PHRASAL CATEGORIES IN ÉKỊD

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed at examining the phrasal categories in Ékịd, which comprise noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjectival phrase (AdjP), and prepositional phrase (PP), by determining their structures. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study, and the X-bar theory was adopted as the theoretical framework for data analysis. Research data were drawn from the central Ékịd via elicitation. The analysis reveals that, every phrasal category (NP, VP, AdjP, PP) is built around the most important lexical category within the phrase. That is, a noun (N) is the head of a noun phrase (NP); a verb (V) is the head of a verb phrase (VP); an adjective (Adj) is the head of an adjectival phrase (AdjP); also, a preposition (P) is the head of a prepositional phrase (PP). Analysis also reveals that, in Ékịd noun phrase, determiners such as definite, demonstrative, possessive, quantifier, numerals, serve as post-modifiers of noun. Definite article like ànám 'the', and numeral (ordinal) like àkpá 'first', do occur before the noun in the NP as pre-modifiers (of noun). This work, thus, serves as a tool for further research in the aspect of Ékịd syntax.

KEYWORDS: Language, Syntax, Phrasal Category, Phrase

Introduction

In linguistics, one of the aspects of language study focuses on the four basic units of grammar according to the traditional grammarian which include: word, phrase, clause and sentence (Ndimele, 2007). The study of phrases, clauses and sentences therefore constitutes the area of the study of language known as 'syntax'. According to Crystal (1985), the aspect of a language syntax, thus, covers the study of the: grammatical categories, phrasal categories, sentences and the syntactic function of constituents within a syntactic construction. The term 'grammatical category' has been used to cover a wide variety of concepts, such as the nominal and verbal categories, including what traditional grammarians call 'parts of speech'; while the phrasal category includes different

levels of syntactic categories which are: Noun phrase (NP), Verb phrase (VP), Adjectival phrase (AdjP), Prepositional phrase (PP); Noun with bar (N'), Verb with bar (V'), Preposition with bar (P'); Noun (N), Verb (V), Adverb (Adv), Adjective (Adj), Preposition (P); and word level of a phrase (Loos, 2003; Crystal, 1985).

On the aspect of phrasal categories in language study, according to Trask (1996), a phrasal category can be seen as any syntactic category which is a one bar or greater projection of a lexical category. Ndimele (2001: p124) submits that a "phrase is a group of words which are joined together following the rules of the grammar of the language". Also, a phrase is a syntactic structure that consists of more than one word but lacks the subject-predicate organization of clause (cf. Crystal, 1980).

Ndimele (2001: p124) is of the opinion that, phrases, like words, are internally structured, and the arrangement of words within them follows a particular pattern depending on the rule that operates in the language for those construction'. Earlier works on phrase structure analysis recognized only two types of categories namely lexical categories (N, V, P, etc), and phrasal categories (NP, VP, PP, etc); while the existence of the intermediate categories such as N' (N-bar), V' (V-bar), P' (P-bar), and so forth, were not mentioned (Ndimele, 2003). The intermediate categories of phrasal categories were later recognized by the x-bar system theory (which was introduced by Chomsky in 1970; and was later popularized by Jackendoff in 1977, to stand in for the inadequacies of the phrase structure grammar (PSG). Hence, the view which postulates the existence of intermediate categories is a characteristic of the x-bar system (Ndimele, 2001). Following the principle of the x-bar system, four levels or constituents were later recognized in the analysis of a construction, which are:

(i)   The higher level category, e.g. NP, VP, PP, and so forth.

(ii)   The intermediate level category, e.g N', V', P', and so forth.

(iii)   The word class or part of speech level, e.g. N, V, P, and so forth.

(iv)   The word level category, e.g, boy, kick, in, and so forth.

The above levels or constituents of a construction are therefore practically illustrated by the use of a phrase marker. According to Nidmele (2001: p125), a phrase marker (p-marker), "is a grammatical device which is used to show the constituents that make up a construction. It is used to show a relationship of both the precedence and the dominance". There are two types of phrase markers: tree diagram and labeled bracketing. A tree diagram is a grammatical device which is used to show the structural configuration of a construction, and it is made up of branches and nodes; while a labeled bracketing is a grammatical device whereby

brackets are used to enclose constituents of a construction (cf. figure 1) (Ndimele, 2001: p125 - 127).
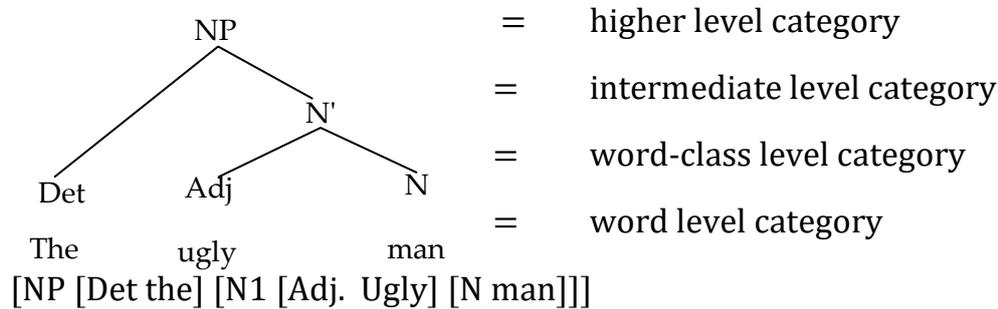
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                NP                          =    higher level category
               /  \
              /    N'                       =    intermediate level category
             /    /  \
            /    /    \
          Det  Adj     N                    =    word-class level category
          The  ugly    man
                                            =    word level category
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[NP [Det the] [N1 [Adj. Ugly] [N man]]]

Figure 1: Illustration of the phrasal marker (tree diagram). Source: Ndimele (2001: p126)

With a careful look at the illustration in fig. 1, it is observed that, in the analysis of phrase structure with the x-bar system (or principle), a phrase or a construction must have or has a head. In the words of Trask (1993: p124), "A head is that element of a constituent which is syntactically central in that, it is primarily responsible for the syntactic character of the construction". In other words, a phrasal category which consists of a sequence of words is grammatically equivalent to a single word which serves as the keyword. Therefore, (traditionally), the head of an NP is a noun; the head of an Adj P is an adjective etc.

This paper therefore examines the aspect of phrasal categories in Ékịd, to determine and analyze their structures. Ékịd is the name of a language likewise the name of the speakers of the language. Ékịd is spoken as the main and dominant local language in Eket and Esit Eket LGAs of Akwa Ibom State, by a population of about 172, 557 (male: 88,635; female: 83,922) according to the 2006 result of the National Population Census. Ékịd language is closely related to Ibibio, Efik, Anaang, Oro and Ibuno languages. It has dialectal differences with Ibibio and other Lower Cross languages, and there is unidirectional intelligibility between Ékịd and Ibibio. Ékịd language has two varieties: Ékịd and Esịd Ékịd, spoken in Eket and Esit Eket LGAs respectively. Genetically, according to the linguistic classification of languages, Ékịd belongs to the Lower Cross subgroup family of the Delta group of the Cross River sub-branch of the New Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo sub-family (Williamson, 1989). According to Connel (1987), the Lower Cross group spans three Nigerian states in this coastal region - Rivers, Akwa Ibom and Cross River, as well as the international frontier to the Isangele sub-division of South-Western Cameroon. More recent classification has placed Ékịd in the Lower Cross group of the Cross River sub-branch of proto Benue-Congo of the Niger-Congo phylum (Williamson and Blench 2000).

Before the discussion of Ékịd phrasal categories, let's review the types of phrasal categories.

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Types of Phrasal Categories

Ndimele (2001) discusses five types of phrases: noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjectival phrase (Adj.P), adverbial phrase (Adv.P) and prepositional phrase (PP).

The Noun Phrase: A noun phrase (NP) is a group of grammatically related words which have a noun as the head (Ndimele, 2007: p57). A headword is a unit of central significance around which other units cluster in a set order (Ndimele, 2007: p57). According to Ndimele (2001: p128) it is one of the principal syntactic categories which appear to be universally present in all languages. He is also of the view that an NP can function as the subject, direct object, indirect object or complement of a preposition; and structurally, it is the largest expansion or the maximal projection of the noun. In English, Haegeman (1994) observes that, the head noun (in a noun phrase) precedes its complement and adjuncts, (but this is not a universal property of an NP). Ndimele (2007: p58) is of the opinion that in English, an NP is exceedingly complex because the head word (noun) can be modified by a number of other element. In other words, an NP can take a number of forms as follows (Ndimele, 2001, p128 – 129; 2007: p58 - 59).:

(i)   An NP can consist of a single noun (NP→ N). This is often the case when the noun is a proper noun (prop. N). For example, we have:

    (1)   John, Lagos, Monday, April, and so forth.

(ii)   NP → Determiner + Intensifier + Adjective + Noun

    (2)   That very little boy
        Det Inten. Adj. N.

(iii)   NP → Determiner + Intensifier + Adjectives + Noun

    (3)   The very pretty innocent little girls
        Det. Inten. Adj. Adj.   Adj. N.

(iv)   NP → Quantifier + Noun

    (4)   Many boys; Every man
        Q   N   Q   N

(v)   NP → (Determiner) Numeral + Noun

    (5)   One man;   The third house
        Num N   Det Num   N

(vi)   NP → Article + Noun

(6)   A boy;   An egg
       Art N   *Art N*

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(viii) NP → Demonstrative + Noun

(7)   This man;   Those girls
       Dem N   *Dem   N*

(ix)   NP → Possessive modifier + Noun

(8)   His   table;   My   orange
       Poss N   *Poss N*

(x)   NP → Pronominal modifier + Noun

(9)   We   students
       PM   N

(xi)   NP → Determiner + Noun + Prepositional Phrase

(10)   The Street of Lagos
       Det   N   P + N (PP)

(xii) NP → Quantifier + Determiner + Noun + -ed or –en Verb form

(11). All the problems discussed;   All the people chosen
       Q Det   N   V + -ed   *Q   Det   N   V + -en*

(xiii) NP → Quabtifier + Demonstrative + Noun + Adverb

(12)   All these goals here
       Q   Dem   N   Adv

(xiv) NP → Demonstrative + Noun + -ing Verb form

(13)   Those boys swimming
       Dem   N   V + -ing

(xv)   NP → Noun + Adjective

(14)   God Almighty
       N   Adj

From Ndimele's point of view that English NP can take on a number of elements such as determiners and adjectives as illustrated above, Ékịd NP can also comprise these elements (determiners and adjectives) as discussed in chapter three.

Verb Phrase: A verb phrase (VP) is a group of grammatically related words where the verb serves as the head (Ndimele, 2001: p130). VP is one of the principal syntactic categories which appear to be unniversally present in all languages, just like NP. In a structural view, VP is seen to be the largest expansion or the maximal projection of the verb, whereby other units of grammar such as NP, PP, AdjP and AdvP can combine with the verb to form the VP. According to Ndimele (2001; 2007), in English, the VP is structurally realized as follows:

(i)   A VP can consist of a single verb (VP → V). This occurs when a verb is used intransitively; that is, when a verb does not require an object. For example, we have:

(15)   (John) sings

In example (15), the verb sing is used intransitively.

(ii)   VP → V + NP (Det + N). This occurs when the verb is transitively used; that is, when a verb requires an object, as seen in the example (16):

(16)   Kick the   ball
        V   Det + N (NP)

(iii)   VP → V + NP + NP. That is, the VP consists of a verb obligatorily accompanied by two NPs. For example, we have:

(17)   Buy Mary   an   apple
        V   N (NP) Art + N (NP)

(iv)   VP → Middle verb + NP

(18) a. John) has   a   car;   b. (Mary) resembles her mother
        MV   Art + N (NP)   *MV   Pro + N (NP)*

(v)   A VP can consist of a linking or copula verb accompanied by an adverb, adjective or an NP which describes or identifies the NP in the subject position of the sentence.

(19) a. be there;   b. become fat;   c. is a teacher
        V   Adv   *V   Adj*   *V   Art   +   N*
(NP)

(vi)   A VP can consist of a verb followed by a full-fledged clause, as in:

(20)   (John) said that he will visit us today.

Adjectival Phrase: An Adjectival Phrase (AdjP) is a group of grammatically related words, where the adjective functions as the main word. An AdjP can consist of pre-head modifiers (i.e. modifiers which come before the adjective) and post-

head modifiers (i.e. modifiers which come after the adjective). Modifiers of the adjective are optional in the AdjP (Ndimele, 2001: p133). According to Ndimele (2001: p133 - 134), the AdjP of English is structurally realized as follows:

(i) An AdjP can consist of a single adjective (i.e. AdjP → Adj). Examples are:

(21)   short, tall, fat, old, oblong, red, beautiful, hot, and so forth.

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(ii)   An AdjP can consist of a degree modifier or intensifier followed by an adjective.

(22) a. Extremely careless.
Inten   Adj

b.Quite professional.

c. Too ugly.

d. Very beautiful.

(iii)   AdjP → Adverb + Adjective

(23) a. Unnecessarily sluggish.
Adv   Adj

b Remarkably accurate.

(iv)   AdjP → Adj + PP (prepositional phrase)

(24)   Full of water

Adj P + N (PP)

(v)   An AdjP can consist of an adjective accompanied by a clause

(25) a. I am [AdjP sad [S1 that you did not come]]

b.He is [AdjP afraid [S1 that the man will die]]

Prepositional Phrase: A Prepositional Phrase (PP) is a construction which obligatorily consists of two parts: a preposition and a prepositional complement (which is typically a Noun Phrase (NP)) (Ndimele, 2001: p135). In English, we have the example below:

(26)   In the house
P Det + N (NP).

Ékịd Phrasal Categories

Every phrase structure in Ékịd is internally structured with words. Analysis here is based on x-bar theory, which provides all the level categories of a

phrase: the higher level category, e.g. the NP, VP, PP, ADJP; the intermediate level category, e.g. N', V', P', Adj'; the word-class level, e.g. N, V, P, Adj; and the word-level ategory.

Noun Phrase (NP) Structure: The NP structure of Ékịd comprises the head of the phrase, intermediate categories, and lexical categories, including the word level categories (when shown on a tree diagram).

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(a)   An NP consists of a single noun. That is, NP → N, for example we have the case of a proper noun like 'Emem, 'Eno', 'Imo', 'Ékịd', and so forth; and the case of a reduplicative noun like àtáñ-útàñ'talker', àsàñ-ísàñ'walker', and so forth.

(b)   NP → Noun (common Noun) + Determiner: NP in Ékịd can comprise a common noun and a determiner. The determiner can be of several types like defiite, demonstrative, possessive, quantifier, numerals as shown in the following examples:

(i) NP → N + Det (definite article)

(27) a. ánwé   ádà
          Person that
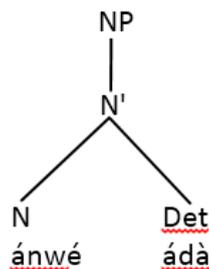   'That   person'

Figure 2: Illustration of Ékịd NP (N + Det) structure. Source: Udoeyo (2018).

b.   étú ánịñkè
       stick the
       'The stick'

c.   ánwé ìté
       person three
       'Three persons'

(ii) NP → N + Det (demonstrative)

(28) a. ánwé   ánịm
          person (N) this (dem)
          'this person'

   b. ǹdụ̀ghútị̀n ánịñke

children (N) those (dem))
'those children'

(iii) NP → N + Det (possessive)

(29) a. ǹwéd àmị̀ì
book my
'My book'

b. ùsὲ ésìí
plate his/her
'His/her plate'

(iv) NP → N + Det (quantifier)

(30) a. ùwáʔ (or ùmíáñ) ánínìěnwè
'Many   boys'

b. àfị́d   étị́í
'every   father/man'

c. ǹdùsụ́k   ánwè
'some   persons/people'

d. àfị́d   ánwè
'all   people'

(v) NP → N + Det (Numeral: cardinal).

(31) a. ánwé   kìàñ
Person   one
'One   person'

b. ǹdìtò   ìté
children   three
'Three   children'.

Apart from determiners in Ékịd, occurring after an NP, there is still a possibility for it to occur before an NP as seen in the following examples:

(vi) NP → Det (numeral: ordinal) + Noun.

(32)   àkpá ánwè
first person
'First person'

(vii) NP → Det (definite article) + Noun + Det (Numeral: ordinal).

(33) a. ànám ánwèìbà
the person two

'The second person'

  b. ànám ánwèìté
  the person three
  'The third person'

(c) NP→ Pro: NP can comprise a single pronoun. Example:

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 (34) a. àfè   'you';
    b. àmịì   'I'
    c. ànyé   'him/her/it';
    d. émò   'them''.

(d) NP→ N + PP: An NP in Ékịd can consist of a noun, followed by a prepositional phrase. For example, we have:

(35) a. ákpódìghè ámè Èkịd
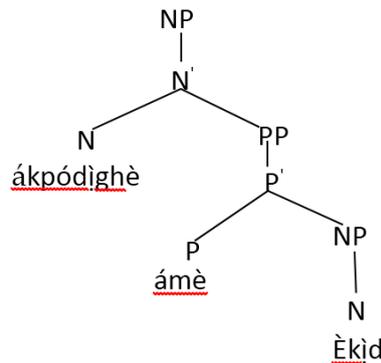   Road   of Ekịd
   Road   of Ékịd

Figure3: Illustration of Ékịd NP (N + PP) structure. Source: Udoeyo (2018).

  b. úfàʔ ámè àfíánwè
   'House of whiteman'

(e) NP can be a whole clause: For example, we have:

 (36) ké Èmèm á-má-nák únák ádà ádè étị̂ m̀kpò
   that Emem say pst dance(v) Det is good thing
   'that Emem danced the dance is a good thing'

(f) NP→ Pronominal modifier + Noun: An NP can be made up of a pronominal modifier and a noun. For example, we have:

 (37) a. ayịd m̀mè-áníníénwè
   We plu.m boy

'We boys'

    b. àmìì̀ Únyímè
       I   Unyime
      'I   Unyime'

    c. àfè ánwénwà
      you girl
      'You girl'

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(g)   NP→ Pronominal modifier + Noun + Det: An NP can also contain a pronominal nodifier, a noun, and a determiner as shown in the example below.

    (38) a. àfè ánwénwà ánìm
         you   girl   this
         'You this   girl'

      b. àfè ánwé ádà
        you person that
        'You that person'

(h) NP → Pronominal modifier + Adj + N + Det. For example, we have:

    (39) àfè ìdíóʔ ánwè ádà
        you bad   person that
        'You that bad person'

(i) NP→ Noun + the other. For example, we have:

    (40) ánwé   ánìñke
        person the-other
        'The other person'

(j) NP→ Quantifier + Noun + Demonstrative. For example, we have:

    (41) àfị̀d ánwé ánìm
        all people these
        'All these people'

Verb Phrase (VP) Structure: The verb phrase structures of Ékị̀d are as follows

(a) VP→ V (intransitive verb). For example, we have:

    (42) á-déé 'sleep'

(b) VP→ V + NP (N + Det). For example, we have:

(43) nwị́n   èkpàd ádà
     squeeze bag   the
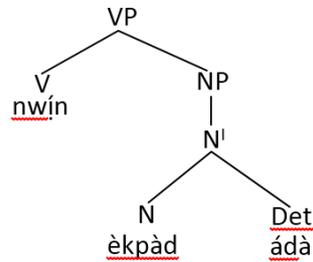   'Squeeze the bag'

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            VP
          /    \
        V       NP
      nwị́n       |
                N'
              /    \
            N       Det
          èkpàd     ádà
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Figure 4: Illustration of VP (V + NP) structure of Ékịd. Source: Udoeyo (2018).

(c) VP→ V + NP (Det + N), + PP. For example, we have:

(44) dị́í èkpàd ádà nò Èmèm
     Buy bag the for Emem
     'Buy the bag for Emem'

(d) VP→ V (linking or copula) + Adv (or Adj or NP). Examples are:

(45) a. á-   dè ébú
         3sg.cl is goat
         'It is a goat'

      b. ńdídíá ádà ánị̀ì úfʌ̀k
         Food the good smell
         'the food smells good'

(iii) VP→ V + Adj

(46)   kị̀ppá àfiá
      'become whlte'

(e) VP→ V + Adj + NP. For example, we have:

(47)   kị̀ppá ùyě ánwè
      'become fine person'

(f) VP→ V + a full-fledged clause. For example, we have:

(48) (Ènò) á- nyị̀m í- díá ńdídíá
     (Eno) 3sg.cl want 3sg.cl eat food
     'Eno wants to eat food'

Structure of Adjectival Phrase (AdjP): The structure of Ékịd AdjP consists of the following types:

(a)   AdjP→ Adjective. Examples are:
ákáàn 'old'; àfíá 'white'; ùyě 'beautiful/fine/handsome'; àkpụ́wó
'big/large'; ànyán 'iong/tall' and so forth.

(b) AdjP→ Intensifier + Adjective. Examples are:

(49)   ánị̀ké áyě
'very   beautiful'

(50)   ánị̀ké ákpú,
'very   big'

(c) AdjP→ Adj + PP + NP. For example, we have:

(51)   áyọ́ʔ   m̀mè   ḿmọ́ñ
'full   of   water'

(d) AdjP→ Adj + a clause. For example, we have:

(52)   àmị̀ì   ḿ-ménị̀ké ḿfúghọ́ mé àfè   ú- kú-dị́íké
(I   1sg.cl so   sorrowful that you 2sg.cl. Do come Neg)
'I am so sorrowful that you didn't come'.

Structure of Prepositional Phrase (PP): The structure of Ékị̣d PP is of the
following types:

(a) PP→ P + NP (NP serves as a prepositional complement). Examples are:

(53)   m̀mè   ànyé
'with   him/her'

(54)   mé úfàʔ
'At home'

(b) PP→ P + a relative clause. For example, we have:

(55)   mé   sé   àmị̀ì   ḿmòó
(of   what I   see)
P   relative clause
'of what I see'

Conclusion

So far, we have discussed and analyzed the structures of Ékị̣d phrasal categories
which comprise noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjectival phrase (AdjP),
and prepositional phrase (PP). In the analysis of Ékị̣d phrases, it is revealed that,
every phrasal category (NP, VP, AdjP, PP) is built around the most important
lexical category within the phrase. That is, a noun (N) is the head of a noun
phrase (NP); a verb (V) is the head of a verb phrase (VP); an adjective (Adj) is

the head of an adjectival phrase (AdjP); also, a preposition (P) is the head of a prepositional phrase (PP). This work, thus, is an aspect of Ékị̣d syntax, which serves as a tool for further research in Ékị̣d syntax and other related languages.

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