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Hausa
Igbo
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JNLP

Volume 1, December 2019

ISSN: 2705-411X

GB Syntax on NP Movement to Argument Position in Ùdá

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Abstract

This paper examines NP movement to argument position in Ùdá', a *Lower Cross* language spoken in the South-South Geopolitical Zone; specifically, Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The argument position in this work is identified as SPEC-I' - a position that is potentially a recipient of theta role and case. The paper adopts four modules of the Government-Binding (GB) framework which are: X-bar, theta, case, and government. Data were elicited from Ùdá' through the Ibadan Four Hundred and Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) wordlists. Samples of sentences relating to the NP movement were also collected and analyzed. The study reveals that ergative and middle sentence constructions show evidence of NP movement to argument position. The constituent which occupies the subject position of an ergative construction superficially originates from the Verb Phrase (VP) of the underlying form. For the movement of the object to be possible, there must be a matching empty slot in the SPEC-I' position of the same clause where the pre-posed NP can be anchored. Transitive object and its ergative subject counterpart must have the same θ -role because they are in a θ -chain. Furthermore, the study discovered that ergative and middle sentence constructions are similar but differ in the sense that middle sentence constructions contain adverbials and are realized in the present tense, unlike the ergative constructions whose verbs are rendered in the past tense. This paper concludes that the NP movement to an argument position is for case features to be checked.

Keywords: argument position, ergative, middle sentence, preposed, theta-chain.

1. Introduction

Movement is a syntactically motivated operation in which constituents are displaced from one position to another within the same syntactic structure. (Mbah 2006 p.65) further notes, "movement is determined by the word order in a structure and it is made possible if there is a landing site".

Arguments can move into a position known as A-position identified as SPEC-I' position. Any category outside the minimal clause IP is not within the domain of government. In essence, the CP node is not transparent to the government. Ndimele (2004)

defines an argument position as a position in which theta role and case can be assigned. This position which is usually empty must be occupied by an overt nominal. In the process, an argument or NP is displaced to occupy the empty position. Lasnik and (Uriagereka 1988 p.20) defines argument movement as “movement of a category from a position that is potentially a recipient of θ -role to another such position, (for example, from object to subject position, or from an embedded subject position to a higher subject position”. (Ndimele 2004) points out that, ‘the category that undergoes A-movement and its null trace constitute an A-chain’. This type of movement is case-motivated. A-movement, while normally obligatory, can sometimes be suspended.

The language of the Ùdá people is called Ùdá. It is the most widely spoken language in Ibakka located in Mbo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria. (Connell 1991) is of the view that Ùdá may be spoken by less than 10,000 speakers. This figure is also supported by this work. The language belongs to the Ọrọ group of languages to which Enwang, Okobo, Ilue, Ebughu form a cluster of dialects. As a language, Ùdá is greatly threatened by the hegemonic status of Oro, Efik, Ibibio and English languages. Ọrọ is more in use as a medium of instruction in schools that are situated in Ùdá community. The Ùdá language has no orthography and there are no reading materials in it. The word Ùdá is used in its dualised sense representing both the people and language respectively.

Ùdá is a coastal settlement comprising twelve gazetted villages. The villages include Affi Uda, Ekie Uda, Orukim Uda, Ibaka Uda, Ukonteghe Uda, Akprangkprang Uda also known as Amkprang Uda, Utit Anti Uda, Udung Eyo Uda, Mkpang Uton Uda, Utte Udombo Uda, Udinghi Uda, and Isong-Nka Uda known as James town. Ùdá shares boundaries with Orue Ofon Oruku L.G.A in the North, Etebi in Esit Eket in the West. It is bounded on the South by Efiat. On the East and West by the estuary of Enwang all in Akwa Ibom State. Ùdá is traversed by a major river leading to Cross River State.

Ùdá is a *Lower Cross* language. Genetically, Ùdá belongs to the Benue-Congo family – one of the largest families of languages in Africa, (Greenberg 1963). Modifications to Greenberg’s classification by (Essien 1990 and Urua (2000) have resulted in the establishment of Lower Cross as a distinct subgroup of the Delta Cross branch of Cross River. (Williamson 1989) maintains that Cross River itself is a branch of (New) Benue Congo. Cross River is classified into two major groups; Delta Cross and Bendi. (Essien 1990, Connell, 1991, 1994 and Urua 1996) maintain that Ùdá is a member of the Lower Cross group including Ọrọ, Obolo, Ibeno, Efik, Ibibio, etc. (Essien 1990) also suggests an umbrella name ‘Ibibiod’ capture the common origin of these varieties.

Ùdá is an independent language. The fact that it shares a considerable and high degree of lexical items, a variety of phonological, morphological, and syntactic features, as well as, a great deal of mutual intelligibility with related languages like Ọrọ, Enwang, Ilue, Efik, Ibibio, etc. does not suggest any form of dependency on any of these languages for survival. In recent years, it is observed that there is a remarkable deviation in the choice of Ùdá as a common code in Ùdá community. Ùdá is playing a complementary role to the English language, Ibibio, Efik, Ọrọ due to their hegemonic status within the Ùdá enclave.

Ùdá is being threatened with extinction. Presently, it is only the elderly ones who speak it. The younger generation prefers to use the English language in their day to day communication.

Therefore, the rationale for choosing Ùdá for this research is to contribute towards reviving the language and ensure that an aspect of its syntax is descriptively analysed.

The objectives of this research include:

- i. to identify and examine what constitutes argument position in Ùdá;
- ii. to explain argument position involving argument movement in Ùdá;
- iii. to identify and examine the type of traces left behind by argument movement in Ùdá; and
- iv. to relate the Government and Binding framework to argument position in Ùdá.

This work covers discussions on argument position in Ùdá with special focus on the four sub-theories of Government and Binding theoretical framework. The four sub-theories include X-bar, case, theta, and government theories. Some instances of movement operation in which constituents are moved into a position known as argument position will be discussed in Ùdá.

The sample population for this study was made up of twenty-two men and fifteen women who fall within the age range of eighteen and seventy-five years of age. They were selected from different villages in the community. They all speak Ùdá as their mother tongue. One of the informants is the Paramount Ruler of Ibaka, Ovon Edet Isemin. Some of them are title chiefs. Others are farmers, fishermen, businessmen, civil servants, politicians and undergraduate students. Most of the informants were literate and some were undergraduates and spoke English fluently. The problem of interpretation did not arise so much. But useful explanations were offered on technical areas where the researcher had to focus. Again, most of the informants had some competence in more than one Lower Cross language, typically an understanding of Efik and Ibibio.

Data for this research were gathered through primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data involved the Ibadan 400 and the SIL wordlists. These wordlists (instruments) consist of basic vocabulary items and samples of short sentences to elicit more information on morphology and syntax to aid the researcher on the analysis of argument movement. Data from the library which form part of the literature review serve as a secondary source of information. Publications and journals on core levels of language study were consulted. Materials from lectures and reading on the theoretical model gave new insights into the organisation of facts. Inputs from the previous thesis on the related subject matter also guided and directed the work while it lasted.

This research involved a field trip to the language community. The method applied here was an interview that elicited the translation of the Ibadan four hundred basic items and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) wordlists from English into Ùdá. In addition to these, samples of short sentences were also presented to the respondents for their equivalence in Ùdá based on the research topic. About eighty sentences were covered in the study. Two of these informants were regularly consulted for the confirmation of data. The elicited data were transcribed directly on the list indicating the phonetic representations using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

2. Theoretical Considerations

This work is based on the Government-Binding (GB) framework. One of the main properties of GB is that it has a principles and parameters (P&P) architecture. This means that Universal Grammar is taken to be composed of principles with open parameter values that are set by experience, i.e. by primary linguistic data (PLD). By having innate general principles with open parameter values, one can deal with two basic facts that characterize language acquisition: it is very fast despite the deficiency of linguistic data that the child can use in fixing his competence. Again, languages display an intricate surface variation. According to P&P idea, the ease of language acquisition lies in the rich innate principles that the child comes equipped with. In turn, the variation can be traced to the fact that different parameter values can result in significantly different outputs (languages).

Principles simply describe potentially universal attributes of natural languages or the properties of grammatical operations. An example of a universal principle is the requirement that every phrase in a language must have a head, the head parameter. According to (Ndimele 2004 p.4), the head parameter is ‘a word order parameter’. It is concerned with the relative position of the head of a construction vis-a-vis its complement or specifier. The head parameter determines the position of a head of a phrase thus, giving rise to head-initial languages (e.g. English) and head-final language (e.g. Japanese). Parameters refer to the dimension of grammatical variations among natural languages. GB strives to narrow down specific rules. Thus, severe constraints are imposed on rules and system of rules.

GB identifies four distinctive levels of grammatical representation: The D-Structure (DS), S-Structure (SS), Logical Form (LF), and Phonetic Form (PF).

According to (Hornstein et al, 1995), the DS is substantively described as the phrase maker at which pure grammatical function GF- θ is represented, i.e. the one-to-one correspondence between grammatical function and thematic or θ -role. This means that DS is where an expression’s logical/thematic role perfectly coincides with its grammatical function GF; logical subjects are DS grammatical subjects, logical objects are DS grammatical objects etc. Thus, at DS, thematically active positions must be filled and positions with no thematic import must be left empty. The rules of the base component generate the D-structure which is simply a projection of the θ -marking properties of lexical heads of constructions. The D-structures as viewed by (Chomsky 1982 p.5) “are representations in configurational terms of the grammatical functions (GFs) (subject, object, etc.) that are associated with θ -roles”. Only GF positions which are lexically filled at D-structure are assigned θ -roles if they occupy θ -positions.

The Transformational Component consists of rules which relate each D-structure to its corresponding S-structure.

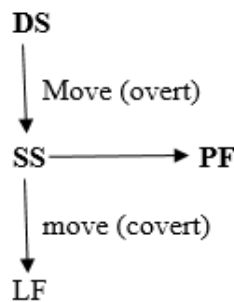
SS can be functionally characterized as the point in which the derivation splits, sending off one copy to PF for phonetic interpretation and one copy to LF for semantic interpretation. SS is equally a phrase marker where several grammatical modules ply their trade. Case is assigned at this level. A lot of things such as movement, subjacency, as well as binding hold here. This has made this level of representation to be described as the queen level of GB. In other words, the S-structure is an essential bridging level between sound

and meaning, leading on one hand to the Phonetic Form (PF) and on the other hand to the Logical Form (LF). The S-structure indicates the original locations of the elements that are moved by the use of traces which mark the original places in the sentences from where the elements have been moved. In the context of GB, movement rules operate on the D-structure for the S-structure to be derived. The case theory, for instance, operates on the S-structure to assign the case to all the phonetically realized NPs. The S-structure is also operated on by the phonological rules to derive Phonological Form (PF).

PF means Phonetic Form. It is the output of grammar at the sound end. The LF means Logical Form. It is the output of grammar at the meaning end. These are interface levels of representation within GB. This means that they provide the grammatical information required to assign a phonetic and semantic interpretation to a sentence. (Carnie 2007) maintains that these two levels represent the final products of computation; hence, they should appear at the end of the derivations.

Figure 1

The GB T-model of Grammar



Culled from (Hornstein et al 2005)

It is to be observed that the move operation that applies on the mapping from SS to LF is the same operation that applies before the split, the only difference being that one is overt (from DS to SS) and the other covert (from SS to LF). Since LF and PF are not directly connected, the outputs of move that are obtained after SS, i.e. covert movement, do not have a reflex at PF. Wh-movement is a good example of covert movement operation.

The transformational component of GB consists of rules which relate each D-structure to its corresponding S-structure. In effect, two rules have been recognized: bind and move. Bind allows free indexing of arguments and moves α allows anything to move anywhere anytime. It generalizes rules such as move NP and moves wh, which in their turn generalize construction-specific transformations such as passivization, wh-movement, raising, etc.

The modules of GB include the following (sub-theories): X-bar, case, theta, control, government, bounding and binding theories. The overall GB theory consists of an interlocking network of these sub-theories in which each interacts with all others. However, this work will adopt four sub-theories of GB for its analysis: X-bar, case, government, and theta sub-theories. They are so adopted for the following reasons: The X-bar provides information on intermediate categories. A phrase in the X-bar syntax always contains a

3. An Overview of Constructions with instances of Argument Movement

Ndimele (2004) says that passivization, ergative structures, middle sentence constructions, and NP raising are good instances of argument movement process in which a pre-posed constituent is moved to occupy an empty argument position symbolized as [NPe].

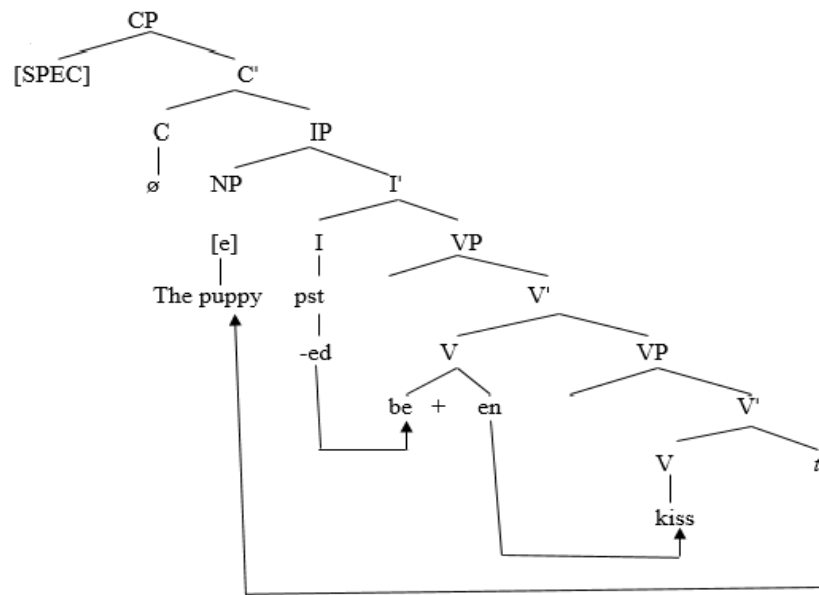
3.1 Argument Movement in Passive Structures

Passivization involves moving a target NP in the object position into the empty NP slot in the SPEC-I' position. (Ndimele 1992) defines a passive sentence as that in which the patient (i.e. the entity that feels the impact of the verb) occurs as the subject of the sentence, while the agent or force (i.e. the entity that initiates the action that affects the object) optionally occurs as the complement of a 'by preposition' at the end of the sentence. Passivisation is a valency reduction process just like anticausitivation, reflexivisation (Comrie 1985b; Spencer 1991). The passive rule is an optional transformational operation which relates an active sentence to its passive counterpart. Consider the sentence below:

- 1a The policeman kissed the puppy.
- 1b The puppy_i was kissed_i by the policeman.

Diagram 2

NP Movement in Passivisation

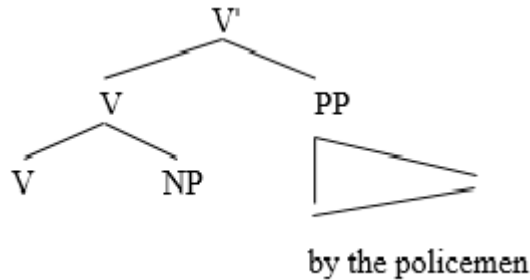


(Carnie 2007) explains that, 'the puppy' in diagram 2 moves to satisfy the Extended Projection Principle (EPP) which simply adds, all clauses must contain subject NPs. The

EPP works like the theta-criterion, it is a constraint on the output of the X-bar rules. It requires that every sentence must have a subject. It should be noted that *by-phrases* are treated as optional adjuncts. In other words, adjuncts are not obligatory. The *by-phrases* are adjoined to the V' as shown in the diagram (3) below:

Diagram 3

Optional Adjunct (By-phrase)



In the passive construction in English, the agent is represented by an optional prepositional phrase headed by *by*. This is an adjunct. Adjuncts are adverbs or adverbial phrases that describe a verb in the sentence. It is to be noted that adjuncts are not included in the basic theta grid and are not subject to the theta criterion. If the agent here is an adjunct and not subject to the theta criterion, it should be optional. This is indeed the case in (1c):

1c. The puppy was kissed.

It thus seems that passives and actives have different thematic properties. Actives have an agent and a theme, whereas passives lack the agentive theta grids. The explanation is not syntactic, it is a morphological issue. In other words, the passive form of a verb takes special morphology.

Haegeman (1994) maintains that Passivization affects the morphology of the verb. In contrast with active sentences, passive sentences contain the passive auxiliary *be*, a past participle and an optional PP introduced by *by*. It is, of course, pertinent to mention that the active verb differs from the passive verb concerning Case and θ -role assignment. Whereas an active verb assigns both Case and θ -role to its object, the passive verb assigns only θ -role to its object. According to (Ndimele 2004), the above view implies that the object position of a passive verb is a Caseless position. Again, since the object of a passive verb must be assigned a θ -role at D-structure before movement, it then follows that the same category, cannot be assigned another θ -role in the new home. In the words of (Ndimele 2004), the subject position of a passive is 'dethematised'. Thus, it will be taken as a crucial property of passive verbs that they fail to assign the external theta role in an A-position. (Jaeggli (1986 and Roberts (1987) propose that 'the agent role is not absent in passive sentences, rather, they claim, it is absorbed by the passive morphology on the verb. The external theta role cannot be assigned to an NP in an A-position because it is absorbed by the passive ending.

3.2 Argument Movement in Ergative Structures

This is another type of A-movement which involves the movement of an argument into the SPEC-I' position of the same clause. (Ndimele 2004) maintains that, ergative sentences are sentences which naturally have objects but whose subjects are not known. They have overt patients without known agents. In an ergative language, the pseudo subjects originate internally from the verb phrase. In ergative, there can be some kind of self-induced action.

- 2a The ball broke all by itself.

Ergative has come to be used to denote verbs like 'break' which occur both intransitive and transitive structures as illustrated by (Haegeman 1994) in (3a) and (3b) respectively.

- 3a Someone broke the window.
3b The window broke.

In the above constructions, the window seems to play the same semantic role in both types of sentences, despite being the complement of a break in one sentence and the subject of break in the other. According to (Crystal 1980 p.134), "an ergative structure is one in which "there is a formal parallel between the object of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive one". (Radford 1988 p.448) also defines an ergative construction as "an intransitive clause which has a transitive counterpart in which the transitive object corresponds to the ergative subject". Consider the following pairs of sentences from (Ndimele 2004).

- 4a. [e] will break the glass.
4b. The glass_i will break_i.
5a. [e] might sink the vessels
5b. The vessels might sink_i.

Ndimele (2004) also explains that each of the (a) examples above is the underlying form from which its (b) counterpart is derived. From the above sentences, it is observed that the transitive objects in (4a - 5a) serve as the corresponding subjects of the intransitive verbs of the ergative constructions in (4b - 5b). The superficial subject in an ergative construction originates internally as the underlying object of a transitive verb. For the movement of the object NP to be possible, there must be a matching empty slot in SPEC-I' position of the same clause where the fronted NP can anchor. It is to be noted that transitive object and its ergative subject counterpart must have the same θ -role because they are in a θ -chain.

3.3 Argument Movement in Middle Constructions

Middle sentences are used in linguistics to refer to a situation in which the complement of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive verb are assigned the

same semantic role. Almost as in ergative constructions, except that middle sentence constructions contain adverbials. Apart from this, the verbs in middle sentence constructions are realised in the present tense, unlike the ergative constructions which are in the past form. (Ndimele 2004) presents the following examples:

- 6a. [e] breaks easily the ball.
- 6b. The ball_i breaks_i easily.
- 7a. [e] sinks easily the ship.
- 7b. The ship_i sinks_i easily.

Examples (6a and 7a) are described as the underlying forms, from which their (6b and 7b) counterparts are derived. It is observed that the transitive objects in (6a and 7a) also serve as the corresponding subjects of the intransitive verbs of the middle sentence constructions in (6b and 7b) respectively.

3.4 Argument Movement in Raising Structures

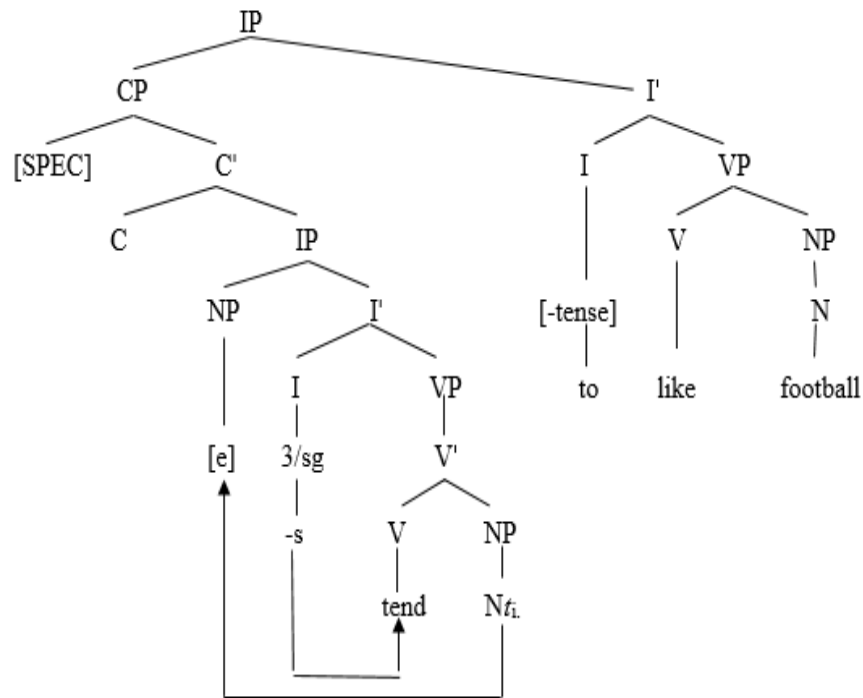
NP Raising is a type of argument promotion and another instance of A-movement. (Trask 1993 p.228) defines raising as a linguistic operation 'in which a target linguistic element appears in a higher clause than is semantically appropriate'. Ndimele (2004) says that it involves the movement of a target NP category out of the subject position of an embedded clause into the subject position of a matrix clause. It is a term given to the process by which the subject of an infinitival complement is raised to become the subject of the main clause. NP-movement in raising structures is through the SPEC-I' node. The SPEC-I' position is an argument position in which both case and theta role can be assigned. Raising is implemented by the use of raising verbs. Examples of raising verbs in English include *seem*, *appear*, *tend* etc.

In the following example provided by (Ndimele 2004), it is observed that John in (8a) and Obi in (9a) which serve as the subjects of the lower clause are raised into the subject position of the higher clause in (8b) and (9b) respectively.

- 8a. [e] seems John to love Mary.
- 8b. John_i seems_i to love Mary.
- 9a. [e] tend Obi to like football.
- 9b. Obi_i tends_i to like football.

A syntactic tree for (9b) is shown in (4):

Diagram 4
NP Raising Structure



Ndimele (2004) illustrates that, targeted NP (Obi) which serves as a subject of the embedded clause moves into the subject position of the matrix clause (cf. 9b). Observe that movement is within the minimal clause to an empty NP slot in the SPEC-I' position. The next section considers the attested argument movement operation in Ûdá'.

4. Argument Movement in Ûdá'

The Ûdá language attests some instances of argument movement which include ergative and middle sentence constructions. Comparatively, Ûdá does not have the morphological properties for passivized structures to be derived, unlike the English language. Again, constructions which involve NP raising in Ûdá are not possible. The next section considers discussions on possible syntactic operations of argument movement in Ûdá.

4.1 Ergative Construction

An ergative construction is an intransitive clause which has a transitive counterpart in which the transitive object corresponds to the ergative subject. Argument movement is possible in Ûdá ergative structures. Such constructions usually have objects, but their subjects are not known. Thus, they have overt patients without known agents since the action by the ergative subject may be self-induced. Consider the following constructions:

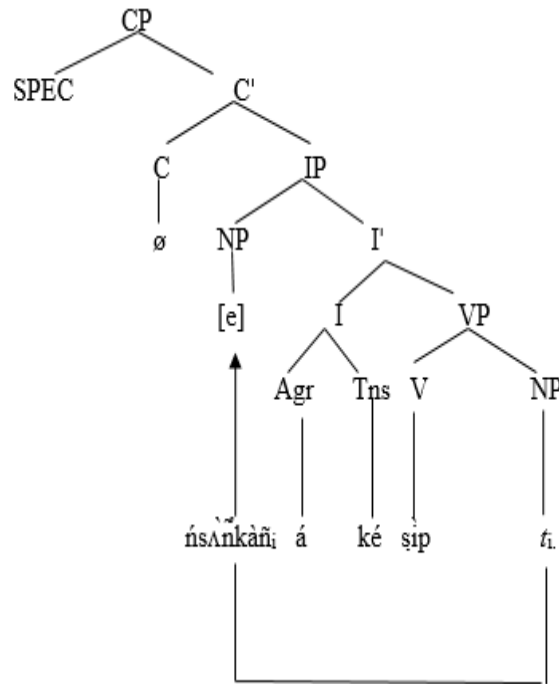
- 10a. ŃsΛ` ñkàñ_i ákésìp ð_i.
 Ship 3sgcl.pst.sink.
 ‘the ship sank’.
- 10b. [e] ákésìp ñsΛ` ñkàñ.
 [e] 3sgcl.pst.sink ship
 [e] sink the ship
- 11a. Ábáñ_i ákóbù ð_i.
 Pot 3sgcl.pst.break
 ‘The pot broke.’
- 11b. [e] àkóbù ábáñ
 [e] 3sgcl.pst.break pot
 [e] broke the pot
- 12a. Ádìghì_i ákóbò ð_i.
 door 3sgcl.pst.lock
 ‘The door locked’.
- 12b. [e] ákóbò ádìghì
 [e] 3sgcl.pst.lock door
 [e] locked the door
- 13a. Ádìghì_i ákékwùòñò ð_i.
 door 3sgcl.pst.open
 ‘The door opened’.
- 13b. [e] ákékwùòñò ádìghì
 [e] 3sgcl.pst.open door.
 [e] open the door
- 14a. Òfòn~ ísìghí_i ákàwàghá ð_i.
 cloth his 3sgcl. pst.tear
 ‘His cloth has torn’.
- 14b [e] á.kàwàk òfòn~ ísìghí
 [e] 3sgcl.pst.tear cloth his
 [e] torn his cloth

Each of the (b) examples above is the underlying form from which its (a) counterpart is derived. From the sentences also, it is observed, the transitive objects in (10b – 14b) serve as the corresponding subjects of the intransitive verbs of the ergative constructions in (10a -14a). The argument is that the constituent which occupies the subject position of an ergative construction superficially originates from the object position of the underlying form. For the movement of the object to be possible, there must be a matching empty slot in SPEC-I' position of the same clause where the pre-posed NP can be anchored. All the

constituents (ńsΛ`n~kàn~ ‘ship’, ábán~ ‘pot’, ádíghì ‘door’, ọ̀fọ̀n~ ísìghí ‘his cloth’) in the above constructions seem to play the same semantic role in both types of sentences, despite being complements of verbs in the (10b -14b) sentences and also being subjects in the (10a – 10a) sentences. This is because they are in a θ-chain. It is observed that the morphology of the verb does not change except in example (14a). Essien (1990) has identified this phenomenon and refers to it as a verbal extension indicating the absence of an agent. The tree diagram below illustrates the movement of a constituent from a potential theta role position to an argument position using ergative sentence (10a):

Diagram 5

NP Movement in Ergative Construction



ńsΛ`n~kàn~ ákésip t_i. ‘The ship sank’.

From the above tree, it is observed that, the constituent, ńsΛ`n~kàn~ ‘ship’ is moved from its deep structure position to an argument position in the SPEC-I’ within the same minimal clause where case and theta role can be assigned. From the tree diagram, the [+Tense] INFL C-commands and governs ńsΛ`n~kàn~ ‘ship’. Therefore, it assigns a Nominative case to ńsΛ`n~kàn~ ‘ship’. It is pertinent to also observe that, the pseudo subject originates from the verb phrase at the underlying structure. Since the entire sentence is built upon certain

semantic relationships, $\acute{n}s\Delta`n\tilde{k}\acute{a}\tilde{n}$ ‘ship’ still bears the patient role as that which suffers the induced action by an unknown agent. This also conforms with the theta and the projection principle which state that each argument bears one and only one theta role and each theta role is assigned to only one argument. The theta roles are assigned at the D-structure level.

4.2 Ûdá Middle Construction

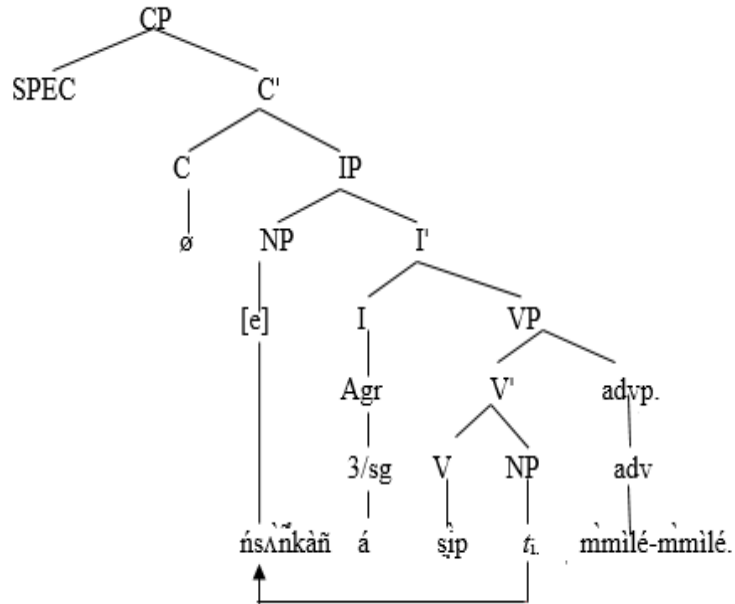
This is another instance of argument movement in Ûdá. A middle construction is used to refer to a situation in which the complement of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive verb are assigned the same semantic role. Almost as in ergative construction, but middle constructions contain adverbials or can be modified by adverbials. Again, the verbs in the middle constructions are realised in the present tense. Consider the examples below:

- 15a. [e] $\acute{a}s\grave{a}\tilde{n}\acute{a}\ \acute{a}v\grave{e}\ \acute{E}y\grave{o}\ k\acute{u}l\grave{u}-k\acute{u}l\grave{u}$
 3sg.cl.walk pass Eyo slowly.
 ‘[e] walks away Eyo slowly’
- 15b. $\acute{E}y\grave{o}_i\ \acute{a}s\grave{a}\tilde{n}\acute{a}\ t_i\ \acute{a}v\acute{e}\ k\acute{u}l\grave{u}-k\acute{u}l\grave{u}$.
 Eyo 3sgcl.walk pass slowly
 ‘Eyo walks away slowly’.
- 16a. [e] $\acute{a}s\grave{i}p\ \acute{n}s\Delta`n\tilde{k}\acute{a}\tilde{n}\ \grave{m}\acute{m}\acute{i}l\acute{e}-\grave{m}\acute{m}\acute{i}l\acute{e}$
 3sg.cl.sink ship easily
 ‘[e] sinks easily the ship’
- 16b. $\acute{N}s\Delta\tilde{n}\tilde{k}\acute{a}\tilde{n}_i\ \acute{a}s\grave{i}p\ t_i\ \grave{m}\acute{m}\acute{i}l\acute{e}-\grave{m}\acute{m}\acute{i}l\acute{e}$.
 ship 3sg.cl.sink easily
 ‘The ship sinks easily’.

Examples (15a and 16a) are described as the underlying form from which their (15b and 16b) counterparts are derived. It is observed that the transitive objects in (15a and 16a) also serve as the corresponding subjects of the intransitive verbs of the middle constructions in (15b and 16b). It is pertinent to note that middle constructions contain present tense and adverbials. This makes the distinction between ergative constructions and middle constructions in Ûdá. Consider the following tree diagram:

Diagram 6

NP Movement in Middle Construction



ńsΛ`ńkàn` á sìp mmìlé-mmìlé. 'The ship sinks easily'.

From the tree diagram, it is observed that the verb *sìp* 'sink' subcategorises for its object as well as assigns theta roles. The moved constituent *ńsΛ`ńkàn`* 'ship' is governed in its new home by the [+Tense] INFL - [á], the third person marker. The [á] person marker shows agreement in the finite clause between the subject and the verb. The [á] person marker governs *ńsΛ`ńkàn`* 'ship' and assigns Nominative case to it. This nominative case assigned by the person maker to *ńsΛ`ńkàn`* falls under structural case which is assigned under government. *ńsΛ`ńkàn`* which is a lexical NP appears in a position that is visible to the government. Even though, *ńsΛ`ńkàn`* 'ship' occurs at the subject position, it still plays the semantic role of a patient.

5. Summary and Conclusion

Thus far, the NP movement to argument position has been discussed. NP movement to argument position has different syntactic properties from its counterpart i.e. NP movement to non-argument positions. A-movement involves movement of a category from a potential theta position to another position in which case and theta role can be

assigned. Under this type, the movement of a targeted constituent occurs within the minimal clause (i.e. SPEC-I'). Argument movement which is case motivated movement of NPs can be found in ergative constructions and middle constructions in Ùdá.

Argument movement in Ùdá ergative constructions is a type in which an intransitive clause which has a transitive counterpart in which the transitive object corresponds to the ergative subject. This means that these constructions have overt patients without known agents since it is assumed that the action by the ergative subject may be self-induced.

NP movement in Ùdá middle constructions refers to a syntactic operation in which the noun complement of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive verb are assigned the same semantic role. Middle constructions in Ùdá are almost like ergatives, except that middle constructions are modified by adverbials and are always realized in the present tense while that of the ergative is in the past tense. Movement of constituents within this movement type is to the SPEC-I' position (i.e. a potential theta role position). Data from Ùdá have revealed that active voice is possible while passivization is not attested. It is to be noted that, movement of argument to an argument position is for case features to be checked.

In this research, it has been shown that NP movement in Ùdá relates to a position of the case and theta-role assignment.

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