

**SYNTACTIC PATTERNING OF POSSESSIVE MARKERS IN
YORUBA**



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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.), DEGREE IN
LINGUISTIC STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,
NIGERIA.**

APRIL 2024

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God for His wisdom, guidance and protection during my academic journey in the University of Benin and by His Grace I have completed my degree program. Also, to my wonderful and loving parents Mr. and Mrs. Okeke Samson, I have made it this far by their support, understanding, prayers, morals and as well as financial support

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God Almighty for his guidance and protection upon my life and also providing the money that is used for this project, because without him, it won't have been possible.

My gratitude also goes to my project supervisor Mr. FA. Ajala, for taking his time and diligently guiding me in the course of writing this research project. Thank you, sir, for your guidance in ensuring that the research was a success. May God bless you sir.

Special thanks go to the head of the department, Prof. M.S. Agbo, and my course adviser Dr. W.I Aigbedo and I am grateful to other lecturers of the Department of Linguistics Studies.

I am extremely grateful to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Okeke Samson. I am forever grateful for their prayers, love and support towards my academic pursuit. I extend my gratitude to my siblings Godstime and Isaac for their constant support, love, prayers and advice towards the completion of my degree program. Your continuous encouragement has taken me to this point, and for that, I am immensely appreciative.

I will not forget to acknowledge my wonderful friends and course mates who in many ways have rendered assistance to me especially Fayo and Blessing. Each of you made my academic journey so smooth, your presence, support, and companionship have played an important role in my achievement. I can't express enough gratitude to you but to say thank you and God bless you all forever.

Lastly, I would use this opportunity to appreciate the Watchman Catholic charismatic Renewal Movement Ugbowo for their encouragement, love and support, towards my academic journey. I am forever grateful.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the syntactic patterning of possessive markers in Yoruba and how Yoruba possessive construction plays a crucial role in conveying ownership, relationship, identity and kinship within discourse. A qualitative approach was adopted. The data used were obtained from primary sources via interviews with natives of Yoruba, while some of the data were obtained from secondary sources such as textbooks and journal articles. The study adopts the Government and Binding theory of Noam Chomsky. The findings of this study revealed the difference between the English possessive construction markers and the Yoruba possessive construction markers, it shows that English language is a head-first language. In head-first languages, the head typically comes before its modifiers and the Yoruba language is a head-last language, in head-last languages, the head comes after its modifiers. However, possession is not marked on the owner of the entity rather the object owned precedes the owner to show possession. It shows how possessive construction plays a crucial role in conveying ownership, relationship, identity and kinship in the Yoruba language.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the general overview of this research, by giving significance to some mandatory phenomenon. It also clearly categorizes this research by presenting necessary information such as the aim and objectives of this research, scope of study, significance of this study and methodology used in data collection.

Lyons 1977, Seiler 1993, Croft 2002 and Heine (1997), studies that focus exclusively on African languages and which take into account both morphosyntactic and semantic constraints are rare. A study of this nature will evaluate the existence of varied patterns of possession in the target languages, which in turn may result in fine grained descriptions for individual languages, in addition to the possibility of more cross-linguistic tendencies.

In order to capture the intricacies surrounding possessive constructions in African languages, the research will first determine how languages broadly represent possession. Following Heine (1997), two main types of possessive constructions occur across languages. Predicative or verbal possession usually relates to clausal syntax where the possessor and the possessum are both in argument slots. Possession, a fundamental concept in language and human interaction, is expressed through various linguistic constructions across different languages. One such language rich in possessive constructions is Yoruba, spoken primarily in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa. In Yoruba, possessive constructions play a crucial role in conveying ownership, relationships, and identity within discourse. Understanding the intricacies of possessive constructions in Yoruba not only sheds light on the structure and function of the language but also provides insights into Yoruba culture and society. The

possessive constructions in the Yoruba language, focusing on their morphosyntactic structures, semantic nuances, and sociolinguistic implications. By delving into the various forms and functions of possessive expressions in Yoruba, we seek to deepen our understanding of how possession is conceptualized and communicated within the language. This study attempts an analysis of syntactic patterning of possessive construction in Yoruba language.

1.2 YORUBA LANGUAGE AND PEOPLE

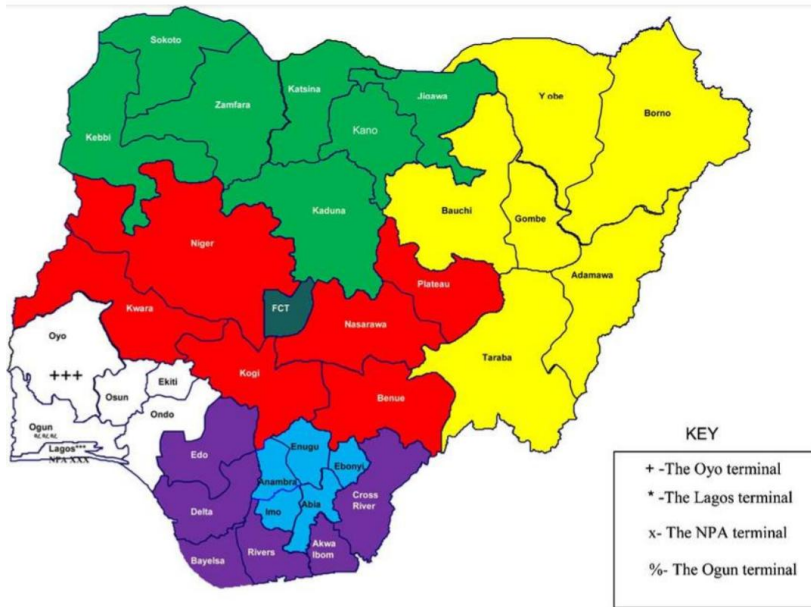
Yoruba is a tone language whose many varieties are spoken across West Africa with about 20 million native speakers. It is spoken natively in Nigeria as well as the neighboring countries of the Republic of Benin, Togo, Sierra Leone and Ghana (Campbell 1991:1471). Yoruba is considered to be one of the four official languages of Nigeria (Campbell 1991:1471). The other official languages are English, Hausa, and Igbo. Okun and Oworo are the two main dialects in Yoruba. Specifically, the Yoruba language is classified as a member of the Defoid category of the Benue-Congo subgroup of languages, part of the Niger-Congo language family (Campbell 1991:1471). In the Defoid group of languages, Yoruba is in the Yoruboid cluster which also includes Igala, Itsekiri and Ife' and the Ede complex (Campbell 1991:1470).

The Yoruba language is spoken in West Africa by a group of people whose native language is known as Yorùbá language. According to the Nigerian 2006 Census figure, its population stands at 27,722,432 million speakers (Source: National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria). It has a well written orthography with an SVO grammatical structure. It is an isolating tonal language.

Yoruba is the second largest language group in Nigeria (after Hausa) in terms of population of speakers. It is spoken mainly in the Southern-western Nigeria states of Oyo, Ogun, Ondo,

Lagos and a large part of Kwara and Kogi States. There are also Yoruba speaking communities outside Nigeria in Benin Republic, Togo and in Pockets of towns in Cote D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone (where they are known as Aku), Ghana and Niger Republic.

There are different dialects spoken in Yoruba such as Oyo, Ijesha, Ikale, Ondo, Ekiti, Iworo, Ilaje, Awori, Egba, etc. Yoruba is used extensively in education (all levels). One can take a degree in Yoruba (up to PhD) in the University of Ibadan, Ife, Lagos, Ado-Ekiti, Ilorin, and several colleges of Education in the South West Nigeria. There is a flourishing literary tradition in Yoruba. The first ever newspaper in Nigeria, 'Iwe Irohin fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba' (A Newspaper for the Egbas and Yoruba People) was published in Yoruba in October 1859 (Omoloso and Abdulrauf-Salua 2004). Textbooks, novels, plays and other reading materials are published extensively in Yoruba. In fact, it is the lingua franca of the South-Western Nigeria and it is a member of the Niger-Congo family of African Languages and belonging to the Yeai sub-group, as classified by Williamson and Blench (2000:13) and Benneth and Sterk (1979). See diagrams below showing the south western geopolitical zone in Nigeria and classification of Yoruba language respectively.



1.3

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the syntactic patterns and structures employed in possessive constructions in the Yoruba language?
2. How do possessive constructions in Yoruba convey different semantic nuances, such as ownership, kinship, and other relational concepts?
3. What are the sociolinguistic variations in possessive constructions within the Yoruba-speaking community, and how do they impact usage and interpretation?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research project is to investigate and analyze possessive constructions in the Yoruba language, with a focus on understanding their syntactic structures. The objectives include :

1. examine the syntactic patterns and structures utilized in possessive constructions in the Yoruba language.
2. investigate the variations associated with possessive constructions in Yoruba, including the expression of ownership, kinship, and other relational concepts.
3. explore the role of possessive constructions in Yoruba discourse and communication, including their functions in conveying information and establishing social relationships.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to the field of linguistics by providing a detailed analysis of possessive constructions in the Yoruba language. By documenting and analyzing the morphosyntactic structures, semantic nuances, and sociolinguistic factors influencing possessive usage, the study enriches our understanding of language structure and function. Yoruba is a widely spoken language with a rich cultural heritage. By studying possessive constructions in Yoruba, we contribute to efforts aimed at preserving and revitalizing the language. Understanding the intricacies of Yoruba grammar and usage is essential for language maintenance and promoting linguistic diversity.

Possession is a universal concept, but its expression varies across languages and cultures. By examining possessive constructions in Yoruba, we gain insights into Yoruba culture, social norms, and worldview. This promotes cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. The study provides valuable insights into the sociolinguistic aspects of possessive usage in Yoruba-speaking communities. By investigating regional variations, social factors, and pragmatic functions associated with possessive constructions, we enhance our understanding of language variation and language use in sociocultural contexts.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach is adopted. The data used were obtained from primary sources via interviews with natives of Yoruba, while some of the data were obtained from secondary sources such as textbooks and journal articles. A phone recorder and writing materials was used as instruments for gathering data for this research. This research involves a multi-faceted approach aimed at comprehensively exploring the Possessive construction in Yoruba language. By attending village gathering, conversation and interactions with core Yoruba native speakers to observe firsthand on the use of inflections in the language.

These interviews provided insights into the possessiveness surrounding the Yoruba. Possessives observed during interactions and conversation was collected and subjected to textual analysis to examine their linguistic features and semantic meanings. Discourse analysis was also conducted through the interactions and conversations with Yoruba language speakers, focusing on the use of Possessives within the discourse context.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION:

This literature review aims to explore and synthesize existing research on Possessive construction in Yoruba language. By examining the work of linguists, scholars, and researchers in this field, we seek to uncover the current state of knowledge, identify research gaps, and shed light on the distinctive features of Possessiveness within the Yoruba language. The findings of this review will contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the Yoruba's linguistic structure and provide a foundation for future studies and language preservation efforts.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1.1 LOCATIVE BASE FOR POSSESSIVES

Possessives include those constructions in which the idea of 'ownership' of an object is expressed; that is, constructions of the nature, Xni Y (X possesses Y). But more demonstratively constructions in which the idea of 'transfer' of 'property' is involved, are considered as possessives latter types of constructions crucially denote an attribution of benefit or appropriation of an object, referred to here as 'property'.

2.1.2 OWNERSHIP

The verb, *ni* 'to have or possess' expresses the notion of owning in Yoruba as

(a) **Qyin ní ìwé**

Oyin have book

'Oyin has a book'

(b) **Qdẹ nǎà ní sjá dúdu kan**

"The hunter has a black dog'

hunter the have dog balck one

The term, Benefactive (cf. Chafe 1971:147) will be adopted here to categorize cases in which a possessor is expressed as in Oyin and *odẹ nad* in (a) and (b), respectively. The 'beneficiaries' of the objects in sentence in which 'ownership' is expressed will be regarded as Benefactive Proximate (BPr.) and at the same time be construed to be assigned the BPr. subease. there are constructions in which *ni* is used metaphorically to express the possession of remote or abstract objects as those underlined in **B̀nmi ní aya/aanu/suuru 'Bunmi is bold/kind/patient'**

Bunmi has chest/kindness/patience

2.1.3 TRANSFER

A large number of verbs can be employed to express different kinds of transfer of object or property in Yoruba. Examples of such verbs are *rǎ* 'buy', *tà* 'sell', *gha* 'take/receive', *fún* 'give', *jí* 'steal', *paard* 'exchange' etc. Constructions with these verbs may have an expressed beneficiary as *Oyin* in (a) below or an expressed benefactor as *Yémisi*, in 13 (h):

(a) *Oyin gha/ra qkǒ nán*

Oyin receive/buy vehicle the

(b) *Yémisi ta apò męta*

Yemisi sell bag three

'*Oyin* received/bought the vehicle'

Yemisi sold three bags'

However, would like to suggest that as in the case of the Locative expression, similar subcategories of the directional and non-directional type could be proffered for the Possessive. This is to say that the beneficiary, *Yémisi*, in (b) may be regarded as the Benefactive Source (BS) while the benefactor, *Yémisi* in (a) is the BG. 13(c) shows the co-occurrence of both the BS and BG: (c) *Oyin ra işu fún Yemisi* 'Oyin bought yams for Yemisi' *Oyin buy yam give Yémisi*

Possessive constructions play a crucial role in language, allowing speakers to express ownership and relationships between entities. In the context of the Yoruba language, spoken predominantly in southwestern Nigeria, possessive constructions exhibit unique features and contribute to the rich linguistic structure of the language. This literature review aims to

explore the contributions of various possessive exponents in Yoruba, shedding light on the distinctive characteristics and functions they bring to the language.

2.1.4 PERSONAL PRONOUN POSSESSION: In Yoruba, personal pronouns are used to express possession, indicating that a particular entity belongs to a specific person. The contributions of possessive exponents in this category are evident in the inflectional changes that occur on personal pronouns. For example, the possessive form of the first-person singular pronoun "mo" (I) is "mi" (my), indicating ownership or association. Similarly, possessive forms are marked on other personal pronouns, such as "rẹ" (your), "ọ" (his/her), "wa" (our), "yin" (your plural), and "jẹ" (their), contributing to the expression of possession in Yoruba.

Personal Pronoun Possession:

- Mo ni ìwé mi. (I have my book.)
- Rẹ̀ ni ọkọ rẹ̀. (You have your husband.)
- Ọ̀ ni ọmọ rẹ̀. (He/she has his/her child.)
- Wa ni ilé wa. (We have our house.)
- Yin ni àwọn èniyàn yin. (You all have your people.)
- Jẹ ni ọmọ wọn. (They have their children.)

2.1.5 ADJECTIVAL POSSESSION

Yoruba employs adjectival possession to indicate ownership or association between a possessor and a possessed entity. Adjectival possessive constructions involve the use of possessive adjectives, which agree in number and gender with the possessed noun. The contributions of possessive exponents in this domain are seen in the inflectional changes that occur on the possessive adjectives. For example, the possessive form of the adjective "ọkọ" (husband) is "ọkọ mi" (my husband), where "mi" serves as the possessive exponent. This inflectional process allows for precise and explicit expression of possession in Yoruba.

- Ìyàwó mi jẹ ọmọ ọkọ mi. (My wife is my husband's child.)
- Àdié rẹ ni ẹran rẹ. (Your chicken is your meat.)
- Ọkọ rẹ ni ipa ọkọ rẹ. (His/her husband is his/her pride.)
- Àwọn ọkọ wa ni àwọn òrìṣà wa. (Our husbands are our deities.)
- Àwọn ejè yin ni ìyáwó yin. (Your plural wives are your blood.)

2.1.6 GENITIVE POSSESSION

Genitive possession in Yoruba refers to the expression of possession using the genitive marker "nó" or "ni." The contributions of possessive exponents in this category are evident in the inflectional changes that occur on the possessed noun. For instance, to indicate possession of a house, one would say "ilé nó" (house of), where "nó" functions as the possessive exponent. Similarly, the genitive marker "ni" can be used in possessive constructions, as in "ọwó ẹlédé ni" (the hand of the child), where "ni" serves as the possessive exponent. These

possessive exponents facilitate the expression of ownership or association in genitive possessive constructions.

Genitive Possession:

- Ìwé nọ́ baba. (Father's book)
- Àmòtẹ̀kùn ni ọ̀ràn ni wọ̀n. (Leopard's skin is its clothing.)
- Èlẹ́dẹ́ ni ọ̀mọ ọ̀kọ. (The child's hand)
- Àwọ̀n ọ̀mọ̀de ni ọ̀ràn ni wọ̀n. (Children's clothes)
- Iya baba mi (My father's mother)

2.1.7 LOCATIVE POSSESSION

Locative possession in Yoruba refers to the expression of possession using locative markers to indicate the location of the possessed entity. The contributions of possessive exponents in this domain are seen in the inflectional changes that occur on the locative markers. For example, to express possession of a book on the table, one would say "iwe ni lówó tábilí" (book is on the table), where "ni" functions as the possessive exponent, indicating the location of the book. This inflectional pattern enables speakers to convey possessive relationships while also providing information about the spatial arrangement of the possessed entity.

Locative Possession:

- Ìwé ni lówó tábilí. (The book is on the table.)

- Àkókò ni lówó isé. (The clock is on the wall.)
- Èlédé ni lówó ìdà. (The hand is on the chair.)
- Àwọn ọkọ wa ni lówó ilé wọn. (Our husbands are in their houses.)
- Àwọn èjè yin ni lówó ìkòkò yin. (Your plural wives are on your bed.)

2.1.8 INCORPORATIVE POSSESSION

Incorporative possession in Yoruba involves incorporating the possessor into the possessed noun phrase. The contributions of possessive exponents in this category are evident in the inflectional changes that occur on the possessed noun. For instance, to express possession of a child, one would say "ọmọkunrin" (male child) or "ọmọbinrin" (female child), where the prefixes "ọmo-" and "ọmọbi-" function as possessive exponents, indicating ownership or association. This incorporation process allows for concise and economical expression of possession in Yoruba.

Incorporative Possession:

- Ènikan ni ọmọkunrin. (A person is a man's child.)
- Èjìrẹ ni ọmọbinrin. (Twins are a woman's child.)
- Adebayo ni ọmọdé. (Adebayo is a child.)
- Ọmọ iyá mi ni ọmọ. (My mother's child is a child.)
- Ọmọ àbúrò mi ni ọmọ. (My younger sibling's child is a child.)

Possessive constructions in the Yoruba language demonstrate a variety of exponents that contribute to the expression of ownership, association, and relationships between entities. The contributions of possessive exponents in personal pronoun possession, adjectival possession, genitive possession, locative possession, and incorporative possession provide Yoruba with a diverse and flexible possessive system. Understanding these possessive patterns is essential for comprehending and effectively communicating in Yoruba, highlighting the significance of possessive constructions in the language and the cultural context they represent. Possessive constructions are essential linguistic structures that allow speakers to express ownership, association, and relationships between entities. In the Yoruba language, spoken primarily in southwestern Nigeria, possessive constructions exhibit unique features and contribute to the rich linguistic structure of the language. This comprehensive literature review aims to explore the various aspects of possessive constructions in Yoruba, including personal pronoun possession, adjectival possession, genitive possession, locative possession, and incorporative possession. By examining the contributions of possessive exponents in each category, this review provides a detailed understanding of the diverse and intricate possessive system in Yoruba. Possessive constructions in Yoruba are formed using various possessive exponents, such as personal pronouns, possessive adjectives, genitive markers, locative markers, and possessive prefixes. They demonstrate the range of ownership and association expressed through possessive constructions in Yoruba.

2.2 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Research on possessive construction markers in Nigerian Yoruba languages has been conducted by linguists and scholars interested in understanding the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of these markers within the broader context of Yoruba linguistics and language studies

- Professor Ayo Bamgbose is a renowned linguist who has made significant contributions to the study of Yoruba grammar and possessive markers. His work delves into the intricate grammatical structures and syntactic patterns of Yoruba possessive constructions, shedding light on how ownership and relationships are expressed in the language. Professor Bamgbose's research has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of Yoruba linguistics and the broader field of Nigerian languages.

Professor Ayo Bamgbose's research has uncovered key findings regarding Yoruba grammar and possessive markers. Some of his notable discoveries include the analysis of possessive constructions in Yoruba, the identification of possessive markers used in expressing ownership, and the exploration of the syntactic and semantic nuances of possessive relationships in the language. His work has provided valuable insights into how possession is linguistically encoded and culturally understood in Yoruba-speaking communities.

- Dr. Bolanle Arokoyo's research focuses on possessive constructions in Nigerian languages, providing valuable insights into how ownership and relationships are expressed linguistically. Her work has contributed to our understanding of the cultural implications and syntactic structures of possession in Nigerian languages.

Dr. Bolanle Arokoyo studies possessive constructions in various Nigerian languages, including Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. Her research delves into the linguistic structures and cultural nuances of possession in these diverse language communities.

Akinbiyi Akinlabi: Akinlabi, known for his work on African languages, including Yoruba, may have conducted research on possessive constructions in Nigerian languages. His expertise in phonology, morphology, and syntax could provide valuable insights into this topic.

- Francis Egbokhare: Egbokhare, a Nigerian linguist, has expertise in Nigerian languages and linguistics. His research may include studies on possessive constructions in Nigerian languages, particularly within the context of syntactic analysis and grammatical structure.
- Kola Owolabi: Owolabi, a linguist with expertise in African languages, may have conducted research on possessive construction markers in Nigerian languages. His work likely contributes to our understanding of the syntax and semantics of possessive constructions in Nigerian linguistic contexts.
- Bamidele A. Adetugbo: Adetugbo, a Nigerian linguist and researcher, has likely contributed to the study of Nigerian languages, including possessive constructions. His research may focus on the grammatical properties and usage patterns of possessive markers in Nigerian linguistic varieties.
- Oladele Awobuluyi: Awobuluyi, a linguist with a background in Nigerian languages, may have conducted research on possessive construction markers in Nigerian contexts. His work may include studies on the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of possessive constructions in Nigerian languages.

Many linguists would agree with Taylor (1989: 679) that Possession is a difficult concept.’ Its difficulty arises, in my view, from the dominant assumption in nearly all frameworks of linguistics of linking possession to ‘ownership’. ‘Ownership’ has been assumed to be a central semantic relationship (Dixon 2010: 263) and the prototype meaning of NP internal possessive constructions. This assumption has been entrenched by suggestions from the anthropological literature that ‘property rights’, ‘inheritance patterns’, ‘exchange’, and ‘trade’ might be cultural or human universals (Murdoch 1945; Hockett 1973; Brown 1991). At best these are etic and classificatory universals (see Evans and Levinson 2009; Levinson and Evans 2010) and their content varies widely across languages and cultures. ‘Ownership’ is

not a central relationship coded in the Likpe possessive construction, nor in many other languages. Hence, I do not assume ‘ownership’ to be central nor prototypical for possessive constructions. From a co-evolutionary perspective of language and culture, the primary meaning coded by possessive constructions is that of kinship and other socio-cultural relationships. As Lyons (1977: 473–4) points out, NP internal possessive constructions in many languages, that is a phrase like X’s Y, ‘means no more than ‘the Y that is associated with X’. In fact, in some African grammatical traditions, such phrases are called ‘associative’ phrases (Welmers 1973). For Akan, a Kwa language like Likpe, Boadi (2010: 30) expanding on Christaller’s (1881) analysis of possessive noun phrases insists that the common meaning relation underlying all the relations identified by Christaller is that of ‘associated with’ and hence labels all such phrases in Akan the Associative Phrase. I assume that nominal structures of the form [X POSSESSIVELY] signal conceptual relations between the entities so linked. The canonical relation is one of a person and their relationship to kin. This feature is assumed to be a universal of world views (Kearney 1984). Apart from this canonical relationship two other features of world view are relevant: the distinction between self and other as well as classification. As the conceptual relations are bio-cultural by nature, such structures also code a relation between a person and their parts (see Chapter 1 and Dixon 2010; Seiler 1983; Chappell and McGregor 1996). Such phrases are an important site for the exploration of there flexive relation between language, culture, and modes of thinking and in particular of the ways in which culture and cognition are encoded in grammar (see Chapter 1 and also Wierzbicka 1988; Ameka 1996, 2004; En field 2002; Evans 2003).

2.3 CONCERN OF THE STUDY

The concern of the study is the syntactic structures of possessive constructions in Yoruba languages, including the placement of possessive markers, word order variations.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter of this project work will show the theoretical approach applied in the research.

- Government and binding theory (GB theory)

This theory will be discussed below

3.1 GOVERNMENT AND BINDING THEORY (GB THEORY)

Within the framework of Government and Binding Theory (GB Theory), the analysis of possessive construction markers involves examining how these markers interact with various syntactic principles proposed by scholars. Here's how GB Theory relates to possessive construction markers, along with contributions from notable scholars:

1. Theta Theory: Theta Theory deals with the assignment of thematic roles to syntactic elements within a sentence.

Possessive construction markers are analyzed in terms of their thematic roles, such as possessor and possessed.

Noam Chomsky's contributions to Theta Theory laid the groundwork for understanding how possessive markers participate in thematic relations within the sentence structure.

2. Case Theory: Case Theory deals with the assignment of structural case to noun phrases in a sentence.

Possessive construction markers are often analyzed in terms of their case marking properties.

Howard Lasnik and Richard Kayne contributed to Case Theory, providing insights into how possessive markers interact with principles governing case assignment within the syntax.

3. Binding Theory: Binding Theory deals with the principles governing the distribution and interpretation of pronouns and reflexives within a sentence.

Possessive constructions often involve pronouns or reflexives in certain languages.

Howard Lasnik and Noam Chomsky made significant contributions to Binding Theory, providing insights into how possessive construction markers interact with principles governing pronouns and reflexives.

4. Movement Operations: GB Theory posits movement operations to account for the displacement of syntactic elements within a sentence.

Possessive construction markers may involve movement operations, such as movement of the possessor or the possessed noun phrase.

Luigi Rizzi and Jean-Roger Vergnaud contributed to the analysis of movement operations within GB Theory, shedding light on how possessive markers interact with movement constraints and syntactic structures.

These scholars, along with others in the field of generative grammar and GB Theory, have contributed to our understanding of possessive construction markers within the syntactic framework. Their contributions have provided insights into how possessive markers are generated, licensed, and interpreted within the syntax, enriching our understanding of the syntactic structure of possessive constructions across languages.

3.2: JUSTIFICATION OF THE THEORY

The study framework is based on one approach: Government and binding theory. GB Theory provides a formal and explicit framework for generating an infinite variety of sentences in natural languages. By positing abstract syntactic structures and principles, the theory accounts for the creative aspect of language, allowing speakers to produce and understand novel sentences.

GB Theory offers explanations for a wide range of linguistic phenomena, including word order variations, syntactic dependencies, and semantic interpretations. By identifying and formalizing abstract syntactic structures and principles, the theory can account for diverse syntactic patterns observed across languages.

Government and binding theory offer valuable theoretical frameworks for analyzing possessive constructions in languages in Yoruba. Government and Binding Theory offers a rigorous and systematic framework for studying the syntactic structure of languages, providing insights into the universal properties of human language and the cognitive mechanisms involved in language processing.,

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains data gotten from selective speakers of the Yoruba language. The selected data has been analyzed and presented to show Possessive markers in Yoruba language that can take various forms, including prefixes, suffixes, or standalone words, depending on the possessed noun and its grammatical function within the sentence. And it also shows the difference between the placement of the English possessive markers from the Yoruba language possessive markers. The English language is a head first language while the Yoruba language is a head last language.

4.1 OWNERSHIP

Possessive constructions in Yoruba explicitly state the ownership relationship between the possessor and the possessed entity. By using possessive markers, speakers indicate that the possessed entity belongs to or is associated with the possessor.

a) my cat. ologbo mi Yoruba language

Source Language	ologbo	mi
Lexical Translation:	[cat	my]
literal Translation:	(my	cat)

b. our house ile wa

source language. Ile wa
 | |
lexical translation [house our]

literal translation. (our house.)

c. my husband (ọkọ mi)

source language. ọkọ mi
 | |
lexical translation [husband me]

literal translation (my husband)

d• your husband (ọkọ rẹ)

source language ọkọ rẹ
 | |
lexical translation [husband your]

literal translation (your husband)

e• our children (awọn ọmọ wa)

source language. awon omọ wa
 | |
 lexical translation. [children's our]
 literal translation (our children's)

f. their children (awon omọ won)

source language. awon omọ won
 | |
 lexical translation. [children's their]
 literal translation. (their children's)

g• ilẹ rẹ (his/her land's)

source language. ilẹ rẹ
 | |
 lexical translation. [house his /her]
 literal translation.(his/her land's)

h• oja rẹ (your market's)

source language. oja re

lexical translation [market your]

literal translation (your market)

i• iyawo mi (my wife)

source language iyawo mi

lexical translation [wif e my]

literal translation. (my wife)

j. iyawo re (your wife)

source language iyawo re

lexical translation [wife your]

literal translation(your wife)

k• ologbo re (your cat)

literal translation. (your wife's)

C• ọkọ rẹ (your husband's)

source language. ọkọ rẹ
 | |
lexical translation. [husband your]

literal translation. (your husband.)

D• ọrẹ rẹ (your friend's)

source language. ọrẹ rẹ
 | |
lexical translation [friend's you]

literal translation. (your friend's)

E• ọmọ wọn (their children's).

source language. ọmọ wọn
 | |
lexical translation [children their]

literal translation. (their children)

F• ọmọ wa (our children's)

source language.	omọ	wa
lexical translation.	[children	our]
literal translation.	(our children)	
G• omọ wọn	(their children's)	

source language.	omọ	wa.
lexical translation.	[children	their.]
literal translation.	(their children)	
H• okọ rẹ (your husband's)		

source language.	okọ	rẹ
lexical translation.	[husband	your]
literal translation.	(your husband)	
I• oṛẹ rẹ (your friend's)		

source language.	ore	re
lexical translation.	[friend	your]
literal translation.	(your friend.)	

4.3 KINSHIP:

Possessive constructions in Yoruba are also used to signify lineage and ancestry within the family. They denote connections to ancestors, forefathers, and the broader familial lineage.

A•baba mi (my father)

source language.	Baba	mi
lexical translation.	[father	my]
literal translation.	(my father)	

B•iya re (your mother's)

source language.	iya	re
lexical translation.	[mother	your]

literal translation. (your mother)

C•baba re (your father's)

source language. baba re
 | |
lexical translation. [father. your]

literal translation. (your father)

D• iya re (your mother's)

source language. Iya re
 | |
lexical translation. [mother your]

literal translation. (your mother)

E• omọ wa (our children's)

source language. omọ wa
 | |
lexical translation. [children our.]

literal translation. (our children)

F• ọkọ rẹ (your husband's)

source language.	ọkọ	rẹ
lexical translation.	[husband	your]
literal translation.	(your husband)	

G• ọmọ wọn (their children's)

source language.	ọmọ	wọn
lexical translation.	[Children	their]
literal translation.	(their children)	

4.4 IDENTITY

In Yoruba, possessive constructions also play a significant role in indicating identity or characteristics associated with individuals, objects, or places.

A. iwe rẹ - your book

•source language	iwe	rẹ
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lexical translation. [book your]

literal translation. (your book)

B• oja re - your market

source language. oja re

| |

lexical translation. [market your]

literal translation. (your market)

C• ilẹ re - his/her house

source language. ilẹ re

| |

lexical translation. [house his/her]

literal translation. (his/her house)

D• ologbo oja re your market's cat.

source language. ologbo oja re

| | |

lexical translation. [cat market your]

literal translation. (your market cat)

E • ibi ọ̀lorun yín - your God's place

source language. Ibi ọ̀lorun yín
 | | |
lexical translation. [place God your]

literal translation. (your God's place)

F• ologbo mi - my cat's

source language. ologbo mí
 | |

lexical translation. [cat my]

literal translation. (my cat)

G• iwe rẹ̀ - your book's.

source language. Iwe rẹ̀
 | |
lexical translation. [book your]

literal translation. (your book)

H• oja re - your market's

source language.

oja re

lexical translation.

[market your]

literal translation.

(your market)

I• olori wa - our leaders

source language.

Olori wa

lexical translation.

[leader our]

literal translation

(our leader)

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

This summary investigates how possessive construction play a crucial role in conveying ownership, relationship, kinship and identity. The chapter one introduced the work by providing necessary information about this study such as; The Yoruba people language and its culture, it also introduces the topic and explain what possessive construction markers is, the methodology which entails qualitative approach was used for this study, interviews were also conducted with key native speakers including village elders and Yoruba friends and family. The research aim which project is to investigate and analyze possessive construction in the Yoruba language, with a focus on understanding their word order, syntactic structures and different between the Yoruba possessive construction and the English possessive construction. Research questions and the significance of this study were also discussed in details.

In the chapter 2, a thorough literature review was carried out on the topic and the related concepts about the study which includes locative base for possessives, ownership, transfer, personal pronoun possession, adjectival possession, genitive possession, locative possession and incorporate possession was discuss in details.

The third chapter presented the Theoretical framework of the research which is Government and Binding Theory (GB Theory) and Functional grammar (FG) to the study of possessive construction markers.

The Fourth Chapter of the study presents the data, showing the difference between the English possessive construction markers and the Yoruba possessive construction markers, it

also shows how the word order is arranged, it shows how possessive construction plays a crucial role in conveying ownership, relationship, identity and kinship

5.2 FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed the difference between the English possessive construction markers and the Yoruba possessive construction markers, it shows that English language is a head-first language. In head-first languages, the head typically comes before its modifiers and the Yoruba language is a head-last language, in head-last languages, the head comes after its modifiers. however possession is not mark on the owner of the entity rather the object owned precede the owner to show possession .It shows how possessive construction plays a crucial role in conveying ownership, relationship, identity and kinship in the Yoruba language.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Possessive construction in the Yoruba language plays a crucial role in indicating ownership, relationship, identity, and kinship within sentences. Through the use of possessive markers, speakers convey the possessor's association with the possessed entity, expressing familial ties, social connections, and personal belongings. Possessive constructions also reflect cultural values and norms surrounding ownership and possession, enriching communication and interpersonal relationships in Yoruba-speaking communities.

This project explored various aspects of possessive construction in Yoruba, including its syntactic structure, semantic interpretation, pragmatic functions, and sociocultural contexts. Scholars and linguists, such as Ayo Bamgbose, Akinbiyi Akinlabi, Francis Egbokhare, Kola Owolabi, Bamidele A. Adetugbo, and Oladele Awobuluyi, have contributed to our understanding of possessive construction in Yoruba through their research on Yoruba linguistics and language studies.

The project has highlighted the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic complexities of possessive constructions in Yoruba, as well as their significance in expressing ownership, relationship, identity, and kinship. Further research in this field can contribute to our understanding of Yoruba grammar, discourse, and sociocultural dynamics, as well as broader implications for linguistic theory and language revitalization efforts.

In conclusion, possessive construction in the Yoruba language serves as a linguistic tool for conveying various aspects of human experience, social interaction, and cultural identity. Its study enhances our appreciation of the rich linguistic heritage of Yoruba and contributes to the ongoing exploration of language diversity and complexity in the global linguistic landscape.

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