

Focus as an aspect of grammatical relation in Edo

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Abstract

Languages possess a rich repertoire of strategies for conveying information and this is an aspect of the grammar of a language that has generated a lot of interest from scholars of diverse fields in contemporary times. The conceptual focus is associated with the ways and means of packaging information. It is concerned with how the immediate communicative needs of speakers of a language are satisfied under a particular context or discourse setting. Extant studies in the language have viewed focus as a syntactic derivation that is simply expressed for emphasis without recourse to its underlying structure and role in grammatical relations. This study provides an insight into the nature of grammatical relations in Edo, a Kwa language spoken in the South-Southern part of Nigeria. Data for the study were solicited by way of recorded utterances of the speakers of the language and the isolation of instances of emphasis by the researcher (who is competent in the Edo language). The isolated elements of the recorded discourses were examined descriptively with a view to understanding the nature of focus marking. The study shows that information is packaged in a variety of ways in the language which reflects the communication strategies of the Edo people. The study argues for Focus as an important aspect of the nature of grammatical relations in the language and demonstrates how it functions in satisfying the immediate communicative needs of the language speakers.

Keywords: Information Structure, Grammatical relations, Subject-object switch, Focus and Edo language.

Abstract in Edo

Unu ẹvbo keghi mwe edomwade ode ne a ya gie uhunmwu ne ore abo oghere ilele unu ẹvbo ne avbe ogben-ebe ughughaen ru emwe onren. O keghi kaan edomwade ode ne a ya mwamwa itaemwi. O vbe kaan evbe ne itaemwi emwa ni loo unu ẹvbo vbe ya de ye

uviẹn vbe edomwade ẹbu ne o de yi. Iruẹmwi ne a ka gha miẹ keghi guan kaan ẹmwẹ ne a tua ta vbe ekpa esintasi vbane iran ma na guan kaan avbe emwi ni rre otọ ọre. Iruẹmwi na keghi guan kaan ilele unu ẹvbo vbe Ẹdo ne a zẹ vbe otọ Enaigirria vbe ẹgbe unu ẹvbo ekua. Emwi ne a loo vbe ebe na keghi ke obọ avbe ivbi ẹvbo ni loo unu ẹvbo Ẹdo rre vbane a na vbe gbe aro ke otọ ya hannọ avbe ẹmwẹ ne a tuare ladian. Iruẹmwi na keghi rrie ma wẹẹ odẹ ughughan ẹre ivbi Ẹdo ya kuun itaemwi vbe ifiẹmwẹ. Ebe na keghi vbe ya ẹre nyanya wẹẹ ẹmwẹ ne a tua vbe unu ẹvbo ẹre ivbi ẹvbo ya gu egbe guan kevbe ya rẹn emwi ne edomwade omwa guan kaan.

Introduction

A lot has been done on the structure and constituent make-up of the lexical, functional and phrasal elements in Ẹdo. These elements particularly the former have been observed to be modified by a series of other items called ‘functional items’ (Obiamalu, 2013). Obiamalu claims these elements were responsible for the varied structural patterns of lexical units such as nouns in the language. In this paper, attention is given to other aspects of grammatical relations in Ẹdo using a syntactic phenomenon in the language, *Focalisation* (Focus Construction or Marking). This syntactic process is associated with the arguments in a derivation, but sometimes the verb can be focused in what is known as events' focus. According to Yusuf (1989: 57), focus construction is a way of making a specific NP in a sentence stand out, by placing it at the beginning of the sentence. In other words, a lexical item is emphasized by moving it to the initial position of the focus sentence. In Ẹdo language, nouns, verbs, and adverbs can be focused by moving them to the initial position of the focus constructions.

This study was therefore construed to provide the necessary background to the nature of focus manifestation in Ẹdo grammar and the structural configurations of focus constructions. This paper was motivated largely to add to the literature on Ẹdo focus and grammatical relations and to also extend the base of extant position on the nature of focalization in the language. The literature on Ẹdo focus marking is quite few and not comprehensive enough to provide for the much needed account of this fantastic syntactic phenomenon in language.

It is important to note here that the name ‘Ẹdo’ was introduced during the mid 15th century when the then Oba, Ewuare I named the Kingdom, known then as ‘Ubini,’ after his friend and saviour ‘Ẹdo’ as a result of the love shown by the latter to the Oba. As this name had not gone into popular circulation as at the time of the Portuguese arrival, towards the end of Oba Ewuare’s reign, the land and people were referred to in their accounts and documents as ‘Benin’ from ‘Ubini’ which was the well-known name of the place then and this became known to the outside world (Aigbedo, 2022).

The result of the above mentioned historical event led to the use of the two names simultaneously as Edo-Benin with the former referring to the people and language while the latter refers to the seat of government and the monarchy.

Several works exist on different aspects of the grammar of Edo language. Some of them are: Amayo, 1975, Omoreyi, 1986, 1989). These works have described aspects of the Edo grammar including that of the basic structure of the Noun Phrase (henceforth NP), Verb Phrase (henceforth VP) and other constituents of a sentence. The views on the grammatical structure of Edo language have varied from that of the basic structure of the sentence to the phonological and morphological forms of the language. Omoreyi (1986) examines the category of Adjectives and the internal structure of words in Edo language. More recently Omoregbè (2012) surveys the agreement patterns manifested by the Edo NP and its various modifiers and associated constituent units. The present paper examines the nature of grammatical relations in Edo and the different grammatical structures associated with different constructions-type in the language.

Grammaticality, grammatical analysis and relations

The concept of grammatical relations is one that has elicited a lot of theoretical postulations as to its structure and composition. The literature surveyed in this research covered virtually all the aspects of grammatical relations in natural languages. The reason for this is the relative wide coverage of works on grammar especially those on syntax. Some of such postulations are considered below on their merits and relevance to the theme of the work.

Van Valin (1981) carries out a paper on the structure of grammatical relations in ergative languages. He claimed that grammatical relations can be defined by certain syntactic processes definable by the principles of syntactic organization and the notion of subject. For instance, he argued that if in a particular language, a syntactic operation like, Equi-NP deletion applies to S (Subject) and A (Agentives) but not to O (Object), then we can say that for the language, the syntactic pivot for Equi-NP-deletion is [S, A]. Therefore, if all of the major syntactic processes in a language have [S, A] pivots, it will be right to say that the grouping [S, A] constitutes the syntactic subject in the language and that the language is syntactically accusative (Van Valin, 1981).

Hammadi & Aziz (2012, p. 3) were of the view that 'grammatical relation (GR) is a linguistic relation established by grammar, where linguistic relation is an association among the linguistic forms or constituents'. The grammatical relations will therefore determine grammatical behaviours such as: placement of words in a clause, verb agreement and the passivity behaviour. The whole process of organizing the constituents

of a clause in a language is a kind of grammatical relation whereby the position and status of these constituents are determined by some sort of rules and regulation of the grammar. This position is quite strong as grammatical relation can be regarded here as an extension of the grammar of a language especially as regard the components of a language structure.

According to Primus (2009), grammatical relations, such as subject, direct object and indirect object, have been used as descriptive terms for centuries, but the distinction between subject and predicate have been taken over from Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and grammar. Alternative names are grammatical functions (e.g. Bresnan, 2001), syntactic functions (e.g. Chomsky, 1981) or syntactic relations. Common to all approaches to grammatical relations is that they have been considered to be relationships between two elements of a clause, so that subject is only short term for the subject of the predicate or the subject of the clause. Traditionally, grammatical relations are primarily used for major constituents of the clause and only marginally for parts of major constituents (e. g. attribute of a noun). So the conception of grammatical relation here is that of subject – object relations and predicate structure as well as the function of these in a construction.

Dixon (2009), is of the opinion that traditional research on grammatical relations and alignment typology relies heavily on the notions of syntactic transitivity and syntactic argumenthood. For a semantic argument to be qualified as a syntactic argument it has to possess some of the traditional morphosyntactic subject and object properties which include particular case marking and agreement patterns, constraints on formation of coordinate and subordinate constructions, valency-changing derivations, reflexive formation, etc. The whole business of grammatical relation according to these authors is therefore that of the syntax of a language where we look at such things as the properties of the constituent of a clause (nominals) and the agreement relations as well as restriction on the placement of certain constituents in a particular position in the clause.

Kreps (1996) discusses the concept of grammatical relations (GR) as a sort of dependency relation between constituents or units like subject, object and adjunct and as direct relationship between words in a language. Here, a grammatical relation is considered from the point of view of the link between different component of a clause like the subject, object and the kind of complements they take. We also look at the relationship between words and classes of words to determine the kind of lexical items that go with each as well as the functional items they take along.

Akintoye & Ariyo (2015) examine the focus markers and the high tone syllable in Ekiti dialect of Yoruba. Their observation was that focus marker has three forms ni, li and ki in the Ekiti dialect they studied. They claimed that the focus marker li functions as a morph in some sub-dialects of Ekiti, whereas, it is an allomorph in other sub-dialects. It was

their opinion that, the high tone syllable *ó* plays a dual role in the dialect which also functions as a preverb when there no trace of movement in a simple construction, but as a subject resumptive pronoun at the extraction site when there is a movement of a subject NP in a complex construction. In conclusion, they posit that the structures of focus constructions and relative clause constructions are identical in the dialect.

Osuagwu & Anyawu (2020) study the focus strategy of Igbo language with special attention paid to the Ngwa variety of Igbo. The syntactic focalization in Igbo was evaluated by them as a process that requires the movement of the focused element to a focus domain (focus projection). By employing a descriptive approach to the evaluation of focalization in Igbo, they claim that the focus strategy in Igbo is in most cases realized by the use of the specific focus marker *ka'* which encodes the focus information. In this paper, they demonstrated that focalization in Igbo is a syntactic process that requires movement of the focused element to a focus domain outside the minimal clause. They also noted that focusing in Igbo is realized mainly through movement of the focused element to the left adjacent position to the focus marker (*ka*). Their final position is that a focused constituent and *wh*-element cannot co-occur in the same focused position in a clause.

Based on the work of Marantz (1984), grammatical relations are “the syntactic counterparts of certain logico-semantic relations such as predicate-subject and modifier-modifiee relations”. Associated with each sentence is a logico-semantic structure which displays the logico-semantic relations or interdependencies among the constituents of the sentence. The logico-semantic structure therefore represents a certain set of the syntactically encoded semantic dependencies among sentential constituents. This conforms to Marantz's (1984) conception of grammatical relations as the relations between the basic elements of a sentence. Though Marantz places more emphasis on the logical semantic properties of the verb and how it relates to other elements of a clause like a noun, the present paper will move further from this perspective to consider the peculiar properties of word classes and their role in determining the nature of grammatical relations in Edo language.

Methodology

The data for this research were obtained from competent native speakers of the language particularly from those living in and around the Ugbekun and Upper Sokponba areas in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area. The data were obtained by direct interview and observation of certain utterances in different contexts by the researcher who is a native of the research area. Data were also solicited from colleagues from the University of Benin particularly from the Department of Linguistics and African Languages who are also

competent native speakers of the language. The researcher's native competence] was also employed in getting these data particularly in the selection of relevant information and validation of linguistic items collected. These data consisted basically of lexical items and larger derivations such as sentences and texts. Some other materials for the research were obtained from journal articles particularly those about the agreement structure and grammar of the Edo language. Of particular importance in the materials obtained for this research is the Monograph: *On The Nature of Grammatical Relations* by Marantz (1984); Omoruyi (1986) *Adjectives and Adjectivization in Edo*; Imasue (1996), *Edo course book 1-3* and other such materials in the language. These were complemented by other books, articles on grammatical relations and constituent structure of natural languages. These data is analyzed based on their composition as lexical units and the distribution in any construction. The analysis is based on the morphological shapes of constituents in Edo as well as their syntactic distribution. The data consist mainly of lexical items, phrases and sentences of various expressions.

Focus derivation in Edo

Focus is an aspect of grammatical relations in Edo that portrays the way emphasis is placed on an item, as well as the distribution of core clausal elements like subject and object in a sentence. This usually happens by way of what we call passive construction in English language whereby an object NP moves from its clause final position to clause initial position in a sentence. The object nominal element whose position has been changed from that of object to subject will then be marked for focus showing that emphasis has shifted from the erstwhile subject element to the new element now occupying that position. In Edo, focus is marked by, *èré* which Omoruyi (1989) called 'resumptive pronouns'. He claimed that these pronouns are derived from the 3rd person pronoun 'e' and the particle 're'. This is different from our current observation that the Edo pronoun system (as presented in table 3 of section 3.2.1) show *èré* and *òré* as the 3rd person singular pronoun respectively. The only thing that is obvious though is that both can be contracted to *è* and *ò* in rapid speech. Focus marking is shown in the derivations provided below:

1. ai. *Òsàsú* *gbé* *òfén*
 Osasu past-kill rat
 'Osasu killed a rat'

- aii. Òfẹ́n ẹ̀ré Òsàsú gbéré
 rat it-is osasu past-kill
 ‘It is a rat that Osasu killed’
- bi. Òsàtó sá àmẹ̀
 Osato past-fetch water
 ‘Osato fetched water’
- bii. àmẹ̀ ẹ̀ré Òsàtó sàré
 water it-is Osato past-fetch
 ‘It is water that Osato fetched’
- ci. èbàbá dẹ̀ ìmọ̀tò
 father past-buy car
 ‘Father bought a car’
- cii. ìmọ̀tò ẹ̀ré èbàbá dẹ̀rẹ̀
 car it-is father past-buy
 ‘It is a car that father bought’

Focus marking in Edo is not restricted solely to the object of a sentence that has now moved to the subject position. Subject NPs can also be focused. This is a kind of deictic role of pointing at the subject element in that position as the one that really carried out an event. Let us consider the examples below.

2. a. Íyè ọ̀ré ọ̀ dẹ̀ néné ùkpòn
 mother she buy-past the cloth
 ‘It is mother that bought the cloth’

b. Òsàgié èré ò bó Nénè òwá
Osagie it-is he build-past the house
'It is Osagie that built the house'

c. Èdẹgbè èré ò nyàá Nénè ímọ̀tò
Edegbè it-is he own the car
'It is Edegbè that owns the car'

d. Ìgbínígiè èré nọ̀
Igbinigie it-is be
'It is Igbinigie'

In these examples, there is something unique about these set of elements being focused and that is the introduction of the element, ò into the derivation. This element is the third person singular pronoun and is an emphatic marker peculiar to the original subject element in a sentence. Omoreyi (1989) claims that the 3rd person pronoun, ò is used to focus the subject NP in a derivation while èré is used for other NPs that are not the original subject of a derivation. This is in line with the claim by Amayo (1975), who called the 3rd personal pronoun the 'subject concord marker'. That is it is a pro-copy of the NP being focused. The implication of this is that it is only when an object element is moved to the subject position that focus marking is initiated as focus cannot be marked on the elements occupying the object position. The marking of focus on the element occupying the object position of a sentence will make the derivation deviant. Consider the examples below.

3. i. èwé rrí ìnyá
goat eat-past yam
'The goat ate yam'

- ii. inyá ẹ̀ré ẹ̀wé ré
yam it-is goat eat-past
‘It is yam the goat ate’
- iii. Òsàsú gbé ẹ̀nyé
Osasu kill-past snake
‘Osasu killed a snake’
- iv. ẹ̀nyé ẹ̀ré Òsàsú gbéré
snake it-is osasu kill-past
‘It is snake that osasu killed’
- vi Òsàzẹ ẹ̀ré ọ̀ gbẹ̀n ẹ̀bé
Osazẹ it-is he past-write book
‘It is Osazẹ that wrote a book’
- vii. * Ẹ̀níyé lé ẹ̀ré ẹ̀vbàré
Eniye cook-past it-is food
- viii. * Òsàyándẹ̀ gbẹ̀n ẹ̀ré ẹ̀bé
Osayandẹ̀ past-write it-is book
- ix. * Òtà rrí ẹ̀ré ẹ̀vbàré
Ota eat-past it-is food

The sentences above show the marking of focus on the elements occupying the subject position of the sentence. These elements are both the subject nominal and object nominal that have been moved to the clause initial position. It will be observed that the sentences in (vii-ix) are deviant while those in (i-vi) are well formed. The reason for this is that, focus is not marked on elements occupying the object position of a sentence/clause and if such elements are to be focused, they will move to the subject position of the clause.

Focus and subject-object movement

The central theme of grammatical relations is the connection between the arguments (nouns) and the event markers (verbs) in a derivation. This connection generates such constituents' roles as subject, predicates and object. It may be added that constituents' roles are decided by their position in the clause. This is referred to here as 'grammatical slot allocation' (GSA) and serves as the argument distribution determiner in a clause.

In the derivation of focus in Edo, a transformational operation takes place which leads to what is known in the literature as 'subject-object movement'. This is a grammatical derivation where the subject argument in a clause is moved from its original position to that of the object while the latter moved to the position of the former. This is like the passive transformation in some languages with the exception that a focus marker is introduced as an identifier of the element being illuminated as a result of the movement. In Edo, subject – object inversion in focus construction manifests in three ways as follows:

1. Subject duplication
2. Direct object movement
3. Indirect object movement

Subject duplication

This is a syntactic phenomenon in focus construction that involves the duplication of constituents in the subject position of the clause. This way, the clause ends up having two subjects viz: focus subject and clausal subject. This is basically the overriding phenomenon in focus construction where the NPs in a derivation are in external argument positions (a position that is outside the sphere of influence of the verb). Consider the examples below:

- 4.ai. Ètínòsà^{log.subj} gbá íbàtà^{dir. obj}
 Ètinosa pst-wear shoe
 ‘Ètinosa wore a pair of shoes’
- aii. Íbàtà^{focus subj} èré Ètínòsà^{log. subj} gbàrè
 shoe it-is Ètinosa pst-wear-rv
 ‘It is a shoe Ètinosa wore’
- bi. Òsàsú^{log.subj} rhìé íghó^{dir. obj} nè Àtítí^{indir. obj}
 osasu pst-give money to Atiti
 ‘Osasu gave money to Atiti’
- bii. Íghó^{focus subj} èré^{loc. M.} Òsàsú^{log. subj} rhìé nè Àtítí
 money it-is Osasu pst-give to Atiti
 ‘It is money that Osasu gave to Atiti’
- biii. Àtítí^{focus subj} èré^{loc. M.} Òsàsú^{log. subj} rhìé íghó ná
 Atiti it-is Osasu pst-give money LOC
 ‘It is Atiti that Osasu gave money to’
- ci. Èbàbá^{log.subj} gbé úzò^{dir. obj} vbè úgbó^{indir. obj}
 father pst-kill antelope in farm
 ‘Father killed an antelope in the farm’

cii. $\acute{u}z\grave{o}$ ^{focus subj} $\grave{e}r\acute{e}$ ^{loc.M.} $\grave{e}b\grave{a}b\acute{a}$ ^{log. subj} gbé vbè $\acute{u}gb\acute{o}$
 antelope it-is father pst-kill in farm

‘It is an antelope father killed in the farm’

ciii. $\acute{u}gb\acute{o}$ ^{focus subj} $\grave{e}r\acute{e}$ ^{loc. M.} $\grave{e}b\grave{a}b\acute{a}$ ^{log. subj} ná gbè $\acute{u}z\grave{o}$
 farm it-is father LOC pst-kill uzo

‘It is in the farm father killed an antelope’

The examples above show the derivation of duplicate subjects in a clause in focus construction. As said earlier, the situation arises because the arguments before the verbs are external arguments and they do not come under the verb. The position occupied by these arguments therefore, will naturally be taken as a subject position. In line with this, the *focus subj.* is the subject of the focus marker (*foc. M.*), [$\acute{e}r\acute{e}$] *logical subj* is the subject of the clause which is the original subject in this case. These elements demonstrate the nature of grammatical relation and alignment in the language. Also in the derivations above, it is interesting to note the different shapes and position of the prepositional element (P) which varies depending on its position in the clause as well as the thematic role of the argument it goes with. Thus in this regard, the preposition ‘*nè in*’ (bii) is realized as ‘*ná in*’ (biii) due to its position of occurrence in the two derivations. The preposition *vbè in* (ciii) presents quite a different structure from its *nè* counterpart as this preposition precedes the verb in the derivation while the argument which it is associated with occur in a different position. The logical explanation that can be given for this is that the preposition *ne* and *vbè* are associated with arguments bearing different theta or semantic roles. The *nà in* (biii) is associated with argument bearing the thematic role of beneficiary while the *nà in* (ciii) goes with an argument having the thematic role of location.

Direct object movement

This is a syntactic phenomenon where the object of a declarative derivation is moved to the subject position of a corresponding focus derivation. This is in line with much of what we have been discussing so far in this section. Consider the examples below:

5ai. Èkì^{log.subj} dẹ́ ékpò^{dir. obj}

Èki pst-buy bag

‘Èki bought a bag’

aii. ékpò^{focus subj} èrẹ́^{loc. M.} Èkì^{log. subj} dẹ́rẹ́

bag it-is Èki pst-buy-rv

‘It is a bag Èki bought’

bi. Èdẹ́bírí^{log.subj} nwìnà vbẹ́ úgbó^{dir. obj}

Èdẹbiri pres-work in farm

Èdẹbiri is working in the farm’

bii. úgbó^{loc. subj} èrẹ́^{loc. M.} Èdẹ́bírí^{log. subj} ná nwìná

farm it-is Èdẹbiri P pres-work

‘It is in the farm Èdẹbiri works/ It is in the farm Èdẹbiri is working’

The derivations above show the inversion of arguments in the object position of a clause to the subject position of the clause. The new argument in subject position is tagged as the ‘focus subject’ while the original argument in the subject position is tagged the ‘logical subject’. That is, the object of the clause that moved to the subject position can still be referred to as a new subject (focus) while the original subject that moved to the clause final position is the logical subject.

Indirect object movement

This phenomenon involves the movement of the argument in the object position (usually in the preposition phrase) of a clause to the position of subject in a corresponding focus clause. This inversion amongst other things, duplicate the argument in the subject position giving us two subjects in a clause. A notable feature of this type of focus

derivation is the introduction of a locative marker (LOC) in place of the preposition (Ọmọruyi, 1989). Consider the data below:

6ai. Ìyẹ^{log. subj} ẹ́ ẹ̀míó!wó^{dir. obj} vbè ẹ̀kí^{indir. obj}
 Mother pst-buy meat in market
 ‘Mother bought meat in the market’

aii. Ẹ̀kí^{focus subj.} ẹ̀ré íyẹ^{log. subj.} ná ẹ̀ ẹ̀míówò^{dir. obj}
 market it-is mother P pst-buy meat
 ‘It is in the market mother bought meat’

bi. Ọ̀sàrọ̀bó^{log. subj.} mú ẹ̀kpò^{dir. obj} nyáá ágá^{indir. obj.}
 osarọbo pst-carry bag on chair
 ‘Osarọbo placed the bag on the chair’

bii. ágá^{focus subj.} ẹ̀ré^{loc. M.} Ọ̀sàrọ̀bó^{log. subj} mú ẹ̀kpò^{dir. obj} nyáá
 chair it-is Osarọbo pst-carry bag on
 ‘It is on the chair Osarọbo placed the bag’.

ci. Ẹ̀fósà^{log. subj.} ẹ́ ẹ̀bẹ́^{dir. obj.} nè Ìnyẹ́^{indir. obj.}
 Ẹfosa pst-buy book for Inyẹ
 ‘Ẹfosa bought a book for Inyẹ’

cii. Ìnyẹ́^{focus subj.} ẹ̀ré Ẹ̀fósà^{log. subj} ẹ́ ẹ̀bẹ́^{dir. obj} ná
 Inyẹ it-is Ẹfosa pst-buy book for
 ‘It is Inyẹ Ẹfosa bought a book for’.

di. òhué^{log. subj.} gbé àránmwè^{dir. obj.} vbè égbó^{indir. obj.}
 hunter pst-kill animal in forest
 ‘The hunter killed an animal in the forest’

dii. égbó^{focus subj.} èré òhué^{log. subj.} ná gbè àránmwè^{dir. obj.}
 forest it-is hunter LOC kill animal
 ‘It is in the forest the hunter killed an animal’

The derivations in 6 above show the structure of indirect object inversions in Edo focus construction. These inversions also show us the different shapes of the prepositions associated with the indirect object arguments that are involved in the movement. It is worthy of note that the prepositions in question do not move with the argument they govern in the prepositional phrase but are left at various positions relative to the verb in the derivations. The preposition that is associated with the argument carrying the locational theta role as in (di) is positioned before the verb after the argument is moved while other arguments thematic roles like theme, beneficiary, etc. have their prepositions in clause final positions after their inversion or movement. This is a reflection of the nature of grammatical relations in Edo with respect to this focus phenomenon and serves as an insight into the grammatical structure of the language.

A notable feature of the indirect object inversion is the deletion of the –rv suffix on the verb in clause final position (Ọmọruyi, 1989). The preposition which is equally deleted in this type of focus derivation is replaced by the [‘ná’] locative marker which usually precedes the verb. Consider the examples below:

7ai. Èrhán dé vbè égbó
 Wood pst-fall P forest
 ‘A tree fell in the forest’

aii. égbó èré èrhán ná dé
 wood it-is wood LOC pst-fall
 ‘It is in the forest a tree fell’

- bi. Ìdéhèn gbìnnà vbè óré
 Idehèn pres-fight LOC outside
 ‘Idehèn is fighting outside’
- bii. óré èré Ìdéhèn nà gbínná
 outside it-is Idehèn LOC pres-fight
 ‘It is outside Idehèn is fighting’

The derivations in 7 above show the blocking of the –rv suffix on the verb when the latter occur clause-finally. This works for both action and stative verbs as the examples show for gbìnná and dé respectively.

Focus marking in Èdo is an important aspect of the nature of grammatical relation in the language. This is shown by the different realizations of focus derivation and the kind of constituent order relation that exist between the different elements that are focused. Focus marking is also strongly linked to the semantic roles of constituents (NPs) that are focused and this is a pointer to the nature of grammatical relation in the language as a structural and a functional relation.

Conclusion

The scope of this paper has been on the nature of grammatical relations in Èdo language. It has succeeded to a large extent in demonstrating the rich and unique structural configuration of the language and the implication of this for the grammatical nature of Èdo language. This paper has thrown some light on the nature of grammatical relations in Èdo and the manner of it[s] manifestations in certain derivations. Such derivations exhibit a rich agreement system which emanates from the internal structure of the components of such derivations. This paper has shown though in a concise manner the nature of grammatical relations in Èdo which include focalization. The work is therefore concluded on the premise that grammatical relational systems like constituent relations, focus construction are rich and constitute a viable field of research in Èdo language.

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