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HEAD AND MOVEMENT PATTERNS OF RELATIVE CLAUSE
CONSTRUCTIONS IN IDÓMÀ

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Abstract

The paper is a study of the syntactic headedness and movement of Idómà relative clauses. The motivation for the choice of the study hinges on the central role relative clauses play as the nucleus of complex sentences. Data gathered from both primary and secondary sources reveal that Idómà relative clauses are amenable to external headedness, internal headedness, headless and correlative. Some of the movement theories, principles and strategies that are productive in the analysis of Idómà relative clauses are: Wh-movement, Relativised Minimality, Empty Category Principle as well as Trace theory. From the data, relative clauses in Idómà serve as a link between the matrix NP and the rest of the sentence. This paper hopes to make a valid contribution to the study of Idómà linguistics in particular and syntax in general. It is also seen as a contribution to the syntactic study of African languages.

Keywords: Headedness, Movement, Relative clauses and Idómà.

Introduction

This paper shows relative clauses as the heads of the construction which could be observed at various levels of the structure and how these affect their movement within the structure as well as the effect of the movement within the construction on the entire relative clause structure. In Idómà, phrases and clauses are headed by word classes, such that the noun phrase is headed by the noun or its equivalent. In relative clauses, the head is usually the relative pronoun. Idómà relative clauses are introduced by the relative pronoun **ń** ‘who’, ‘which’, ‘whom’, which is realised as a nasal consonant **ń** consistently bearing a high tone [+pronoun] feature. The sound following **n-** is determined by the initial sound of the vowel of the succeeding word such as; **né**, in **ń’Énèchẹ**, **na** in **ń’Álèchénù**, **ní as** in **ń’ígbánọ** and **nọ as** in **nọpẹ**, and so on. This realisation is due to the fact that most Idómà NPs are vowel initial. Also, **onyé** ‘who’ is used in a situation where the relative pronoun is at the beginning of the relative clause structure.

Idómà is the name of the language of the Idómà people who are predominantly found in Benue state with clusters of them found among other ethnic groups, especially the Afo and the Alago, in Nasarawa State and the Yala in Northern Ogoja, in Cross River State. The language is grouped along with Igede, Ukaan, Akweya, Yartye, and Etulo languages as belonging to the Idomoid group of West Benue Congo phylum of African languages. Other languages in this phylum include Igboid, Bantoid, Yoruboid, and so on (Williamson & Blench 2000). Linguistically, the Idómà of Benue State share a lot in common with their neighbours, but culturally, they differ to a large extent. Languages such as, Afor, (Eloyi) and Alago in Nasarawa State, Igala and Ebira in Kogi State, Akweya and Etulo in Benue State, as well as Jukun in Taraba State are sisters of Idómà. These languages have a high level of mutual intelligibility, given their historical and genetic commonalities. The intelligibility can

be asymmetric, such that, speakers of language **A** understand language **B** while speakers of language **B** are less able to do so, for instance, the Idòmà and the Etúlò. Intelligibility can be symmetrical, when sets of languages can be understood by others equally, for instance the Idòmà and the Alágò. As stated by Greenberg (1963), mutually intelligible languages usually are of close geographic origin and display very similar grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

This study is an attempt to explain the dynamics of an aspect of Idòmà syntax, which is a very important focal point in the analysis of any language. Although, missionaries, anthropologists, educationists, linguists and other researchers have done some very useful research work on Idòmà language. The following are few examples of scholars who have done one form of research or the other on the language. These are: Ameh (2000a); *Idoma Language for Primary Schools*, Makurdi: Onaivi and Ameh (2000b); *Teaching Indigenous Languages in Junior Secondary Schools: an Introduction to Language*, Armstrong (1955) *The Idoma speaking peoples*; Armstrong (1983) *Idomoid Languages of the Benue Cross River Valley*; Armstrong (1985) *Idoma Orthography*; as well as Yakubu (2005) *Noun Phrases in Idoma Syntax: A Transformational Generative Analysis*.

However, the near - absence of research work on the syntax of Idòmà , for instance, relative clauses and the concepts of headedness and movement have not been studied adequately by any scholar to the best of the present writers' knowledge. These have provided the motivation for undertaking this study. In view of these challenges , the study aims to provide a coherent analysis of relative clauses in Idòmà that will reflect the native speaker's grammatical competence and fill the afore-mentioned gaps in the literature.

Review of Related Literature

Headedness and movement are key in syntax in general and relative clauses, in particular. In fact, these concepts dominate the study of relative clauses, Idòmà inclusive. In any phrase or clause, there is a distinction between the overall head of the phrase or clause. The head is the most important word in the clause. It is a grammatical description of some types of clause to refer to the central element which is distributionally equivalent to the clause as a whole. Such constructions are sometimes referred to as headedness. Headedness also determines any relationship of concord or government in other parts of the phrase or sentence (Crystal 2007). Tallerman, (2005: 95) summarises the properties of the head thus:

- i. The head bears the most important semantic information in the phrase (clause)
- ii. The word class of the head determines the grammatical class of the entire phrase (clause)
- iii. Heads are normally obligatory
- iv. The head has the same distribution as the entire phrase, head plus dependents
- v. Heads select dependent phrases of a particular word class; these phrases are sometimes obligatory
- vi. Heads often require their dependents to agree with some or all of the grammatical features of the head
- vii. Heads may require dependent NPs to occur in a particular grammatical case

Syntactic heads have four categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. The head of a complex expression, such as relative clauses, is the constituent of that which lends itself to the expression (Crystal, 2007). Idòmà relative clauses lend themselves to externally headed, internally headed, headless and correlative. These are explicated as follows, based on Kroeger's (2005) classification.

Externally headed relative clauses are the type of clauses in which the head noun occurs outside the modifying clause, whether before or after, and most SVO languages are amenable to post nominal relative clauses (Kroeger, 2005). In an internally headed relative clause, the head noun appears inside the modifying clause (Kroeger, 2005). Headless relative clauses may or may not take the normal NP form (case, determiners etc) and contain a modifying clause which may be preceded by

a relative pronoun or relativizer, but lacks a head noun (Kroeger, 2005). In correlative, the head noun occurs both inside and outside the modifying clause. Relative clauses can appear anywhere in the matrix sentence where a 'normal' NP would be allowed (Kroeger, 2005).

Movement, on the other hand, has the effect of moving constituents usually one at a time, from one part of the phrase marker to another (landing site). Relative clauses in Idòmà are as a result of movement. Another alternative term is reordering or permutation. Two main types of movement rules have been used: Wh- movement and NP movement. The relative clauses are **CPs** preceded by the relative pronouns that are sentences. The pronoun could only occupy (Spec, CP), C, being reserved for heads. The predicate of the relative clause needs an internal argument and there are no overt elements present, but by analogy of Wh-question is followed by a trace whose antecedent is a pronoun. The rule for generating Wh- movement is, Wh- movement adjoins a Wh-phrase immediate to the left of **Comp** (Radford, 1981). The possibility that all movement rules may be reflexes of a single, universal rule is referred to as move alpha. The category which has been moved leaves behind an empty node, or trace, a moved constituent and it co-indexed trace form a movement chain (Crystal, 2007). According to Koopman (2000), movement is not subject to any economy conditions, but proceeds mechanically, blindly and to the closest available attractor. The hypothesis is that relative clause formation involves Wh-movement, and as well subject to subadjacency condition on movement.

In general, heads cannot move across other heads and can be displaced over significant distance in the tree, provided they move through the intervening head position; as soon as one position is skipped.

The trace is a movement via transformation, which leaves behind an empty category. When an element moves, the position it vacates is not entirely empty rather, it is filled by a trace of the moved element, which is co-indexed with the moved constituent (Chomsky, 1986; Cook & Newson, 2007). The major characteristic of trace is that it retains the syntactic and semantic properties of the moved element to which it is linked. There are restrictions of movement of a constituent in a structure and the movement of a constituent in a structure is restricted in terms of how far a constituent may move. Bounding theory favours a condition that limits the operation of movement of a constituent structure (Chomsky, 1989; Radford, 1989).

Relativized minimality theory within GB serve as constraints, states that an element must move to the nearest relevant position defined in relation to what movement is involved: head – movement, A- movement or $\bar{A}$ - movement. This means, if it is the head that is moving, then the nearest relevant position is the nearest head position (Haegeman, 1994).

Methodology

The study is limited to the Otúkpò dialect, the central dialect of Idòmà in which the orthography is written and approved by the National Educational Research Council of Nigeria (NERDC). Otúkpò dialect is spoken in Ugbójù, Oglèwù and Otúkpò districts. The research is however, concentrated in the Otúkpò district where the standard Idòmà dialect is spoken.

The primary sources came from the field, which include those that were derived directly from the native speakers through interviews and observations. These involved writing out over one hundred and seventy complex sentences translated into Idòmà by educated respondents. The language assistants/ consultants were Idòmà - English bilinguals; whose competence in the chosen dialect and the data could be verified by any native speaker of Idòmà. The consultants were chosen because they were native speakers and have lived in Otúkpò for a long time. Also part of primary sources are: Idòmà language programmes such as *ókà* news translation in Idòmà, *ókà ọnọ̀nẹ̀*, a magazine programme and *ókà* Idoma folktales from media houses such as Joy FM, Otúkpò, Radio Benue Idékpà Sub-Station. Secondary data are textual materials such as theses, dissertations and projects, journal articles, chapters in books, encyclopaedia, textbooks, internet, and so on. The researcher's native speaker competence in the language was also very useful in the collection,

collation, and elicitation of the data. This also helped to give direction to the work. The respondents were selected based on age, bilingual status, and length of time they had lived in the areas which are: Igbánónmájè, Odúdájè, Èúpì, Àhà as well as Otúkpíchò. Five respondents were selected from each of the villages, that is, three men and two women each from each village.

The researcher made use of five techniques for data collection, that is, the oral interviews, which involved one - on - one interaction between the researcher and the respondents, his own intuition as a native speaker, tape recording of interactions between the researcher and the respondents and subsequent translation of the data by the research assistants. Competent native speakers who were proficient in the dialect were also used to translate lesson series such as teaching English by radio, translation of English to Idòmà by Radio Benue Makurdi, Radio Benue Idèkpà Sub -Station and Joy FM Otúkpò. This enabled the researcher to elicit actual translation of the English to Idòmà version and to analyse Idòmà relative clauses.

From the data, one hundred and seventy sentences were generated, out of which one hundred and fifty, representing over ninety percent, were found to contain relative clauses. Based on the method applied for the collection of data, it was possible to have enough data needed for the analysis of relative clauses in Idòmà. This research adopts the descriptive method with emphasis on headedness and movement theories. In the analysis of Idòmà relative clauses, we recorded the rules to which the members of the community actually conform to the rules or norms of correctness in Idòmà.

Head Pattern in Idòmà Relative Clauses

Idòmà relative clauses lend themselves to both external and internal headedness, as well as headlessness and are correlative. These are explicated as follows, based on Kroeger's (2005) classification.

In Idòmà, externally headed relative clauses are the type of clauses in which the head noun occurs outside the modifying clause, whether before or after. The following are examples in Idòmà:

- (1). *N' lé apè á ná Adéyì jè lù Mèmùnà*
 1SG eat pawpaw the REL Adeyi give-PST to Memuna.
 'I ate the pawpaw which Adeyi gave to Memuna.'

The head of example (1) above is *apè a* –'the pawpaw' and not *ná Adéyì* 'that Adeyi'. *Apè a* 'the pawpaw' is outside the modifying clause *ná Adéyì jè lù Mèmùnà* 'that Adeyi gave to Memuna', showing an external headedness; the relative clause is headed by a structure outside the relative clause.

In Idòmà internally headed relative clauses, the head noun appears inside the modifying clause. The following is an example which is taken from the language.

- (2). *òchè á [nó ònyà á chò ẹchá ẹnè] lè yè nyọ Odúdájè*
 NP DET REL woman DET PST insult yesterday have move PST Odudaje
 'The man whom the woman insulted yesterday went to Odudaje.'

In example (2), the head noun *ònyà* 'woman' is inside the modifying clause; *nó ònyà á chò ẹchá ẹnè* 'whom the woman insulted yesterday'. That the relative clause is headed internally, there would be no need to look for the head elsewhere. This means that the head is found inside the relative clause. This shows that Idòmà is amenable to internally headed relative clauses.

Headless relative clauses may or may not take the normal NP form (case, determiners etc) and contain a modifying clause which may be preceded by a relative pronoun or relativizer, but lacks a head noun (Kroeger, 2005). That means, the interpretation of a headless relative clause depends on the

context or on the previous discourse, but quite often headless relative clauses are used to refer to people. The following is a headless relative clause construction.

- (3i). Ègèlè é [núm lá abòyín] lè òhí
 NP which whom I buy-PST by me has beauty
 ‘Bicycle that I bought by myself is good’

- (3ii) é [núm lá abòyín] lè òhí
 which whom I buy-PST by me has beauty
 ‘that I bought by myself is good’

In (3i) above, there is the presence of the head noun, but in (3ii), the head noun is absent and the statement is therefore, incomplete. The use of é ‘which’ in the example could be anything; in other words, it does not refer to any specific object within the context, and therefore cannot serve as the head of the construction. Such an absence of head noun makes the listener to rely on the previous discussion to get the meaning, which is exemplified in example (3i). The same construction could have a similar structure with its head recovered. Consider the following example:

- (4). ègèlè [núm lá abòyín]
 bicycle which I buy-PST by me
 ‘The bicycle I bought.’

In (4) above, the head of the construction is ègèlè ‘bicycle’ which makes the first informant aware of what is referred to without recourse to the previous information.

In correlative, according to Kroeger (2005), the head noun occurs both inside and outside the modifying clause. Relative clauses can appear anywhere in the matrix sentence where a ‘normal’ NP would be allowed. An example in Idòmà is as follows:

- (5). M má òchè nó wè òínè kúm
 1SG see NP REL BE brother POSS
 ‘I saw the man who is my brother.’

Sentence (5) above shows the head noun occur both inside and outside the modifying clause. The head noun is òchè ‘man’ and nó ‘who’ a relative pronoun are co-heads. Nó ‘who’ inside the modifying clause, refers to the head noun outside the modifying clause, òchè ‘man’. Both of them are co-referent and are joint heads in the construction.

Movement in Idòmà Relative Clauses

The relative clauses are **CPs** preceded by the relative pronouns that are sentences. The pronoun could only occupy (Spec, CP), C, being reserved for heads. The predicate of the relative clause needs an internal argument and there are no overt elements present, but by analogy of Wh-question, it is followed by a trace whose antecedent is a pronoun. The rule for generating Wh- movement is, Wh-movement adjoins a Wh-phrase immediate to the left of **Comp** (Radford: 1981). Consider the following example in Idòmà.

- (6a) òchè [nó yó nyà] [núm jílà mlà ----- ènè].
 NP REL is here REL meet with ----- yesterday
 ‘Here is the man whom I met -----yesterday’.

- (6b) *owè á [nú gómèntì á yà] bià bóbí*
 road DET REL government the make spoil bad
 'The road which the government constructed is bad.'

In example (6a) above, the wh- relative pronoun *núm* 'whom' moves from the object position of the verb *yó* 'is' to the initial position of the clause it introduces. In (6b), the two NPs *owè á* 'the road' and *gómèntì á* 'the government' are identical. These are the subject NPs of the matrix clause and the subject NP of the embedded clause respectively. In relativisation, the identical NP in the embedded clause is changed to a relative pronoun *nú* 'which' and moves to the COMP position of the embedded clause, thereby leaving a trace at the extraction site. It should be noted that the NP extraction is from the subject position of the embedded clause.

Also, within the Wh- movement, the interpretation of the relative pronoun in Idómà is also achieved through a rule of coindexation where the noun phrase and pronoun end up having the same index. This is expressed in examples (7) and (8).

- (7) *Ń jé [ochè [ná [IPAláchè gé hígwù]]]*
 1SG know NP REL NP will call
 'I know the man whom Alache will invite.'

The construction in (7) contains a complex NP with a relative clause. The head noun is modified by a clause (CP). The relative clause, therefore, is a CP preceded by the relative pronoun *ná* 'whom'. This is strikingly similar to the structure of indirect question. The pronoun *ná* 'whom' occupies [Spec, CP], C, being reserved for heads. The predicate of the relative clause, the verb *hígwù* 'invite'; needs an internal argument and *hígwù* 'invite' is followed by a trace whose antecedent is *ná* 'whom'. The complete S-structure of the relative clause in the above example and its D-structure are shown in the examples below:

- (8a) *[CP Ná [Aláchè gé [VP hígwù]]]*
 WH NP will invite.
 'Whom Alache will invite.'
- (8b) *[CP [IP Aláchè gé hí ɔnyè ígwù]]?*
 NP will VERB WH VERB
 'Alache will invite whom?'

The above examples (8a and b) show a case of Wh- movement, where *ná* 'whom', moves from base generated position as subject of the sentence in (9a) to the object position in (9b). In other words, in example (8a) *ná* 'whom' occupies a subject position, but as a result of movement the relative clause introducer *ná* 'whom', replaced with *ɔnyè* 'whom' (for the sentence to be grammatical), is in the object position of the sentence.

The hypothesis is that relative clause formation involves Wh-movement, and as well subject to subadjacency condition on movement. Consider the following examples in Idómà.

- (9) *ɛnyà wé ɔchè[ná Aláchè ká ánò hígwù].*
 this BE NP REL NP say she call
 'This is the man whom Alache claims that she invites'.
- (10). *ɛnyà wé ɔchè [ná Aláchè bi ká kánò hígwù].*
 this BE NP REL NP hold say she call
 'This is the man whom Alache made claim that she invite'.

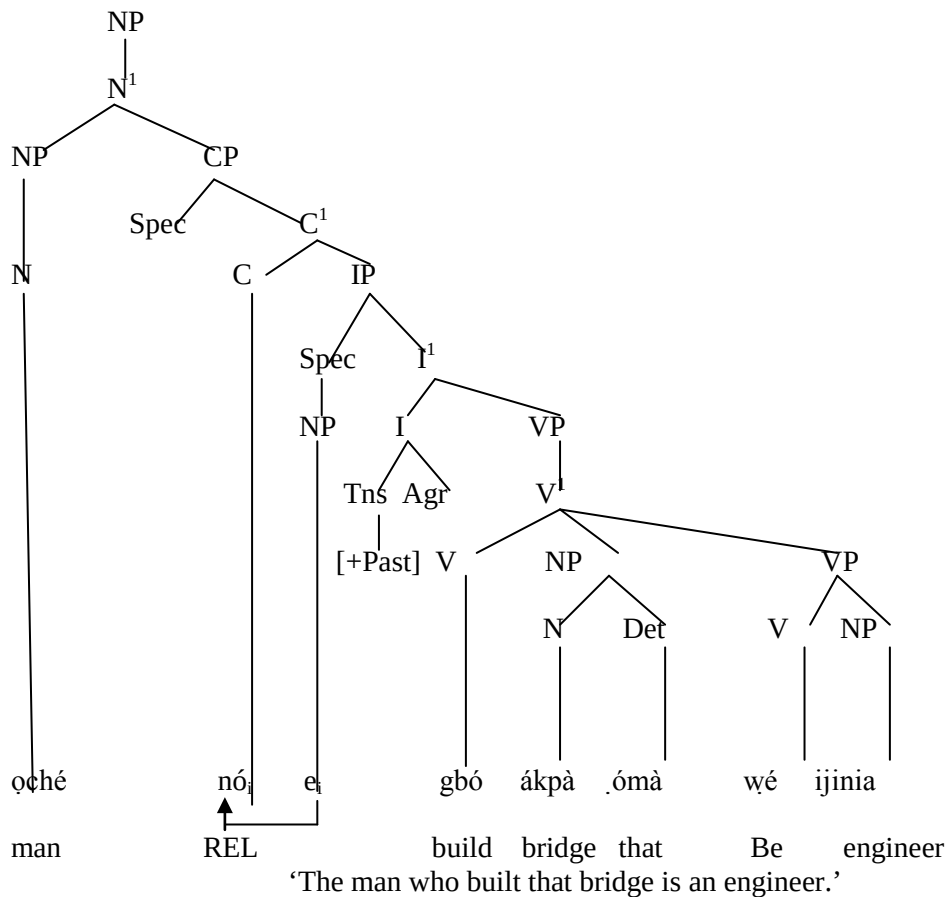
In example (9), we have a long movement, which is allowed in relative clauses. Example (10) is a violation of the complex NP constraint. With the NP using the subadjacency condition, we find out that relative clause formation is indeed a result of movement.

This sub-theory discusses the movement of lexical items and phrases from one position to another in a structure. The movement is determined by the moved constituent and the landing site (Mbah, 2006). The Movement of embedded relative clauses is attested in Idòmà . Consider the following example in the language.

- (11). *ọ́chẹ́ [nó gbó ákpà ọ́mà] wẹ́ injinia*
 man REL build bridge DEM is engineer
 'The man who built that bridge is an engineer.'

In example (11) above, **nó** 'who'; the Wh – word in the embedded relative clause, moves from the original position to COMP of the embedded sentence. This is displayed in the following phrase marker.

Fig. 2

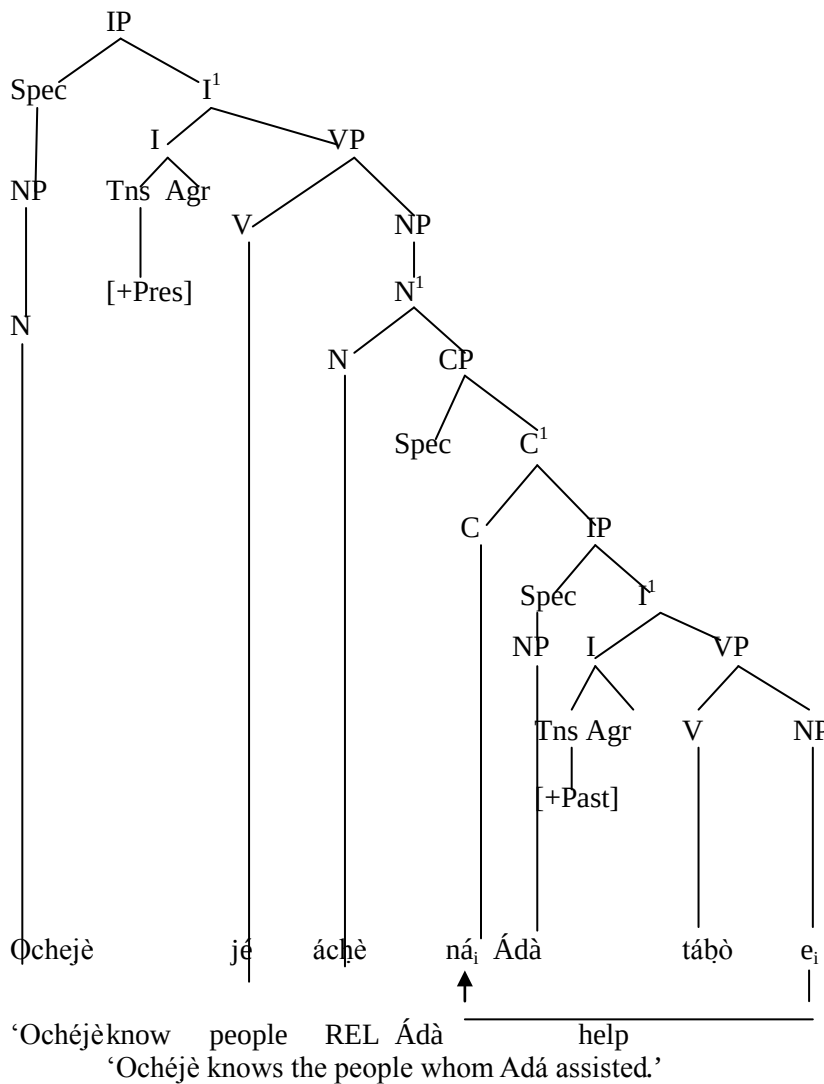


In data (11) above, the movement is from Spec (subject) position of IP and the Wh –word lands in the Spec of CP. The Wh-word in the example is an alpha that moves from its original position which specifies the noun phrase **ọ́chẹ́** 'the man'.

The principle of this sub-theory is that wherever there is a movement of any category (X), the moved X must leave its trace in the original position in order to satisfy the projection principle. Consider the following example and its phrase marker in the language.

- (12). *Ochéjè jè áchè [n'Ádà tábò]*
 Ocheje know people REL Ada help-PST
 'Ocheje knows the people whom Ada assisted.'

Fig. 3



In the above phrase marker (tree diagram), there is a movement from the object position. This is referred to as head- to- head movement. *N' Ádà* ‘whom Ada’ is in the object position. The object of *tábo* ‘assisted’ leaves its position leaving an empty space represented by [*t_i*]. The space left as a result of the movement shares with NP *áchè à* ‘the people’, which is the referent of the relative clause. The moved item in the example leaves its trace in the original position in order to preserve its selectional properties. This satisfies Government and Binding framework which states that despite the fact that

anything could be moved anywhere in the sentence, it must leave behind a phonologically null category (Pro or PRO) pronoun as trace and the movement must be meaning preserving. The movement demonstrated above does not lose any structural information.

Empty Category Principle (ECP)

In empty category principle (ECP), the phenomenon of Wh- word which is in an argument position, moves from where it is extracted to a landing site which must be empty (Ndimele, 2008). In Idòmà, the absence of the Wh- word does not affect the correctness of the structure. See the following sentences.

- (13) *oyí nó lẹ egéle*
 boy who has bike
 'The boy who has a bike.'
- (14) *óínónyá nó lẹ ìlì*
 girl who has cloth
 'The girl who has a piece of cloth.'
- (15) *oyí a [e] lẹ egéle*
 boy the has bike
 'The boy has a bike'
- (16) *óínónyá a [e] lẹ ìlì*
 girl the has cloth
 'The girl has cloth.'

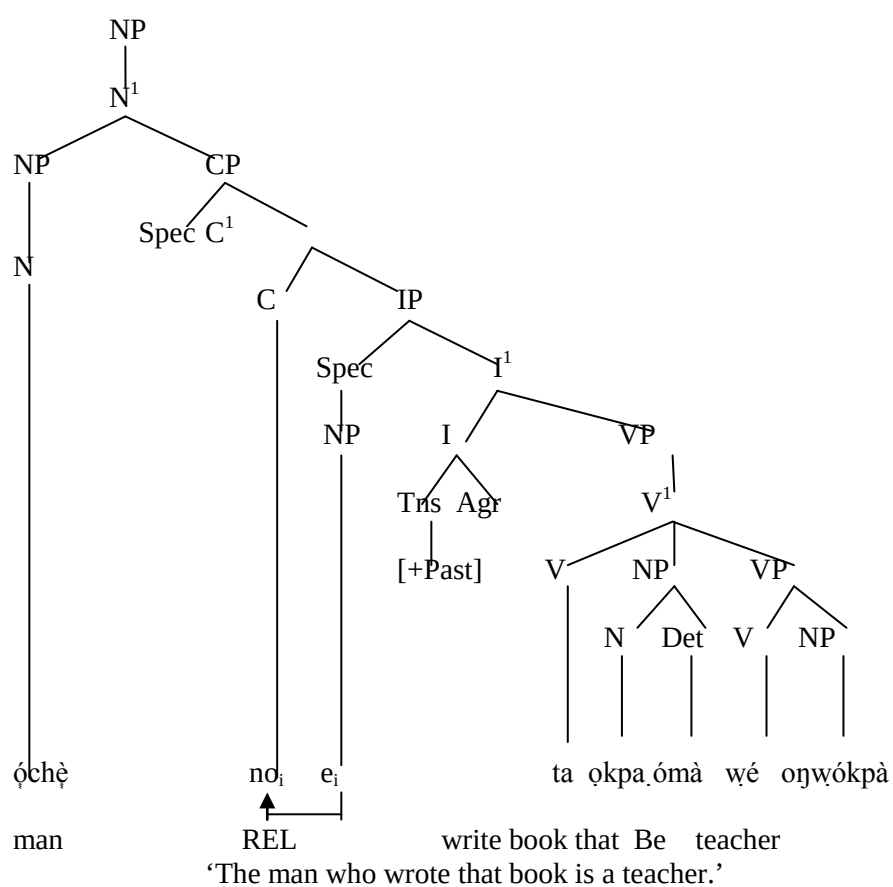
Sentences (13) and (14) have the relative clause introducer *nó* 'who', while sentences (15) and (16) do not. The NP in the embedded clause that is co-referential to the relativized subject NP is empty. The absence of the relative clause introducer, however, does not affect the grammaticality of the structure in Idòmà.

In ECP, movement is possible within the embedded relative clauses to COMP. Consider the following example in Idòmà.

- (17) *ochẹ [nó tá ọkpá ọmà] wẹ onwọkpá*
 NP REL VERB book that is teacher
 'The man who wrote that book is a teacher.'

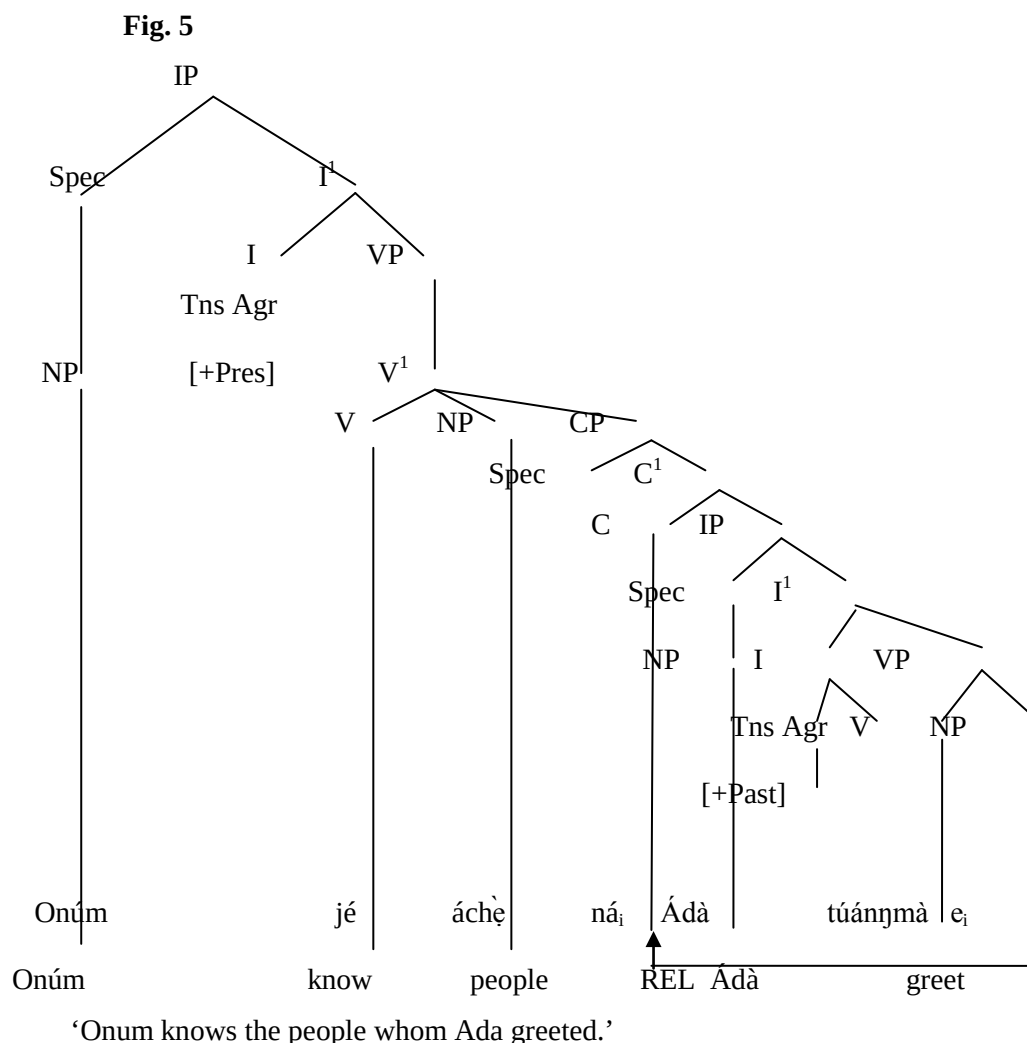
'Nó'- 'who', in (17), (the Wh-word in the embedded relative clause) moves from the original position to the COMP of the embedded sentence as shown in a phrase marker.

Fig. 4



In example (17), the movement is from Spec (subject) position of IP and the Wh-word lands in the SPEC of CP. Consider the contrast in the following example and its phrase marker.

- (18). *Onúm jè achè à [ń' Ádá túaúymà]*
 NOM know NP DET REL Ada them greet
 ‘Onum knows the people whom Ada greeted’.



In figure (5) above there is a movement from the object position. This is referred to as head to head movement. **Ádà** ‘whom Ada’ is in the object position of the relative clause. The object of **túánḡmà** ‘greeted’ vacates its position leaving an empty space represented by [e_i]. The space left as a result of the movement shares with NP **áchè à** ‘the people’, which is the referent of the relative clause.

Still, in Empty Category Principle (ECP), the phenomena of superiority and of relativized minimality encourage Wh-movement. The Wh-word, which is in an argument position moves from where it is extracted to a landing site, which must be empty. In the process of landing, it leaves a trace of itself at its original position. When such occurs, the head that is displaced moves to another (head) position. The following are examples in Idòmà.

- (19) [ɔnyé_i Adúma gbókò_i tó] gá éga ɔnyè
 whom NP beg to him come place whom
 ‘Whom did Aduma persuade to visit whom.’

- (20) [ɔnyé₂ Adúma gbókò lɔnyé₁ kó nyò₁₂]
 whom NP beg to who to VERB

‘Whom did John persuade whom to visit.’

Considering the above examples (19 & 20), it is agreeable that in all cases, some elements have failed to make ‘the shortest move’. The movement of *ónyè* ‘Whom’ to [Spec, CP] is longer than the movement of *ónyè* ‘whom’ to this position. In (21), the moved element has skipped a position, it could have reached by a shorter move, had that position not been filled.

The Trace Sub-Theory

The trace is a movement via transformation, which leaves behind an empty category. When an element moves, the position it vacates is not entirely empty but is filled by a trace of the moved element, which is co-indexed with the moved constituent (Chomsky, 1986; Cook & Newson, 2007). The major characteristic of trace is that it retains the syntactic and semantic properties of the moved element to which it is linked. Consider the following examples in (21).

- (21) *Inálégwù jè áchè à [n’ Ádí chùáèchà]*
 Inálégwù know NP det REL Adi insult
 ‘Inalegwu knows the people whom Adi insulted.’

In example (21), there is a movement from the object position. *N’Ádí* ‘whom Adi’ is in the object position of matrix clause. The object of *èchà* –‘insulted’ vacates its position leaving an empty space. The space left as a result of the movement shares with NP *Inálégwù*, which is the referent of the relative clause. That is, they could be traced to each other.

Traces in Idòmà are governed by either head or an antecedent. Thus, traces in the object position are always governed by the head they are objects of. Traces in subject position are never head governed and therefore must be antecedent governed. The trace is represented by a (t) which is co-indexed with the moved element to serve as the link between them. Consider the following examples.

- (22) *owè á [nú gómèntì á yà] bià bóbí*
 road the REL NP DET make spoil badEMP
 ‘The road which the government constructed is very bad.’

- (23) *ochè[nó yó nyà] [núm jílà mlà] ----- ẹnẹ.*
 man REL is here REL meet with ----- yesterday
 ‘Here is the man whom I met -----yesterday.’

In example (22), the two NPs namely, *owè á* ‘the road’ and *gómèntì á* ‘the government’ are identical, as both of them are nouns. These are the NP subject of the matrix clause and the NP subject of the embedded clause. In relativisation, the identical NP in the embedded clause is changed to a relative pronoun *nú* ‘which’ and moved to the COMP position of the embedded clause, thereby leaving a trace at the extraction site. It should be noted that the NP extraction is from the subject position of the embedded clause. In example (23), the Wh- relative *núm* ‘whom’ moves from the object position of the verb *jílà* ‘met’ the initial position of the clause it introduces. The interpretation of the relative pronoun in Idòmà is also achieved through a rule of co-indexation where the noun phrase and pronoun end up having the same index. This is expressed in the following examples.

- (24). *m jé [ochè [CP ná [IPAláchè gé hígwù]]]*
 I VERB NP REL NP will call
 ‘I know the man whom Alache will invite.’

The construction in (24) above contains a complex NP with a relative clause. The head noun *óché* ‘man’ is modified by a clause *ná Aláché gé hígwù* ‘whom Alache will invite’ (CP). The relative clause therefore, is an CP preceded by the relative pronoun *ná* ‘whom’. From the example given above, one notices the interwoven relationship that exists between the trace theory of movement and ECP, in the language; one leads to another.

Movement Constraints in Idoma Relative Clauses

There are restrictions of movement of a constituent in a structure and the movement of a constituent in a structure is restricted in terms of how far a constituent may move. Bounding theory favours a condition that limits the operation of movement of a constituent structure (Chomsky, 1989; Radford, 1989).

Relative clauses are formed in much the same way as interrogative. An operator phrase, which may be either an EC operator, (OP) or morphologically identical to a question phrase, is moved to SPEC, SP, leaving a trace that functions as a variable. Consider the following examples in Idómá:

- (25) *Aché à [ná Awúlù chéí ójílà múlúwà]*
 people the [whom Awulu expect to meet with]
 ‘The people whom Awulu expects to meet.’
- (26) *Aché à [ná Awúlù chéí ójílà múlúwà]*
 people the [OP that] Awulu expect to meet with]
 ‘The people who Awulu expect to meet.’

In each of the cases in (25) and (26), the relative clause, *n’Awúlù chéí ójílà* ‘who/ that Awulu expect to meet’ is an open sentence functioning as a predicate. Movement in this example is in the overt and satisfies the bounding conditions on overt movement. There is a relationship between the noun and the relative pronoun, which the relative pronoun is achieved through a rule of co-indexation. This co-indexation shows that the relative clause and the noun phrase have the same referent.

Relativized Minimality

Relativized minimality theory within GB serves as constraints, states that an element must move to the nearest relevant position defined in relation to what movement is involved: head – movement, A-movement or $\bar{A}$ - movement. This means, if it is the head that is moving, then the nearest relevant position is the nearest head position (Haegeman, 1994).

In Idómà relative clauses, the relationship with the head noun, as the position they are found, is very close to the head noun. This, therefore, means that if the relative clause is undergoing a movement, then the nearest relevant position is the head position; as seen in the following Idómà example.

- (27) *Ọché [nó wẹ ọchéńẹhì] yọ dóchè*
 man REL BE person rich VERB sick
 ‘The man who is rich is sick.’
- (28) *Ọché [nó nyẹ gwálọ tá ẹńẹà] wẹ óhẹhọ*
 man REL VERB move PST us yesterday BE farmer
 ‘The man who left us yesterday is a farmer.’
- (29) *Ọchí lólọhì né má ọwẹ gájẹ*

tree beautiful that they see roadPST go down
 'The beautiful tree that they saw on the road has fallen.'

In the above examples, the relative clauses have a relation of describing the head noun. In (27) *nó wẹ ọchẹnéhì* 'who is rich' describes the condition of the noun *ọchẹ* 'the man'. *Nó nyẹ gwálọ tá ẹnèà* 'who left us yesterday' in (28) and *né má ọwẹ* 'that they saw on the road' in (29) describes the head nouns or noun phrases *ọchẹ* 'the man' and *Ọchí lólólhì* 'the beautiful tree'. This, therefore, means that the movement of the NP is to the nearest head equivalent which is the relative clause. Both the NP and the relative pronouns are co-heads; one describing the other.

Conclusion

This paper has presented key issues in Idómà relative clauses and the following are attested: externally headed relative clauses, internally headed relative clauses, headless relative clauses and correlative relative clauses. Some of the movement theories, principles and strategies that are productive in the analysis of Idómà relative clauses are: Wh-movement, Projection Principle and Gapping strategy, Subject-qualifying relative clause and object-qualifying relative clauses, Bounding theory, Relativised Minimality, Empty Category Principle as well as Trace theory. From the data, relative clauses in Idómà serve as link between the matrix NP and the rest of the sentence.

The research has contributed to the study of African languages. Also, the study shows results that are quite distinct from other researchers in Idómà and has, therefore, laid a foundation in language study for researchers in Idómà and other African languages using the same set of theories, and more specifically to Idómà syntax. The theories of language used in this research have explored the peculiar and universal properties of grammar related to Idómà language and filled the vacuum in Idómà syntax. to add to linguistic research findings and, therefore, stimulate further research of similar or wider dimensions in related fields in order to facilitate better and more productive language learning.

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