

THE LAYERED STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE IN AROGBO

BY

**DOUBRAH SAMUEL
ART2008921**

**DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS STUDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

FEBRUARY, 2025

THE LAYERED STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE IN AROGBO

BY

**DOUBRAH SAMUEL
ART2008921**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS
STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO
STATE, NIGERIA. IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.)
DEGREE IN LINGUISTICS**

FEBRUARY 2025

CERTIFICATION

I, **DOUBRAH SAMUEL**, a student in the department of linguistics studies, University of Benin, with the matriculation number **ART2008921** have completed the requirements for course work and research for the Bachelor of Arts degree of the University of Benin. The research work contained in this project is a product of my personal effort and does not contain any previously written or published material that has been submitted in any other degree or diploma program from any university or higher institution of learning.

DOUBRAH SAMUEL (Miss)
(AUTHOR)

Date

MR. G. O. AGHARUWA
(PROJECT SUPERVISOR)

Date

PROF. M. S. AGBO
(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

Date

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Date

PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATION

I, **DOUBRAH SAMUEL** with matriculation number **ART2008921** declare that this work titled **THE LAYERED STRUCTURE OF THE CLAUSE IN AROGBO** has successfully passed the anti-plagiarism test and so does not violate any copyright regulation.

Sign: _____
DOUBRAH SAMUEL

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my love for the Izon culture, language, people, and their worldview. I am dedicated to bridging the gap between linguistics and Izon, one dialect at a time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank God Almighty for His grace, provision, and protection throughout the duration of this course. I am deeply grateful to my project supervisor, Mr. G. O. Agharuwa, for his guidance and encouragement, particularly during the preparation of this project.

Also my gratitude goes to my lecturers and staff of the department of Linguistics Studies who have in one way or the other impacted my academic journey, Dr. O. O. Evbuowman, Mr. F. Ajala, Dr. (Mrs.) R. Osewa, Mr. E. James, Dr. (Mrs.) Evbayiro, Dr. (Mrs.) P. Solomon-Etefia, Mr. Prosper and many others. A special thanks goes to my H.O.D, Prof. M. S. Agbo.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the following individuals for their invaluable assistance and support, which greatly contributed to the successful completion of this work: Mr. Tobouke Jemine, Mr. Baite Fukpene, Ms. Priscilla Ugbagba, and Mr. Friday Christopher.

My profound gratitude goes to my parents, Mr. Peter Samuel and Mrs. Durojaiye Samuel, and my siblings; Tekena, Dufah, Fiyephon, Tibiebi, Emmanuel and his wife Goodness, and my step sister Mega, for their love, encouragement, and unwavering belief in me.

A special acknowledgment goes to Barr. Bobajo Omowole for his unwavering support, mentorship, and believe in me. His financial and emotional encouragement

ensured that I navigated my academic journey with a positive mindset. Thank you, sir, I am more than grateful.

I am especially grateful to Comrade Joseph Evah and his wife, Mrs. Preye Evah (Grand Patron, NAIFS Worldwide), as well as Capt. Warredi Enisuoh of Tantita Security Service Limited, for their empowering support. I cannot fail to mention Mrs. Kess-moke for her constant push and encouragement, Mr Evy for his encouragement and support (someone who helped a total stranger for the sake of humanity). I can never forget that gesture. Also, Mr Charles of my alma mater secondary school. I solemnly appreciate you all.

To the family I found at UNIBEN, Mrs. Racheal Agofure, Ms. Godbless Settle, Ms. Busayo Oyeku (my roommate), Ms. Boluwatife Adebayo, and Ms. Folasade Ganiyu (my 100-level roommates), as well as Pretty Eight (my closest friends, Grace, Pepe, Prechy, Peniel, Esther, Mercy and Joy), and Mr. Abdulakim Daudu, thank you for the shared experiences and memories. I also appreciate all members of the Linguistics Student Association (LINSAs), the National Association of Ijaw Female Students (NAIFS), and the National Union of Izon-Ibe Students (NUIS) for their positive impact on my life. I deem it fit to acknowledge Mr. Edosa O. for his computing skills in the course of my project work.

Finally, cheers to myself for pushing through and completing this journey!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-ii
Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-iii
Plagiarism Certification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-iv
Dedication	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-v
Acknowledgments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-vi
Table of Contents	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-viii
Abstract	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION										
1.1 Background Information	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1
1.2 Methodology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-4
1.2.1 Method of Data Collection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-5
1.3 Purpose of Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-6
1.3.1 Aim and Objectives	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-6
1.3.2 Statement of the Problem	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-7
1.4 Significance and Justification of Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW										
2.0 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-9
2.1 Conceptual Review	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-9
2.1.1 Syntax	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-10
2.1.2 Clause	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-13
2.1.3 Clause Structure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-15
2.1.4 Syntactic Layering	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-17
2.2 Previous Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-19
2.3 Concern of Present Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-21
CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK										
3.0 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-22
3.1 Theoretical Foundation: Role and Reference Grammar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-22
3.2 Theoretical Orientation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-25
3.3 Theoretical Organization	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-27
3.4 Theoretical Application	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-29
3.5 Theoretical Applications to the Study of the Layered Structure of the Clause	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-30
3.6 Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-32
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS										
4.0 Introduction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-33
4.1 Analysis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-33

4.1.1. The Nucleus in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-34
4.1.1.1 Mìṣì (as a present tense marker)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-35
4.1.1.2 Mìṣì (as a future tense marker)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-36
4.1.1.3 Tẹ̀jì (to show wish or want in completed action)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-37
4.1.1.4. Tẹ̀jì (to show a desire to carry out an action)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-39
4.1.1.5 Agha as Negation marker	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-40
4.1.1.6 The Dynamic Role of the Nucleus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-41
4.1.1.7 Lexical and Auxiliary Verbs in the Nucleus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-41
4.1.1.8 The Interaction of Focus, Intonation, and the Nucleus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-42
4.1.1.9 The Semantic Flexibility of the Nucleus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-42
4.1.2 The Core in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-43
4.1.2.1 The Core and the SOV Structure Organization in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-44
4.1.3 The Periphery in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-45
4.1.3.1 Focus and Topicalization in the Periphery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-46
4.1.3.2 The Role of Intonation and Tone in the Periphery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-47
4.1.4 The Pre-Core Slot in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-48
4.1.4.1 Topicalization in the Pre-Core Slot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-48
4.1.4.2 Focus Marking and Interrogative words in the Pre-Core Slot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-48
4.1.5 The Left-Detached Position in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-49
4.1.5.1 Left-Detached and Right-Detached Positions in Arogbo Izon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-49
4.1.5.2 Dislocated Arguments in the Left-Detached Position	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-51
4.1.5.3 Adverbial Phrases in the Left-Detached Position	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-52
4.2 Discussion and Findings (Layered structure of Arogbo clauses)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-53
4.3 Summary of Chapter	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-65
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS									
5.0 Summary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-67
5.1 Summary of Findings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-67
5.2 Conclusion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-70
References	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-72

ABSTRACT

This study examined the limited linguistic research on minority languages. The study focused on an aspect of the layered structure of Arogbo clauses to uncover the significant for expanding the understanding of Ijaw syntax. The aim of the study was to investigate and analyze the layered structure of clauses in Arogbo. The objectives included to identify and describe the syntactic components of Arogbo clauses; examine the structural patterns of simple; discuss the compound and complex clauses in Arogbo amongst others. The study relied on primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected through oral interviews with native speakers of Arogbo Izon using a field note and a voice recorder. The secondary data consisted of existing texts and audio recordings related to Arogbo dialect. The type of data selected from the bulk of data collected consisted of clauses reflecting the layered structure of Arogbo clauses. The data were analyzed using the Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) framework. The findings of the study revealed the intricate and flexible nature of Arogbo Izon clause structure. Central to this structure is the nucleus, which serves as the grammatical and semantic core of the clause, typically represented by the verb. Also, the core of an Arogbo Izon clause consist of three main components; the subject referential phrase (RP), the object RP and the predicate, adhering strictly to the Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order and the periphery which altogether play an essential role in shaping the overall meaning of a clause by offering supplementary information that is crucial for emphasis, context and communicative intent among others. The study concluded that Arogbo Izon employs a highly layered and flexible clause structure where various syntactic positions such as the nucleus, core, periphery, pre-core slot, and detached positions work together to shape both the grammatical and communicative aspects of a sentence.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

The motivation for this study stems from the limited linguistic research on minority languages like Arogbo, particularly within the framework of clause structure analysis. Arogbo, as part of the Ijaw cluster, represents an under-documented language in Nigeria despite its cultural and historical importance. The study focuses on analyzing the layered structure of Arogbo clauses to uncover the internal organization and syntactic processes that operate in the language. This research is significant for expanding the understanding of Ijaw syntax, contributing to the documentation of the language, and enriching general linguistic theories by testing them against data from a less-studied language.

To provide clarity, the basic terms in the project's title are defined as follows: **Layered structure** refers to the hierarchical arrangement of elements within a clause, distinguishing between core components (e.g., the subject, predicate, and object) and peripheral elements (e.g., adjuncts and modifiers). **Clause** is understood as the basic unit of sentence structure, typically containing a subject and a predicate, which together express a complete idea. By analyzing the layered structure of the clause, this study seeks to uncover how Arogbo constructs meaning and organizes linguistic information.

Arogbo is a dialect of the Izon language, spoken predominantly by the Arogbo people in Ondo State, Nigeria. Izon is one of the main languages in the Ijaw language

group, which belongs to the Niger-Congo language family. The Arogbo community is part of the larger Ijaw ethnic group, with speakers maintaining distinct cultural and linguistic identities. The language is spoken mainly in coastal and riverine areas, where fishing and trade are central to the people's livelihood. While there are related varieties of Izon spoken in the Niger Delta, Arogbo maintains certain phonological, morphological, and syntactic features that distinguish it from other Izon dialects. However, like many minority languages, Arogbo faces challenges of endangerment due to increasing influence from dominant languages such as Yoruba and English. The fact that educational and religious materials were published in Izon as early as the nineteenth century indicates that Izon has orthography (Williamson, 1969). The Izon alphabet comprises twenty-eight letters - nineteen consonants and nine vowels:

Table 1: Vowels and Consonants Alphabets in Izon (Williamson, 1969)

a	b	d	ɛ	e	f	g	gb̂	h	ì
i	k	l	m	n	o	o	p	k̂p	r
s	T	u	u	v	w	y	z		

Also in Arogbo Izon, there are three major sentence patterns: SOV, OSV and SVO. The SOV word order is usually associated with the serial verb sentence (both interrogative and non-interrogative) (Jenewari 1989:115 - 116). This pattern is illustrated with the following Izon sentences:

(i) Ebibo /u/ bulo tɛj (Ebibo has duped him)

S O V

(ii) Ebibo /u/ bulo tẹi? (Ebibo has duped him?)

S O V

(iii) E yabì /i/ ẹrì mìnì. (My uncle is seeing you.)

S O V

Linguistically, Arogbo is classified under the Ijoid branch of the Niger-Congo language family, which is one of the major African language families. Ijoid is a small family spoken only in the Niger Delta in Nigeria consisting of Defaka, a tiny endangered language, and Ijo, a language cluster, with over a million speakers. The largest language is Izon. Although Ijoid is closely related internally, it is very distinct from all other Niger-Congo families. The Ijọ branch is subdivided into two main groups: Eastern Ijọ and Western Ijọ. The Izon language, to which Arogbo belongs, falls under the Western Ijo subgroup. Izon itself has multiple dialects, including Kolokuma, Gbaramatu, and Arogbo, among others. Arogbo, therefore, is closely related to these dialects but is geographically and socially distinct. Its linguistic classification highlights its role as part of the larger Niger-Congo language family while emphasizing the unique features it shares with other Ijoid varieties. Understanding the place of Arogbo within this classification is essential for comparative analysis and broader studies of Ijoid languages. Figure 1 shows a classification derived from Jenewari and Williamson (1989).

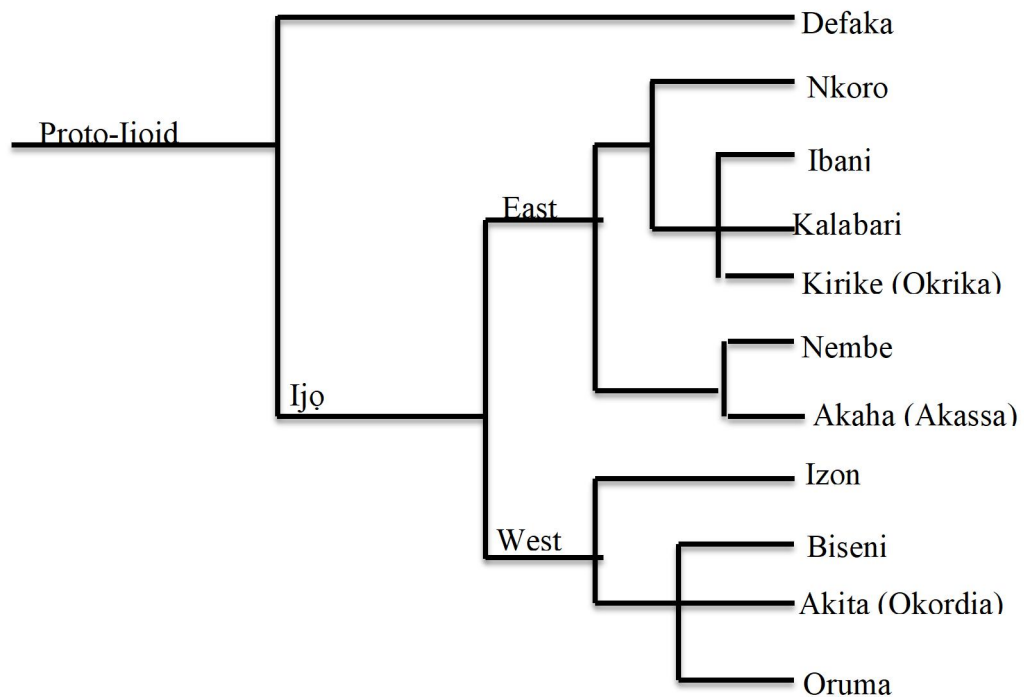


Figure 1: Classification of the Ijoid Language Jenewari and Williamson (1989)

This work contains five chapters. Chapter one entails the introduction to the study, Methodology used for data collection and data analysis, the purpose of the study - aim and objectives & statement of the problem and significance of the study. Chapter two is literature review which contains the Conceptual review, previous study and concern of the present study. Chapter three is the theoretical framework that bonds this work which is role and reference grammar. Chapter four entails the data presentation and analysis. Chapter five is the findings and conclusions of the entire work.

1.2 Methodology

This section outlines the methods used to collect data on the layered structure of the clause in Arogbo Izon,

1.2.1 Method of Data Collection

The data used in this research consist of both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected through oral interviews with native speakers of Arogbo Ijaw. A total of 10 informants participated in the study, selected based on their fluency in the language and knowledge of its use in different contexts. The informants, aged between 25 and 70, included fishermen, traders, and educators with varying academic qualifications ranging from primary to tertiary education. Secondary data were sourced from existing texts and audio recordings related to the Arogbo dialect. Data collection techniques involved semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and the use of questionnaires. A voice recorder and field notes were the primary instruments employed to capture the data during the sessions.

For analysis, only data relevant to the layered structure of Arogbo clauses were selected. These included examples of simple, compound, and complex clauses, as well as their use in everyday communication and traditional narratives. The data were organized into themes based on syntactic categories and functions, such as subject, predicate, modifiers, and clause structure. Verification and authentication of the data were carried out by two linguists proficient in the Arogbo dialect and cross-checked with native speakers to ensure accuracy and reliability.

The analysis employed a descriptive approach to systematically examine the data. The study is framed within the functional grammar model, aiming to document and describe the layered structure of Arogbo clauses. This research contributes to the

extension of existing linguistic knowledge of the Arogbo dialect by providing a detailed syntactic analysis and exploring patterns that may inform future comparative study.

1.3 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the layered structure of the clause in Arogbo, a dialect of the Ijaw language. This research seeks to explore the syntactic patterns and relationships within Arogbo clauses, contributing to the understanding of its linguistic structure. By documenting these features, the study aims to bridge the gap in existing knowledge and highlight the uniqueness of Arogbo syntax within the Ijaw language family.

1.3.1 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate and analyze the layered structure of clauses in Arogbo. The objective includes:

- i. to identify and describe the syntactic components of Arogbo clauses;
- ii. to examine the structural patterns of simple, compound, and complex clauses in Arogbo;
- iii. to document the unique syntactic features of Arogbo clauses; and
- iv. to contribute to the linguistic study of the Ijaw language by extending existing knowledge.

1.3.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the years, linguistic studies on the Ijaw language family have primarily focused on phonology, morphology, and lexical analysis, with limited emphasis on syntax, particularly the layered structure of clauses. While a few works have explored broader aspects of Ijaw grammar, there is a noticeable gap in detailed syntactic analysis specific to the Arogbo dialect. This has left questions about its clause structure largely unexplored, including how syntactic components are organized and their functional relationships.

This study sets out to address these gaps by documenting and analyzing the layered structure of clauses in Arogbo. Using a descriptive framework, the research will explore syntactic patterns to provide a detailed account of clause formation and function. The study will contribute to the extension of existing linguistic knowledge by offering new insights into Arogbo syntax and its place within the broader Ijaw language family.

1.4 Significance and Justification of Study

This study is significant to the field of linguistics as it provides a detailed syntactic analysis of the Arogbo dialect, a less-documented variety of the Ijaw language. By examining the layered structure of Arogbo clauses, the research contributes to the broader understanding of syntactic patterns in Niger-Congo languages. It offers valuable insights for language studies, particularly in understanding how clause structures vary across dialects of the Ijaw language. For researchers and scholars, this study serves as a resource for further linguistic inquiry and comparative studies. Additionally, it supports

the preservation and documentation of Arogbo, thereby contributing to efforts aimed at sustaining endangered or under-documented languages.

The study is necessary because it addresses a significant gap in linguistic research on the Arogbo dialect, particularly its syntactic features. By identifying and analyzing the structural patterns of Arogbo clauses, this research extends the knowledge of Ijaw syntax and provides a foundation for future studies. Furthermore, it ensures that this linguistic knowledge is preserved for academic and cultural purposes, especially as globalization threatens smaller languages. Through its documentation and analysis, the study fulfills its purpose by contributing to the advancement of linguistic scholarship and highlighting the cultural importance of the Arogbo dialect.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature that provides a foundation for the study of the layered structure of the clause in Arogbo Izon. It aims to explore existing research, theories, and concepts that directly or indirectly inform the investigation. The chapter is organized into three sections. The first section, Conceptual Review, discusses key concepts relevant to the layered structure of clauses, providing multiple definitions and critical evaluations. The second section, Previous Studies, examines existing research on Ijaw syntax and related areas, highlighting what has been done and identifying gaps in knowledge. The final section Concern of the Present Study, explains how this research addresses the identified gaps and contributes to the understanding of Arogbo clause structure.

2.1 Conceptual Review

This section provides an overview of key concepts related to the study of the layered structure of the clause, with a particular focus on syntax, semantics, and clause structure. These concepts form the foundation for understanding how clauses are organized and interpreted, offering insight into the syntactic and semantic properties that underpin Arogbo Izon. By exploring the relationships between words, phrases, and clauses, this review highlights how various linguistic elements interact to shape meaning and structure within sentences.

The following definitions cover the core concepts relevant to this study: syntax, semantics, and clause structure. These areas are integral to analyzing how Arogo Izon constructs and conveys meaning through its clause patterns.

2.1.1 Syntax

Syntax refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language.

According to Chomsky (1957), syntax is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language. Chomsky's definition of syntax highlights the systematic framework that underpins sentence structure in any given language. It refers to the set of rules that specify how words can be arranged to form grammatically correct sentences. These rules are language-specific but operate within a universal structure, revealing the shared cognitive foundation of human language. Principles, on the other hand, are the broader, universal guidelines that govern how sentences are organized across languages. These principles reflect innate properties of the human mind, such as recursion, which allows for infinite combinations of elements within sentences. Processes in syntax involve the dynamic mechanisms that manipulate sentence structures. For example, in transformations like forming questions (What did you eat?), certain elements move within the sentence, a process regulated by syntactic rules. Syntax, therefore, governs not just the linear order of words but also their hierarchical organization, ensuring that sentences conform to both language-specific

conventions and universal grammatical principles. It is this layered organization that makes syntax a central component of linguistic theory.

Radford (2004) defines syntax as the study of how words are combined to form phrases and sentences, emphasizing hierarchical relationships. Radford's definition of syntax focuses on the way words come together to create phrases and sentences, with a particular emphasis on their hierarchical organization. This view highlights that language is not just a simple stringing together of words but involves a structured arrangement where smaller units (words) combine to form larger units (phrases and sentences) in a systematic way. The concept of hierarchical relationships refers to the idea that elements within a sentence are organized in layers, where some components are more central or dominant than others. For instance, in a sentence like *The girl read the book*, the phrase *the girl* functions as a unit (a noun phrase) and is distinct from *read the book* (a verb phrase). Within these phrases, there are further layers, such as how *the* modifies *girl* or *the book* forms a subordinate unit within the verb phrase. By studying syntax, Radford emphasizes understanding the rules and principles that govern these combinations and the structural relationships that make language meaningful. This layered approach is essential for analyzing the complexities of sentence formation in any language.

Carnie (2013) explains syntax as the study of sentence structure, focusing on how linguistic elements are organized and function together. Carnie's definition of syntax centers on the study of sentence structure, specifically how linguistic elements are systematically organized and interact to form coherent and meaningful sentences. This

perspective highlights that syntax is not just about the placement of words but about understanding the relationships between various components of a sentence and how they function together to convey meaning. For example, Carnie focuses on the organization of words into larger units such as phrases, clauses, and sentences, showing how these elements are governed by rules and patterns. These patterns ensure that each part of the sentence plays a specific role, such as subjects, verbs, objects, or modifiers, and that they fit together cohesively within a sentence. Carnie also emphasizes the functional aspect of syntax, which deals with how these linguistic elements work together to fulfill grammatical and communicative purposes. This includes analyzing how words combine to express ideas, how certain structures highlight particular information, and how relationships like agreement (e.g., subject-verb agreement) are maintained within sentences. Ultimately, his approach underscores the structured and interconnected nature of sentence formation in language.

Fromkin et al. (2014) describe syntax as the grammar component that handles sentence construction, including the ordering and interaction of words. Fromkin et al. define syntax as the branch of grammar that deals with the construction of sentences, focusing on the arrangement and interaction of words within a sentence. This description underscores syntax as the component of grammar responsible for determining how words combine to form meaningful and grammatically correct structures. The ordering of words refers to the specific sequence in which words appear, which varies across languages and affects meaning. For example, in English, the typical word order is subject-verb-object

(She eats apples), while other languages might follow different patterns. Syntax provides the rules that govern these arrangements, ensuring sentences conform to the grammatical norms of a language. In addition to ordering, the interaction of words refers to the relationships between different elements in a sentence. For instance, how a noun relates to a verb, or how modifiers like adjectives and adverbs affect other words. Syntax examines these interactions to explain why some combinations work (She quickly eats apples) while others do not (Eats apples she quickly). Fromkin et al. emphasize that syntax is central to sentence construction, ensuring that words are organized in a way that conveys meaning and adheres to the linguistic rules of a language.

These definitions converge on the central idea that syntax deals with sentence structure but differ in their emphasis on rules, hierarchy, and functions. For this study, syntax is viewed as the framework for understanding how clauses in Arogo are constructed and organized.

2.1.2 Clause

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate, forming a syntactic unit. Crystal (2008) defines a clause as a grammatical unit that consists of a subject and predicate and may function as a sentence or part of a sentence. Crystal defines a clause as a grammatical unit composed of two key components: a subject, which identifies the topic or actor in the clause, and a predicate, which conveys information about the subject. Clauses can function independently as complete sentences

(She is reading) or as parts of larger sentences (She is reading because she loves books). This definition highlights the clause as a fundamental unit of sentence structure.

Quirk et al. (1985) describe clauses as building blocks of sentences, categorized into independent and dependent clauses. Quirk et al. expand on the structural role of clauses, describing them as the essential building blocks of sentences. They categorize clauses into two types: independent (main) clauses, which can stand alone as sentences (I went to the store), and dependent (subordinate) clauses, which rely on independent clauses for meaning (because I needed groceries). This classification emphasizes the hierarchical relationships between clauses in complex sentences.

Huddleston and Pullum (2005) emphasize the functional role of clauses in expressing propositions, commands, or questions. Huddleston and Pullum take a functional approach, focusing on how clauses serve to express different communicative purposes, such as propositions (The sky is blue), commands (Close the door!), or questions (Is it raining?). This perspective underlines the role of clauses in conveying meaning and facilitating communication.

Payne (2011) explains clauses as linguistic units with a verb as the core element, elaborating on their syntactic and functional diversity. Payne emphasizes the verb as the core element of a clause, noting that the verb anchors the structure and dictates the syntactic relationships within it. Payne also highlights the syntactic and functional diversity of clauses, which can vary in form (e.g., finite vs. non-finite) and function (e.g.,

declarative, interrogative, imperative). This approach provides a comprehensive view of clauses as versatile units central to sentence structure and meaning.

2.1.3 Clause Structure

Clause structure refers to the internal organization of clauses in terms of syntactic roles and relationships. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define clause structure as the arrangement of elements such as subject, predicate, object, and complement, emphasizing their functional roles. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define clause structure as the systematic arrangement of elements like the subject, predicate, object, and complement, focusing on the specific functional roles these elements play within a clause. Their definition highlights that the clause is not just a random sequence of words but an organized structure where each element serves a particular purpose. For instance, the subject typically represents the participant or entity being discussed (The cat in The cat chased the mouse), while the predicate expresses what is being said about the subject (e.g., chased the mouse). The object is usually the entity affected by the action (the mouse in the same example), and the complement provides additional information about the subject or object (The cat is hungry). Halliday and Matthiessen's emphasis on functional roles reflects their systemic functional linguistic approach, which sees language as a tool for communication. They explore how these elements work together to express processes, participants, and circumstances, making clause structure central to both grammar and meaning.

Tallerman (2011) explains clause structure as a system of rules governing how syntactic elements are ordered and combined. Tallerman (2011) describes clause structure as a system of rules that governs the ordering and combination of syntactic elements within a clause. This definition emphasizes the rule-based nature of clause formation, where specific patterns determine how elements like subjects, verbs, objects, and modifiers are arranged to create grammatical and meaningful structures. The rules governing clause structure vary across languages but are systematic within each language. For example, in English, the typical structure follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) pattern (She ate an apple), while other languages, like Japanese, often use a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) order. Tallerman's perspective highlights that these rules not only dictate the sequence of elements but also how they combine hierarchically to form larger units such as phrases and sentences. This focus on order and combination reflects the importance of syntax in ensuring coherence and meaning in language, showcasing clause structure as both a formal system and a functional tool for organizing linguistic elements.

Kroeger (2005) discusses clause structure in terms of argument structure and its alignment with verb valency. Kroeger (2005) approaches clause structure by linking it to argument structure, which refers to the roles played by different participants in an event, and verb valency, which determines the number of arguments a verb requires. This perspective emphasizes that clause structure is fundamentally shaped by the properties of the verb at its core. Argument structure outlines the relationships between the verb and its associated elements, such as subjects, objects, and adjuncts. For example, a transitive

verb like eat requires two arguments—a subject (She) and an object (an apple), while an intransitive verb like sleep requires only a subject (He sleeps). Verb valency refers to this "argument-taking" capacity of verbs, dictating how many and what kind of arguments are necessary to form a complete and grammatically correct clause. Kroeger highlights how the alignment between argument structure and verb valency governs the organization of clause elements. This alignment determines which syntactic roles (e.g., subject, object) are assigned to the arguments based on the verb's requirements. For instance, the verb give typically requires three arguments—a subject, a direct object, and an indirect object (She gave him a book). By focusing on the interaction between argument structure and verb valency, Kroeger underscores the central role of the verb in clause formation and its influence on the syntactic and semantic relationships within the clause.

These perspectives provide a foundation for exploring the layered organization of Arogo clauses, focusing on their syntactic components and functions.

2.1.4 Syntactic Layering

Syntactic layering refers to the hierarchical organization of linguistic elements within a clause. Dixon (2010) defines syntactic layering as the arrangement of linguistic elements into nested structures, reflecting grammatical and functional relationships. Dixon defines syntactic layering as the arrangement of linguistic elements into hierarchical, nested structures, which reflect their grammatical and functional relationships within a clause. This concept emphasizes that sentences are not flat strings of words but are organized in layers, where smaller units (like words or phrases) are

embedded within larger ones. For instance, in a sentence like *The girl who lives next door is singing*, the relative clause *who lives next door* is nested within the noun phrase *The girl*, creating a layered structure. This layering illustrates grammatical relationships, such as which elements modify or depend on others (e.g., the relative clause describes the girl), and functional relationships, like how subjects and objects interact with the predicate. Dixon's view shows that these layers are crucial for understanding how meaning and syntax interact to produce well-formed sentences.

Givón (2001) explains layering as a means of organizing syntactic elements in a way that mirrors cognitive processes. Givón explains syntactic layering as a way of organizing linguistic elements that mirrors how humans process and structure information cognitively. According to this view, layering reflects the brain's tendency to organize ideas hierarchically, starting from simpler units and building up to more complex structures. For example, in *She thinks [that he is coming]*, the embedded clause *that he is coming* reflects a deeper layer of thought or intention within the main clause *She thinks*. This approach highlights that syntactic layering is not arbitrary but grounded in cognitive principles, such as focus, attention, and memory. Layers in syntax often correspond to layers of meaning or information, with more central layers carrying core meanings and peripheral layers adding contextual or supporting details. Givón's theory bridges syntax and cognition, showing how sentence structures align with the way humans organize and prioritize information.

Van Valin (2005) describes layering as a feature of syntactic representation that reveals dependencies and relationships among clause elements. Van Valin describes syntactic layering as a feature of syntactic representation that highlights the dependencies and relationships among elements in a clause. This perspective focuses on the structural connections between parts of a sentence, such as how subjects and objects depend on the verb or how modifiers relate to the elements they describe. For instance, in a sentence like *The dog chased the ball quickly*, the adverb *quickly* depends on the verb *chased*, while the noun phrase *the ball* is the object of the verb. Van Valin's approach is closely tied to the framework of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), which views clauses as multi-layered structures where each layer represents a distinct grammatical or functional role. For example, the nucleus (verb) is surrounded by layers representing arguments (subject, object) and adjuncts (modifiers). This layered representation allows for a clear depiction of how clause elements interact, revealing their syntactic and semantic dependencies. In summary, Van Valin's focus on layering highlights the interconnectedness of clause elements and how these relationships are systematically encoded in syntax.

These definitions highlight the complexity of syntactic organization and provide a lens for analyzing Arogbo clauses in terms of their layered structure.

2.2 Previous Studies

Several studies have been conducted on the Ijaw language family, with a focus on various linguistic components, including phonology, morphology, and syntax. However,

specific research on the Arogbo dialect and its layered clause structure remains limited. This section reviews key studies relevant to the current research focus.

Williamson (1989) comprehensive work on the Ijaw language family is a foundational resource for understanding the linguistic diversity within the group. Her study focuses on the classification of Ijaw languages, including an overview of their phonological and morphological features. Although her work provides a general description of Ijaw grammar, it does not delve into the syntactic peculiarities of the Arogbo dialect, leaving the layered structure of clauses unexplored.

Jenewari (1982) examines the syntax of the Kalabari dialect, one of the major dialects of the Ijaw language. His study highlights syntactic patterns such as sentence structure, verb serialization, and nominalization. While providing valuable insights into Ijaw syntax, the study does not address the specific clause structures of Arogbo, underscoring the need for dialect-specific research.

Emenanjo (2010) research focuses on the syntax of Niger-Congo languages, including Ijaw dialects. He discusses universal syntactic principles and their application to African languages, with occasional references to Ijaw. However, his study does not include a detailed analysis of Arogbo syntax, particularly its layered clause structure, which is the focus of this research.

These studies demonstrate significant progress in the documentation and analysis of Ijaw languages but highlight a gap in the detailed syntactic analysis of Arogbo,

particularly its clause structure. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing a focused investigation of the layered structure of Arogbo clauses.

2.3 Concern of Present Study

The primary concern of this study is to investigate the layered structure of clauses in the Arogbo dialect of Ijaw. This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the syntactic components and organization of Arogbo clauses, contributing to the documentation and understanding of the dialect. By addressing gaps in existing studies, the research extends linguistic knowledge of Arogbo, focusing specifically on clause structure, an area that has received limited attention in previous works.

The study seeks to achieve several objectives: identifying and describing the syntactic components of Arogbo clauses, examining their structural patterns, and documenting unique features that distinguish Arogbo syntax. These objectives align with the broader goal of contributing to the preservation and development of under-documented languages. The significance of this study lies in its potential to advance linguistic scholarship on Ijaw dialects, particularly Arogbo, while providing a resource for researchers and aiding language preservation efforts. The justification for this research is rooted in the limited syntactic analysis available for Arogbo, particularly in terms of clause layering. By addressing these gaps, the study ensures that the Arogbo dialect is better understood, documented, and preserved for future linguistic and cultural studies.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive theoretical foundation for analyzing the layered structure of the clause in Arogbo Izon. It examines the relevant linguistic theories, their principles, and how they apply to the study of Arogbo Izon syntax. The chapter is systematically organized into five major sections: theoretical foundation, theoretical orientation, theoretical organization, theoretical application, and specific applications to the study. Each section elaborates on key linguistic principles, frameworks, and methodologies that underpin this research.

3.1 Theoretical Foundation: Role and Reference Grammar

The analytical framework for this study is Role and Reference Grammar (RRG), first introduced by Van Valin (1993a, 1993b) and later expanded and refined in Van Valin (2005, 2010, 2019). RRG was developed to address languages where the interaction between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics is predominantly interdependent. It serves as a grammatical model that seeks to explain how these linguistic components interface, particularly in languages other than English.

RRG is classified as a non-generative grammatical model. Its theoretical foundation is built upon two key questions:

- a. what would a linguistic theory look like if it were based on the analysis of structurally diverse languages rather than primarily on English?

- b. how can the interaction of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics across different grammatical systems be best represented and explained?

These questions have guided the evolution of RRG by encouraging the inclusion of a broader range of languages within its framework. The second question, in particular, allows researchers to analyze linguistic data holistically, integrating structural and contextual findings rather than treating them separately. Core aspects of RRG include sentence processing, the organization and representation of grammar, and the syntactic and semantic representation of lexical and post-lexical units, among others. The subsequent discussion explores these aspects in greater detail.

A fundamental assumption in RRG is that syntax and semantics are bidirectionally linked. This means that meaning (semantics) maps onto structure (syntax) in production, while structure maps onto meaning in comprehension. Proponents of RRG view this as an optimal way to explain the processes involved in both speaking and understanding language. Due to this emphasis on bidirectionality, RRG structures grammar in a way that explicitly illustrates the connection between syntax and semantics using a bidirectional framework.

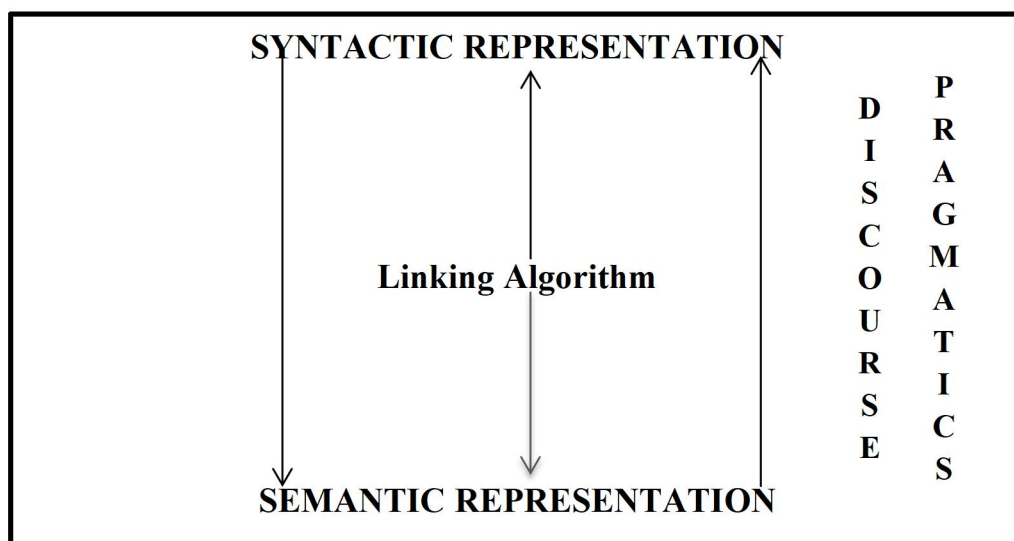


Figure 2: The Organization of Grammar in RRG: Van Valin (1991c)

As depicted in Figure 2, RRG does not incorporate abstract syntactic representations such as logical form or phonetic form. Instead, sentences are represented in a single structure that directly corresponds to their actual form. The linking algorithm connects the syntactic and semantic representations, incorporating lexical decomposition to account for the meaning of the predicate and its arguments. Additionally, discourse pragmatics operates alongside the linking algorithm, contributing to the information structure of a language and influencing the syntax-semantics interface.

RRG also introduces specific terminologies distinct from traditional grammatical terms. For instance, nouns, arguments, and noun phrases (NPs) are collectively referred to as Reference Phrases (RPs) because they function as referents within a clause. The term "clause" is preferred over "sentence," the verb phrase is termed "predicate," and the verb itself is called the "nucleus."

In RRG, both syntactic and semantic structures are represented, with the syntactic organization of clauses and lexical elements adhering to two key principles:

- a. a theory of clause structure should account for universal features without imposing unnecessary structures on languages that lack evidence for them.
- b. similar structures across different languages should be represented in comparable ways.

To satisfy these principles and provide an explanatory framework, RRG incorporates two sub-theories within its syntactic representation of clauses:

- (i) The theory of the "Layered Structure of the Clause" and
- (ii) The theory of "operators"

These sub-theories contribute to the systematic representation of clause structure, ensuring that grammatical analysis remains consistent across languages with varying syntactic patterns.

3.2 Theoretical Orientation

This study adopts a functional-structural orientation, aligning with the principles of RRG, which views syntax as a structured hierarchy composed of various layers. Arogbo Izon, being an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language, follows specific syntactic and morphological patterns that align with RRG's layered clause structure. Key aspects of this orientation include:

- (iii) **Clause Structure Analysis:** Examining the syntactic organization of verbs, arguments, and modifiers within Arogbo Izon clauses. This includes analyzing the

hierarchical layering of the clause, distinguishing between core and periphery elements, and understanding how syntactic units interact.

- (iv) **Information Structure:** Exploring the role of topic-focus articulation and its effect on word order. In Arogbo Izon, focus markers and topicalization strategies influence the placement of elements within the clause, making information structure an essential component of syntactic analysis.
- (v) **Syntax-Semantics Interface:** Investigating how meaning is encoded within different layers of the clause structure. This includes the relationship between verb semantics and argument realization, as well as how different semantic roles are syntactically represented.
- (vi) **Interaction of Operators:** Examining the role of tense, aspect, modality, and negation in shaping clause structure. Operators in Arogbo Izon, such as negation (wa) and tense markers, modify the clause at different hierarchical levels, impacting both syntactic organization and meaning.
- (vii) **Comparative Functional Analysis:** Comparing Arogbo Izon's syntactic structure with other Niger-Congo languages to highlight its unique and shared features. This helps in understanding how general linguistic principles manifest in Arogbo Izon's grammar while also recognizing language-specific variations.

By incorporating these dimensions, this orientation ensures that the analysis goes beyond formal syntactic patterns to consider functional, semantic, and discourse-driven

factors. This holistic perspective is essential in capturing the complexities of clause structure in Arogbo Izon.

3.3 Theoretical Organization

The theoretical organization follows the RRG framework and consists of several hierarchical components that govern clause structure analysis in Arogbo Izon. These components are outlined as follows:

- (i) the NUCLEUS: The nucleus is the core element of a clause that contains the predicate, which may be a simple verb or a complex predicate. It is the fundamental unit upon which other clause components are built.
- (ii) the CORE: This consists of the nucleus and its direct arguments, such as the subject and object. The core represents the basic syntactic and semantic structure necessary for clause formation.
- (iii) the PERIPHERY: The periphery includes elements that modify or provide additional information to the clause, such as adjuncts, adverbial phrases, and discourse markers. These elements do not alter the core argument structure but contribute to meaning and pragmatic interpretation.
- (iv) the OPERATORS: RRG accounts for grammatical elements like negation (wa), tense, aspect, and modality, which operate at different layers of the clause structure. Operators can function at the nucleus, core, or periphery level, influencing syntactic and semantic interpretation.

- (v) the **CLAUSE LINKAGE**: This component deals with how multiple clauses are linked together in discourse. RRG distinguishes between coordination, subordination, and co-subordination as different strategies used for clause combination.
- (vi) the **INFORMATION STRUCTURE**: The theoretical organization of a clause also accounts for how focus and topic are marked within sentences. Arogbo Izon employs specific word order patterns and discourse strategies to indicate topic prominence and focus shifts.

In table 2 below, we present the semantic elements captured by the syntactic units in the LSC:

Table 2: Semantic under underlying the Syntactic units of the LSC

S/N	SEMANTIC ELEMENTS	SYNTACTIC UNITS
1	Predicate (PRED)	Nucleus
2	Argument (ArGR) in SRP	Core Argument
3	Non-Arguments (NArGR)	Periphery
4	PRED + ArGR)	Core
5	PRED + ArGR + NArGR)	Clause (Core + Periphery)

Key: SRP: Semantic Representation of the Predicate

By structuring the theoretical organization in this way, the study provides a comprehensive model for analyzing Arogbo Izon clause structures. This framework ensures that the language’s unique syntactic and morphological patterns are systematically captured.

3.4 Theoretical Application

The application of Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) to Arogbo Izon provides a structured approach to analyzing the language's clause structure, revealing how different linguistic elements interact to form meaning. This section outlines key areas where RRG is employed to deepen our understanding of Arogbo Izon syntax.

One crucial aspect of this analysis is the representation of clause linkage relations, which examines how clauses connect within discourse. Arogbo Izon, like many Niger-Congo languages, employs various strategies to join clauses, whether through coordination, subordination, or other forms of syntactic dependency. Understanding these relationships is essential for capturing the broader discourse structure of the language. RRG provides a framework to categorize and analyze these connections, identifying whether linked clauses function as independent statements, embedded structures, or elements of a larger syntactic unit.

Another key area of focus is the role of operators - grammatical elements that modify clause structure, including tense, aspect, and negation. In Arogbo Izon, these operators influence how events are temporally and modally interpreted. For instance, tense markers indicate whether an action occurs in the past, present, or future, while aspectual elements determine whether an event is completed, ongoing, or habitual. Additionally, negation markers such as 'wa' play a central role in modifying sentence meaning. Through RRG, this study examines how these operators are positioned within clauses and how they interact with other syntactic elements to shape interpretation.

Furthermore, the study explores focus and topicalization, two mechanisms that highlight specific information within a sentence. In Arogbo Izon, the placement of certain constituents may shift depending on whether a speaker intends to emphasize a particular element or maintain discourse coherence. Focus structures alter word order to foreground key information, while topicalization mechanisms help structure sentences to reflect known or backgrounded information. By applying RRG's theoretical tools, this research identifies how Arogbo Izon marks focus and topic, analyzing their impact on syntactic structure and meaning.

Through these theoretical applications, this study aims to provide a systematic and comprehensive description of Arogbo Izon's clause structure. By integrating insights from RRG, the research not only clarifies the grammatical organization of the language but also contributes to broader discussions on syntax-semantics interaction in Niger-Congo languages.

3.5 Theoretical Applications to the Study of the Layered Structure of the Clause

This study employs Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) as a framework to analyze the structure of clauses in Arogbo Izon. By applying RRG, the research aims to uncover how syntax and semantics interact in the language, shedding light on key grammatical phenomena that define its clause structure.

One central focus of the study is the syntax-semantics interface, particularly the relationship between verb selection and argument structure. In Arogbo Izon, as in many languages, verbs play a crucial role in determining the number and type of arguments that

appear within a clause. This research explores how different verb classes interact with syntactic elements and how these interactions shape the overall clause structure.

Another important area of analysis is tense, aspect, and modality (TAM). These grammatical categories influence how events are situated in time, whether they are completed or ongoing, and the speaker's attitude toward them. In Arogbo Izon, TAM markers contribute significantly to clause formation, and this study seeks to determine their syntactic positioning and functional roles within the layered structure of the clause.

The study also investigates negation and focus marking, particularly how negation is expressed and how it interacts with other syntactic elements. For example, the negation marker 'wa' plays a critical role in altering the meaning of a clause. Understanding its placement within the sentence and its interaction with focus structures offers insights into how negation operates in Arogbo Izon.

Furthermore, the research examines word order variations and how discourse and information structure influence the arrangement of sentence constituents. Although Arogbo Izon generally follows an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) order, certain discourse contexts may allow or require deviations from this pattern. By analyzing these variations, the study aims to identify the factors that drive changes in constituent placement and how they align with broader principles of linguistic organization.

By applying RRG to these aspects of Arogbo Izon, this research provides a formal analysis of its layered clause structure while contributing to broader typological studies of Niger-Congo languages. Beyond simply describing the language's syntax, the study seeks

to enhance our understanding of how form and meaning interact in Arogbo Izon, enriching the field of linguistic scholarship and offering a valuable perspective on the structure of understudied languages.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth theoretical framework for analyzing Arogbo Izon's clause structure. It has elaborated on the Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) framework and supplementary linguistic theories that inform this study. The next chapter will focus on data presentation and analysis, applying these theoretical principles to empirical linguistic data to further investigate the structure of Arogbo Izon clauses.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the layered structure of the clause in Arogbo Izon, focusing on its core components and their interactions. It provides a detailed analysis of the clause's five major layers: the core, the nucleus, the periphery, the pre-core slot and the left-detached position (LDP). Each layer is discussed in separate sections, illustrating their roles and contributions to the overall clause structure in Arogbo Izon. The chapter is divided into five sections, with each section dedicated to exploring one of these layers in depth, supported by relevant examples from the language.

4.1 Analysis

This section provides a detailed analysis of the layered structure of the clause in Arogbo Izon, focusing on the interaction and functions of its core components. The analysis begins with the nucleus, which contains the main predicate, typically a verb that conveys the core semantic information of the clause. It then expands to the core, which includes the predicate and its arguments, such as the subject and object, forming the essential grammatical unit. Beyond the core, the periphery is examined as the domain for adjuncts or modifiers, which provide additional context like time, place, or manner. The section then discusses the pre-core slot, which is used for focus or interrogative elements that directly interact with the core. Finally, the left-detached position (LDP) is analyzed as the pre-clausal domain for introducing topics or external elements, often marked with

particles or resumptive pronouns. Examples from Arogbo Izon illustrate how these layers function independently and as part of a cohesive system, highlighting the dynamic nature of clause structure in the language.

4.1.1. The Nucleus in Arogbo Izon

The nucleus in Arogbo Izon represents the smallest unit of the clause and is primarily occupied by the predicate, typically a verb or verbal complex. It is the core semantic component of the clause, encoding the primary action, state, or event. In Arogbo Izon, the nucleus is where tense, aspect, and mood (TAM) markers are attached, providing temporal and modal information about the event. The data in (1) below show an example of the nucleus in Arogbo Izon.

1. bọ (Come)

The verb "bọ" functions as the nucleus, expressing the main action without additional arguments or modifiers.

Similarly: *deri* (laugh), *fī* (eat) etc.

In Arogbo Izon, the nucleus of the clause, which includes the verb and its extensions, plays a crucial role in expressing tense, aspect, mood (TAM), negation, argument structure, and other grammatical features. TAM markers are especially significant, as they are attached to the verb within the nucleus to indicate distinctions in time and the speaker's perspective on the action.

4.1.1.1 Mìṅì (as a present tense marker)

In Arogbo Izon, "mìṅì" functions as a present tense marker when it follows the verb in the sentence. It indicates that the action is occurring in the present. This marker attaches to the verb and is placed after the verb's nucleus, giving it a clear temporal reference to the present. The data in (2) below shows the marking of present tense using mìṅì in Arogbo Izon:

2. (i) È mu mìṅì

I going

I am going

The present tense marker mìṅì comes after the verb mì (to go) to show the action is happening now.

(ii) U bunu mìṅì

He sleeping

He is sleeping

Similarly, mìṅì comes after bunu ("to sleep"), indicating that the action is ongoing.

(iii) Ọṅì sei mìṅì

They dancing

They are dancing

mìṅì marks the verb sei (to dance) as happening in the present.

(iv) Wọ fì mìṅì

We eating

We are eating

m̄ɪɲɪ is used with fi (to eat) to express an action taking place in the present.

(v) I deri m̄ɪɲɪ

You laugh

You are laughing

The present tense marker m̄ɪɲɪ modifies deri (to laugh), showing that the laughing is happening at the moment.

4.1.1.2 M̄ɪɲɪ (as a future tenses marker)

In addition to expressing the present tense, "m̄ɪɲɪ" can also signal futurity when combined with verbs that undergo specific changes, particularly in terms of vowel lengthening and tone. In this context, the final vowel of the verb is lengthened and pronounced with a high tone to indicate that the action is intended to occur in the future.

The data in (3) below shows how this is represented:

3. (i) Ẹ muu m̄ɪɲɪ

I go will

I will go

The verb mu (to go) is lengthened to muu with a high tone, marking the future tense.

(ii) U bunuu m̄ɪɲɪ

He sleep will

He will sleep

bunu (to sleep) becomes bunuu, with a lengthened vowel and high tone, indicating futurity.

(iii) Ọnị sei mịnị

They dance will

They will dance

sei (to dance) takes a high tone and lengthened vowel to indicate that they will dance.

(iv) Wọ fii mịnị

We eating will

We will eat

fị (to eat) becomes fii, lengthened with a high tone to express futurity.

(v) I derii mịnị

You laugh will

You will laugh

derii is formed by lengthening the vowel of deri ("to laugh") and adding the high tone, showing that the action will take place in the future.

In the sentences above, the verbs muu, bunuu, sei, fii, and derii co occurring with “mịnị” takes the high tone and lengthens the final vowel so as to indicate futurity.

4.1.1.3 Tẹj (to show wish or want in completed action)

In Arogbo Izon, the particle “tẹj” plays a significant role in verbal constructions, particularly in expressing perfect aspect (completed actions) and wish or desire,

depending on the context and tonal patterns. When “tɛj” combines with a verb in its regular form, it typically indicates that the action expressed by the verb has been completed. The data in (4) shows that tɛj is a marker of perfective aspect, signifying that the event has already occurred:

4. (i) ɛ mu tɛj

I gone

I have gone

Here, tɛj combines with mu ("to go") to indicate that the act of going is complete.

(ii) U bunu tɛj

He slept

He has slept

The particle tɛj adds a sense of completion to bunu ("to sleep").

(iii) ɔnɪ sei tɛj

They danced

They have danced

The verb sei ("to dance") is marked as a completed action by tɛj.

(iv) Wɔ fɪ tɛj

We eaten

We have eaten

fɪ (to eat) is modified by tɛj to show that the eating is done.

(v) I deri tẹ̀

You laugh have

You have laughed

The particle tẹ̀ emphasizes the completion of deri ("to laugh").

4.1.1.4. Tẹ̀ (to show desire to carry out an action)

In contrast, when the verb undergoes vowel lengthening and is pronounced with a high tone, tẹ̀ changes its function, signaling desire or wish. Data in (5) below shows the use of tẹ̀ indicates that the speaker desires or wants to perform the action:

5. (i) Ẹ́ muu tẹ̀

I go want

I want to go

The verb mu (to go) is lengthened to muu, and the high tone is used, signifying a desire to go.

(ii) U bunuu tẹ̀

He sleep want

He wants to sleep

The verb bunu ("to sleep") is lengthened to bunuu, and the high tone marks a desire to sleep.

(iii) Oni seii tẹ̀

They dance want

They want to dance

The verb seḷi (to dance) is modified with vowel lengthening to seii, and the high tone signals a wish to dance.

(iv) Wọ fii teḷi

We eat want

We want to eat

The verb fi ("to eat") is lengthened to fii, and the high tone expresses a desire to eat.

(v) I derii teḷi

You laugh want

You want to laugh

The verb deri ("to laugh") becomes derii with a high tone to indicate a wish to laugh.

4.1.1.5 Agha as Negation Marker

Negation in the nucleus is expressed through specific prefixes or particles. In the data (6) below show negation is marked by certain markers suitable for the sentence structure:

6. U bọ agha

He come not

'he did not come '

The sentence above illustrates how the negative particle “agha” attaches to the verb bọ ‘come’ to negate the action. In the sentence U bọ agha - ‘he did not come’, the negative particle ‘agha’ directly negates the verb bọ (come), showing how negation is

incorporated into the nucleus. This integration of negation within the nucleus showcases the compact and multifunctional nature of the verb in Arogbo Izon grammar.

4.1.1.6 The Dynamic Role of the Nucleus

The nucleus is also capable of incorporating arguments or forming verb complexes that alter its meaning or valency. In simple constructions, the verb alone may carry the full meaning of the clause, as in data (7)

7. (i) à fẹ

She bought

she bought

However, in more complex constructions, additional morphological elements expand the verb's function

(ii) U à miyen seḡ mọ

He her made dance

He made her dance

He made her dance where creating a causative verb increases the valency of the clause.

This ability to incorporate arguments or extensions makes the nucleus a dynamic and adaptable element in Arogbo Izon syntax.

4.1.1.7 Lexical and Auxiliary verbs in the nucleus

A distinction is also made between lexical verbs, which carry core semantic content, and auxiliary verbs, which contribute grammatical information like TAM or negation. In sentences like data (8) below:

8. Ú bọ tẹ̀ì

He come

He has come,

The lexical verb bọ ‘come’ forms the nucleus, while the auxiliary tẹ̀ì encodes the aspectual information. This division allows the nucleus to serve as a focal point for both semantic and grammatical content.

4.1.1.8 The Interaction of Focus, Intonation, and the Nucleus

Focus and intonation interact closely with the nucleus, emphasizing its role in clause structure. When elements in a clause are in focus, they often shift the prominence of the nucleus. In data (9) the interrogative

9. U bọ ma?

He come?

Did he come?

The nucleus bọ ‘come’ is emphasized through intonation to mark the question. This interaction highlights the importance of the nucleus in conveying meaning and intention, even beyond its grammatical functions.

4.1.1.9 The Semantic Flexibility of the Nucleus

The semantic flexibility of the nucleus is another notable feature. Verbs in Arogbo Izon can represent a wide range of actions, processes, and states. For instance, in stative verbs like data (10) i. ẹ̀rì (to see) and (ii) na (to hear), and dynamic verbs like (iii) mu ("to go") can both function as the nucleus, depending on the context. This versatility

allows the nucleus to adapt to various syntactic and semantic demands, making it a central component of Arogbo Izon clause structure.

4.1.2 The Core in Arogbo Izon

In Arogbo Izon, the core of a clause is made up of three essential components: the subject, the object, and the predicate, with the language following a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order. This means that the verb, as the central element of the clause, consistently appears at the end, while the subject and object precede it. In data (11) below:

11. Doubrah obori fẹ
Doubrah goat bought
Doubrah bought a goat

Doubrah (she) is the subject, *obori* (goat) is the object, *fẹ* (buy) is the verb. In this sentence, the core is in its past tense form as a result of the nucleus “fẹ” standing alone without any particles occurring after it. This shows that to mark past tense in Arogbo Izon, the nucleus must be standing alone. The predicate, often a verb, plays a central role in the structure of the clause. Verbs in Arogbo Izon carry information about tense, aspect, and mood. Tense situates an action in time (past, present, or future), while aspect highlights whether the action is completed, ongoing, or habitual. Mood, on the other hand, expresses attitudes such as possibility or necessity. This richness of verbal encoding makes the predicate a key player in the grammatical framework of the language.

4.1.2.1 The Core and the SOV Structure Organization in Arogbo Izon

The subject, which refers to the doer or experiencer of the action, precedes the object and the verb. Meanwhile, the object, which is the entity affected by the action, follows the subject but appears before the verb. In data (12) below:

12. (i). Doubrah bini ko kala tobou piri

Doubrah water child gave

Doubrah gave the child water

“Doubrah” is the subject (the first referential phrase in the core), bini (water) is the direct object (in RRG, there is nothing like direct or indirect object so this is also referred to as RP - referential phrase), ‘ko’ in the sentence is connecting the RP to the nucleus, kala tobou (child) is the second object (which is the third reference phrasal element in this sentence), and piri (gave) is the verb (the nucleus).

The SOV word order of Arogbo Izon also influences other grammatical structures. Consistent with SOV typology, the language uses postpositions rather than prepositions.

For example

(ii). Buru mi kasi ke emi

Yam the chair for

The yam is on the chair

The sentence above illustrates the typical Arogbo Izon structure and highlights the use of postpositions like ke emi (for). In (ii) above the structure aligns with the SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) typology, and the postposition ke emi follows the noun it modifies (kasi, ‘chair’). This also showcases how Arogbo Izon relies on postpositions rather than

prepositions to indicate spatial relationships, consistent with many other SOV languages. The sentence demonstrates the interplay between the core elements (*buru mi*) and the periphery, where the locative information (*kasi kẹ emi*) is added.

Understanding the SOV structure in Arogbo Izon sheds light on its typological features and its relationship to other languages in the Ijoid family. The interaction between syntax, semantics, and tonal patterns reveals the intricacy of the language and provides a basis for exploring how it organizes information within the clause.

4.1.3 The Periphery in Arogbo Izon

In Arogbo Izon, the periphery of the clause consists of elements that lie outside the core but contribute additional information to the sentence. These peripheral elements typically include adjuncts (such as expressions of time, place, manner, or reason), focus particles, and other discourse-level markers. While the core (subject, object, and verb) forms the grammatical and semantic foundation of the clause, the periphery provides context or emphasis without altering the fundamental structure of the clause.

One of the most important features of the periphery in Arogbo Izon is the role of adjuncts, which add information about time, location, manner, or purpose. But in the case of Arogbo Izon, adjuncts do not always take the position at the periphery of the clause, it is most times embedded in the core. For instance, in the data (13) below sentence

13. *Doubrah Ekọ kẹ eyi fẹ*
 Doubrah Lagos from bought
 Doubrah bought from Lagos

The phrase ‘Eko kẹ eyi which literally translates to (from Lagos) is a locative adjunct that does not appear at the periphery of the clause. Adjuncts in Arogbo Izon often precede the verb, but they can also precede the core for emphasis or stylistic purposes.

4.1.3.1 Focus and Topicalization in the Periphery

Focus and topicalization are also central to the periphery in Arogbo Izon. Focus markers like *béi*, and in some cases ‘*kẹ*’, ‘*mọ*’, and ‘*kọ*’ is used to emphasize specific elements in the sentence, drawing attention to them as the most important piece of information. In the data (14) below this is illustrated:

14. Doubrah obori fẹ bei dou mìnì

Doubrah goat buy the want

Doubrah wants to buy a goat

‘*bei*’ is added to the verb ‘*fẹ*’ to emphasize or highlight it as the key element. This kind of flronting is a common strategy in Arogbo Izon for managing discourse and signaling shifts in topic or focus. Discourse particles and interjections often occur in the periphery to express speaker attitudes or manage the flow of conversation. These elements provide clues about the speaker's emotions, intentions, or the overall structure of the discourse. For example, particles like *ma* can be used to soften commands or indicate politeness.

4.1.3.2 The Role of Intonation and Tone in the Periphery

Intonation and tone also play a role in the periphery by signaling clause boundaries and marking sentence types. In questions, for instance, rising intonation or the

use of interrogative particles at the periphery can indicate that a statement is being framed as a query. This is illustrated in data (15) below:

15. Ú buru fì mìnì ghan?

He yam eat + interrogative particle

Does he eat yam

The interrogative particle ‘ghan’ appears at the end, functioning as part of the periphery to signal the question.

Overall, the periphery in Arogbo Izon serves as a flexible space for adding contextual, emphatic, or interpersonal information to the core and also the clause. Its interaction with the core reveals the layered structure of the clause, where peripheral elements modify or frame the meaning established by the core components. This balance between core and periphery is key to understanding how Arogbo Izon organizes and communicates information within its clause structure.

4.1.4 The Pre-Core Slot in Arogo Izon

In Arogo Izon, the pre-core slot refers to the syntactic position preceding the core of the clause, which is often used for elements such as topics, focus-marked constituents, or other discourse-relevant material. This slot plays a crucial role in the organization of information, particularly in terms of highlighting or foregrounding specific elements within a sentence.

4.1.4.1 Topicalization in the Pre-Core Slot

One primary function of the pre-core slot is topicalization, where an element is moved to the beginning of the sentence to establish it as the topic of discussion. This is illustrated in data (16) below:

16. Buru mị seị ya, u a fị emi

Yam the, he eat

As for the yam, he eats it

The noun ‘buru’ (“yam”) appears in the pre-core slot to indicate that it is the topic of the sentence. This structure helps to set the context for the information provided in the core.

4.1.4.2 Focus Marking and Interrogative words in the Pre-Core Slot

The pre-core slot is also frequently used for focus marking, often achieved through particles such as ke. Focus marking emphasizes a particular element as the most significant or contrastive piece of information in the clause. For instance, in data (17)

17. (i). Buru ke u mọ fị

Yam he eat

It is yam that he eats

The noun ‘buru’ is fronted to the pre-core slot and marked with ‘kẹ’ to draw attention to it as the focused element. This use of the pre-core slot is a common strategy in Arogbo Izon for managing emphasis and clarifying the intended meaning of a sentence.

In addition to topics and focused elements, interrogative words also commonly occupy the pre-core slot. For example, in a question like

(ii). Tẹ kẹ u mọ fì ma?

What he eat

What does he eat

The interrogative word tẹ kẹ (what) appears in the pre-core position to signal that it is the focus of the inquiry.

The pre-core slot interacts closely with intonation and tone, particularly in marking emphasis or distinguishing between declarative and interrogative constructions. For example, a focused or topicalized element in the pre-core slot may be accompanied by a distinct intonation pattern that further underscores its prominence within the clause.

Overall, the pre-core slot in Arogbo Izon functions as a dynamic space for managing discourse, marking focus, and framing topics. Its flexibility allows speakers to adjust the syntactic structure of a clause to reflect the communicative priorities of a given context. By using the pre-core slot effectively, Arogbo Izon speakers can highlight specific elements, clarify the flow of information, and convey nuanced meanings within their sentences.

4.1.5 The Left-Detached Position in Arogo Izon

In Arogo Izon, there is the left-detached position and the right-detached position. It is a syntactic space that appears outside, before or after the core clause, often separated by a pause for the Left-Detached position. This position is used for elements that are grammatically disconnected from the core but play an important role in framing the discourse or providing contextual information. These elements are not part of the main syntactic structure of the clause but instead serve as introductory or background material.

4.1.5.1 Left-Detached and Right-Detached Positions in Arogo Izon

The left-detached position (LDP) and right-detached position (RDP) in Arogo Izon illustrate how discourse elements outside the core clause frame or highlight specific information. For instance, in data (18) below:

18. Buru mị seḡ ya, u a fī emi

 Yam the, he eat for

 As for the yam, he eats it

‘buru’ (yam) is placed in the left-detached position to establish it as the subject of discussion. It demonstrates the use of the LDP, where buru mị (as for the yam) serves as a discourse topic, establishing what the sentence is about. Emphatic words like ‘seḡ ya’ reflect a focus marker or a means of emphasizing the verb or action within the clause, highlighting its importance. Also ‘emi’ is often a pronoun or demonstrative used for emphasis or specificity, adding weight to the idea of "it" being eaten. Together, these

emphatic elements contribute to the communicative intent of the sentence, ensuring clarity and focus on the highlighted points.

One common function of the left-detached position is topic introduction. Speakers often use this position to present a topic that is relevant to the conversation but not necessarily a grammatical argument of the core clause. This use of the left-detached position helps orient the listener to what the clause will elaborate on.

The left-detached position is also used for contrastive emphasis or to introduce elements that set the stage for the core clause. For example in data (19) below, a speaker might say:

19. U sei ya, u buru fi miŋi

Him, he yam eat

As for him, he eats yam

to emphasize u (him) sei ya is attached as the focus marker. The pause following the detached element signals its separation from the syntactic structure of the core clause, reinforcing its role as a contextual or discourse-level marker.

4.1.5.2 Dislocated Arguments in the Left-Detached Position

Dislocated arguments also frequently appear in the left-detached position. In such cases, an argument that would normally be part of the core clause is moved to the left-detached position for emphasis or clarity, often with a resumptive pronoun appearing in the core. This is illustrated in data (20) below:

20. Saramo, umi-iyọ o pẹre

Quickly, place sit

quickly, sit there)

Here, *saramo* is detached and the pronoun ‘*o*’ is attached to ‘the place’ in the core clause, creating a dislocation that highlights the subject.

4.1.5.3 Adverbial Phrases in the Left-Detached Position

Additionally, adverbial phrases or expressions of time, place, or reason can occupy the left-detached position. This illustration follows data (21) below:

21. *Aberin o, Doubrah foto bei ko Tobouke digha uni dama zu*

Yesterday, Doubrah photo Tobouke not show office

Yesterday, Doubrah did not show the photo to Tobouke in the office

This sentence uses the temporal adverb ‘*aberin*’ (yesterday) in the left-detached position to provide temporal context for the clause. Then ‘*o*’ is attached to ‘*aberin*’ to create emphasis.

Intonation and pauses play a critical role in marking the left-detached position in speech. Detached elements are often accompanied by a rising or flat intonation, followed by a pause that separates them from the main clause. This prosodic feature helps listeners identify the detached element as distinct from the core clause.

Conclusively, the left-detached position in Arogbó Izon serves as a flexible syntactic and discourse tool. It allows speakers to introduce topics, provide contextual information, or emphasize elements without altering the grammatical structure of the core

clause. This feature contributes to the richness of the language's clause structure and its ability to manage information flow effectively in conversation.

4.2 Discussion and Findings (Layered structure of Arogbo clauses)

The analysis of the layered structures of Arogbo Izon clauses reveals a complex interaction between syntactic positions and discourse functions. Each layer of the clause demonstrates unique roles and contributes to the overall meaning and communicative intent.

The NUCLEUS in Arogbo Izon is the central grammatical and semantic element of the clause, typically represented by the predicate, which includes the main verb and any attached markers for tense, aspect, and mood (TAM). As shown in data (1) (Section 4.1.1), simple verbs such as *bɔ* (come) can function as the nucleus without additional modifiers, emphasizing the importance of the nucleus in encoding the primary action or state of a clause.

1. THE NUCLEUS

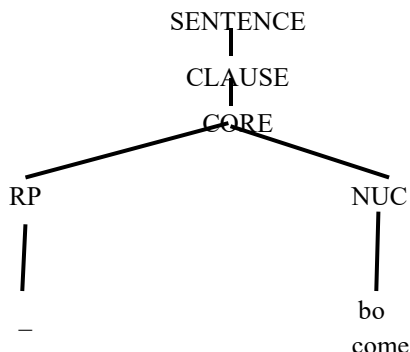


Figure 3: Representation of the nucleus

Figure (3) shows the representation of simple verbs such as *bo* that can function as the nucleus without additional modifiers.

The nucleus plays a pivotal role in expressing TAM markers, as illustrated in data (2) and (3) (Sections 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.2). For instance, *E mu m̄iṅi* (I am going) uses the present tense marker *m̄iṅi* after the verb *mu* (to go), while *E muu m̄iṅi* (I will go) indicates future tense through vowel lengthening and tonal changes combined with the same marker. These examples demonstrate how the nucleus is both compact and versatile in its ability to encode grammatical information.

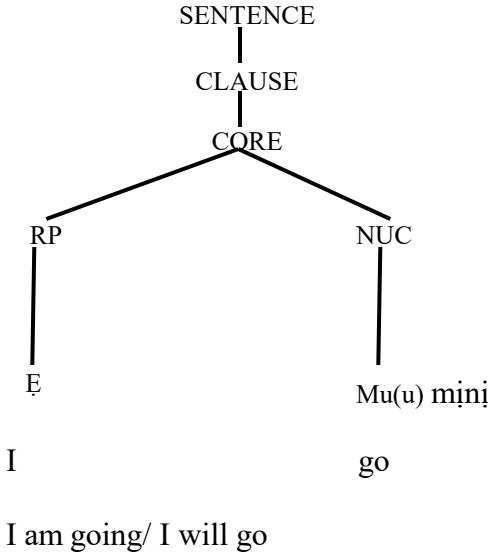


Figure 4: Representation of Interaction of the Nucleus and RP

Figure 4 shows how present tense and past tense are marked using the particle *mini* and vowel lengthening for past tense respectively.

Moreover, the nucleus interacts closely with auxiliary particles, negation markers, and focus elements, further highlighting its dynamic role. For instance, in data (6) (Section 4.1.1.6), negation is marked by the particle *agha* attached to the verb, as in *U bọ agha* ("He did not come"). Similarly, auxiliary particles like *tẹi* add layers of meaning to the nucleus, signaling either perfective aspect (*Ẹ mu tẹi* – "I have gone," data (4)) or desire (*Ẹ muu tẹi* – "I want to go," data (5)). This multifunctionality reflects how the nucleus serves as the foundation for syntactic and semantic operations in Arogbo Izon clauses.

The nucleus also exhibits semantic flexibility, adapting to different contexts and conveying a range of meanings. As discussed in Section 4.1.1.10, both stative verbs (e.g., *ẹri* – "to see," data (10i)) and dynamic verbs (e.g., *mu* – "to go," data (10iii)) can serve as the nucleus, depending on the clause's intent. Furthermore, the interaction between focus, intonation, and the nucleus, as seen in data (9) (*U bọ ma?* – Did he come?), underscores its importance in shaping the clause's communicative function. This adaptability makes the nucleus a central component of clause structure, capable of balancing both grammatical precision and semantic depth.

The CORE in Arogbo Izon clause consists of three primary components: the subject, the object, and the predicate. The language adheres to a strict Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order, ensuring that the verb, as the nucleus, always appears at the end. In 4.1.2 data (12) above the sentence "Doubrah obori fẹ" (Doubrah bought a goat),

"Doubrah" functions as the subject, "obori" (goat) as the object, and "fẹ" (buy) as the verb, forming a simple and complete core clause. The verb, or predicate, plays a central role in the core, encoding grammatical information such as tense, aspect, and mood. In the given example, the past tense is marked by the nucleus "fẹ" standing alone without additional particles, indicating that verbs in Arogbo Izon encode tense directly through their isolation or context.

2. THE CORE

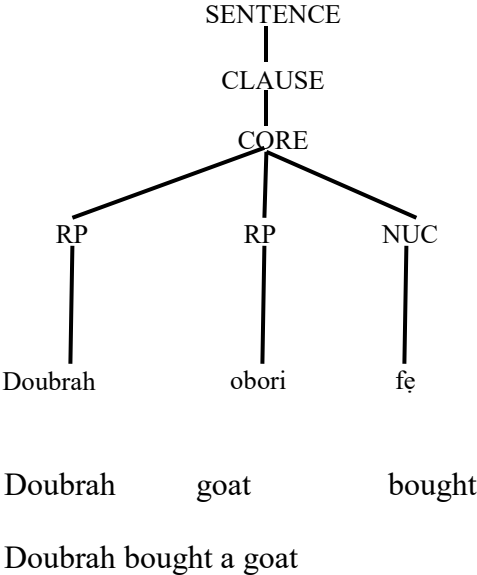


Figure 5: Representation of Interaction of the Element in the Core

Figure 5 shows the representation of the three primary components that the core entails, subject (the first RP – referential phrase) object (the second RP), and the predicate (the nucleus).

Also in figure 6 below, the core may consist of more than two RPs. As shown:

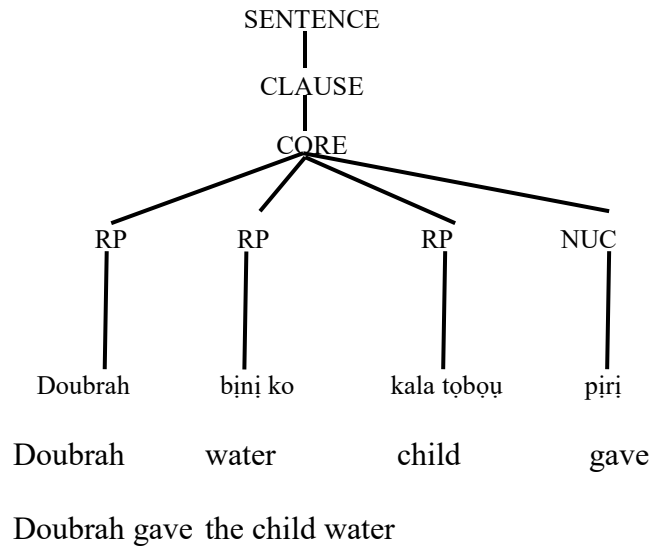


Figure 6: Organization of the Element in the Core

The SOV structure, characteristic of Arogbo Izon, organizes these elements logically. See figure (4) above "Doubrah biṇi ko kala tɔbɔu pɪri" (Doubrah gave the child water), the subject "Doubrah," the referential phrases " biṇi" (water) and "kala tɔbɔu " (child), and the nucleus "pɪri" (gave) illustrate the interaction of core elements in clause formation.

Additionally, the aspect of verbs in the core provides insight into the nature of the action. For instance, an action can be completed (perfective), ongoing (progressive), or habitual, depending on verbal markers or context. Mood further enriches the predicate by expressing attitudes such as possibility, obligation, or necessity, making the predicate a multifunctional element that drives both grammatical and semantic interpretations.

The PERIPHERY in Arogbo Izon plays a significant role in shaping the overall meaning of a clause by providing additional contextual, emphatic, or interpersonal

information. Intonation and tone are particularly important within the periphery, especially in signaling clause boundaries and marking sentence types. For example, in data (15) (Section 4.1.3.2), the interrogative particle *ghan* appears at the end of the clause in *Ú buru fi mīni ghan?* (Does he eat yam?). Here, rising intonation, coupled with the particle, indicates that the sentence is framed as a question. This interaction between periphery elements and intonation highlights the language’s reliance on both syntactic and prosodic cues to communicate meaning effectively.

3. THE PERIPHERY

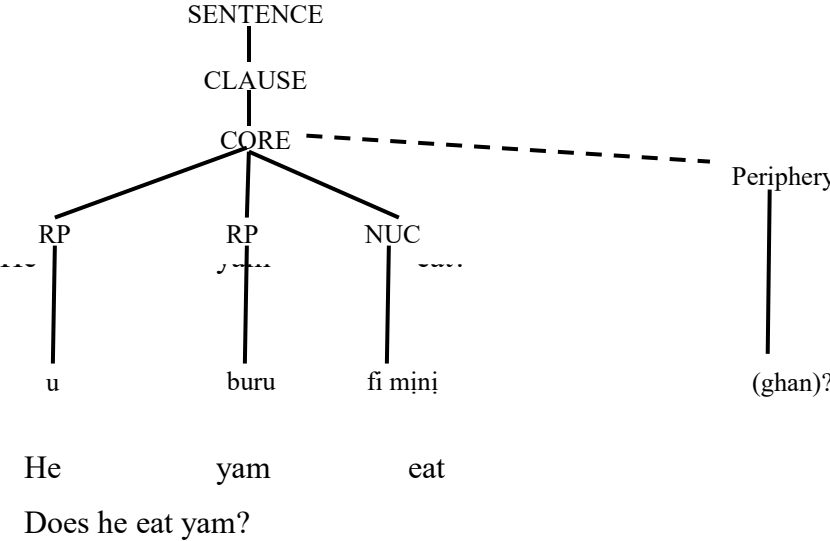


Figure 7: Representation of the Interaction of the Core Element and the Periphery

It may be argued that the particle “ghan” is the periphery of this sentence as opposed to the information in figure (8) below, interrogative matters and intonation patterns emphasize the layered nature of the clause structure.

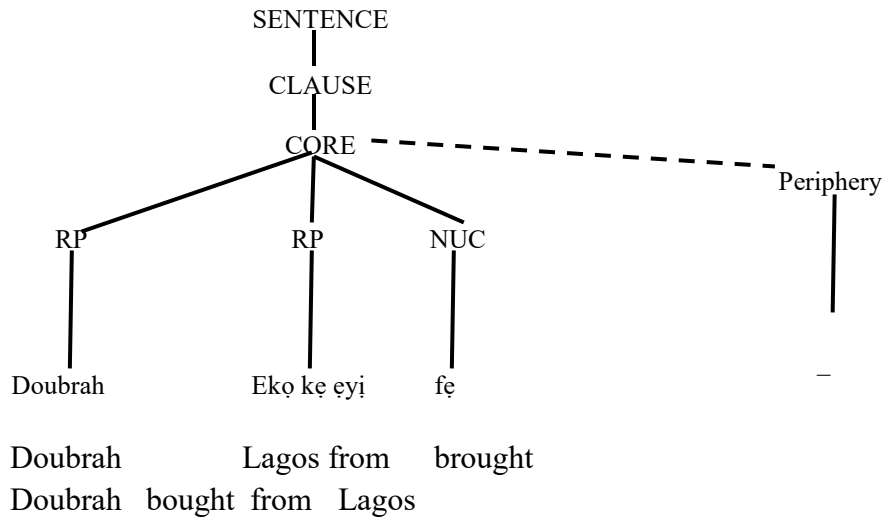


Figure 8: Representation of the Embedded (Absent) Periphery

In figure (8) above, it is seen that additional information such as the locative adjunct “Eko ke eyi” which literally translates to “from Lagos” does not appear at the periphery position of the clause as oppose to what we have in English. There are also cases of irregular positioning of the periphery in Arogbó Izon as shown in figure 9 below.

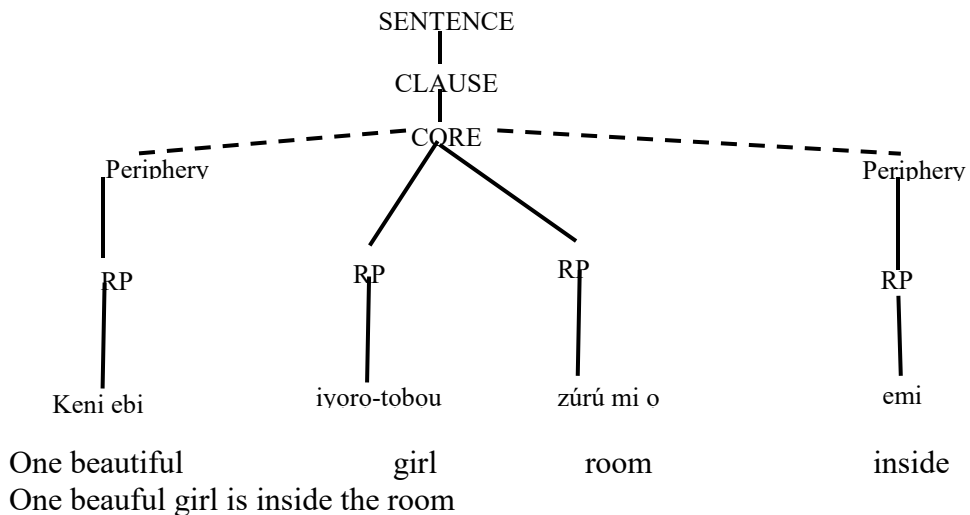


Figure 9: Representation of a case of two Peripheries and Absence of the Nucleus

In figure 9 above, the clause has two peripheries and absence of the nucleus which is uncommon in most sentences in Arogo Izo and even in English. It shows the interaction of the element in the core (RP minus nucleus in this case) and the periphery.

In Arogo Izo, the periphery also works in tandem with the core to frame or modify the information provided within the clause. Peripheral elements such as interrogative markers and intonation patterns emphasize the layered nature of the clause structure, where the core conveys the primary semantic and grammatical content, while the periphery refines or contextualizes it. This dynamic relationship between core and periphery illustrates how Arogo Izo achieves flexibility and clarity in clause construction, balancing the core's essential meaning with the periphery's nuanced contributions.

The PRE-CORE SLOT in Arogo Izo plays a crucial role in clause formation, particularly in topicalization, focus marking, and interrogative constructions. One significant function of the pre-core slot is topicalization, where elements are moved to the beginning of the sentence to establish them as the topic of discussion. As highlighted in Section 4.1.4.1, data (16) exemplifies this: *Buru m̩ se̩ ya, u a f̩ emi* (as for the yam, he eats it). Here, the noun *buru* (yam) is placed in the pre-core slot, foregrounding it as the topic and helping to set the context for the information presented in the core clause. This usage demonstrates how topicalization in the pre-core slot enhances discourse cohesion.

4. THE PRE CORE SLOT

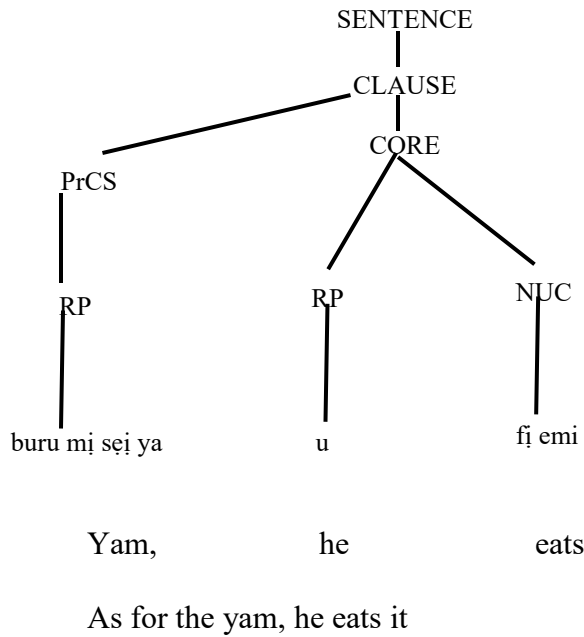


Figure 10: Representation of the Pre Core Slot

In figure 10 the noun ‘buru’ (yam) is placed at the pre-core slot, foregrounding it as the topic and helping to set to set the context for the information presented in the core of the clause.

The pre-core slot also facilitates focus marking, as discussed in Section 4.1.4.2. Data (17i) demonstrates this function: *buru kẹ u mọ fị* (it is yam that he eats). In this example, *buru* (yam) is fronted to the pre-core slot and marked with the focus particle *kẹ*, emphasizing it as the most significant part of the clause. Additionally, the pre-core slot is integral to interrogative constructions, as seen in data (17ii): *Tẹ kẹ u mọ fị ma?* (what does he eat?). Here, the interrogative word *tẹ kẹ* (what) occupies the pre-core slot, highlighting the focus of the inquiry. The interaction between the pre-core slot and

intonation further enhances its communicative importance, with distinct intonation patterns marking elements in this slot, reinforcing their prominence and discourse function. This dynamic role of the pre-core slot in managing emphasis and discourse organization is evident in both topicalization and focus marking, as well as in interrogative constructions.

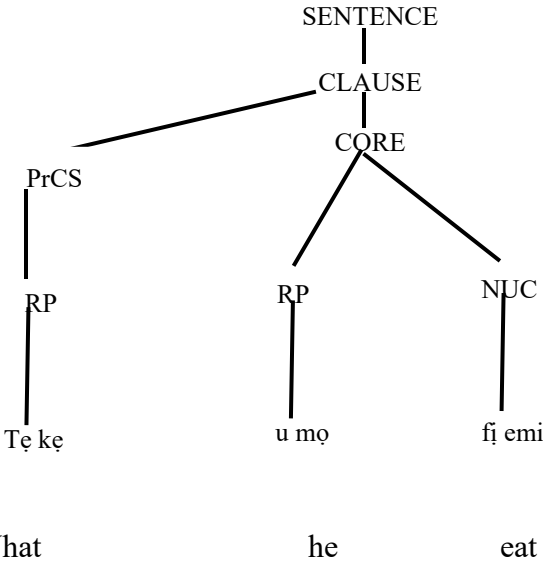


Figure 11: Representation of Pre core Slot and the Core

In figure 11 above, the interrogative word “tẹkẹ” (what) occupies the pre-core slot, highlighting the focus of the inquiry.

In Arogbo Izon, the LEFT-DETACHED position (LDP) and RIGHT-DETACHED position (RDP) serve important discourse functions, allowing speakers to frame or emphasize specific information outside the core clause. The left-detached

position often appears before the core clause, typically separated by a pause, and is used for elements that are grammatically disconnected from the core but play a significant role in providing contextual or background information. For instance, in data (18) *buru mi seji ya, u a fi emi* (as for the yam, he eats it), *buru* (yam) is placed in the left-detached position to establish the topic of discussion. Emphatic elements like *seji ya* and *emi* emphasize the focus and importance of the action. This syntactic flexibility allows for topic introduction, contrastive emphasis, and setting the stage for further elaboration within the core clause, enhancing the discourse flow and communicative intent.

Additionally, the left-detached position accommodates dislocated arguments and adverbial phrases that provide additional context. Dislocated arguments, which would typically be part of the core clause, are moved to the left-detached position for emphasis, as seen in data (20) *saramo, umi-iyo o pereji* (Quickly, sit there).

5. THE LEFT DETACHED POSITION

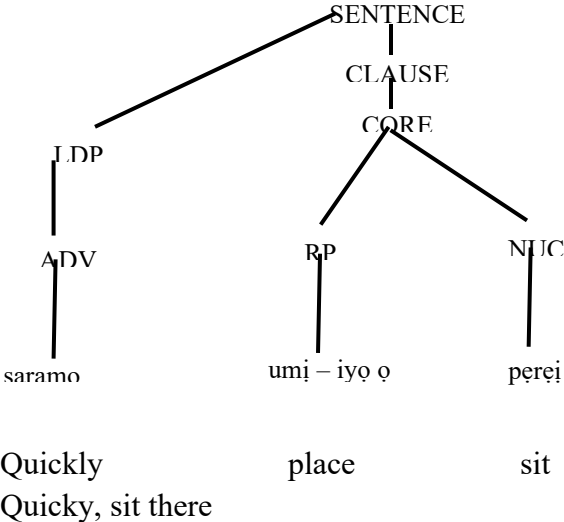
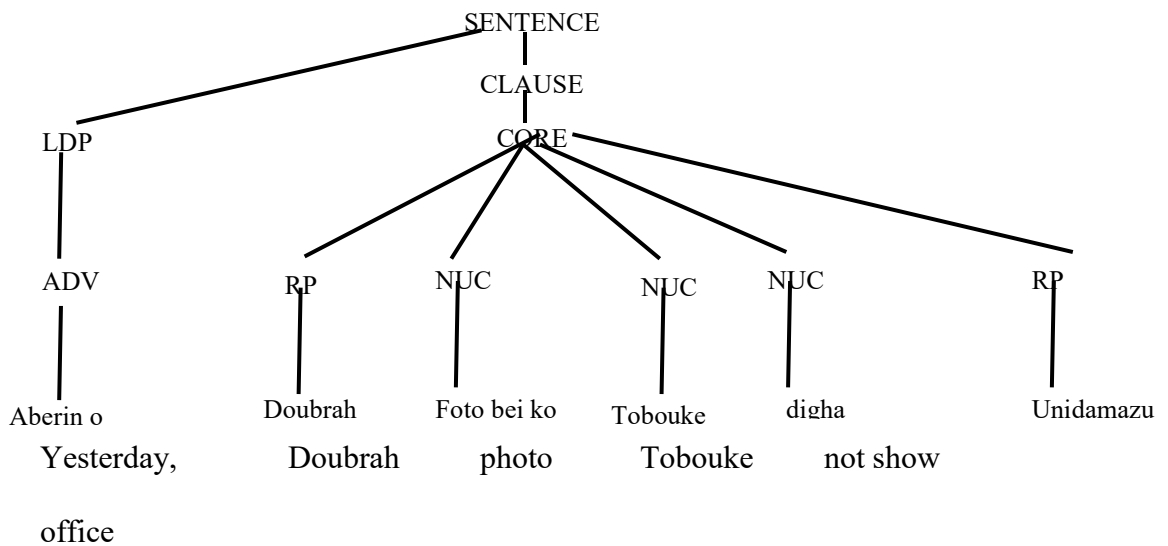


Figure 12: Representation of the Left Detach Position

In figure 12 above, the LEFT DETACHED position accommodates dislocated arguments and adverbial phrases that provide addition not context. As shown in the data saromɔ (quickly).

Also in figure 13 below, adverbials appear in the left detached position providing temporary or contextual information.



Yesterday, Doubrah did not show the photo to Tobouke in the office

Figure 13: Interaction of the Left Detached Position and the Core in the Clause

Adverbial phrases, such as the temporal adverb aberin (yesterday) in data (21) aberin ɔ, Doubrah foto bei ko Tobouke digha uni dama zɔ (Yesterday, Doubrah did not show the photo to Tobouke in the office), also appear in the left-detached position, providing temporal or contextual information. Intonation and pauses further distinguish these detached elements, signaling their separation from the main clause. The figure

below shows the representation of the elements in the clause aside the periphery in Arogbo Izon.

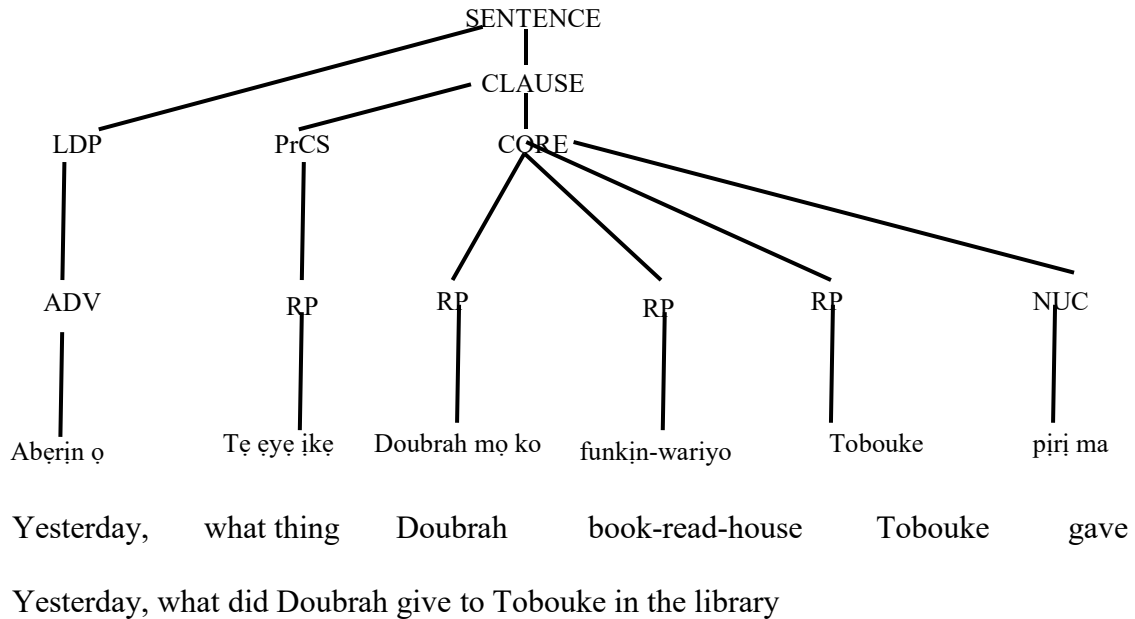


Figure 14: Representation of the Element in the Clause in Arogbo Izon

Overall, the left-detached position enhances the flexibility and richness of Arogbo Izon’s clause structure, allowing for effective management of information and discourse organization.

4.3 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, we explored the layered structure of Arogbo Izon clauses, highlighting the interaction between different syntactic positions and their discourse functions. The chapter began by examining the core components of the clause, including the nucleus, which represents the central grammatical and semantic element, typically the verb, and the core, which consists of the subject, object, and predicate in a strict Subject-

Object-Verb (SOV) order. We also discussed the importance of the periphery, where elements like interrogative markers and tone contribute to shaping the overall meaning of the clause. The pre-core slot was introduced as a flexible space for topicalization, focus marking, and interrogative constructions, with specific examples demonstrating how it modifies clause meaning.

The chapter also delved into the left-detached position, where elements outside the core clause, such as topics, contrastive emphasis, dislocated arguments, and adverbial phrases, provide contextual information or emphasize specific aspects of the discourse. Intonation and pauses play a critical role in marking these detached elements, helping to separate them from the core structure. The overall findings underscore the layered nature of Arogbó Izo clause structure, where different syntactic positions interact to convey meaning efficiently and with clarity, enhancing the flexibility of the language in both grammatical and communicative functions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Summary

This study provides an in-depth examination of the layered structure of Arogbo Izon clauses, focusing on the complex interaction of syntactic positions and discourse functions. The analysis considered key syntactic elements such as the nucleus, core, periphery, pre-core slot, and the left-detached position, examining their roles in shaping the meaning and communicative function of a clause. Through a detailed exploration of data examples, the study highlighted how these elements work together to create clarity, emphasis, and flexibility in the expression of both grammatical and pragmatic information. The research also delved into the significant role of prosody, intonation, and pauses in marking boundaries, question formation, and information focus within the clause structure.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this study underscore the intricate and flexible nature of Arogbo Izon clause structure. Central to this structure is the nucleus, which serves as the grammatical and semantic core of the clause, typically represented by the verb. The verb in Arogbo Izon, whether in its simple form or with added tense, aspect, or mood markers, carries the primary meaning of the clause. For instance, verbs like *bọ* ("come") or *mu* ("go") serve as the nucleus of the clause, while tense markers (e.g., *mini* for present tense) are attached to convey temporal distinctions. The nucleus's ability to encode tense, aspect,

and mood is a critical feature that ensures the grammatical accuracy and depth of meaning in Arogbo Izon sentences.

The core of an Arogbo Izon clause consists of three main components: the subject, the object, and the predicate, adhering to a strict Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order. This word order ensures that the verb, acting as the nucleus, is placed at the end of the clause, which helps to clearly demarcate the action and its associated arguments. The core structure provides the essential grammatical framework for clause formation, while additional syntactic elements serve to modify or refine the message being communicated.

The periphery in Arogbo Izon plays an essential role in shaping the overall meaning of a clause by offering supplementary information that is crucial for emphasis, context, and communicative intent. Elements in the periphery include focus markers, interrogative particles, and discourse markers, which help frame the clause. For instance, in interrogative constructions, particles like “ghan” are used to signal question formation, and rising intonation further reinforces the sentence's interrogative nature. The periphery thus works in conjunction with the core to provide a nuanced interpretation of the clause, balancing the primary grammatical content with additional contextual or emphatic information.

The pre-core slot is another important syntactic position in Arogbo Izon, often used for topicalization, focus marking, and interrogative constructions. Elements placed in this slot, such as the noun *buru* ("yam") in the sentence "Buru mi seɣi ya, u a fi emi" (as for the yam, he eats it), serve to foreground or emphasize particular elements, setting the

stage for the core clause. This syntactic flexibility allows speakers to manipulate the clause structure for specific communicative purposes, such as emphasizing certain topics or framing questions. The pre-core slot's interaction with elements like focus particles (e.g., *kẹ* for focus) and interrogative markers further demonstrates its crucial role in discourse organization.

Additionally, the study examined the left-detached position, which provides a syntactic space for elements that are grammatically detached from the core clause but still serve important discourse functions. These elements, often separated by pauses and marked by distinctive intonation, can be used to introduce topics, emphasize certain parts of the clause, or provide background information. The left-detached position allows for flexibility in discourse, as speakers can introduce a new topic or contrastive emphasis without altering the grammatical integrity of the core clause. For instance, in the example "*buru mi seji ya, u a fi emi*" (as for the yam, he eats it), the noun *buru* is placed in the left-detached position to introduce the topic, while the core clause conveys the action of eating.

The right-detached position was also discussed, though its role in Arogbo Izon is less prominent than that of the left-detached position. In instances where the right-detached position is used, it serves to emphasize the action or state described by the clause or to add further contextual detail after the core clause has been presented.

Finally, intonation and pauses were highlighted as integral to Arogbo Izon's clause structure, particularly in marking boundaries between the core and peripheral

elements, signaling question formation, and emphasizing particular pieces of information. Intonation patterns, such as rising intonation for questions or flat intonation for statements, work in tandem with syntactic structures to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed effectively.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Arogbo Izon employs a highly layered and flexible clause structure, where various syntactic positions such as the nucleus, core, pre-core slot, periphery, and detached positions work together to shape both the grammatical and communicative aspects of a sentence. The research highlights the dynamic interaction between syntax, prosody, and discourse functions, providing a comprehensive understanding of how Arogbo Izon achieves clarity, emphasis, and fluidity in clause construction.

The findings show that Arogbo Izon is a language with a rich syntactic framework that allows for a high degree of flexibility in how meaning is structured. The ability to use the pre-core slot for topicalization and focus marking, the periphery for adding emphasis or contextual information, and the left-detached position for topic introduction or contrastive emphasis illustrates the language's adaptability and its emphasis on discourse-level management. These syntactic features, combined with the role of intonation and pauses, give speakers of Arogbo Izon considerable freedom to organize information and tailor their communication to the context.

Furthermore, the study's findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Arogbo Izon's syntax and its discourse practices. The language's layered clause structure allows it to function effectively in both everyday conversation and more complex narrative or argumentative contexts. The flexibility inherent in its clause formation reflects the communicative needs of its speakers, enabling them to manage topic flow, emphasis, and information packaging with ease.

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the syntactic and discourse structures of Arogbo Izon, advancing our understanding of the language's typological features. Future research could explore other aspects of Arogbo Izon syntax, such as its use of auxiliary verbs, subordination, or sentence-final particles. Comparative studies with other languages in the Niger-Congo family or beyond could also shed light on broader trends in syntactic and discourse structure. By examining these features in greater detail, researchers can continue to uncover the intricate ways in which Arogbo Izon structures meaning and manages discourse.

REFERENCES

- Agbo, M. S. (2013). *A Role and Reference Grammar of the Igbo Verb* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Ibadan.
- Agharuwa, G. O. (2015). *The Edo Verb Root and Its Sequential Serialization* [Unpublished Master's Thesis]. University of Benin.
- Belloro, V. (2007). *Spanish clitic doubling: A study of the syntax-pragmatics interface* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University at Buffalo. Retrieved from the RRG website.
- Bornkessel, I., & Schlesewsky, M. (2006). The Extended Argument Dependency Model: A neurocognitive approach to sentence comprehension across languages. *Psychological Review*, 113(4), 787–821.
- Carnie, A. (2013). *Syntax: A generative introduction* (3rd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic structures*. Mouton.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (6th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Dixon, R. M. W. (2010). *Basic linguistic theory: Volume 2 – Grammatical topics*. Oxford University Press.
- Dowty, D. (1979). *Word meaning and Montague grammar*. Dordrecht: Reidel.
- Durie, M. (1985). *A grammar of Acehnese*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Durie, M. (1987). Grammatical relations in Acehnese. *Studies in Language*, 11(2), 365–399.
- Emenanjo, N. E. (2010). *Elements of modern grammar and descriptive linguistics*. Port Harcourt: University Press.
- Fillmore, C. (1988). The mechanisms of Construction Grammar. *BLS*, 14, 35–55.
- Foley, W., & Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (1984). *Functional syntax and universal grammar*. Cambridge University Press.

- Fromkin, V., Rodman, R., & Hyams, N. (2014). *An introduction to language* (10th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Givón, T. (1980). *Syntax: A functional-typological introduction (Vol. 1)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Givón, T. (2001). *Syntax: An introduction (Vol. 2)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Goldberg, A. (2006). *Constructions at work: The nature of generalization in language*. University of Chicago Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2005). *A student's introduction to English grammar*. Cambridge University Press.
- Jacobsen, W. (1979). Noun and verb in Nootkan. In B. S. Efrat (Ed.), *The Victoria Conference on Northwestern Languages* (pp. 83–155). Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum.
- Jenewari, C. E. W. (1982). *Studies in Kalabari syntax* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Ibadan.
- Jenewari, C. E. W. (1989). Ijoid. In J. Bendor-Samuel (Ed.), *The Niger-Congo languages* (pp. 106–118). University Press.
- Kroeger, P. R. (2005). *Analyzing grammar: An introduction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nolan, B. (Ed.). (2004). *RRG 2004 Book of Proceedings*. Retrieved from the RRG website.
- Ohuri, T. (2001). Some thoughts on a new systematization of interclausal semantic relations. Paper presented at the 2001 Role and Reference Grammar Conference, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Ohuri, T. (2005). More thoughts on the semantic representation in RRG: Event types and the semantics of clause linkage. Paper presented at the 2005 International RRG Conference, Taiwan. Retrieved from the RRG website.
- Payne, T. (2011). *Understanding English grammar: A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge University Press.

- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. Longman.
- Silverstein, M. (1976). Hierarchy of features and ergativity. In R. M. W. Dixon (Ed.), *Grammatical categories in Australian languages* (pp. 112–171). Humanities Press.
- Tallerman, M. (2011). *Understanding syntax* (3rd ed.). Hodder Education.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (1977a). Ergativity and the universality of subjects. *CLS*, 13, 689–706.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (1977b). *Aspects of Lakhota syntax* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of California, Berkeley.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (1985). Case marking and the structure of the Lakhota clause. In J. Nichols & A. Woodbury (Eds.), *Grammar inside and outside the clause* (pp. 363–413). Cambridge University Press.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (1993). *Advances in Role and Reference Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2001). The acquisition of complex sentences: A case study in the role of theory in the study of language development. *CLS*, 36(2), 511–531.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2002). The development of subject-auxiliary inversion in English WH-questions: An alternative analysis. *Journal of Child Language*, 29(1), 161–175.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2005). *Exploring the syntax-semantics interface*. Cambridge University Press.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2006). Semantic macroroles and language processing. In I. Bornkessel et al. (Eds.), *Semantic role universals and argument linking* (pp. 263–302). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2007a). Privileged syntactic arguments, pivots, and controllers. Paper presented at the Role and Reference Grammar Conference, Mexico City.
- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2007b). The Role and Reference Grammar analysis of three-place predicates. *Suvremena Lingvistika*, 63(1), 31–64.

- Van Valin, R. D. Jr. (2008). RPs and the nature of lexical and syntactic categories in Role and Reference Grammar. In R. Kailuweit et al. (Eds.), *Semantic roles: Their universals and argument linking* (pp. 233–256). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Williamson, K. (1969). *Ijo: Twelve Nigerian languages*. Longman.
- Williamson, K. (1983). Ijo orthography. In *Orthographies of Nigerian languages: Manual II* (pp. 16–29). National Language Centre.
- Williamson, K., & Timitimi, A. O. (1983). *Short Izon–English dictionary*. Port Harcourt: University Press.
- Zeller, J. (2011). *The syntax of African languages: A review*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.