly ran

23. *Amàka na Ñkèchi n'anyammìrì* mèchìrì ọnụ

Amaka and Nkechi in tears close-pst mouth

Amaka and Nkechi in tears close their mouths

In example 22, the italicised adjunct- *nà mbèrède* came between the subject and the predicate. While in 23, the adjunct *n'anyammìrì* came before the main verb.

(c) Adjuncts can also occur at the final-position in a structure: The term final-position is used for those adjuncts which are commonly placed after the verb and after any objects which may occur in the sentence usually as a supplement. In the final position, an adjunct can come after an intransitive verb. Time adjuncts normally have final-position. For example;

24. *Ò làrà n'ọnwa* gàrà agà

1sg-prn leave-pst last month

He left last month

25. *Òbì gàrà ahịa ùbọchì Mọnde*

Obi go-pst market day Monday

Obi went to market on Monday

In 24, the italicised adjunct *n'onwa gàrà àga* came after the verb in the final position while the adjunct in 25 *ùbòchì Mònde* came after the object in the final position. Adjuncts indicating manner can come in the final-position as shown in the sentences below.

26. Ànyị rùrù ùlò *n'egbùghi ogè*
 1pl-prn get-pst home not killing time
 We got home in less than no time
27. Nne yā tiri yā ihe *nà mwùtè*
 Mother 3sg-prn beat-pst 3sg-prn in agony
 His/her mother beat him/her in agony

Place adjuncts also come in the final-position as exemplified in the following sentences.

28. Ò riri nri *n'àzụ ùlò*
 3sg-prn eat-pst food in back house
 He/she ate behind the house
29. Ha nyèrè yā ego *na mbara ezi*
 3pl-prn give-pst 3sg-prn money in compound
 They gave him/her money in the compound

The above examples reveal that adjuncts are very mobile in their syntactic configuration. Their meanings remain the same in the different positions.

As has been stated earlier, there are three main positions that are accessible to the adjuncts in sentence structure namely: initial, medial and final positions. In the transformational theory, the syntactic mobility of adjuncts is realized through movement transformation. This type of transformation involves the movement of some elements of the surface structure from their original syntactic position to a position before or after the original. When the landing site is before their original position, it is called topicalization, while if the landing site is a position after their original position, the movement is called extraposition. For example;

- 30 a. Nkèchi tiri mkpu *n'anya mmirī*
 Nkechi past-shout in eyes water
 Nkechi shouted in tears
- b. *N'anya mmirī*, Nkèchi tiri mkpu
 In eyes water Nkechi past-shout
 In tears, Nkechi shouted
- c. Nkèchi *n'anya mmiri*, tiri mkpu
 Nkechi in eyes water past-shout
 Nkechi in tears shouted

In sentence 30(a) the adjunct *n'anya mmirī* is in the final position (extraposed), in sentence 30(b) the adjunct *n'anya mmirī* moved to the initial position (topicalization), while in sentence 30(c) the adjunct *n'anya mmirī* moved to the medial position between the subject and the predicate.

Co-occurrence of Adjuncts

When adjuncts co-occur, they do so recursively (Mbah 1999:169). This implies that adjuncts can cluster or come together in a particular position. When this is the case, the order in which they are to be placed has to be decided. As Umera-Okeke & Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2010) observed, there is no hard and fast rule about the order of adjuncts in the final position. It depends on the rhythm and emphasis. However, adjuncts of manner should come before adjunct of place which in turn comes before adjunct of time. Let's see this in the examples that follow;

- 31 a. Amaka, *n'ezikwu* gùrù egwu *n'oke olù*, *n'ùtutù*
 Amaka in truth sing-past song with loud voice in morning
 Amaka truly sang with a loud voice in the morning
- b. Nne Obi tiri yā ihe *n'iwe*, *mgbe* *ọ lotàrà n'àbàlì*
 Mother Obi beat 3sg-prn something in anger when 3sg-pro come-past back at
 night

Obi's mother beat him in anger when he/she came back in the night

In examples 31(a), in the final position, *n'oke olù* which is an adjunct of manner came before the time adjunct- *n'ütutù*, likewise in 31(b), the manner adjunct *-n'iwe* came before the time adjuncts- *mgbè o lotàrà* and *n'abàli*.

Findings and conclusion

Findings

The analyses of the sentences used as data reveal that adjuncts are optional elements that have many privileges of occurrence within a sentence structure. From our analysis, we have established that there are three main positions accessible to the adjunct in a sentence structure namely: initial, medial and final position. Our findings show that in the initial position, the adjunct functions as a modifier of the entire sentence usually for emphasis or contrast. In the medial position, it is placed before the verb or between the auxiliary and main verb. Adjuncts in the final position are commonly placed after the verb and after any objects which occur in the sentence usually as a supplement. Furthermore, adjuncts are neither subcategorised by the noun nor by the verb. It is also established that adjuncts can cluster or come together in a particular position and can be reordered with respect to one another. Our study also confirms that in Igbo, adjuncts in the medial position are not used frequently as adjuncts in initial and final position.

Conclusion

The work examined the syntax of adjuncts in the Igbo language. The foundation for the study was laid through the introduction, literature review, empirical review and then the data analysis that reveals that adjuncts are optional or secondary elements of a construction which when removed do not affect the remainder of the sentence except to discard from it some auxiliary information. The investigation also shows that adjuncts are syntactically mobile confirming their having many privileges of occurrence within a sentence structure as Mbah (1999) asserts. From the findings, a given head may be modified by a potentially unlimited number of adjuncts and they can take any position in a construction.

This study will be of immense value to students and teachers of Igbo grammar. Also, upcoming researchers in syntax will use the findings as a stepping stone to higher dimensions in linguistic analysis of grammatical categories. Above all, the study is an addition to the number of reference materials on the adjunct in the Igbo language.

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